

Back Channel II: The Vietnam Betrayal

Chapter 1: Return to Washington – Fear and Loathing

It was bitter cold in the nation's capitol that December 12, 1963 and I gazed morosely out of the back window of the car at the bundled-up Christmas shoppers going happily about their business as nightfall approached. My Secret Service driver, who had greeted me upon my arrival at Washington National Airport with the terse announcement that "President Johnson wants to see you right away sir," maneuvered adroitly through the rush hour traffic on our way to the White House.

I was scared – terrified, actually. One doesn't lightly tangle with *any* President of the United States – and particularly not this one. Lyndon Johnson could be as vicious and vindictive as anyone I have ever met and he was absolutely furious with me. I was – and still am – convinced that he was the principal organizer of the assassination of my former boss, and friend – President John F. Kennedy. There was no way I was going to be able to avoid this meeting, but I was dreading it. I thought of the sunny, warm tranquility I had left behind that morning in Sardinia and inwardly groaned. There have been many times in my life when I wanted desperately to be back in the United States but right now was definitely not one of them.

What a change the two and a half weeks since Kennedy's assassination had brought. Under Kennedy, the White House had become my second home. I worked there, ate there, worked out at the White House gym and pool and on a couple of occasions during the Cuban Missile Crisis, I had just plopped down on a chair in my office and slept there. I loved working for Kennedy. I couldn't wait to get to work early each morning and oftentimes worked past midnight. Camelot was real and it was magical. I felt like I was at the center of the universe and working directly for the man who was making history and changing the world. Not only that, he had become a friend. I couldn't have been happier. The fact that I had essentially zero social life really didn't bother me – I frankly didn't have time for it anyway. I think I was about as content as a man could be.

Now the White House had been taken over by a malevolent man who I detested and feared. My White House 'home' was gone, destroyed – turned into a hostile, alien, cold, enemy stronghold. Camelot had evaporated overnight and would never return. I was filled with bitter outrage.

These musings ended abruptly as we pulled up to the entrance of the State Floor of the White House and my driver handed my travel bag to the Marine who opened the door for me (I was sure it would be thoroughly searched during my meeting with Johnson.) I wasn't worried. They would find absolutely nothing of interest. I was informed that Johnson was briefly attending a White House cocktail party for foreign correspondents and he wanted me to wait for him in the Yellow Room upstairs in the family living quarters (the Yellow Room is directly above the oval Blue Room and is the same size and shape). I was literally going into the lion's den. I tried to mentally prepare myself for combat. The butler that met me at the entrance to the family quarters was nice, though. He seemed a little taken aback when he took my overcoat and I asked him how he was doing, etc. Johnson wasn't known for treating his underlings very well. I don't think the butler was used to being treated like an actual person and he warmed up right away. I thought *I* needed some human warmth a lot more than he did. Actually, (while on the subject of human warmth) on a later occasion, he shared some information with me about someone rather well known who had crawled into Johnson's bed (with him in it) and stayed there for quite some time. I always chuckle a little bit when I see her on television sharing her knowledge with the vast unwashed.

I didn't have to wait long. Johnson exploded into the room and greeted me like a long lost son, grabbing my shoulder while vigorously pumping my hand with a strong handshake. Johnson was a big guy. He was about 6'4" tall (193 cm) and early in his Presidency he weighed about 220 pounds (100 kg.). He weighed a lot more later in his Presidency and had to wear a girdle to try to hide it. Lyndon was always in a rush and those long legs made it truly hard for shorter people to keep up with him. He had outsized ears and hands, leathery skin and a booming voice which he never seemed to modulate. He was also boorish and crass and often publicly belittled and swore at his staff. (He never did it to me but he certainly yelled at me on several occasions.) He had an amazing ability to almost instantly switch from bellowing in a purple-faced rage to a calm and gentle (for him) tone of voice. He was devious and a liar and proud of it. I would *truly* trust a rattlesnake before I'd trust Lyndon Johnson. At least the rattlesnake is honest about its intentions. He motioned for me to sit on the couch while he plopped into a chair to face me. (Somehow, Johnson sitting in a Louis XIV chair seemed a little incongruous.) "Bertie, Bertie," he said. "You've worried us all to death. Where in the world have you been – and what in the world have you been doing there?"

Why couldn't he just be honest? The Secret Service had finally found the travel agency where I had bought my ticket and spoken to Fiorina Moretti who had sold me the round trip ticket to Rome. Fortunately for me, the little Italian shuttle airline that operated between Rome and Cagliari was too small to have the international arrangements that would permit U.S. travel agents such as Fiorina to write tickets for them. Therefore the trail ended at Rome. Johnson was well aware that I had gone to Rome. He didn't know anything more than that because Fiorina was not about to risk getting her parents involved by telling the Secret Service that I was staying with them.

I had rehearsed my little speech on the long flight back from Rome and launched into it effortlessly.

“Mr. President, I am sincerely regretful if I have caused you or any of your staff any consternation or worry. As you know sir, I considered President Kennedy to be a personal friend so news of his assassination hit me even harder than it did many of the rest of the nation's citizens. In the aftermath, I had decided to leave government service altogether and when you informed me that you were ordering me to stay on in my position of Special Assistant to the President, I had yet another massive mental gear-change to make. I believe you sensed the extent to which my thoughts were in total disarray and I was most grateful for your suggestion that I take a couple of weeks off to reorganize. I was particularly grateful for your generous offer for me to use your ranch in Texas as a haven in which to do so.

As my mind was really in a bit of a jumble, I decided that what I actually wanted to do was to spend the time with a good personal friend who was a buddy of mine at Duke. He was a friend I could talk to and he always gave good advice. I tried calling him but there was no answer and on the spur of the moment, I decided just to hop in the car and go out to Des Moines to see him. I did write you a note thanking you for your generous offer and meant to give it to the concierge when I left, but in my haste I forgot and left it on my desk in the apartment. I hadn't even gotten out of town when I was struck by how foolish I was being. What if my friend hadn't answered his phone because he was out of town on a trip or something?

When I turned the car around and was driving back to my apartment, I decided that if I couldn't be with a close friend, the next best thing would be a total change of scenery - somewhere out of the country, preferably near the ocean and where the weather would be reasonably warm. I stopped at a public phone booth and picked out a travel agency at random, called them, explained to them what I had in mind

and asked them to start working on possibilities. I didn't want to waste time going all the way back to the apartment to park my car and since I was in a nearby neighborhood that also had lots of high-rise apartment buildings, I figured that I would just try to find an empty Visitor's Parking space in one of them and leave my car there. So that's what I did. I took a taxi into town, went to my bank to get out some money, went to the travel agency and talked to one of the agents there about different possibilities and finally settled on Rome. I found out that I could catch a flight out of Idlewild that very evening – and I think you know the rest, sir.”

Johnson had been regarding me with a piercing stare during my little recitation, and I think he knew that a 'recitation' was exactly what it was. Everything I had told him was verifiably true – as far as it went – but what was I leaving out? All he said was, “Well, that's real interesting, Bertie. Tell me what you did once you got to Rome.” I continued, “Well, I changed some money into Lira and caught a bus into town. After walking around for a while, I bought a map of Rome and sat down in a little sidewalk café to get my bearings. It was late afternoon and there was still plenty of sunlight for sightseeing but it had been a long day and I was tired so I thought I'd better just find a place to stay for the night. Fortunately, my waiter spoke English pretty well and when I told him that I wanted to find a little *pensione* to spend the night, he told me that his cousin owned one not far from the café, showed me where it was on the map and told me to tell his cousin that 'Guido had sent me.’”

I began telling Johnson that I had found the place simple but clean when he interrupted me saying, “It sounds nice, Bertie. What's the name of it?” He just nodded his head knowingly when I told him that I had no idea because Guido had simply written an address on a napkin that I gave to the cab driver, and when the cab stopped I was looking through a glass door into what appeared to be a modest hotel lobby. I never gave it a second thought. Johnson looked at me as though he didn't believe me but just nodded and asked, “Did you stay there the whole time you were in Rome?” I told him that I only stayed there for one more night. I spent the next day on tour busses of Rome and while Rome is of course endlessly fascinating, I wanted to get out of the big city environment and get into the Italian countryside and see something of the country. I decided to go south so the morning after my day-long tour of Rome, I caught a bus to Naples.

I had a whole complicated story of how I spent the rest of my time touring the countryside around Naples, Sorrento and the Isle of Capri on a little motor scooter

but I never got to tell it. It was probably a good thing. It's hard to hide the smell of pure bullshit but then I didn't give a damn whether he believed me or not.

Johnson casually asked me what I was doing with my bags all this time. I told him that I didn't have a suitcase; I just had a small gym bag packed with a few changes of clothes and my shaving kit. Johnson made a huge mistake then because he blurted out, "Do you mean to tell me that all you were carrying around is that little bag that you left downstairs?" I just nodded and said, "Yes, sir." But Johnson realized very clearly what he had just done. Presidents do not check on the baggage of their visitors. I had no doubt that he had personally gone through it thoroughly when the Marine guard showed it to him and told him that he had found nothing. What he had just done was to confirm that he was intensely interested in the contents of the baggage that I was carrying. Of course what he was most interested in was what baggage I had carried out of the country but there was no possible way to check that. He was in a silent rage. The room was charged with a nearly palpable electricity from his anger. Johnson always had to win. Even with games like horseshoes or checkers, he enjoyed the games as long as he was winning but would quit and walk away in a rage the first time he lost.

After chastising me severely for having left the country without filling out the appropriate forms (with my security clearances, that was a grave offense – he probably could have very justifiably stripped me of all my clearances and put me in jail but of course, if he did that, he could not possibly keep me on as Special Assistant – and he would still not have the documents he so desperately wanted. It was better to keep me under his thumb so that he could keep an eye on me.) It was a good example of the type of peculiar, circular dilemma described so memorably in Joseph Heller's 1961 work, "*Catch 22*." Lyndon Johnson did *not* like to be out-manuevered and he did *not* like to be frustrated. I was not surprised by his red face, his surliness or his screaming when he told me that whether I liked it or not, he was assigning me for temporary duty to Robert S. McNamara, (the Secretary of Defense) and that I *would* carry out the Secretary's orders as though they had been issued directly by him personally. He then calmed down slightly and asked me why I was so God-damn dead set against working in Defense Planning like the Secretary wanted me to.

"Because, sir, I consider it to be a total waste of time and effort but much more importantly, I don't want it on my conscience that I participated in causing multiple deaths and countless mutilations of fine young Americans."

"You'd better explain yourself, Bertie," he snarled.

“I’ve read the draft of NSAM (National Security Action Memorandum) 273¹, Mr. President. Have you approved it?”

He nodded his assent.

“Well sir, then it appears to me that far from planning to withdraw all our personnel by 1965 as President Kennedy planned, we are now prepared to significantly augment our presence and our activities in Vietnam. As you know sir, at the request of President Kennedy, I have done something that not a single one of our top military or State Department officials in Vietnam has done. Guided by a member of a prominent and respected Vietnamese family, I have visited villages all the way from the Delta to the demarcation line between North and South Vietnam. It was my guide – and friend – who did the actual speaking for us as we met with the village elders in their council huts, but through him I gathered invaluable information on what the Vietnamese people think, how they feel about our presence there, how they feel about our Strategic Hamlet² program, what they felt about then President Diem³, what they felt about the re-unification of North and South Vietnam, and what they felt about Ho Chi Minh. It was pretty sobering. The bottom line is that the people – the “peasants” – aren’t really very concerned about who is running the government but given the choice between an American puppet government and Ho Chi Minh, they will pick ‘Uncle Ho.’ We may not like him but the truth is that he is a brilliant, charismatic man that the majority of people in Vietnam – both North and South – see as a real Vietnamese patriot. If the majority of a country’s population is not willing to fully support a struggle for independence or throw their support behind some other cause that the country’s political and military leaders are willing to wage war for, the war has no chance of being ‘won.’ I’m afraid that Secretary McNamara’s cautious optimism is based on overly rosy reports from the Vietnamese Army generals and it certainly wouldn’t surprise me to find that the actual situation on the ground there is quite different – and alarming. It is simply not in the Asian culture to disappoint people or tell them unpleasant things. They will always try to put the most positive spin on things that they possibly can – even if they have to stretch the truth a little. They do not want to be impolite and the bearer of bad news. But those are the only people that McNamara, General Taylor, Ambassador Lodge, etc. are talking to. I think we ought to be highly skeptical of the accuracy of the information that they are receiving.”

¹ See Appendix I.

² See Appendix I.

³ In a military-led coup on November 1, 1963, Diem had been removed from office and then assassinated along with his brother.

“God damn it, Bertie, you sound just like John McCone,”⁴ he growled. “Have you been talking to him on the phone, or something?” I replied that I had not and to his next question I replied that I had not discussed my views with Secretary McNamara, either. He gave me a direct order to do so as soon as I reported to work. I asked if I could get someone to drive me back to the apartment building where I had parked my car to which he replied, “Sure, sure. Just get somebody to get a limo for you when you get downstairs.”

As I was leaving, he stopped me and said, “You know something, Bertie? I always wondered why Jack spent so much time talking to you. You’re smarter than I thought. You like to just analyze everything, don’t you? Well, let me tell you something. Don’t get too smart for your britches. I promise you’ll regret it. And one other thing. Don’t you ever, ever leave the country again without my personal approval. Never. Ever. Now you go on back home. I’ve got work to do.”

The Marine guard at the entrance gave my little travel bag to my driver who drove me in silence to the garage where I had left my MG. My driver insisted that he place it in the trunk for me and had the decency to blush when I told him, “Fine. Just open it up – it’s not locked. The car’s not locked either. Would you like to look in there, too?” He shook his head and said, “I’m sorry, sir. I was just following orders. It’s not personal, sir. Oh, and sir – I was instructed to tell you that your limo privileges remain in force but you are requested not use the service when reporting for normal duty at the Pentagon. Treasury will reimburse you for the use of your private vehicle.”

He turned and started to get back in the limo when I called out to him, “What’s your name?”

“Gerald, sir. Gerald Brown.”

“Are you armed, Gerald?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Did you have orders to take me back to the White House, by force if necessary, if you found something in the trunk of my car?”

“Yes, sir”.

“What specifically were you told to look for?”

“A small suitcase or traveling bag or anything else containing documents. Sir, you know I’m not supposed to be telling you this.”

“Gerald, I haven’t heard a word you’ve said. Have a good evening.”

⁴ Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

I was too tired to go somewhere and try to find something to eat so I just drove back to my apartment. The apartment building was owned by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) and occupancy was restricted to very high ranking government employees or elected officials, diplomats, etc. The building was extremely secure and the elevator from the garage (which one could only enter with a personal security code) would stop only in the main lobby. In fact, the elevator had just two buttons on the control panel – a red one for emergencies and a black one. Pressing the black one simply took you to wherever the elevator was programmed to take you and if you got into the elevator on the garage level, it would only take you to the building's lobby. When the elevator doors opened in the lobby - about ten feet away from the desk of the 'conciierge' (actually an armed Secret Service agent) - he would greet you cordially and send you on to your floor. In light of everything that had happened since I left for Rome and especially in light of the events of this evening, I wasn't quite sure what to expect but I got only a "Ah! Good evening, sir. Good to see you back. You're looking fit and tanned. I hope you had a pleasant vacation. Is there anything that you would like us to do for you? Your mail's upstairs on your desk."

My apartment had been assigned to me by President Kennedy but its two bedrooms, 2½ baths and separate living room, dining room and study were ridiculous for a single person. Never-the-less, it now felt like home and I was happy to be back. I heated up a can of soup to appease my growling stomach and then went into the study to look at my mail. There wasn't very much – I have no family. My father was killed in a car accident and although my mother is still (barely) alive, she is in a Baltimore nursing home with terminal-stage Alzheimer's and recognizes no one. Besides a couple of minor bills, most of the rest of the mail consisted of Embassy invitations to Christmas and New Year's Eve parties. Properly vetted and eligible bachelors are difficult to find in Washington so I get lots of invitations to Embassy functions. I had no plans whatever for Christmas or New Year's Eve so I saved a few invitations to look at more closely in the morning.

I went into the living room and plopped down on my favorite chair to think. I was profoundly puzzled by the rapidity with which Johnson had approved NSAM 273 which was so clearly counter to NSAM 263 which Kennedy had approved. It was a radical change of policy. What was so puzzling was that Secretaries Rusk and McNamara – at a bare minimum – would have had to sign off on it before Johnson's official approval. How could he have possibly persuaded them to accept something so radically different from the existing policy as laid down in NSAM 263 and do it so

incredibly fast? It usually takes many weeks – a month or more, even – to get everybody to sign off on a major policy shift like this. Then I had a thought that so stunned me that I was literally paralyzed for a few seconds. What if Johnson had *already* lined up the support of McNamara and Rusk? The implications of that were bone chilling. I was already personally convinced that LBJ was the organizing force behind the assassination of Kennedy but if Johnson had already lined up the support of McNamara, Rusk, and McGeorge Bundy (who wrote the draft) as well as, perhaps, some other high Administration officials, it would mean that there was a whole cabal who knew the assassination was imminent and were complicit in it. There had to be some other explanation. I couldn't think of one at the moment but surely it would come to me.⁵ I decided to clear my mind by focusing on more mundane concerns.

I didn't know whether I had been followed when I drove back to the apartment but I had to assume that I had been. I also had to assume that my apartment was bugged and that I would have a 'tail' on me no matter where I went. I was pretty sure that Johnson was almost certain that I had taken my 'insurance policy' documents with me when I went to Italy but he was going to track me closely on the off chance that I hadn't. Being constantly followed was no way to lead a life and I wasn't having it. There had to be a way to get out of such constant surveillance and I was determined to figure out a way to do it. In the meantime, I would have some fun and a certain amount of satisfaction in fooling my keepers. I've always enjoyed challenges – the non-deadly ones, anyway. I undressed, unstrapped Excalibur,⁶ put it on my bedside table and took a leisurely shower. I set the alarm for 5:30 a.m. which is when I normally wake up naturally but my body was still on Italian time. I slept like a log until it rang.

McNamara usually got in to the office around 6:30 in the morning and I used my secure phone⁷ to call him. When his assistant answered, she greeted me cheerfully but said that Secretary McNamara was going to be completely tied up for the next several days. She said that she had scheduled me to meet with Deputy Secretary Gilpatric at 8:00 Monday morning. I assured her that I would be there, hung up and thought, "Wow! What a gift! I've just gotten a three-day week-end pass." I was particularly grateful because I really needed some time to think.

⁵ Unfortunately, it never has and I've thought about it for nearly 50 years. I later found that there were quite a few others who had reluctantly come to the same conclusion.

⁶ An extremely lethal Special Operations combat knife which Secretary McNamara had permitted me to have for a special self protection situation. He had probably forgotten about it by now. See Book One.

⁷ Issued by the White House Communications Agency to allow secure communications.

Two Encounters

Delighted with the unexpected freedom, I decided I would go have a magnificent breakfast at the nearby diner that I knew of and which had become one of my favorite places to get a casual meal. Afterwards, I'd go to my office in the West Wing to see what paperwork had accumulated during my absence. I set off for the diner feeling pretty good about things.

The diner was less crowded than I had anticipated so I grabbed an empty seat at the counter and ordered an enormous breakfast. When it came, the guy sitting next to me said, "Good God, man! How can you eat like that and still be so trim and fit?" I don't like talking to strangers so barely looking at him, I just mumbled something like, "I was really hungry this morning," and turned to my breakfast. I wasn't going to get off so easily. At least he had the decency to wait until I had finished but as soon as I laid my fork down, he stuck out his hand and said, "Hi, I'm Peter Moore, retired Navy. How 'bout you? You in the military?" I actually was a Major in the Regular Army at the time but I didn't feel like being interrogated so I lied and said,

"No, I'm just a civilian."

"You come here often? I come just about every morning because my wife, Anne, likes to sleep late but I don't recall seeing you here before."

"No, sir. I'm a pretty infrequent breakfast patron."

"Well tell me . . . aah, what did you say your name was?"

"I didn't say, sir. My name is Bertram MacFarland."

"Well, Bertram - you go by the name of Bertram?"

"Bertie, sir."

He sighed.

"Well Bertie, you're about as closed mouthed as they come so I'll stop trying to strike up a conversation. I expect you must be in Intelligence or something. Us old retired guys enjoy meeting and talking to new people – especially young ones like you – but it looks like I've struck out this morning. I'll be seeing you around."

With that, he put some money on the counter, waved and walked out. I noticed he had a slight limp.

I asked for another cup of coffee. For the life of me I couldn't put my finger on it, but there was something oddly troubling about Peter Moore. His features seemed slightly Slavic but in the melting pot of America, that meant nothing. His English was accentlessly perfect American English – colloquialisms and all. However, the

lack of a regional accent was common among career service members who, for twenty years or more, had been stationed on bases all over the globe. I decided that I was being paranoid. After all, *I* had sat down next to *him* – not the other way around. I paid up and left for the White House but I made a mental note that if I ever went there again for breakfast, *not* to sit at the counter but to try to find a booth or table.

I was relieved to see that my desk was piled pretty high with manila envelopes – most of which were stamped ‘Secret’ or ‘Top Secret.’ It looked like I was still on the distribution list. I grabbed the whole stack and turned it upside down so that I could start with the earliest documents and work my way through to the present. The first two were ‘old news’ and went straight into the shredder. The next one was something of a shocker, though. It was a memorandum for record⁸ written by John McCone, Director of the CIA, and covered a meeting in the Oval Office attended by Johnson, Secretaries Rusk, McNamara, Ball, Messrs. Bundy and McCone plus Ambassador Lodge. The subject was the South Vietnamese situation.

McCone’s view of the situation was bleak. He noted a continuing level of Viet Cong activity and attacks and expressed his considerable concern over a high level of message volume on the Viet Cong military and political networks. I found one paragraph of the memo of particular interest:

Note; I received in this meeting the first “President Johnson tone” as contrasted with the “Kennedy tone.” Johnson definitely feels that we place too much emphasis on social reforms; he has very little tolerance for our spending so much time being “do-gooders”; and he has no tolerance whatsoever with bickering and quarrelling of the type that has gone on in South Vietnam.

I was appalled to see that the rest of the ‘advisers’ had a generally optimistic view of what was going on and felt positive about the eventual outcome of the ‘war.’ However, the thing I found shocking was the *date* of the meeting – November 24, two days after Kennedy’s assassination. I had neither been invited nor informed. I re-visited my ‘cabal’ thoughts of the previous evening. Could a conspiracy of the top administration officials actually be possible? Surely, not. In any case, it was clear that I was definitely ‘out of the loop.’ None of the other documents were of major

⁸ See Johnson Library, Meeting Notes File, Meeting with Lodge and Vietnam Advisers. Secret. Drafted by McCone on November 25. The meeting was held in the Executive Office Building. Johnson describes this meeting in *The Vantage Point*, pp. 43-44.

importance so I shredded them, filed the McCone memorandum in my secure file cabinet, and went back to my apartment to reflect. It was the end of an era. Even though I remained on the daily distribution list of classified documents and reports, I was now an outsider. I was no longer going to participate in the events that made history; I was just going to be allowed to read about them. My world was falling apart in very large chunks. I desperately wanted to be free of any further government involvement of any kind but I was trapped. What was going to happen to the rest of my life?

On my way home, I decided I needed to make some changes domestically in terms of my kitchen and pantry. Heretofore, I had eaten most of my meals in the White House and although my kitchen was thoroughly stocked with all sorts of condiments and utensils courtesy of Helen⁹ (plus a second refrigerator completely filled with white wine and Champagne – also courtesy of Helen), my capacious pantry was barren except for some cans of soup and a can or two of pork and beans. I stopped at a bookstore and bought a cookbook, then went to a grocery store and picked up some staples. My home-cooked hot dog was delicious.

There was a public phone booth about a block and a half from the apartment and I used it to call Fiorina's travel agency. I was told that she had just left today for an out of town trip and would not be back until shortly after the New Year. I figured she was going to Sardinia to be with her parents for the holidays. Back in the apartment, I wrote a short note thanking her for introducing me to her parents and telling her how much I enjoyed them and my stay with them. I addressed it to her at the local travel agency. I then wrote a somewhat longer note to the Moretti's telling them how much I had enjoyed meeting them and the family and how much it had meant to me and I thanked them for their gracious hospitality. I wished them all a Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year. I added that I truly missed them. I addressed it to their home in Sardinia and put a ton of stamps on it. I did not put my return address on either envelope.

Although it was a miserable December day – temperature around 40, patchy fog, occasional spits of rain – I needed exercise so I dressed up in warm gym clothes, unstrapped Excalibur and put it in its hiding place, and then drove out to Rock Creek Park for a good long run. Being a work day (Friday) and with such miserable weather, I had the park pretty much to myself and once I had settled into the long loping stride that is so natural for me, my body lapsed into auto-pilot mode and left

⁹ See Book One

my mind completely free to think. I began to think about my forthcoming meeting with Roswell Gilpatric, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, on Monday.

Gilpatric was a interesting guy. Extremely bright, he was Phi Beta Kappa when he graduated Yale in 1928. He graduated from Yale Law School in 1931. He came from a very well-connected family and he had been a friend of Governor Nelson Rockefeller since childhood. He went to work for a prestigious New York City law firm where he later became a partner. He joined the Kennedy Administration in 1961 when Kennedy appointed him as the number 2 man in the Defense Department. Gilpatric had been Under Secretary of the Air Force from 1951 to 1953 and Kennedy wanted to make sure that McNamara had someone on his team that was intimately familiar with the way things work in Washington. McNamara and Gilpatric quickly became so close that they would often finish each other's sentences and McNamara would often start out a statement with, "Ros and I . . ." I truly enjoy interacting with bright people and though I wasn't sure how much negotiating leverage I had, I was looking forward to my meeting with Gilpatric.

I had been running for a little more than two hours and was only about 15 minutes from getting back to where I had parked my car when it happened. The impact was like running into the side of a barn and I found myself sprawled on the side of the path wondering what or who had hit me. My Army training as an Airborne Ranger with extensive additional training in Special Ops immediately took over and reflexively I went into a combat crouch. I wished I had Excalibur with me but I'm also very well trained to kill with my bare hands. My first job was to locate the enemy.

It wasn't hard. I heard a low moan from the other side of the path and saw another runner lying there with his bleeding head next to a tree trunk. It looked like both of us idiots had assumed we had the park to ourselves and had stupidly run headlong into one another because neither one of us was paying attention. I didn't seem to be hurt at all but I was concerned about the other runner. I was hoping that the blood on his head was coming from a superficial scalp wound as they are notorious for copious, but medically trivial, bleeding. I was also hoping that the head wound was the only thing he had suffered but of course, I had no idea. Quickly, but cautiously, I went to him and knelt by his side. The caution came from long training that any time there is unexpected and violent bodily contact; never assume that the other person is your friend.

"Hey, are you OK?"

[softly and muffled] “I doan know.”

“Don’t try to get up. Lie still right where you are for the moment. Can you wiggle your fingers? OK. That looks good. Now try to very slowly and gently move your feet. Just do one at a time. If you feel a sharp pain, stop immediately and tell me where it hurts most. OK, that’s good. Now the other one. Looks good. Now just keep lying there. I am going to gently probe your arms, legs and torso to see if I can feel anything broken. Tell me immediately if you feel a sharp pain. Are you still awake? Can you hear me?”

[Much more clearly, this time.] “Yes.”

I went over him pretty thoroughly. He seemed to be intact and his muscles, though firm, were not hard. I felt a lot better after discovering that. It looked like this really was an accident. The blood was starting to clot around his scalp wound and that was a relief since it indicated that he probably had not suffered a deep head wound. My principal concern now was for the integrity of his spinal column. If that were injured, he was in serious trouble. It was already near freezing and it would be getting dark soon. In 1963, cell phones hadn’t even been thought of. It was a fifteen minute run back to the car and I wasn’t sure where I could find a public phone or a gas station. Medical help would be a long time coming. I kicked myself for my stupidity.

I asked him not to move his head and said that I was going to put my hand on his neck and very gently probe the bones there. I asked him to tell me immediately if anything hurt. With great relief, I felt nothing out of the ordinary and told him so. I asked if he thought he could roll over so that he was lying on his back and said that when he did, I would help him get up. He struggled a little but made it and I helped him to his feet. He said he felt a bit woozy but he thought he was OK. I asked him to take a couple of steps back and lean against the tree while I checked his shoulders, chest, and hips. He looked at me suspiciously but did as I said. I made the pretense of checking. He wasn’t armed. Again I breathed a sigh of relief.

There was no way he was up for running but after about five minutes on the path back to the parking lot, he felt recovered enough to take his arm from around my shoulders and continue walking without help. We chatted amicably; we both apologized profusely to the other for being completely at fault for our running into one another; we exchanged names (his was Peter Boyle), occupations (he was a junior partner in a small but apparently pretty successful Washington law firm - I told him I was working with an Intelligence group in the Pentagon), and marital status (he was but no children yet). He expressed surprise that I was not a

physician and wanted to know how I seemed to know so well what to do when I was checking on his condition and when I told him that I had taken a bunch of pre-med courses at Duke when I was considering going on to medical school, he laughed and told me, “You CIA guys have an answer for everything, don’t you?” I think he was a little taken aback at the sharpness of my reply emphasizing that I was definitely *not* a CIA employee.

We found we had a number of interests in common: he was fascinated by mathematics (in which I had a degree), we both were passionate about protecting wilderness areas and wildlife, we both loved music – classical, jazz, (we both thought Stan Kenton and Julie Christie were nothing short of fantastic) - we both loved reading and in short, for the first time in a very long time, I thought that maybe I could have a friend that wasn’t put off by my inability to discuss details of my post-university past. It seemed promising, anyway. Just before we got to the parking area, where the eponymous Rock Creek flows under a small wooden bridge across the path, I told Peter that maybe we should do a little cosmetic repair and he followed me down to the creek where I untied my sweat band and used part of it as a wash cloth and the remainder as a towel to get the dried blood off his face and neck.. I didn’t want his wife, Sally, to faint when he came in the house. When we got to the parking area, I used the pencil and pad that I always keep in the glove box to swap phone numbers and after his strong assurances that he was OK to drive, I asked him to please call me and if I wasn’t there, to please leave a message on my machine confirming that he had arrived home safely.

When I got home there was already a message on my machine. It was Sally confirming that Peter was fine but tired, and thanking me for taking such good care of him. She also invited me for dinner at their house Saturday evening of the next week. Since my return from the Soviet Union, it was the first time I had ever received an invitation to a private dinner from anyone except Jack and Bobby Kennedy and Kenney O’Donnell. I was exhilarated. I was in such a festive mood that after returning the phone call to accept and showering and cleaning up, I eschewed the opportunity to have the second home-cooked hot dog for the day and went to the diner for dinner.

A Little Chat with Ros

I was almost late for my meeting with Secretary Gilpatric at the Pentagon. When you are in the back seat of a White House limo (which up until then had been my usual mode of travel in Washington), you tend not to pay very much attention to the route being taken to your destination and you certainly have no need to know where

people park their cars. Not knowing exactly which lane you need to be in while driving in the ferocious Washington rush-hour traffic is hazardous, to say the least, but on the bright side, there were a whole lot of drivers who got to test their car's hooter to make sure it worked properly. Parking was a nightmare. I couldn't find where they had hidden the Visitor's Parking (if such even existed) and I wound up parking in an area that I think was reserved for flag-grade officers (Generals and Admirals). I figured – 'The hell with it. If I wind up getting a ticket or getting towed, I'll get Bob (McNamara) or Secretary Gilpatric to sort it out.' It was a good thing that it was a bitter cold day because I was running full out to get to the River Entrance to the Pentagon. I arrived in Secretary Gilpatric's outer office slightly breathless but right on time. I was in a foul mood, though. The traffic and parking problems had seriously annoyed and frustrated me but what made me truly angry was that no matter what I said, Gilpatric could simply order me to work in Defense Planning. I felt at a terrible disadvantage and as a result, I'm afraid I had an Attitude when I met him. It wasn't a great way to start a meeting with Bob's *alter ego*.

I was ushered in immediately.

He greeted me warmly, as if we were old friends.

"Bertie, Bertie. Come on in and make yourself comfortable. For once, I actually get to speak to you. I don't know how many meetings we've been in together but you never spoke a word, never changed the expression on your face, never made eye contact with anyone – and then you left immediately after the meeting was over. Jack told Bob and me more than once that he absolutely treasured the one page synopsis and analysis that you would give him after those meetings. He never let anyone see them though. Mac Bundy¹⁰ got pretty steamed about that once but Jack told him that he had given you his word and he wasn't about to break it. He thought the world of you, you know."

"Thank you for saying so, sir. I know I certainly thought the world of him."

"Well, let's not dwell on it. It's painful for us both but I truly don't understand why Lyndon doesn't want you to continue in that capacity. Just between the two of us, in my opinion he needs you a hell of a lot more in that role than Jack ever did. What's he got against you? He sure doesn't like you – I'm sure you know that – but sometimes both Bob and I get the impression that somehow he's a little afraid of you. What's going on between you two?"

¹⁰ McGeorge Bundy, the National Security Advisor.

When I replied, “I’m sure I don’t know, sir,” I didn’t mean for it to come out sounding so defiant and hostile, but it did.

He stared hard at me and said:

“OK, that’s it, Bertie. If you want to play hardball, we can do that – but I’ll win – and you know it. I’m not stupid, you know. I know damned well you’re going through all this formality and closed-mouth crap just to annoy me. Well guess what. It worked and I’m damned annoyed and that’s a dumb way for you to start this discussion. Now how do you want to continue?”

I felt like a complete idiot and said so.

“You’re right of course and it *was* dumb on my part. Ros... May I call you Ros?”

“Of course. If you could call the former President and his wife by their first names, call the Attorney General ‘Bobby’ and my boss ‘Bob’, you can sure as hell call me ‘Ros’. Now get on with it.”

“Ros, I know the President – and incidentally, I don’t call him ‘Lyndon’ any longer – wants me to work in Defense Planning and I guess Bob does too but I have to tell you that I desperately don’t want to do that. I know that you can order me to and if you do, I have no recourse. I feel like a bear backed into a corner with a gun pointing at me. Please don’t pull the trigger just yet.”

“Tell me why you don’t want to work with us.”

“Because I don’t want any part of sending Americans into a war that we have no hope of winning. Since Johnson is an incredibly wily politician, I feel sure that he won’t really turn up the heat on Vietnam until after next year’s election – which I’m sure he’ll win unless the Republicans can come up with another Eisenhower – but after that, I feel certain that he’ll throw everything we’ve got at the North Vietnamese.”

“Well, that’s speculation on your part, Bertie; but I don’t deny that I agree with you – and of course I never said that.”

“I appreciate your confiding in me, sir.... uh, Ros. As you know, I’m very good at keeping secrets.”

“The understatement of the year. Keep going. Why are you so pessimistic about the war?”

“Well, for one thing, I’ve talked to the *people*. When President Kennedy sent me over there with a translator – the son of a very prominent and respected Vietnamese family - we talked to the village elders in villages all the way from the Delta in the south to almost the demarcation line between North and South Vietnam in the north. As far as the villagers are concerned, they have no problem with the reunification of North and South Vietnam – all they want is to be left alone

to tend their farms. After all, their experience so far with the South Vietnamese government has been a true disaster for them. As you know, the peasants (who are the vast majority of the population) are 80-90% Buddhist. When Diem took over the government of South Vietnam in the fraudulent plebiscite (Diem got more votes in the Saigon province than there were residents, for example) in 1955, he confiscated almost all of the peasants' land – particularly in the fertile Delta - and gave it to his wealthy patrons. His patrons then charged the peasants exorbitant rents to farm and live on their own land. On top of that, Diem was a fanatically devoted Catholic.

“In 1959, the son-of-a-bitch dedicated the entire country to the Virgin Mary. Do you know that the Catholic Church ‘owned’ 1,500 square kilometers of land and was the largest land owner in South Vietnam? Army officers and public officials were required to convert to Catholicism to gain employment or be promoted. All this is in a country that is 80-90% Buddhist, for God’s sake! And who is propping up the government in South Vietnam? The U.S. – another ‘Christian’ nation. How can we possibly think that the South Vietnamese *people* would support armed aggression by a cabal like that against their brothers to the north? It’s so unreal that honestly, sometimes I think I’m living in some sort of alternate universe. How can everyone just ignore reality?”

He looked at me intently, then sighed and said, “Well, well. So the stone-faced Bertie can be passionate after all. Well, you’ve won that one, Bertie. Putting you into Defense Planning would be equivalent to Bob and me poisoning their water supply or something. My guess is that if you were assigned to the Department, within 48 hours you’d have nearly everybody in there either quitting or begging for re-assignment. So before I ask you what the hell we’re going to do with you, tell me why you don’t think the repercussions of withdrawing our support for South Vietnam would not lead to a Communist take-over of the entire region – including Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia – to name a few. Be quick. I’ve got to throw you out of here in ten minutes. I’ve got another meeting coming up.”

“I’m not suggesting that we completely withdraw our support for South Vietnam, Ros. We can train their Army; we can provide them with tanks, airplanes, equipment and all that sort of thing; we can give them money, etc., but the bottom line is that if they are not willing to sacrifice their own lives to preserve their national identity, goals and government then I’m damned if I can see why we should sacrifice the lives of *American* men and women to do so. We can give the Viets all the help in the world but if they aren’t willing to shoulder the burden themselves – with our support in every way other than putting the lives of

Americans on the line – the eventual outcome is a foregone conclusion. I think we have to remember that it is only the ruling elite and their wealthy patrons who are so anxious to preserve the distinction between North and South Vietnam. *They* are the ones that have everything to lose by the re-unification of Vietnam – not the peasants who are the *people* of the country. And if that reunification happens and the surrounding countries are not willing to take up the cudgel themselves to keep Communism out – there's not a damn thing we can do about it.

“I think we are in a war of ideology here. I think our system of government – democracy and individual freedom and free enterprise, etc. – is vastly preferable to the kind of controlled Communist governments that currently exist and that over time, those governments will crumble under the weight of overwhelming popular discontent. But *until* that happens, it's going to be a very bumpy ride. Life is like that. But in the long term, even the Genghis Kahn's of the world eventually fade from view.”

He stared at me and eventually said, “I think that's overly simplistic and somewhat naïve, but then you personally are not naïve and God knows you're not simple so I'll have to think about it.” He continued, “I'll be honest with you, Bertie. I don't think I like you very much but you have definitely earned my respect. I don't know *who* could control you besides Jack. I wish I could fire you but you don't work for the Department of Defense – you work directly for the President, who warned me incidentally that this might be a tough interview. He also made it very clear that you were going to stay directly under his orders in some capacity or another. That sort of limits everybody's options. I wish to hell I knew what is going on between you two. Anyway, get out of here. Bob or I will be in contact when we've decided what the next step should be. In the meantime, feel free to amuse yourself at the government's expense.”

He did shake my hand when I left, though.

I was relieved to find that my little MG was still parked where I had left it. I drove home in something of a funk though. I thought that Ros' parting comment about using my free time to amuse myself at the government's expense was kind of a cheap shot. Where was he when I was being tortured in Lubyanka? I'd paid my dues. I decided that I didn't like *him* very much either. The more I thought about that parting shot, the angrier I became.

Christmas in Washington

When I got back home the morning mail had just arrived and there was yet another bundle of Embassy invitations to Christmas and New Year's Eve parties. They were from just about every country I could think of but the ones I was most interested in were the ones from the Scandinavian, French, Italian and British Embassies. There was one from the Soviet Embassy which was personally signed by my friend, Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin, and I thought about it for a long time before deciding not to accept. I knew that I would be seated at the head table, perhaps even next to the Ambassador and that he would provide me with a beautiful dinner companion but I thought that my appearance for the second time as a mystery guest would set too many tongues wagging and attract far too much attention to me personally. I responded with a hand-written note to be delivered to Ambassador Dobrynin personally offering my sincerest thanks and explaining why I thought it best not to accept. I thanked him again for his previous hospitality and sent my best wishes for a happy holiday season and a healthy and happy New Year. I also declined the invitations to both the White House Christmas party and the White House New Year's Eve gala. I didn't want to be anywhere near Lyndon Johnson if he decided to stay in Washington rather than to go his Texas ranch for the holidays. I didn't know where he was going to be but I wasn't going to risk it.

In all, I accepted six invitations – Denmark, Sweden, Norway, England, France and Italy. On top of that, I was looking forward to having dinner at the Boyle's on Saturday. With no family and no personal friends in Washington (I had high hopes for the Boyle's, though), the holiday season always tends to be pretty depressing for me. I hoped to meet some interesting people at the Embassy parties and vowed not to repeat the experiences I had had following the last two Embassy parties I had attended. As usual, I left my responses with the concierge. I wanted everyone to feel that as far as I was concerned, life was going on as normal – and I normally left my outgoing mail with the concierge. They would find nothing strange about mail addressed to Embassies accepting invitations to parties or a check being mailed to Brooks Brothers. The notes to the Moretti's would be dropped in a public mailbox.

I spent most of the rest of the week working out, reading up about the recently formed DIA in the classified section of the Library of Congress, and reading about cooking in *Joy of Cooking*. I began to understand why it was such a popular cookbook. It not only is full of recipes, it instructs you on *how* to cook, mistakes to avoid, etc. I tried some of the simpler recipes and they mostly turned out pretty well. My pantry and my refrigerator were starting to look a lot less bare.

My first Embassy party was on Friday and though it was enjoyable, a young lady had attached herself to me like a leech within 15 minutes of my arrival and I simply could not shake her off. She was very attractive and very intelligent, a good conversationalist, well-read on a variety of subjects, had a charming laugh – so what was not to like? Maybe I misread it but my antennae were picking up what seemed to me to be strong signals of wanting to explore establishing a serious relationship. No way. She was definitely not happy when towards the end of the evening I gave her a hug, a peck on the cheek, wished her a wonderful Christmas, and left. I would have been happy to enjoy a casual one-night stand but I don't think that's at all what she had in mind. I was *not* going down the relationship path again.

By contrast, the dinner the next evening with Peter and Sally Boyle was a pure delight and an unmitigated success. My favorite kind of evening is having spirited, fascinating discussions on all sorts of topics with good friends while having a great meal washed down with good wine. That's exactly the kind of evening I had with the Boyle's. They both greeted me like a long-time friend and I felt relaxed and truly comfortable right away. Sally again thanked me profusely for having taken such good care of Peter and Peter thanked me as well. He commented that he was absolutely sure I had some kind of medical background hidden somewhere in my past but he and Sally both understood that they couldn't pry. We all had a martini before dinner and were all chatting animatedly when we sat down to Sally's magnificent *Boef Bourguignon*. I had brought along a bottle of really good Bordeaux and it was a perfect compliment to the meal. Peter talked about some interesting cases he was working on for his law firm; Sally, a Wellesley College graduate was teaching Art History at American University; I talked about my love of opera and a number of books that I had read recently. We all got so wrapped up in the endless conversational trails which we had embarked on that when I looked at my watch and saw that it was almost 1:00 in the morning, I gasped and said, "Oh, Lord! Talk about overstaying your welcome! I had no idea it was so late. I haven't had the opportunity to just talk to real people for so long that I totally lost track of time. I'm really sorry. I promise you that if you ever consent to get together again, I'll be much more observant of the time."

Sally told me not to be silly and they were enjoying themselves so much that they had no more idea of the time than I had. She said that both she and Peter truly looked forward to the next time we could all get together and when Peter heartily affirmed the sentiment, I felt infinitely better. As I was leaving, I told Sally I had

this vague feeling that I had either met her or seen her before but I couldn't imagine where or when. She gave me a hug and a kiss on the cheek and said, "Well, I don't know who the lucky girl is or was but I can assure you that it wasn't me. I drove home feeling I had made two really good friends.

I got luckier on the 23rd and 24th. Neither woman was looking for anything more than a casual good time. The astonishingly good-looking aide to the Ambassador of Italy (Sergio Fenoaltea) who came home with me on the 24th didn't have anywhere to go on Christmas Day either so was happy to stay. I think it was the first time ever she had not spent Christmas with her family in Italy so we both consoled each other as best we knew how. She insisted on fixing brunch the next morning and she turned out to be a really good cook. She was less than thrilled by the 'Italian' ingredients she found in the pantry but gave me the name and address of a grocery store in Washington that sold *authentic* Italian products. She also gave me the name of two Italian restaurants that she said served 'acceptable' Italian meals.

Brunch was wonderful and we chatted amiably until 2:00 or so. We decided to go for a stroll in the nearby park so we could stretch our legs and get a breath of fresh air and we both welcomed the clear skies and cold air. I wasn't quite sure what to talk about but tried to tell her – in the sketchy Italian that I had picked up in Sardinia – what a beautiful country I thought Italy was. She laughed and told me that my Italian was terrible and on top of that, I seemed to have a kind of Sardinian accent. I told her of my recent visit to Sardinia and she asked me which hotel I had stayed in. When I told her that I had actually stayed with a Sardinian family, she became truly interested. She of course asked what family and where they lived. I told her that I didn't have the family's permission to tell her that and all that I could tell her was that they lived in a little town close to the coast south of Cagliari.

There was no reaction so I thought the subject was finished when suddenly she gasped and said, "Oh, no! You couldn't have. No. It's not possible. He receives no one except his family." I asked her what the hell she was talking about but it was as though she didn't hear me. She mused, "*Perhaps* it's possible. The White House limo, the enormous apartment, the controlled elevator system . . ." She stopped, grabbed my hand, looked up to me and said, "Bertie, you must be a very, *very* important man. I doubt that even my boss, Ambassador Fenoaltea, could get an audience with Don Moretti. And you were his *house guest*? I'm suddenly a little scared of you, Bertie." Now I was getting a little scared, too. I told her I didn't know what she was talking about and that I wasn't going to tell her who I stayed with and it was none of her business anyway – I was just trying to make casual

conversation. I also told her that it would be a betrayal of my host's hospitality to mention his name when he had never given me permission to do so – not that I would ever have asked for it. I told her that I was starting to get seriously pissed off (and I definitely was).

She looked at me intently then said softly, "You really don't know who he is, do you, Bertie? He is an Italian national hero and has received our country's highest honor for his bravery in World War II where he fought against the Nazis. He is also one of the richest and most powerful men in Italy, perhaps in all of Europe. He has chosen to totally isolate himself from everyone except his family. I don't know why. He only communicates through his law firm in Rome. How could you possibly have been his house guest?" Now I was getting really scared. I told her I didn't know what she was talking about but if I *had* been the house guest of someone that rich and powerful and then betrayed his confidence, I didn't give myself much of a chance to be walking around for very long. She again looked at me intently before she said, "You are quite right, Bertie. *Nobody* betrays Don Moretti and lives very long to tell of it. But you have not even spoken his name. That gives me deep respect for you. I will say nothing of our conversation, not even to my own mother. My family is from Naples. We know how to recognize a brother. Your secret – which I truly think you didn't even know was a secret – is completely safe with me." I hoped so. I had no idea that Don Moretti was anything other than the very wealthy, very reclusive father of Fiorina. I assumed that he and Mama had treated me so kindly because it was his daughter who had invited me to stay with the family. I had no idea he was so powerful and such a legend. It was almost spooky somehow.

I was relieved to put my companion in a cab to go home after dinner.

I went into the office around 11:00 the next morning. Not too much had accumulated on my desk but there were two items that really caught my attention. The first was a memorandum from McNamara to Johnson¹¹ dated December 21st. He had just come back from a trip to Saigon that Johnson had unexpectedly signed him up for. His analysis of the current situation there was as pessimistic as I had ever seen him admit to. The second¹² was from John McCone, Director of the CIA which had been drafted on the 21st but delivered on the 23rd. It was equally pessimistic. I was ecstatic. Then my secure phone rang. I wondered who in the

¹¹ Johnson Library, National Security File, Vietnam Country File, Memos and Misc. Secret.

¹² Johnson Library, National Security File, Vietnam Country File, Memos and Misc. Secret.

Administration was still talking to me. It was Bob McNamara. He was curt and to the point.

“Well Bertie, I suppose you know that you have totally pissed off the President of the United States.”

“I’m sorry, Bob. But I don’t think we ought to do anything in Vietnam other than what Jack had planned and I don’t want to participate in sending Americans into a situation where some will surely die or be seriously wounded in a conflict that we can not possibly win.”

“That’s not your call, Bertie. However, Ros and I agree that putting you into Defense Planning would be worse than putting a fox in the hen house. God *damn* it, Bertie! I did *not* want to have to explain that to the President. But I did and he reluctantly concurs. Bertie, I don’t know what the hell is going on between you two but he’s *not* going to let you go. So what do you want to do?”

“I’d like to speak to General Carroll, Bob.”¹³

There was a long pause and then a sigh. He said, “Ros and I thought you were going to say that. I’ve got to talk to Carroll about you first. He’s got to know what he’s getting into – even just talking to you. You could probably be one of his best assets but you come with a lot of baggage. He’s got to know that up front.”

“Thanks, Bob. God, I hope the New Year is better for us all.”

“Me, too. I’ll be in touch.”

I went to another Embassy party on Saturday. I politely eschewed the after-party opportunities so clearly outlined to me by my dinner partner. New Year’s Eve at the Swedish Embassy was a whole different deal, though.

¹³ LTG. Joseph F. Carroll, the first Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)

Chapter 2 – The Swiss Connection

Emma and Joe

I don't know what it is about winter in Washington, DC. The seemingly unending succession of grey, disagreeable, gloomy cold winter days is wearing and depressing. It was definitely *cold* on December 31, 1963 – I think the *high* was below freezing and it was supposed to drop down much lower later on - but I've been in ski resorts in winter when the temperature was well below *zero* but somehow under those sparkling blue skies the feeling was one of exhilaration – not of cold. Washington's depressing damp cold penetrates right through to your bones and the feeling you get is the antithesis of exhilaration – it's just dreary.

I was enjoying the comfortable warmth inside the limo taking me to the Swedish Embassy and while the transit time from the limo to the entrance to the Embassy was mercifully brief, it still felt good to get inside. The Embassy was full of flowers, alive with the noise of happy people conversing in dozens of languages and alight with the soft glow of candles. I was relaxed and looking forward to the evening. I couldn't help contrasting my present feelings to the extreme tension and stress which I was under when I had arrived at *last* year's New Year's Eve party - at the Soviet Embassy. What a difference. My mission at the Soviet Embassy party had been to introduce myself to Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin and inform him that Soviet KGB agents were trying to kill me – and that President Kennedy would be *personally* grateful if the Ambassador would intervene. I started to reflect on all the things that had happened since that last New Year's Eve and then stopped myself. I was starting to get gloomy and depressed thinking of everything that had happened during those following 365 days. I took a deep breath and tried to put all those thoughts aside. The past can't be undone. All we can do is to keep moving forward as best we know how.

At the moment, relations between the United States and Sweden were cordial and last month both Prime Minister Tage Erlander and Prince Bertil, Duke of Halland had come to the United States to attend the funeral of President Kennedy and offer their condolences to Mrs. Kennedy. Later in the 60's the relations between the United States and Sweden would become strained to the breaking point because of Sweden's opposition to the Vietnam War and the relentless U.S. bombing (particularly of Laos and Cambodia).

I shook myself out of my unhappy funk, braced up, and wandered over to the bar. Vodka is the most popular distilled spirit in Sweden and drinking straight shots of ice-cold vodka is a common custom but a not a great idea if you want to stay reasonably sober. At official functions such as this one, I was always careful to retain a very clear head. Total abstention tends to make people avoid you but I've found that slowly sipping a vodka martini on the rocks works well. The melting ice dilutes the vodka and when it's entirely melted, you appear to be drinking straight vodka. Works for me, anyway.

I had just started surveying the crowd (how in the world can Sweden have so many beautiful women?) when I was approached by a young lady of exactly that description who introduced herself as Ingrid Lindstrom and asked if I were Mr. MacFarland. I responded that I was guilty as charged. She gave me a bright smile and said she was an assistant to Ambassador Jarring who sent his apologies for being unable to greet me personally at the moment but who would be pleased if I would join him at the head table for dinner. (A Special Assistant to the President is considered a VIP – in Washington, anyway.) I told her that I would be honored – and I was more than a little disappointed when she excused herself and said that she needed to get right back to the Ambassador's office. She said she had asked one of her best friends in the Embassy, an assistant to the Trade Minister, to introduce me around. Though I was sorry to see Ingrid leave, her friend (who introduced herself as Emma Dahlquist) was just as strikingly beautiful. Additionally, she had a sharp intellect, a wonderful sense of humor, and was a delightfully charming dinner companion. After dinner, when the New Year had been duly rung in and toasted and the Swedish National Anthem sung, I asked Emma if she were staying or if she would like a ride home. When we got in the limo and I asked for her address, she asked if I would like her to stay with me for the night. I told her I thought it was a terrific idea.

Emma and I got along easily and comfortably and I saw her frequently after that. There was no real romantic involvement. We were just good friends who slept together occasionally. I had been mildly surprised when she told me that Ambassador Jarring was being re-assigned and was leaving Washington January 3. I didn't think much about it - Ambassadors are always being re-assigned – until she told me *where* he was taking up his next post. On January 25, 1964 Ambassador Gunnar Jarring took up his new post – in Moscow, as the Swedish Ambassador to the Soviet Union. That's a hell of a transition – going directly from being the Ambassador to the U.S. to being the Ambassador to its most powerful enemy. I had

to wonder very much what was behind such a re-assignment.¹ Emma was distressed because Jarring had asked Ingrid (her best friend) to join his new staff in Moscow and Ingrid had accepted.

On Monday, January 6, I was just getting ready to leave for the Pentagon gym when my security phone rang. It was General Carroll on the phone and he was brief and to the point. He said, "Bertie, there will be an unmarked regular Army staff car, not a limo Bertie, that will pick you up outside your apartment building at 11:30 this morning. He will drive you to a secure location where we will have lunch and discuss things. Any questions?" "No sir, General. I'll be outside at 11:30," I replied and before I could add "Thank you, sir" the line went dead. I decided to go to the White House to work out. It was much closer. While I was there, I scanned through the papers that were on my desk. Nothing really interesting. They all went into the shredder.

After the CIA-directed Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961, Kennedy set about a complete review and overhaul of all the government's intelligence gathering services. He had fired the previous head of the CIA – Allan Dulles – and replaced him with John McCone. The military side was a mess beyond belief, however. Not only did the Department of Defense itself have an intelligence arm, every single military branch *within* the Department of Defense had its *own* intelligence gathering service. There was massively wasteful duplication of effort; sometimes the internal agencies were working at cross purposes; nobody talked to anybody else; and each of these entities jealously and fiercely guarded its own turf. Trying to get them all coalesced under one command was going to be a mammoth task – demanding a long and successful track record of running a military intelligence operation at the highest level as well as past demonstration of superb diplomatic skills. Kennedy decided that Joe Carroll was just the man and in 1961 appointed him as the first Director of the newly formed Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA).

I was nervous but excited when promptly at 11:30, an unmarked, non-descript, late model car pulled up to the entrance of the apartment building and an Air Force sergeant leaned over and rolled down the passenger side window to ask if I were Mr. MacFarland. When I confirmed that to be the case he simply said, "Hop in the back, sir," and off we went. I'd learned my lesson about not paying any attention to

¹ Although at this point there was not an outright rupture of Swedish-American relations, the storm was strongly brewing and there would not be another Swedish Ambassador to the United States until the end of the Vietnam War in 1974 when Count Wilhelm Hans Fredrik Wachtmeister took up the post. He would remain in the post for almost 15 years.

the route the driver was taking and I was puzzled by the fact that the road that we were on led to no government facility that I was aware of. I was further puzzled when we turned off the main road into an attractive residential area but I quickly lost my bearings as the driver wove us through a succession of similar-looking residential streets. Finally, we pulled up to a secluded estate entrance that was blocked by a handsome but formidable wrought iron gate. There was no signage, no street number – nothing to tell you where you were – much less what might be behind the gate. The driver picked up a hand-held radio that had been on the seat beside him, mumbled something into it, and the huge gate silently swung open. As soon as we had cleared it, I watched out the rear window as it immediately began to close again. I froze as I spotted something that could not possibly be seen from the street. Nestled up to the impenetrable perimeter hedge-camouflaged wall was a small guard house with a heavily armed Marine standing in the doorway. Anybody trying to quickly sneak in while the gate was briefly opened wasn't going to get very far.

As we drew up to the front door of a stately Georgian-style brick house, the front door was opened and two armed Marine guards exited and while one held the car door open for me, the other observed me closely from the top of the steps. “What is this place and what the hell is going on,” I wondered. I was met at the top of the steps by a three star Air Force General who introduced himself with a genial, “Hey, Bertie. I'm Joe Carroll. Good to meet you. Come on in and let's get something to eat.” I followed him into a small but elegant dining room where two places were laid at the table. Somebody closed the door behind us as we sat down. “General Carroll”, I began when he interrupted me and said,

“Let's start off being friends. Call me Joe, Bertie.”

“Thank you, sir. Joe, what is this place?”

“It's a CIA safe house and the Agency has kindly let me borrow a small piece of it for a few hours. Bertie, I'm on a pretty tight schedule so I hope you don't mind that I took the liberty of ordering lunch for the two of us. I hope you like seafood. The chef here does a wonderful Bay scallop dish.”

He continued:

“When I got a call from Ros recounting the discussion that the two of you had and telling me that you had told Bob that you wanted to speak to me, my first reaction was to ‘run for the hills.’ You have to know that you have a very mixed reputation around here, Bertie. Jack loved you, Lyndon hates you, Bob likes you,

Ros does not, Rusk² and McCone seem to be fairly neutral. A lot of people are scared of you and want no part of you. What made me even *consider* talking to you though is the fact that everyone you have ever dealt with, whether they like you or not, has real respect for you. Your reputation includes being exceptionally bright – which is good of course but at this level of the government, there are quite a lot of exceptionally bright people running around. There’s other stuff like a reputation for being fair and impartial but the one thing that everybody gives you credit for is being unbreakably, unbendably honest. ‘If Bertie said it – then that’s the deal.’ Not that you could never make a mistake, obviously everyone makes mistakes now and again, but that’s where the exceptionally bright part comes in. Nobody that I’ve talked to, and believe me, I’ve talked to a lot of people, could recall a specific instance in which you were mistaken. No wonder you scare people. There’s something else, however.”

At this point, there was a discrete knock at the door and two waiters came in bearing lunch. I remember the taste of those Bay scallops to this day.

Between mouthfuls, Joe continued.

“As I was going to say before we were so delightfully interrupted, you have one characteristic Bertie, which makes you uniquely valuable to me. Officially, you don’t exist. It’s true. As far as records go, you have never been an employee of the U.S. Government. The only time you were ever employed in a government position, you were employed by the CIA. When the CIA swapped you for one of their other assets, they simply destroyed all your records. I personally asked John McCone to get someone to do a top to bottom search of their records and McCone phoned me to say that the Agency has no record anywhere of you ever being one of its employees. You’re an Army officer in the Regular Army but you’re not assigned to any unit and you’re not paid by the Department of the Army – you’re paid by Treasury out of the President’s discretionary fund. You’re not in the phone book, your personal telephone line is not only unlisted, it belongs to the GSA – as does your apartment, furniture, etc. You have no family. You just don’t exist. We’re meeting here because I don’t ever want us to be seen together – not even by my secretary and closest staff. So welcome to the DIA, Bertie. From now on, you will report only to me – and to the President of course, when he orders it. Day after tomorrow we will meet here again for lunch so that I can brief you on the arrangements that are being made for your transfer to Switzerland and what your future duties will be.

² Dean Rusk, Secretary of State

We will probably have to meet here on a few more occasions as arrangements progress. Any questions?”

“Yes, sir. Why Switzerland? I’m sure you know I speak French. Would France work?”

“I’m afraid not. Switzerland is neutral and stable; it has a freely convertible currency; and the cover company you’re going to work for – Investors Overseas Services – has its headquarters there. France is not neutral; because Vietnam was a French colony for so many years DeGaulle is still trying to influence our policy there and although last year Algeria became independent of France, French troops are still in Algeria and tensions between the two nations are high. Lastly, the French Franc is not freely convertible which would make our financial dealings with you next to impossible. Any more questions?”

“Just one. You said that a lot of people are scared of me. Why?”

“You don’t form close friendships with anybody Bertie. Nobody can read you. You move in the highest circles of power. Maybe scared is a little too strong – although I think not. The very best spin I can put on it is that you make people uncomfortable. They don’t want to be involved with you because they don’t know how to interact with you. Oh, yes. One more thing. I don’t think anyone feels in any personal danger whatsoever from you, but your exploits in Washington and in Vietnam are the stuff of legend. Just knowing that you can and have done things like that makes people a little shy of getting on your wrong side. Best to just leave you alone and try to stay out of your way.”

“OK, well I asked. What are my duties in the meantime? What am I supposed to be doing?”

“Whatever you want to. Just make sure that you stay out of trouble and don’t get your name in the newspapers or anything. I know you’ve been using the Pentagon gym a lot lately and if we happen to meet in the hall or even in the gym, there will be no sign of recognition from either of us. You are going to have the deepest, most unbreakable cover that I can imagine because your very existence is totally deniable as far as the government is concerned. Now, I have some things to do and I believe your car is outside waiting for you. He’ll pick you up at 11:30 on Wednesday.”

Knowing that ‘officially’ you don’t exist is a pretty depressing feeling. It seemed to me that I’d done more than the average bear in the service of my country – where I now didn’t officially exist. I’d spent a lot of years in intensive training – language training, airborne training, Ranger training, special ops training, etc. The CIA had

betrayed me to the Soviets and left me to be tortured to death by the KGB in Lubyanka – and the KGB had very nearly succeeded. I had served as an (invaluable, according to President Kennedy) communications conduit between my government and the Soviet Union during the Cuban Missile crisis; I'd contributed heavily to getting the first nuclear test ban treaty in place (nobody else in the highest ranks of the administration had my background in advanced physics and math); I'd provided first-hand information on how the *people* of South Vietnam felt about the American presence in South Vietnam and thereby strengthened Kennedy's decision to pull out of South Vietnam; I'd been nearly killed (in Washington) by two highly trained Soviet KGB assassins; I'd been instrumental in getting the Pentagon's automated draftee assignment system working and then repairing it after that SOB Irwin Blasik sabotaged it; I'd had to assassinate – up close and personal – five people (not a pleasant thing for me to have to live with); I'd been a trusted confidant and friend of President Kennedy – and now I had been informed by the head of the DIA that my most valued quality was my lack of official existence. If I got caught and/or killed trying to carry out my assignment – absolutely no problem (for the government). Zero mess that had to be cleaned up. Whoever I was and whatever I was trying to do, it certainly didn't involve the U.S. government. I was totally deniable – and demonstrably not in the government's employ. Although I had to give General Carroll credit for being totally and brutally honest about it, I felt sad, angry, empty and exploited.

A Turning Point

Though I don't think I realized it at the time, in retrospect, this was the real turning point in my relationship with the power mongers in the government. My *loyalty* to the United States remains unwavering to this day. Although I don't think that I could have verbalized it at the time because I don't think I fully understood it then – loyalty and *support* are two different things. Loyalty is a beautiful, profoundly felt, almost indefinable thing – it's both intellectual and emotional – and some would add spiritual to that list. We are loyal to this country because it was founded on beliefs, principles, and values that we profoundly identify with. There have been countless American troops that have died *because* of an administration but I think very few, if any, gave their lives for the continuing survival *of* that administration. They gave their lives for the continuing survival of their *country*. Big difference.

Support is a whole different thing. In the United States, at any rate, successive governmental administrations take on distinctly political casts. Depending on your

ideology and beliefs, you may or may not lend your *support* to that particular administration's point of view. Hopefully however, your loyalty to our *country* remains steadfastly constant. You would be entirely justified to think that any reasonable citizen of this country would understand that. Heaven knows that I certainly should have. But I didn't, and I'm not using the excuse that I was 'just a kid' as an excuse either. The reality was that through a quirk of fate, I had been allowed to participate in a very minor way in an administration headed by a man whose ideals and vision for the country inspired me and motivated me so entirely that I completely identified him and his government with the country. There wasn't a particle of difference. I was embarrassed to realize how naïve I had been.

It was like having a bucket of ice cold water thrown in my face. I had to come to grips with the fact that I was now simply regarded as a tool. A valuable tool and irreplaceable in many respects but just a tool nonetheless. It would be regrettable if it got lost or broken but nobody was going to shed any tears over it. There was just one difference. This tool had a mind of its own and was quite capable of harming the user if mishandled. I would make that painfully clear to any user that didn't realize it. All the ground rules had just changed and I couldn't possibly predict what the ramifications were going to be of this enormous paradigm shift. Camelot had been destroyed forever but I was determined that Bertie Mac was going to rise like a phoenix from those ashes; stronger, tougher – and a whole lot wiser – than he was before.

General Carroll and I met briefly several times after the first meeting. My task was going to be to set up and run a network of DIA cells across Europe – and behind the Iron Curtain whenever that was possible. I was going to work as a Vice President in the Data Processing Division of a company called Investors Overseas Services (more familiarly known as IOS). DIA had constructed a 'legend' for me that included previous employment at IBM and Union Carbide and I was given the names of a few retirees from those companies as being the names of my bosses there. The White House would distribute a classified memorandum announcing that the President had, on compassionate grounds, regretfully accepted my resignation so that I could care for my seriously ill mother. My official connection with the President, indeed with the entire United States government, would be officially over. The only people who would know that I had not been released would be McNamara, Gilpatric, Rusk, McCone, and of course General Carroll, me and the President – who refused to let me out of his control. In addition to continuing my Army pay, I would receive a salary from IOS plus DIA would deposit a very large amount of cash in my name in an account at UBS in Geneva for my mission

expenses. Joe told me that in Europe, it was common for people to ask for a banking reference if they were contemplating doing business with you. The amount to be deposited to my account would definitely qualify me to have a personal account manager at UBS who could be called on to verify that I was a substantial client of theirs.

Joe told me that I could keep my MG if I wanted to but that I was to purchase (for cash, which wasn't at all uncommon in Europe in those days) a large Mercedes as soon as possible after my arrival in Geneva. It was important to be *seen* as a substantial citizen. He told me that it would make a lot more sense for me to sell my current MG and buy a new one when I got to Geneva as the dealer there would deal with all the registration and license plate formalities. (It was excellent advice, and I followed it.) He said that they had located a house for me which met the requirements of being both luxurious and isolated. He said that the only unfortunate part was that it was located nearer to Lausanne than Geneva but reminded me that there was no speed limit on the Autoroute (Autoroutes are major, limited access divided highways with a minimum two lanes in each direction – similar to the best of our Interstates). I asked if my security clearances would still remain in place and was told that as Special Assistant to the President it was mandatory for them to stay in place. I asked how I was supposed to communicate.

“The CIA has a safe house in Geneva. You will have a small office there. Secure communications will be left on your desk. If there are communications for you personally, you will receive a phone call purporting to be from the American Express³ office in Geneva informing you that you have a package waiting for you at their office. If you are asked when you would like to pick it up, the communication is high priority – probably from me. If you are told that you have a *large* package waiting for you, the communication is ultra-urgent and will be from the President, McNamara, Rusk or McCone. Drop whatever you're doing and get to the safe house immediately.”

“How do I reply to a secure communication?”

“You'll dictate your reply to one of the communications staff at the safe house. You are authorized to personally set the secrecy level. God knows you've read

³ In those days, long before cell phones, personal computers, email, etc. , it was common practice for American travelers to give their friends an itinerary so that they could receive mail or telegrams at the nearest appropriate American Express office. American Express at the time was probably the largest travel agency in the world and American Express Traveler's Checks were accepted almost everywhere in the world as being the equivalent of cash. Amex issued the world's first international credit card in 1950 and by 1964 the cards were accepted by every major merchant in Europe (as well as all over the United States, of course).

enough communications to be able to judge what secrecy level your communication should receive.”

“When am I leaving, Joe? I can’t stand not working. It’s driving me nuts.”

“We’re doing the best we can. We’ve got everything ready on our side but we’re still waiting on the Swiss to issue you a work permit. Not even the United States Government can make the Swiss hurry up. We think you *should* be able to leave on the 29th meaning that you will arrive in Geneva about 8:00 a.m. local time on the 30th. I’ll try to let you know a couple of days beforehand. Don’t try to pack everything, just take what you think you’ll need for the first week or so. We’ll take whatever personal effects you leave in your apartment and put it on the next military transport plane that’s going to Europe. You’ll be met at the airport in Geneva by a driver from the CIA who will take you to the safe house and acquaint you with procedures. You’ll probably want to stay overnight there.”

“I think that’s about it, Bertie. God knows when or even if we’ll see each other again but as the saying goes – we’ll be in touch. Oh yes, one last thing. On your way out of the apartment to the car that I’ll send to take you to the airport, leave your White House and Pentagon passes with the concierge. The next time you need to visit either of those buildings, you’ll be issued the appropriate temporary passes. Your apartment and your White House office will be re-assigned.”

I knew that they would be of course, but it was nonetheless hard to hear it said. Joe looked at me very carefully.

“You volunteered for it, Bertie. You asked to speak to me, not the other way around.”

“Of course you’re absolutely right, sir and I’m grateful for the assignment. It’s just that the reality, the finality, of taking this on brings home just how entirely I’ve cut myself off and isolated myself from everything I’ve ever known. I no longer have any *personal* support system whatsoever. I am now truly ‘out there’ in the cold. I’ll be honest with you, Joe. I’m scared. Also, I’m really, really tired of being lonely all the time and I think that part’s about to get even worse. Anyway, again, I’m grateful for the assignment. I give you my word, I’ll do my best. It’s just such a shame that this assignment is the best of the very few bad options that I had to choose from.”

He shook his head.

“Bertie, I wish I knew why the President hates you so much.”

“In fact Joe, you don’t want to know.”

“OK, but why do you say that you have no personal support system? If you don’t do something really egregious, I’ll support you.”

“Yeah? Would you seriously challenge Bob McNamara or the President on my behalf?”

“Well . . . , well . . . , humph. I see what you mean.”

“If I screw up, there’s nowhere to turn to for help, Joe. The other side sure won’t provide it. They’ll kill me – probably as painfully as possible. If I can escape that, at least temporarily, my own government will turn its head, withdraw its support and leave me as food for the wolves. Don’t try to deny it Joe, you know it’s true. You’re not about to ever risk damaging your career on my behalf – nor is anyone else. I’d be a fool not to have learned from the past – and I’m no fool. I’ve learned my lesson very well indeed.”

“Well . . . , Good luck, Bertie.”

He stood up and left. I thought I’d go home and have a good, stiff drink.

Geneva

I did, but it didn’t help. The enormity of the task before me was overwhelming. How does one go about setting up a spy network? The CIA and their counterparts in other countries had been doing it for years but none of those entities seemed to be giving out any handbooks on methodology. The more I thought about it, the more I became convinced that I was simply being set up to fail. A second, but far more subtle, betrayal and abandonment by my own government. Johnson was determined to get me one way or the other and do it in such a way that he was entirely removed from the actual event. He was in no rush. So what if it took a year? Maybe even two? The outcome was inevitable. I think Johnson had come to the conclusion that in the final analysis, whatever research notes I had really didn’t matter. He would figure that first of all, as President, he could probably make sure that anything I attempted to reveal would be quashed before it ever saw the light of day and secondly, there would be no way that I could verify that any assertions which I might make were true. But there were a few facts that Johnson was unaware of.

Meticulous records were kept throughout the government of any photocopies that were made of documents which were classified as Secret or higher. Lengthy request forms had to be filled out and then independently authorized for any such copies to be made. While commercial photocopying centers existed, they were few and far between. Photocopy machines were rare and they were extremely expensive and

only trained employees were permitted to operate them. It would be impossible to simply slip some top secret documents into your briefcase and zip down to the local copy shop to run off some duplicates. I'm sure that Johnson had verified that I had *never* requested a photocopy be made of *any* classified document. I think he was starting to feel pretty confident.

That was a mistake. Yes, my research notes were hand written and they contained no opinions whatsoever. They just contained what I considered to be relevant or simply interesting information - and the source of that information was carefully documented. To a large extent those sources were not classified but they were very, very credible. Some *were* classified however, and I had been able to photocopy them courtesy of a good friend in the Pentagon who was a high enough official such that his office had its own, dedicated Xerox machine. I definitely *did have* the documents Johnson was sure that I couldn't *possibly* have in my possession. In fact, I had a whole lot more.

How I was going to get the documents out of their safe deposit box in a Washington, DC bank and into Switzerland was another matter.

I started the process of winding down my affairs in Washington. I sold my MG to a dealership, closed out my checking account, closed my Brooks Brothers account, etc. I called our family lawyer in Baltimore to see how my mother was doing. He told me that sadly, there was no change – except that she was steadily growing weaker. He didn't expect her to survive for much longer. I told him of my transfer and promised that I would contact him immediately once I had an address and/or phone number where he could reach me. I hung up disconsolately. What a grotesque killer Alzheimer's is.

I used my limo privileges to go back and forth to my office in the West Wing and paid rather desultory attention to my classified mail. On the 23rd, I was surprised to see a memo of a meeting that McNamara had had with the Joint Chiefs the previous day. The contents were astonishing. It proposed that the US Military assume complete control of the war in Vietnam, that the U.S. commence large scale bombing of key targets in North Vietnam, augment US forces in South Vietnam and proposed that the U.S. commit American troops 'in direct actions against North Vietnam.' I was outraged and shocked. Completely gone was the Kennedy position of 'we will provide the South Vietnamese with all the support, training, equipment, etc. that is necessary – but in the final analysis, it is their war to fight.' This memo said that the Joint Chiefs wanted to assume control of the war *and* that they

wanted to send American combat troops against the North Vietnamese. That meant that Americans were not only going to assume responsibility for the protection of South Vietnam, Americans were going to *invade* North Vietnam! I was beginning to think that McNamara was becoming unglued. Maybe that StaComb stuff he used to slick back his hair was eating away his brain.

I had invited Emma and Peter and Sally Boyle out to dinner Friday evening at a new restaurant that had gotten rave reviews in the newspapers. I had previously introduced Emma to the Boyle's and we all dined with the cheerful camaraderie and banter of good friends. We were having a cognac after a truly marvelous meal when I finally broke the news of my 'transfer' to Switzerland. Emma was particularly upset. Her best friend in the Swedish Embassy, Ingrid Lindstrom, had just followed Ambassador Jarring to Moscow where he would take up his new post as the Swedish ambassador to the Soviet Union. Now she was losing me, too. Everyone wanted to know how to stay in touch and I told them I didn't have a permanent address yet but would write or call them just as soon as I did. Emma came home with me and cried the whole weekend.

On Monday, I finally got the call I was waiting for. I was leaving for Geneva Wednesday evening. I went to my office Wednesday morning just to take one last look around and was surprised to learn that the day before; the CIA had gotten an intimation of an imminent coup in South Vietnam. "Surely not," I thought. "Big Minh has been in power for less than three months." I would later learn that Nguyễn Khánh had bloodlessly deposed Big Minh by the time I arrived in Geneva early Thursday morning. It was unclear what the consequences of the coup were going to be.

A little background on Switzerland. It is an amazing country. The entire population of the country was something like 5.8 million in 1964 – about 1/3 of the then population of New York State – and more than 2 million souls *less than* the population of just the Delta region of South Vietnam. Switzerland is entirely landlocked and shares its borders with no less than five other countries – Germany to the north, France to the west, Italy to the south, and Lichtenstein and Austria to the east. It has four national languages – German, French, Italian and Romansh. Romansh is an unusual language and probably spoken by no more than 30,000 people as their main language. However, it is the only 'native' language of Switzerland – descended from the occupation of the Romans when they defeated the native Helvetii tribe around 58 BC.

In Switzerland, all school children must learn a language other than their mother tongue so everybody is at least bi-lingual and the more educated classes will generally speak German, French, Italian, and English. It is one of the wealthiest countries in the world; its ETH University is ranked #1 in the world; its products such as high-grade steel, watches, chocolate, etc. are rated among the best – if not *the* best – in the world and the list of superlatives goes on and on. Of course in addition to all that, the scenery is absolutely breathtaking. It truly is an amazing country and I quickly grew to love it and consider it home.

It was grey and cold when I arrived in Geneva and I was glad to get into the warmth of another spectacularly beautiful safe house. (The CIA takes good care of itself.) My reception there was far from warm however. Although nothing was said directly, it was very clear that I definitely was *not* a welcome guest. It was a miserable way to start out my first day in a new country.

My driver and I had just entered the elegant reception room when he inquired rather curtly if I wanted to take a nap or wash up or something. I figured I'd better get things straight from the start and put down my suitcase (nobody was going to carry my suitcase for me here, boy). I looked him in the eye and said,

“Look, you’ve made it abundantly clear that I’m not welcome here. I’m sorry that’s the case but I’m not going to let it affect me or what I have to do. I’ll get out as quickly as I can but I’ve got some work to do first. I need to know where I am and how to get here again if I need to. I know what the call signals are if you contact me and I also need to know how to contact you. If I’m in trouble and need to get in here in a hurry, I need to know how to do that. I need to know the address and telephone number of the house that my agency has acquired for me. I need to know what security arrangements there are there, if any. I need to know if a rather large sum of money has been deposited in my name at UBS and the name of my personal banking contact. I need to know the name and address of a Mercedes dealer here because I’ve got to have some transportation of my own. I need a street map of Geneva, a street map of the nearest town to my house, and a road map of Switzerland. And damn it, if you want me out of here so badly, you’d better start getting all of that together for me *right now!* Look, you need to remember something! In the final analysis we’re all working for the same boss – the people of the United States. Like you, I’m just an employee trying to do my job. You and your buddies can take your Attitude and shove it right up your ass. I’m staying here until I get what I need so if you want me out – get busy!. You got that straight?”

An older gentleman who had been sitting in one of the comfortable leather chairs reading a newspaper stood up and strolled over and stared at me intently. Finally he said, “That was a nice little speech Bertie, – they said you were good,” and extended his hand. I shook it and said, “Thank you, Mr. Martin. I hope we can get along.” He couldn’t quite hide the shock and the driver looked stunned. “Christ!” he said. “They would have *never* given you my name! You really *are* good – *very* good. Do you want to wash up, take a nap, would you like some breakfast or did you eat on the plane?” I told him that I *would* like to wash up, shave and change my clothes and that some breakfast would be much appreciated.

I asked if my new house was ready for occupancy – heat turned on, phone, electricity and water working, some food in the house, etc. He turned to the driver and raised his eyebrows. The driver looked down at his feet and just shook his head ‘No’. Martin growled, “Well you God-damn well get somebody to take care of that *right now!* When Mr. MacFarland gets there this afternoon for his initial inspection, I want that house warm, clean, in perfect operating order, food in the pantry, food in the fridge, wine in the wine cellar, some good scotch whiskey, bourbon, gin and vodka at the bar, make sure that he’s got a complete set of nice tableware, glasses, pots, pans, whatever. Make sure all the beds are made with good linen sheets, with nice comforters on top. Put Yolande in charge. She’ll know what to do. And no more dirty tricks, God-damn it! You’ll treat Mr. MacFarland as my personal guest. You’re assigned to him for as long as he needs you. Now grab his bag and show him to his room. Make sure he’s got everything he needs in there.” He turned to me and said, “Sorry, Bertie. Looks like you would have had a nasty surprise and it’s probably my fault. I think the staff was well aware that I wasn’t too happy about the prospect of baby-sitting someone from another agency. I suppose they took it on themselves to demonstrate my displeasure. So I think I owe you an apology. We’ll get along just fine, you and me. When you’re ready, come on back here and we’ll have breakfast and chat.” As I was following the driver I turned around and asked, “What’s the status of the coup?” “Done,” he answered. “Khánh’s in power and Big Minh’s under house arrest. No bloodshed as far as we know at the moment. We’ll talk more over breakfast.”

My banker, Monsieur Michaud, was a pleasant, rotund man in his 40’s who greeted me so effusively he was almost obsequious. He told me that the bank was honored to have such a distinguished client and that I could absolutely depend on him to assist me in any way in which he could. He told me that they had received \$250,000 from ‘my’ account in the United States and that ‘my’ bank had also conveyed ‘my’

instructions to ensure that there was always a minimum of \$100,000 in the UBS account and when that lower limit was getting near, to please notify them and they would cable transfer sufficient funds to restore the account to \$250,000. (The exchange rate at the time was 4.33 SF to the dollar – meaning that I had well over a million SF.) The implication, however, was that I had essentially unlimited funds in the United States. I could understand why he was impressed – I certainly was. He said that he had taken the liberty of opening a Swiss Franc account in my name and asked if I would like some of the dollars converted into Swiss Francs and placed in that account. I asked him to convert sufficient dollars such that I had SF500,000 in the new account.

My reception at the Mercedes dealership was just as cordial when it became clear that I was prepared to immediately purchase one of their top-of-the-line sedans. I asked them to have it ready for me by early afternoon. While I was signing all the purchase documents, I asked the manager if he would get my banker on the line and when he did so I asked M. Michaud if he would please make the arrangements for payment and handed the phone to the beaming manager who looked at me appreciatively. I left and repeated the scene at the MG dealership. Back at the safe house, I phoned the Geneva headquarters of IOS and was told that Mr. Cornfeld could meet me Monday morning at 10:00. There didn't seem to be much more to do than thank my host and go see my new house. Martin shook my hand warmly, apologized again and handed me a bulky, sealed envelope. He told me that all my maps were inside plus instructions for emergency and non-emergency contact. He asked me to memorize all the contact information and then burn the written instructions. He gave me his personal phone number and told me to call him if I had any problems with the house. He also invited me to call him from time to time to get together for lunch or dinner. We could never be seen together in public of course but he assured me that the safe house had an excellent chef. I left with two of his employees to go pick up the cars. One of them drove the Mercedes and I slipped into the familiar seat of my new MG and followed the other two cars to my new house.

In 1964, the speed limit on almost all U.S. highways was 55 miles per hour. Most people exceeded it but fines and penalties could be severe if you were caught exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 mph and very few people made a practice of doing it. It was liberating to cruise along the Autoroute at 85 mph and I was starting to think, 'I believe that I'm really going to enjoy living in this country.' I was kind of disappointed when I found it only took about 15 minutes to cover the 22 miles between Geneva and the Autoroute exit for Aubonne.

We wound our way slowly through the village and exited the west side of the village on a small, two lane country road bordered by farmland and pastures on either side. Ever since we had exited the Autoroute, the road had been climbing fairly steeply as we approached Aubonne and the Jura Mountains. The road we were on was perfectly clear and dry but patches of snow started appearing on both sides. The patches got bigger and bigger as we climbed until finally the entire ground on both sides of the road was covered with a thin layer of snow. Suddenly, we turned left onto an unpaved road that looked like it was the driveway to a distant old farmhouse. My heart sank. I didn't want to live in some old drafty farmhouse surrounded by barns that probably stank of ancient cow manure.

Trouble Follows Me Home

Abruptly, we turned left again, this time onto a broad, paved driveway going downhill. I gasped at what I was seeing through the windscreen of the MG. Stretched out far below me was Lac Lemman (sometimes called Lake of Geneva) and in the distance on the other side of the lake were the snow-covered Alps – and the really high peak *had* to be Mont Blanc – almost three miles high. It was absolutely stunningly, breathtakingly beautiful. The house at the end of the driveway was a something of a surprise, however. From my vantage point, it looked like a large concrete blockhouse. The area in front of its (attached) garage was filled with workmen's trucks but there was a little one-lane road or driveway or something that turned off to the right and we parked in that.

I was puzzled as I negotiated my way to the front door through the maze of small trucks. Why would anyone build a house that looked like a concrete blockhouse on a site that had such incredible views? I decided that maybe the 'front door' was more of an 'entrance door' and that there would be windows on the other side from which one could see at least a part of the spectacular view I had seen when driving down the driveway. I sure hoped so. Before I got to it, the 'front' door was opened by a more than pretty young lady who greeted me with, "*Ah bonjour, Monsieur MacFarland! Je suis Yolande. Bienvenue*". I entered a very large and open vestibule and was absolutely speechless. There weren't any *windows* at the 'back' of the house. The *whole wall* consisted of floor-to-ceiling huge glass panels. The sense of spatial continuity was unbelievable. It was almost as though the wall didn't exist and there was an uninterrupted transition between the inside of the house and the beauty of the outdoors. I wish I knew how to better describe it. It wasn't quite like

being inside and outside at the same time. It was like there was no *difference* between inside and outside – they were a smooth continuum.

As I wandered past the massive circular raised fireplace - with an enormous circular brass hood suspended above it - into the living/dining room, I was just amazed by the sense of space. The room itself was about 8 meters (approx. 26 ft.) wide and some 25 meters (approx. 82 ft.) long. The long dimension faced the lake and the Alps. To add to the miraculous feeling of space, both side walls were glass as well. The floors were of semi-glazed fire-brick, the ‘wallpaper’ was made of burlap and the ceiling was done in narrow strips of knotty pine.

Yolande took me on a tour of the house, which turned out to be on five levels. We went up the steps about half a storey and to the left there was an arm that jutted out over whatever part of the house that was underneath it. There were three bedrooms, a living room and 2 baths. Another ½ storey upstairs was the master living area which was directly above the living/dining area. It consisted of just two rooms – a library/lounge with bookshelves floor to ceiling on two walls and a massive bedroom/sitting room. It had 1½ baths but they were huge. The bedroom was slightly narrower than the living/dining room directly underneath. Yolande demonstrated how the glass panels worked. Every other panel was actually a sliding glass door which could be opened to slide in front of the fixed panel beside it. If you opened them all, half of that enormous wall was completely open to the world outside. The reason the bedroom was narrower than the space below it was because outside the bedroom was a long, broad, concrete balcony. The rail of the balcony was a concrete platform about a meter wide (one meter is just a bit more than a yard) which had its own far side rail a few inches high. It was clearly designed for sunbathing.

We proceeded downstairs past the guest level and the main level to the next half level – where the stairs ended at what I suppose I would call the ‘club’ level. Although it was directly underneath the guest level, it wasn’t quite as wide. The natural slope of the land which, four or five miles downhill, would terminate at the lake’s edge, meant that the lower level rooms would have to be partially excavated into the up-hill side of the house. Nonetheless, the room was very large, dominated in the center by a competition-sized billiard table. Leather couches and chairs lined the side walls and there was a massive stereo system against the back wall. A gorgeous floor to ceiling modern tapestry with an intriguing abstract design hung on the far wall towards the back of the room. It added some much needed warmth and color and made the room seem even more intimate and human somehow. The

lake-side wall had a door which led out to a large, pleasant patio which was currently covered by snow.

The room's only other door led down a few steps to what looked like the 'business' part of the house. On the right at the bottom of the stairs there was some large, unidentifiable piece of machinery dominated by a big electric motor which was humming away softly. Behind the motor was a big vertical galvanized tank with all sorts of pipes and valves emanating from it. Directly across the small room was another door which opened to reveal a furnace, air handler, and massive fuel tank. To the left of the stairs (the uphill side) a door opened into a small area which would become one of my favorite areas of the house. Curiously, the floor was made of wooden slats about ½ inch apart. On the immediate left was a small room with a sink and toilet. Past that room there was another room that only had a plastic curtain for a 'door' and it was a really strange room. Half of it was an empty, man-sized, fairly deep basin. It wasn't long enough to be a bath tub but it was much deeper. It had a single, fire-hose size faucet. Right next to it was a small, but normal shower. But the wonderful thing was behind the wooden door with a wooden handle – directly across the slatted wooden floor from the toilet room and the strange shower and basin combination. Inside was an absolutely gorgeous sauna. I thought I'd died and gone to heaven.

We weren't quite through, though. There was one more door on that level. It was just to the left of the motor and tank apparatus. Yolande pushed a dimmer-type light switch and beckoned me to come in. The first thing that hit me was the heat of the air flowing through the door. Then I saw it. It was one of the biggest indoor swimming pools I have ever seen in a private residence. It had its own furnace with two thermostats – one for the air temperature and the other for the water temperature. The long dimension, of course, faced the lake and the mountains and the walls had the same fixed panel, sliding door panel configuration as the upper floors. The whole pool room was pushed well further out than the lake-facing walls of the living room and the master bedroom. The pool room roof was the lawn outside the living room upstairs. Yolande dimmed the main lights and flicked on the underwater lights lining the side of the pool. I'd never seen anything like it.

It was starting to get dark outside as Yolande led me back up to the main level and showed me the kitchen which was parallel to the living/dining room but less than half of its length. It looked out on the large concrete parking area at the end of the driveway which now contained just my two cars and Yolande's car. The keys to both my cars were on the kitchen counter. I noted that the land sloped up so

sharply that it was impossible to see any part of the large farmhouse and barns which I'd seen earlier. Joe had told me that he wanted to find a place for me that was both luxurious and isolated. I don't think he could have done a better job. Yolande said,

"Well, I think that's about it, Mr. MacFarland. Do you like it?"

"First of all, call me Bertie. Secondly, 'Yes' but 'like' doesn't even come close. This place is absolutely fantastic. Did you pick out the furniture – because I think it's great. I love the clean lines and the uncluttered space."

"*Merci!* It pleases me very much to hear you say that. Yes, I've been working on it for over a month. It is very difficult to try to choose for someone that you don't know. I've saved all the receipts however so anything you don't like can be taken back without problem. But look, you must be very tired and hungry. I know a wonderful little restaurant near here that serves delicious fondue. Would you like me to take you there? It's not far."

"I'd love it if it's not too much trouble. I'm ravenous."

"Well, let's go then, Bertie. We'll take my car."

She was right on both accounts. It wasn't very far and the fondue was delicious. Nobody makes fondue like the Swiss. We were finishing up dinner when it struck me. "Oh, Lord!" I groaned. "Yolande, I've got a serious problem. Tell me what to do." She looked horror-stricken.

"What is it? What is it? Are you sick? What can I do?"

"Yolande, I've got a bank account with stacks and stacks of Swiss Francs in it but I don't have a single centime of cash on me. I've got lots of dollars, though. Do you think they would take dollars?"

She started to laugh and couldn't stop. Finally she regained enough control to say,

"Let me catch my breath and wipe my eyes first. Bertie, Bertie. Don't worry. I've got plenty of cash. Actually, I'm quite pleased because I'm going to insist that you repay the loan personally on another occasion. That way I know I'll get to see you again at least once. Incidentally, there's still one more feature to the house that I haven't shown you yet. It's getting late and I live in Geneva. Shall I come back in the morning?"

"You're more than welcome to stay at the house, if you'd like. Lord knows we have enough bedrooms."

"I like the one on the top floor best."

I was tired but I wasn't *that* tired.

I awoke to the wonderfully delicious smell of bacon being cooked. The bedroom was flooded with sunshine. I simply could not believe the view. It was just overwhelming. I was jolted out of my absent-minded absorption by Yolande wanting to know if I was ready to come down because breakfast was nearly ready. I threw on jeans and a tee shirt and went running downstairs.

The one remaining feature of the house that I hadn't yet seen was intriguing to say the least. After breakfast, Yolande led me downstairs to the 'club' level. She went over to the tapestry and pulled it back to reveal - a door! I thought, 'Surely that's not possible. It's far too near the back wall (which was deeply cut into the uphill slope) not to have solid earth behind it'. The door looked very heavy and it was double locked but when Yolande opened it and flipped a light switch. I was looking into a brightly lit pedestrian tunnel that was maybe 30 meters long!

"Yolande, where the hell does this go?"

"Did you see the house at the end of the small driveway where you parked yesterday afternoon?"

"Yes, but to be honest, I'd completely forgotten about it. What is it?"

"Well, the former owner used it as a guest house. I know that you refer to the level just above us as the 'guest level' but the former owner housed his servants there so they would be on instant call. He felt that guests should have more privacy, have larger rooms, their own outdoor patio, their own kitchen, etc. However, he didn't want them to have to walk through snow or inclement weather to get to the main house so he had this tunnel built to connect the two houses. There's an intercom system between the two houses to make communications easier and since the guest house connects at this level, it's easy for the occupants to come over and use the pool, the sauna, the billiard table, etc. without disturbing anyone in the main house. It's quite thoughtful, don't you think?"

"Honestly, I don't know what to think. It's a bit much to take in."

"Well, come along and take a look. It doesn't have any furniture in it at the moment and I think all the rooms probably need to be repainted. But we can worry about that later. Come on, Bertie."

I followed but groaned inwardly. We? Shades of Helen.⁴ I didn't think so. At least not now anyway.

⁴ See Book One.

It was a charming and relatively spacious little house. We entered on the basement level which, besides housing the furnace on the uphill side, had a pleasant sitting room that led to an outside patio, a full bath and another room which was probably intended to be a bedroom but judging by the colorful daubs of paint which speckled one of the walls, looked like it had previously been used as an artist's workshop. As in the main house, the entire downhill wall was entirely glass panels. Upstairs there was a small entry foyer, a kitchen, a living/dining room and two bedrooms plus 2½ baths. There was also a balcony running the entire length of the house. Hell of a guest house.

When we went back to the main house, Yolande carefully locked the guest house door to the tunnel then did the same to the main house door to the tunnel. I asked her why.

“There are motion detector sensors all around the main house and the guest house. You can set them to be silent, as they are now, or set them to sound an interior alarm or to sound both an interior and the exterior alarm. There's a master control switch for the guest house behind the panel next to the door to the guest house furnace room but it can be over-ridden by the master control in the main house. It's upstairs in your bathroom. Come, I'll show you.”

It was behind one of the mirrors over the one of the sinks. I had assumed that if there were anything at all behind the mirrors, it was just the standard medicine cabinet. Nothing was standard in that house. Yolande told me that there was a clever little switch on top of the mirror but that she was too short to reach it and asked me to give her a boost up. As soon as I put my arms around her waist to do so, she turned around and kissed me deeply. Well, you know how that wound up, but afterwards, she said, “Maybe if I just stand on my tippy-toes . . .” She had no problem whatever reaching it.

She left around 2:00 p.m., humming happily as she closed the entrance door. I went outside to the MG and pulled out the manila envelope Martin had given me from its hiding place under the passenger side floor mat. I brought it inside and studied the contact instructions carefully. Back in those days, I had a well developed ‘photographic memory.’ It was easy for me to look at a sheet of paper for only a few seconds before being able to throw it away, close my eyes, and see it just as clearly as if I were looking at the original. I can still do it some but back then, it was perfect. Following instructions, I burned the sheet and then flushed the ashes down the toilet.

The next thing I did was to sit down with the maps (there were a whole lot more than the ones I'd asked for) to try to figure out just exactly where this house was located. It wasn't easy as the scales of the maps seemed to be either too big or too small. I finally found Aubonne on a fairly large scale map and began to understand why I had such spectacular views. Lac Léman (or Lake of Geneva as it is usually called in English) is a big lake – one of the biggest in Western Europe. It's about 45 miles long and nearly 8 miles across at its widest point. It's shaped in a gentle arc and Aubonne is almost exactly situated at the top of the arc. That explained why I could see both the lights of Geneva and Lausanne at night.

It was getting too late to do a lot of sightseeing and I needed to find a bank to get some cash. Although Lausanne was considerably closer than Geneva, I had a map of Geneva and I didn't want to get lost in Lausanne so I went back through Aubonne, back down to the Autoroute, and headed towards Geneva. With a sense of incredible freedom, I accelerated through the gears until I reached 100 mph and though the tachometer was getting near the redline, it wasn't there yet. I felt free as a bird. It gradually dawned on me that I was concentrating so hard on driving that I wasn't seeing anything except the road in front of me. That hardly qualifies as sightseeing so I got off at the next exit, the exit for Nyon.

Nyon was tiny but charming. I found a UBS but there was no place to park. There was a train station about a block and a half away but its tiny parking lot was full. I finally found a public parking lot with lots of open parking spaces and retraced my route back to the UBS office where I asked the teller for SF 10,000 – nine 1,000 franc notes and ten 100 franc notes, please. I showed him my newly minted UBS plastic card with my account number embossed on it. I also gave the teller one of the many business cards that Monsieur Michaud had given me. Today of course, he would have simply typed my account number into his computer workstation and immediately verified my bank balance. Things didn't happen that way in 1964. He courteously asked me if I would wait for a moment while he phoned Monsieur Michaud, whom he knew well. After two or three minutes he came back positively beaming. He apologized for the wait, said that Monsieur Michaud sent his respectful greetings then asked if he could introduce me to 'his superior.' I still hadn't gotten my money yet so I thought I'd better agree. The branch manager came over, leaned across the counter (there were no grills, no bullet-proof glass – just an open counter), shook my hand, gave me his card and told me that if there was anything in the future that his branch could do for me, please let him know personally.

Finally, they counted out my money. I was taken aback by the size of the banknotes. The thousand franc notes were about 9" by 5" and the 100 franc notes were around 7½" by 4". I've never used a wallet – I just shove the notes in my left pant's pocket and the change in the right but the 1,000 franc notes were too bulky. I stuffed them in my jacket pocket and set off to see Nyon. It was a tiny little town – I think the population of Nyon was about 8,000 – but it was charming and lovely. Parts of it had obviously been around for a long time as there were Roman ruins scattered here and there and most of the streets were extremely narrow one-way streets. It had a small castle (well, small for a castle) overlooking the lake below, lots of attractive shops, some interesting cafés and restaurants, a port filled with private boats – the vast majority of which were sailboats, a landing wharf for the picturesque large paddle boats that ply the length and breadth of the lake, etc. I also discovered that people greet each other on the streets; it doesn't matter if you're a stranger. People nod and smile, make eye contact, say '*Bonjour*' – what a difference from Washington. I chose a little restaurant at random and had a wonderful meal before I drove back to the house.

I was puzzled when I got to the top of my driveway and saw a dim light on in the kitchen. I didn't remember leaving any lights on though I wished I had because the house was now quite dark. I should have at least turned on the lights on either side of the entrance door. Maybe Yolande had turned on the light in the kitchen this morning when she was making breakfast and just forgot to turn it off. Then I froze. There was another possible explanation. I slowly extracted Excalibur from its sheath, turned off my headlights, turned into the top of the driveway, stopped and turned off the engine. I silently opened my door and coasted down the drive using the emergency brake to slow my descent because the emergency brakes don't activate the rear brake lights. At the bottom of the driveway, I turned the MG so it was blocking the driveway and quickly slid out of the open door. I was wearing dark clothes but the moon was shining brightly. I slowly edged around the side of the house and looked through one of the glass panels. It was pitch black in the living/dining room except for the dim light coming through the kitchen door. I backed up enough to see that there were no lights on upstairs, then retraced my steps and walked down the little driveway towards the guest house. It too, was totally dark.

I went back to the entrance door. Just because the house was dark inside, that didn't mean it was empty. The entry door had two locks. The top one was double sided so you would have to lock or unlock it with a key whether you were outside or

inside the house. It had a special key. I think the previous owner only used it when he and his family were going to be away for a long trip or something. The bottom one was the more typical lock – keyed on the outside but with a turn bolt on the inside. I paused and deeply meditated for a moment to make mental preparations for combat, then silently tried the top lock. It wasn't locked. Good, I certainly hadn't locked it when I left. It was only the bottom lock that was securing the door. I took a deep breath, quietly unlocked the door and violently threw it aside while I flattened myself against the outside wall just beside the door. The door hit the rubber bumper which prevented the door from being opened too far and started to swing back. I slipped in the house and flattened myself against the inside wall just before the door clicked shut. I silently turned the deadbolt latch to lock the door and waited a full two minutes before I moved. The house was dead quiet. Keeping one eye shut to preserve its dark adaptation, I peered around the kitchen door. It was just a small counter light over the prep area that Yolande could have easily left on this morning. I went past the kitchen entrance to the living/dining room and used the main switch panel to throw on every light in the room. Nothing. I ran over to the glass wall and cupped my hands against my face so that I could see outside. Nothing. I checked every room in the house – including the sauna – nothing. I put Excalibur back in its sheath.

As my heart rate slowed down I went over to the bar, fixed myself a scotch on the rocks and sat down at the dining room table to think. I glanced at the maps I had left scattered around the table along with the information sheet with my address and phone number on it. Something seemed vaguely wrong – but what? Then I realized. When I had been looking at these maps before I left, I had been sitting in this very same chair and although the maps had been scattered around me, the focal point of that scatter had been this chair. Now they were all slightly displaced to my left. Someone had stood just beside this chair and examined them. The clincher was that when I had pulled the stack of maps out of the envelope, I knew that the one map that I wasn't going to use today was the large scale road map of the whole country. I had put it down first and then started looking at the rest of the maps. There was no particular order to my looking at the other maps – but there was one constant - the big map stayed put with the others scattered over it. It was no longer on the bottom. Somebody had definitely been in here. And they had a key. Thank God I'd memorized all the contact information for the safe house and then burned the paper and flushed it. Was that what they were after? Much more importantly, *who* was looking for something and *why*? The house hadn't been broken into so where did they get the key? Yolande had told me that the locks on all the doors were very special and almost impossible to pick. Whoever it was

apparently wasn't looking for me personally; otherwise he (she?) would have waited for me to get back. What did I have that they wanted? The safe house contact info? How could they have known that I had it? It gave me the chills to realize that I had left it outside in the MG where it was totally unprotected but oddly, that's one advantage of leaving your car unlocked. The (fairly reasonable) assumption is that no one, particularly not a professional, is going to leave something valuable hidden in a car that's totally unlocked.

I went outside, moved the MG down to the parking area outside the 'front' door and left it unlocked – you can't really lock a convertible, anyway. All anyone has to do is just cut through the top. It made me think about the entry door lock precautions. With as much glass as this house had, if you wanted to get in, all you needed was a really big rock.

Nowhere to Turn

I reflected that sadly, there was absolutely no one that I could turn to for help or advice. By accepting this assignment I had well and truly put myself 'out there' and I'd better learn to deal with it. I'd also better assume that my phone was tapped, too. On the subject of phones, I really needed to hear a friendly voice so I thought I would try calling Emma – and Peter and Sally as well. It was a little after 10:00 p.m. my time which meant that it would only be a little after 4:00 in the afternoon in Washington but it is not at all uncommon for folks in Washington to leave the office for a 'late afternoon meeting' on Friday afternoons. I thought I'd give it a shot, anyway. In any case, I would probably have to wait 20 minutes or so for the international operator to place the call (no direct international dialing in those days). I tried Peter and Sally first. Sally was there and I told her all about this fabulous house I was living in and about my visit to Nyon, and how you could drive 100 mph on the Autoroute without worry, etc. She was excited, said that she was sorry that Peter wasn't home but he was working on a big case and was working late almost every day. She said that she and Peter were going to try to plan a vacation to Switzerland in the summer and I told her that I had more bedrooms than I could count and they would be more than welcome to stay at the house if they would like.

Emma was delighted to get my call, was overwhelmed by my description of the house etc., and then shocked me by saying that she had applied for a transfer to Sweden's embassy in Switzerland. I had very mixed feelings about that. I said I thought that would be great if she could swing it but that Berne wasn't all that

close to Geneva. She replied that she knew because she'd been studying the maps (I closed my eyes and inwardly groaned) but Berne was a lot closer to Geneva than Washington was. Before I went to bed, I stood at the bedroom window with all the bedroom lights turned off and just looked at the nighttime panorama of distant lights. It was kind of like Toyland. Geneva to my right, Lausanne to my left, Morges, Rolle, Nyon on my side of the lake with the lights of Evian, Thonon and smaller French villages on the other side (the Franco-Swiss border runs through the middle of the lake). Finally, I went into the bathroom and turned the motion detectors on in both houses and set the alarm volume to low. Even though I sleep very soundly, I'm trained to wake instantly if I hear an unusual noise. I've had people ask me how that's possible and I point out to them that your ears don't stop working just because you're asleep. The brain simply filters out anything that it doesn't consider to be important. My brain is trained to interpret *any* strange sound as important.

The next day, I got a real education in getting something done by a Swiss tradesman. First of all, few of them work on Saturday and it was indeed Saturday, Feb. 1. When I finally got a locksmith and told him that I wanted all the locks in my house changed, he first asked how many locks would have to be changed. I told him ten altogether but three of them had to have a different master key (it's useless to have a double lock if one key will open both locks.) He whistled and told me that would be a lot of work; he would probably have to have a helper. I told him that was fine, and asked when he could get started. I expected him to say that he could get to the house in 2-3 hours. I about fell over when he said that the first thing he had available would be at 10:00 on the 13th but that he wasn't sure he could finish in one day. I explained to him that it was urgent – but it made absolutely no difference. I thanked him politely and said that I would try to find someone less busy. He bade me 'Good day' politely. I only got two other locksmiths to even *answer* and the first time that either could fit me in was even worse. Resignedly, I called back the first locksmith who told me that he had received calls in the interim and that now the first time he could make it would be on Monday, the 17th at 9:00 in the morning. I told him that I would see him then.

I also told I wanted some very special locks and described them to him. He sighed and told me that such locks were rare and very expensive. They were all custom-made. I would have to give him a 2,000 franc deposit and he could not guarantee when they would arrive. I gave him M. Michaud's telephone number.

I found a hardware store that duplicated keys and bought four copies of the regular house key plus three copies of the special tunnel and entrance door key. I also bought a hammer and a metal file. Back at the house I inserted the appropriate keys in their locks, turned them about a quarter turn, and hammered them in such that the lock was useless. I then used the hammer to break off the bow of the key (the bow is the part of the key that you grasp to turn the key) and filed whatever was still sticking out flush with the surface of the lock. The locks were totally ruined and useless but that was the plan. The locksmith would probably have to drill them out or something but in the meantime, *nobody* was going to open those doors. That left just one door unsecured - the main entry door. I thought long and hard about that one, then drove back down to Morges where I had found the hardware shop. I bought some springs and some very thin nylon fishing line plus two other common hardware items. I then went to a large grocery store and bought several items that are commonly sold in any medium-sized grocery store.

I searched around and finally found a record store. For those readers who do not predate the iPod generation, records were plastic discs that had music recorded on them. I bought some Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Julie Christie and Édith Piaf albums, some classical music and opera albums and stowed them plus my grocery and hardware purchases in the trunk of the MG, locked it, found a great little restaurant, and went happily home. I fell asleep on the leather couch in the club room listening to the music.

The next morning after a swim, a sauna and some breakfast (God, what luxury) I set to work on my little intrusion protection device. It was an interim measure but would serve until the damn locksmith replaced the locks. It took me a while to get the tension on the thin nylon fishing line adjusted just right. However, if you knew what you were doing, after you had unlocked the entry door, you had just enough room to stick your hand through the partly opened door and unhook the nearly invisible nylon line – thereby disarming the device. If you just pushed the door open without disarming the device, you were going to die a particularly painful and inescapable death.

I spent the rest of the day exploring the perimeter of the property which had a chain link fence (overgrown with weeds and vines) running around much of it. I suppose it was put there just to be a perimeter marker. It certainly wasn't going to keep anybody out. I walked up to the farm house and met the farmer and his wife and their two sons plus their Bernese Mountain dog. The barns were full of their cows which they raised both for milk and for meat.

I went back down to the house, exercised, fixed a light supper, listened to some music and sacked out. I was looking forward to my meeting with IOS in the morning.