

THE GAME PLAN

by

Robert C. Aldridge  
631 Kiely Boulevard  
Santa Clara, California 95051

408/248-1815

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To all my friends who are  
still within the chain-link fences  
of Lockheed.

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## PREFACE

This story is both typical and unique. Typical, in that it dramatizes a pattern which has become a way of existence among weapons builders. Unique, because recognition of an overriding responsibility to the global community brought one family to renounce their wealth and security, derived from an occupation of destruction, in an effort to choose life. Although written as a novel it is based on facts -- I call it a factual novel. Having tussled for months on how to present this message I have settled on this framework for two main reasons. First, it is not my desire to place another narrated volume about America's socio-economic decay on the literary shelves. People already sense that problem, at least in abstraction. My message is directed to the family community because that is where my competence lies. As a husband and father who has experienced the military-industrial complex, I see the need for unified family resistance to the evils of our present national behavior. Having heard many arguments on the failings of the nuclear family I see their main fault as not being truly nuclear -- not being in complimentary orbit with the other familiar molecules of our society -- but, instead, on a collision course with whomever threatens their specific



interests. And many families are not really molecular clusters at all. The individual atoms making up a physical molecule are held together by a strong binding energy but persons in today's families are frequently obsessed with a dividing force -- a selfish interest on the part of members -- that is rending community feelings and depersonalizing cultures. To help husband and wife, brother and sister perceive this destructive power I bring its manifested form alive through the Allens, a middle-income family deeply enmeshed with defense work. Thus plotted, the book zips along to personalize the malignant reality that has become entrenched in the very values we hold sacred. I make no claim that this treatment addresses every aspect of our capitalistic-military social system. I am a so-called middle-class citizen and that is the only viewpoint I can authentically write from. Neither do I claim it to be unbiased. It presents my personal concerns for what grips America today. But I do proffer the depicted conditions as real.

Secondly, the novel format allows me to project my thoughts and feelings and experiences more freely. I can then carry the reader through the struggle as this family frees itself from the weapons business and show all the trials of day-to-day existence behind the guarded gates of defense establishments. For those wishing to escape I have pointed out one way that worked.

As we move through the pages I illustrate other small ways of non-violently confronting the sickness in big business. Organizing groups of workers to seek more fulfilling sources of livelihood and arranging dialogue with high ranking executives have their effect. Even when success is not apparent on the surface,

there is no measurable way of determining the interior influence. Personal witness of the truth is a tremendous force on co-workers and friends.

Being confronted with truth was the influence that caused me to realign my own values. Few have had more effect than my own children. Janie and Kathy, my two oldest daughters, with whom I have had many discussions extending into the wee hours, caused me to look for new meaning. Cres, Jim and Dan, my grown boys, have affected me in a more silent way. And my five still at home: Teri, our high school senior, who shows great concern for others. Mary, our sophomore, who takes the cares of the world upon her shoulders and sides with the less fortunate. Diane and Nancy, our little girls in grade school, whose greatest contribution to the family is loving and laughing. And Mark, our four year old dynamo, who not too silently kept me company through many hours of toil over these pages and who is an ever-present witness of trust and forgiveness. I have come to appreciate why we must become like little children.

The most powerful force ever to act ~~upon~~ my being is Janet. She has been my strength through the years of our marriage; showing me how to practice faith in and commitment to my beliefs. Her encouragement and assistance has made this book possible.

I am also grateful to Jim Albertini and Alice Ray-Keil who read earlier drafts and offered the criticism necessary to make this story come alive.

I cannot end this preface without acknowledging all my friends and former

colleagues who are still in the defense industry. All, in one way or another, intentionally or not, have helped me find true freedom and joy. It is to them that this book is dedicated. I hope it will in some way return their help and be instrumental in bringing greater happiness into their lives.

Robert C. Aldridge

Santa Clara, California

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"Bullshit," he fumes, slamming the rolls of blueprints on his desk. "After seventeen years I should know what to expect." Randy Allen rakes stubby fingers through bushy blond hair as his six-foot frame slumps into the chair. Boyish features usually hide his thirty-nine years but today the heavy brows are furrowed -- quivering nostrils betray his emotion. Brown eyes survey the design area of Jetahl Rocket Works where rows of tilted-up drafting tables restrict visibility. Rat-maze partitioning -- metal on the bottom and glass on top -- poorly disguises the bull-pen effect of the cluttered room. Scrubbing a smooth jaw he muses, "I really believed in this work six years ago when I became leader of the Exotic Reentry Body Design Group. But now I see this weapons contracting as the wild-assed scramble for profits that it is. If it weren't for Gloria and the three kids I'd quit -- especially after reading that report this morning. I'm still stunned to think we would . . ."

"Hey Randy, did you get the word that the design review is postponed?"

Randy stiffens. "I just heard a few minutes ago, Clem. Why do you think I'm resting my laurels here instead of being up in the front office?"

Clem Boliver, supervisor of the Technical Design Section and Randy's boss, is a stocky man slightly shorter than Randy and paunchier. "Commander Burnoff couldn't leave Washington this week or he'd miss the monthly tournament at his country club. We're not supposed to know that's the reason so don't spread it around."

"I see. I had to postpone my <sup>Hawaii</sup> vacation to get ready for this dog-and-pony show but that old bastard can't miss his Saturday golf."

"I know how you feel, Randy, but that's the way it goes in this business. Now that we've got more time let's crank in a few changes."

"Oh?"

"Unroll sheets three and four."

"There. What do you have in mind?"

"On sheet three here, let's add another view showing the radar antenna."

"That's no problem . . . uh . . . Clem, about my vacation . . ."

"Sorry, Randy, you'd better postpone it again. Now, I'd like to see a cutaway in View-D showing the fusing circuit. Not too much detail. Just fake it in so when Commander Burnoff asks where the fusing circuit is we'll have something to point to. Makes us look efficient, you know."

"That's impossible, Clem. The Arming and Fusing Group hasn't decided which circuit they want. Regarding my Hawaii trip -- I would like a definite date before changing reservations."

"Let's talk about that tomorrow. And don't worry about the A&F Group. Just dummy in Option-1. They've been scratching their ass long enough. We have a schedule to meet."

"Okay. If you say so."

"And then on sheet four, change the release system to ball-locks."

"Come on, Clem. You're not serious? That's the crappiest design of all and the manufacturing costs will be prohibitive."

"Commander Burnoff likes ball-locks so, dammit, we'll show ball-locks. The mechanism can be optimized later and, besides, if it's complicated there will be more testing required and that means job security."

"It also means ass-chewings when we have to explain why the damn thing won't work. Also, it's more difficult to incorporate a pyrotechnic train . . ."

"That's another thing. I was just talking to Percival and he's dead set against pyrotechnics. He says separate electrical signals to each mechanism gives him a warm feeling in his stomach."

"Good old Percival Squire. How would we ever make a design work without our department manager's emotions? But that means . . ."

"No 'buts' about it, Randy. The ground rules are separate signals and if there are problems it's up to the electrical people to work them out. Hell, we can't be talked out of everything that's a little difficult. Let's go see them. I'll show you what a little firmness can do."

They thread their way among the drafting tables and the people who man them -- automatons who graciously turn themselves on and off each day in conformance with company rules. They attempt to personalize their work space by walling-off make-shift offices with bookcases. And this pitiful manifestation of the territorial imperative only worsens the dehumanizing effect as each engineer cringes animal-like in his stall glaring at anyone who might short-cut through his area.

"Come on in, fellas," invites the fat-cheeked electrical supervisor. "What chestnuts can I pull out of the fire for you today? Heh, heh!"

"The new ground rules are separate electrical signals to each ball-lock," explains Clem. "What does that do to you?"

"Not too much. A slightly bigger battery perhaps. But you'll need a transformer in the reentry body to step up the voltage as well as a sequencer for the various events. That all weighs about . . ."

"Hold it! That electrical garbage belongs in your interlox package. We're overweight in the reentry area already."

"Nope. Safety won't allow a high-voltage signal across the interface."

"Screw safety! We just can't stand the weight." Clem's face is flushing.  
"It'll have to go in the interlox."

"Can't do it. The reentry area is . . ."

"The interlox!"

"Sorry, Clem, there's just no way. You'll have to figure out how to put it in the reentry body. After all, they are your ground rules."

"I guess we're stuck with it for now," gripes Clem on the way back.

"Yeah, your muscle worked wonders," jibes Randy. Now who did you say should work out the problems?"

"Can't win 'em all. I'm sure you can take care of the details. That's why we've got a man like you on the job."



"Skip the shit, Clem. What are we going to do about the presentation next week?"

"Just dummy in the ball-locks and wiring the best you can."

"But the transformer and sequencer? I can't possibly make a space layout and correct the weight statement in that time."

"Oh no! Don't show those yet. After we sell the concept we'll work that in as an overrun. Oh hell no! If we showed those we'd get tossed out on our ear."

"All right . . ."

"Use all the overtime you need. We've got plenty of budget. I've been meaning to tell you about that. We're underrunning the man-hour spread and if we don't use it up they'll cut us back. Can't be too efficient with excess budget, you know."

"Okay."

"If you've got any other jobs to clean up you'd better bring more of the crew in this week end only don't let an auditor catch you charging to the wrong budget. Be sure to keep your stories straight if you bootleg."

"We'll be careful."

"Say, Randy, you look a little green around the gills. Don't you feel well?"

"Just feeling a little pushed. And those reports I've been reading . . . Clem, are we really . . ."

"'Scuse me, there's the phone. Why don't you sneak out a little early? Get a good night's rest and we'll talk about this in the morning. Gee, you look like you need a vacation."

"I look like I need a vacation, he says! But he's sorry, I'd better postpone it again! Gloria, I can't take this crap much longer."

"I'm disappointed too," responds the good looking brunette with shag hairstyle, a pixie nose and the figure of a woman ten years younger. She lifts her eyes slightly to meet Randy's, "But let's not lose our cool."

"Balls! I feel like fulminating. I've got to get out of this defense business somehow. Defense, phooey! It's a lousy racket to bleed taxpayers and feed the military bureaucracy -- and industry rides the gravy train too."

"You're hungry. Go wash up while I mix a martini. The kids'll be back from the store any minute and dinner's almost ready."

Randy plods out of the room seconds before the front door bursts open. "Hey, Mom!" cries the leader of the threesome; a fifteen year old beauty with short

auburn hair and hazel eyes. "We met Mrs. Ross on the way home -- you know, she belongs to 'Mothers for Peace.' She wants us to help with the campaign to get the National Peace Institute Bill passed by Congress."

"Sounds great, Debbie. Will Dolly and Timmy help too?"

"I will," ejaculates the twelve year old with snapping blue eyes and blond pony tails flapping vigorously to the tempo of her nodding head.

"And you, Timmy?"

"Yup. I guess so," grunts the sandy haired youngster with a freckled face.

"Mrs. Ross says there are lots of things a nine year old husky can do," adds Debbie.

"That sounds great, kids. Tell me more about it later. Right now it's time to wash up for dinner. By the way, Dad had a bad day so don't upset him with any more troubles."

"Again? How come Dad's job gets him down so much? Doesn't he like engineering anymore?"

"It's not that he doesn't like engineering, Debbie."

"Is it 'cause he hates his boss for making him do all the work?"

"No, Timmy, that's not the reason either," laughs Gloria. "Dad doesn't hate his boss although he does get disgusted sometimes."

"Then what is it?" chimes in Dolly.

"The decision makers do play games trying to outguess what their own boss will want but Dad could stand that if the work had meaning. It's more the type of work he's doing. You know how we always think of America as a beautiful land of freedom and peace that tries to help other countries? Well Dad sees secret things going on at work that are not according to the principles we believe in. He sees a contradiction between the terrible weapons of destruction and us seeking liberty and justice for all. His conscience is beginning to bother him. He has to make a decision and we must help him because it's really a family decision."

"How's that martini coming?"

"Right over there on the counter, honey. Bring it to the table. Everything's ready."

"Mmm, that stew smells good. Hi kids. Have a good day?"

The meal progresses on a light tone and Randy relaxes with a martini and some food in his stomach. The three youngsters explain their new project over dessert.

"Have you any ideas for publicity, Dad?"

"To start with, Debbie, I'd send one of those brochures and a copy of the press release to every newspaper."

"How about your company paper -- the Jetahl Blast?"

"Weeell, I'm not sure. I don't know if the people at work would be interested. But I guess we should give them a chance. Leave some of your literature in the study and I'll send it to the Blast with a personal note. Now you three start hitting the homework while Mom and I finish our coffee."

"Later in the evening Randy returns to a serious vein. "Honey, something's bugging me."

"I could see that. What is it?"

"I was reviewing some secret reports today -- about the missile Jetahl is making proposals on. It's called Tricer after the triceratops; a three-horned monster of the cretaceous period with heavy bony armor. It was a real monster and so is this latest innovation of Naval weaponry."

"But you knew there would be another generation missile."

"I know. There's always something bigger and better but this is a change in policy."

"Change in policy?"

"Yeah. The missile we're deploying now, Dino . . ."

"Where'd that name come from?"

"The dinoceras. It was another huge pre-historic animal. Dino is truly a deterrent weapon because it doesn't <sup>carry</sup> large enough nuclear bombs and it's not accurate enough for an offensive attack. To start a nuclear war and win it a nation must destroy all the enemy's missiles with the first strike. Since they are in underground <sup>concrete</sup> silos the attacking missiles must be very accurate and very powerful."

"I get that."

"Dino couldn't do it. All Dino is capable of doing is wiping out cities and industrial areas if some country should fire upon us and the threat of that dissuades them from doing so. Dino is a defensive -- more correct, retaliatory -- weapon. If it detonates anywhere close to a town it will wreak horrible destruction."

"It sounds so gruesome."

"Tricer may be different. This report I'm talking about is a detailed study of accuracy and kiloton yield necessary to destroy hardened targets. In other

words, how close to a concrete silo a nuclear bomb equal to so many thousand tons of TNT must explode, in order to destroy that silo. What does that sound like to you?"

"Like we're getting ready to shoot first."

"Right. There's no use destroying a silo if it's missile has already been fired."

"But how can anyone get by with such a thing?"

"That's one reason for all this secret business. Our government is planning a lot of things they don't want the people to know about."

"I thought information was secret to prevent the communists . . ."

"That's what everyone is led to believe but a good share of it is to prevent John Q. Public from knowing what his government is doing."

"That's scary. Why don't those who know stop it?"

"Fear. They're afraid for their jobs and of the criminal punishment for telling classified information. Something did leak into the papers a few months ago but it was hushed up quick. A DoD spokesman glossed it over by saying we are only investigating the capability of knocking out hardened command posts

during a retaliatory strike. That mollified the public and press but the fact still remains that if we can do that we can also use it as an offensive weapon if some future president desires to do so."

"That is scary."

"It bugs the hell out of me, Gloria. I had to talk to somebody. Thanks for listening."

"That's okay, Randy. I know how you must feel -- it has shaken me up too. If you don't mind I'm going to bed early."

But she lay awake much of the night.

# # # # #



2 - ELBOWING

"Goodbye, Gloria. Deansworth will be along any minute. Don't forget our movie date tonight."

"Bye, honey. Have a nice day. Oh, can you arrange your pool so I can have the car next Wednesday?"

"No sweat. With three cars in his family Deansworth is pretty flexible on the days he can drive. Oops, there he is now. I'll see you tonight."

"Morning, Randy," greets a guttural voice from inside the green Chevy.

"Morning, Deansworth. Ready for another day at the salt mine?"

"I guess so. Gotta keep that pay check coming in."

Deansworth's dark-rimmed glasses and curly black hair emphasize the sharp features of his face as he curls his six-foot-one frame around the steering

wheel. "Say, Randy, remember that mechanism job you gave me?"

"The roll control device for the maneuvering reentry body? Yes, how is it coming?"

"I've run calculations on Concept-1 and started on Concept-2 but that one has problems."

"I expected that but we have to wring it out anyway. You and I both know it stinks but someone up the line hatched the idea and we've got to go through the motions."

"I've got something that'll work better. Preliminary . . ."

"Let's get the first two out of our hair first. We have a deadline to meet."

"Okay but . . ."

"Are the profile layouts started?"

"Nothing down on paper yet. I . . ."

"We have to crank those out quick. I realize we don't have the full picture but after the layouts are finished we can develop the concepts further."

"I'll need one more day on calculations."

"Today, then. I hate to sound pushy but the aero and structural analysis people are on my back."

"I understand."

Deansworth edges the Chevy into a stall. As they walk toward the engineering building Randy watches the sun glisten on the barbed wire points that crown the link fence. It really is a detention camp.

"There goes my stomach again, Deansworth. Doesn't the place ever bother you?"

"The atmosphere's not so hot but it looks better on payday."

"Really think so, huh?"

"Well you know the saying -- if you have to get raped you might as well enjoy it."

"We could quit."

"Are you crazy?" I could never make this kind of dough anywhere else."

They reach the gate and flash ID badges at the guard who admits them with a perfunctory nod.

"Would you like his job, Randy?"

"The guards?"

"Yeah."

"About as exciting as darning socks."

"He does look bored. Remember the rumor about that guy driving up to the test base, flashing a cigarette package at the guard and getting waved through?"

"Uh-huh. Think it really happened?"

"Naw. He probably used a baseball card."

"Oh."

"Well, here we are, Randy. I'll wrap up those calculations today."

"Swell, Deansworth. Thanks."

As Randy approaches his desk the telephone is ringing. "Exotic Reentry, Allen speaking."

"Randy? Clem here. Bring Deansworth's calculations on that roll control design up to Percival's office right away. Okay?"

"I'll be right there. Give me a couple minutes to get the stuff together."

As Randy approaches Percival Squire's office he meets Clem in the hall.

"What's up?"

"Jock's in there with Percival. He claims we're dragging our feet; that maybe we're overloaded and he has a man who can help."

"He could put that man to good use getting his Llama package finished. If he was such a smashing supervisor his section wouldn't have so many late jobs."

"He's building an empire. The son-of-a-bitch wants to get the maneuvering vehicle under his wing."

"Same old shit, huh?"

"Yeah. Jock has Percival hoodwinked into believing anything he says so don't make any excuses about too much work."

Conversation in the room halts abruptly as Randy and Clem enter. The bull-necked, chunky man with wide-set eyes, Jock Kester, slumps back arrogantly in his chair and Clem's face flushes fuller. Percival, a pinch-faced executive type, addresses them in an oily tone. "Good morning, Randy. We thought you might give us a little status report on the roll mechanism."

"Morning, Percival. Hi, Jock. Calculations will be finished today and we'll have profile layouts for the analytikers by the middle of next week. We're pretty much on schedule."

"That sounds reasonable. I was under the impression you were somewhat behind. Of course the flight science people would like our input yesterday but we need time to perform our task too. Very well, keep it moving because a lot of people are planning their work around us."

"Will do. Shall I unroll the layouts?"

"I don't believe that will be necessary. Thank you very much."

"Well the S.O.B. didn't win that round," grunts Clem once they are outside.  
"Keep pushing, though. Deansworth massages those calculations too much."

"He's very accurate."

"I'm sure he is but we need visibility. That's what makes management and the Navy happy. Get some cartoons down on paper."

"We will."

"Fine. And, oh! I'll have a new man for you Monday."

"Good. We need more bodies. See yuh later, Clem."

Randy finds another member of his crew waiting at his desk -- an engineer with shaggy red hair and close-clipped matching mustache. "Hi, Newspell. How's my expert computer-aid designer this morning?"

"Fine, Randy. What's bugging Clem?"

"Just another cut-throat deal. Jock is trying to screw him out of the maneuvering body."

"Clem's changed since Jock and Percival came to this department."

"In what way?"

"He's scared all the time. He used to be self-confident but now he won't make decisions."

"That's because they always get shot full of holes."

"Why?"

"Clem's a good engineer. He's interested in making a design work. But Jock and Percival look out for themselves. When a bad idea serves their purpose they buck hell and high water to justify it."

"I've noticed that."

"Then if Clem opts for good engineering he gets shot down."

"That's dirty pool."

"Jock and Percival are pretty thick -- notice how Jock gets all the good jobs. The maneuvering vehicle is the last challenging project we have."

"We'd better do good work so we can keep it."

"If that'll help. Well, what did you have on your mind, Newspell?"

"I just got the latest computer run on the maneuvering model. The aerodynamics subroutine is incorporated."

"What does the weight optimize at?"

"210 pounds."

"That would be the 50 kiloton concept. Don't advertise that weight 'cause it's about twenty pounds over the design goal. Have you made any runs with the larger warheads yet?"

"Not yet. I'm getting set up for that now."

"Good. I'm anxious to see the printout when you get it. The Navy is very interested in a bigger boom."

"I'll keep you posted. Should have a run next week."



"Fine. Will you ask Stoggs to come up here? I have some things on the presentation package to discuss with him."

"Okay, Randy. See yuh."

"Stoggs won't be happy with these changes," thinks Randy. He really puts his heart in his work and it is a personal thing with him."

"Morning, Randy."

"Good morning, Stoggs. I wanted to get with you first thing this morning but I got sidetracked. The presentation's been delayed 'til next Friday and Clem wants to optimize a few things."

"That's normal."

As Randy explains the changes, Stoggs, a man in his middle fifties, becomes more and more tense. "These arbitrary decisions kill me, Randy. It's not worth while to do good work." work

"Don't let it get you down. We've gotta roll with the punches or it'll get to us."

"Gimme the damn layouts and I'll fix 'em," grumbles Stoggs as he grabs the package and stomps away.

"I wish I could turn him loose on a job. He'd come up with a great design but schedule oriented executives just wouldn't appreciate his efforts. Well, I'd better get this letter to Abigale."

Abigale, the new secretary for Clem's section, is a girl in her twenties, lends freshness to the routine stagnated atmosphere with her enthusiasm and interest. Seeing her, Randy understands why the younger engineers often flock around to talk. She has caught up with her typing as Randy gives her the rough draft.

"It's not a rush job but I'd like to get it out by Monday."

"I can get right on it."

"How do you like your job by now?"

"It's interesting."

"Clem's not a bad guy to work for. I've been with him six years. We have disagreements but he's pretty fair."

"He seems to be."

"Just give a yell when that's finished and I'll sign it."



Randy ducks out to the hall, slips a dime into the machine and retrieves a plastic cup filled with a caustic liquid claimed to be coffee. Rushing back to his desk before his fingers blister from the scorching heat, he summons Stinelli who is preparing specimens for an underground nuclear test in Nevada.

"What's up, Randy?" asks Stinelli, appearing in mod clothes and brownish Dr. Schweppes beard.

"There's a meeting of the Ming Urn working group after lunch. Have we done all our homework?"

"Damn! And I didn't wear my go-to-meeting tie."

"Tough. How about a status report on the hardware being manufactured?"

"Just made a quick check this morning. Here 'tis. But some of them shop 'supers' sure resent us engineering cats snooping around."

"We should be diplomatic but that hardware's being built with engineering dollars and we're responsible. Is everything on schedule?"

Stinelli unrolls a chart. "Those antennas are really draggin'. But that's Procurement's ball of snakes. They gotta get upper management to make a priority decision."

"I'm aware of that problem."

"This column here'll really cool yuh. Hadda scrap a metallic body. Some lathe jockey on swing shift gouged it good. More material's being begged from production so's they can start over."

"Shit! There goes fifteen grand. Can they recover schedule?"

"They say 'no sweat' but I haven't seen their manufacturing plan yet."

"Every time something gets screwed up it happens on swing and the day shift finds it that way in the morning. Nobody ever knows who did it."

"That's the way the ol' ball bounces. You alibi me and I'll alibi you. When the inefficiency gets too obvious Management juggles a few supervisors and that takes the heat off for a while."

"Back to the schedule. Can you get a firm recovery commitment from Manufacturing before the meeting?"

"Can try."

"How was the Nevada trip?"

"Real cool, man. Landed in Vegas about two-thirty Tuesday. Couldn't make it to the test site 'fore quitting time so stayed in Vegas overnight."

"Jake and Tom went with you?"

"Yup. Jake hadda ride herd on some material samples and Tom tagged along to eyeball the specimen mounting fixtures -- something about mitigating ground shock."

"How was your luck in Las Vegas?"

"Sour, man. Fifty bucks down the hole real quick like. But the shows made up for it. Tom 'bout wore his eyeballs out afore he even got a chance to look at shock mitigation devices."

"Then you drove to the site in the morning."

"Right. Had to leave at five-a-m; real rough after ~~all~~ that hooch. We ate breakfast at Mercury's main and only cafeteria and then high-tailed it for the Ming Urn well."

"Do you like the old ant works?"

"Ant works? I don't dig ya man."

"That's my opinion of NTS. I am astounded at the number of bodies scurrying around out there; the unlimited feverish activity associated with one of those big blasts. They follow a routine by the numbers. There are endless lines going through the cafeterias in the morning and at Rainier Mesa the procession moving into the tunnel system ~~dup~~licates ants swarming into their hill. Then on Friday night a long stream flows into Las Vegas and Mercury becomes a ghost town."



"Yep. They scurry for town with their pay burning a hole in their pocket and limp back broke Monday morning."

"There are no children anywhere. That's the spooky part. Mercury hasn't even got family living quarters -- not even for couples. It's like the last remnants of a dying civilization in a desolate desert. Everyone is a loner following instinctual activity -- just like ants."

"Right on."

"Go ahead. What happened at the Ming Urn well?"

"Roscoe and the Jetahl gang have been holed-up there for two weeks. Roscoe sez if anyone was to give the world an enema they'd stick it in Nevada. He's gotta stay there 'til after the event next month."

"I'll be there for the test."

"Good. Well, we finished doing our thing by threeish and skeedaddled for Vegas. Roscoe's boys clued us in on some good shows. After we hosed-down at the motel we did the town again."

"Sounds like a worthwhile trip."

"Yep. Slept in yesterday and caught a late flight back. Too bushed to stop by here so made a bee-line for my pad."

"I don't blame you."

"You'll get a copy of my trip report but it won't have all the sex and violence in it."

"Okay, Stinelli. Thanks. I'll see you at two. Don't forget that manufacturing plan."

Randy is twenty minutes late for the Ming Urn meeting because of a staff meeting in Clem's office. Ordinarily he would have sent a proxy to the staff meeting but Clem was going through the periodic "stacking" of the section in preparation for the department stacking. Randy hates those sessions when all subordinates are arranged in order of worth to the company. It always smacks of inventorying machinery. But he didn't dare leave or his men would wind up on the bottom of the pile. Layoffs and pay raises all take the stacking system into account. Layoffs, in particular are a constant fear in the feast of famine nature of defense work. With the Dino program tapering off and only a low level effort so far on Tricer, conditions are ripe for a cutback. Just last week management announced there was no layoff being considered and the mention of that word in management circles is a sure indication they are thinking about it. So Randy didn't dare leave -- even at that Stoggs got a lousy deal. Now as he enters the Ming Urn meeting Stinelli is just finishing his presentation on hardware status.

"I'm glad you're here," barks Buckley, the tall straight haired coordinator of the working group. "We seem to have a problem with a metallic body."

"I know that." Randy's disposition is not the best after a stacking meeting.

"The accelerated schedule looks shaky and if they screw-up again we're dead in the water. We're paying two-thousand bucks a square inch for X-ray exposure and we'll forfeit a helluva lot of data if we miss that test."

"I'm aware of that too," snaps Randy, getting more rankled. "Let's not panic. I have a suggestion."

"What?" gasps Buckley.

"We have five production bodies completed that are destined for the fleet. If the Navy goes along with the idea we could keep one of those in local storage in case we need it." Randy turns to the youthful Lieutenant Commander sitting at the end of the table. "Is that possible, Commander Brent?"

Brent, the Navy's resident engineering representative -- an industrious fellow who still thinks promotions are rewards for good work -- rubs his chin thoughtfully. "It's a possibility. It is in the Navy's interest to assure that specimens meet the test schedule. The AEC certainly won't hold up just because we aren't ready. I'll let you know at the next meeting."

"Fine," snaps Buckley not sounding too convincing. "If we miss that test we'll all be out on the street."



Being out on the street without a job is the engineers worst phobia. It's not really the data loss or the cost that's worrying Buckley, it's his job. Then Randy asks aloud, "I heard we goofed on the Bald Crow test?"

"It vented," explains Buckley.

"More radioactive crap in the atmosphere, huh? How do we stay out of trouble with the test ban treaty?"

"It was an underground test and that's legal. Leakage was an accident but we classified it to prevent another uproar. No use upsetting people unnecessarily when we acted in good faith."

"Not so good that we prevent leaks. That's the third one this year. Why aren't the test site people taking more precautions?"

"Look, Randy, they've got their problems too. If they made every test fool-proof it would cost a fortune. It's always a gamble."

"How about that radioactive waste affecting the population? What kind of a gamble is that?"

"Official reports indicate the radiation level is well below the threshold of danger," chimes in Commander Brent.

"Balls! They'd state that even if the stuff were hot enough to bake clams."

As the meeting breaks up Randy corners Stinelli. "We've got to order some gum-drop tape to protect the instrumentation wires. Don't let me forget."

"I'll write myself a note. Well, night Randy. I'm splittin'. It's quarter-past knocking-off time."

Randy looks at his watch. "I'm holding up Deansworth." He locks his security desk and heads for the door. "T.G.I.F. -- Thank God It's Friday."

# # # # #

the way we used to be in those days. Blinded by the smoke screen of red-threat propaganda. Randy's teen-age niece helped to straighten us out. I can't get over what a sincere sensitivity she had for people. She stayed a weekend with us to attend some anti-war activities. We were both impressed by her knowledge of social and world affairs; things we should have known, ourselves, had we been more attentive. She had politely challenged us to rethink our own point of view. Then the next day all of us timorously accompanied her to the march and rally to observe other people's response to war and war-related work. That was the beginning of change and the end of our complacent comfort."

Watching Randy place the chicken on the grate, Gloria ponders the decision fast approaching in their life. "Randy's getting more tense as the weeks roll by. Something's got to happen soon but I don't know what. Where will we get money to live? Outside of defense work there isn't much chance for an engineer in this locality. How can I contribute to the family income? What will it be like to start work again after all these years?"

"Cheer up, beautiful! Why the sour look?"

"I was thinking of future shock. Remember what they said at that New Life-styles meeting we visited last night? About goals, I mean? That seems real important. We ought to think about positive goals instead of drifting with dissatisfaction and cussing it."

"Drifting's a way of life now, sweetheart. The force of society carries everyone along. They think someone's leading the way and the whole system's out

of whack. . . Meanwhile, everyone's ripping off what they can while the pickings are good."

"That's what I mean. We've got to change that, at least in ourselves. Let's think about our goals in life and set them down in a plan."

"Not today. We'll mull it over 'til next Sunday. Meanwhile we can find out more what the kids think."

"What's the biggest obstacle to changing the defense business?"

"In the upper echelon it's bureaucracy. That'll never change by itself. It takes pressure. Change always comes from the bottom and the biggest obstacle there is fear. Very few workers worry as much about communism as they do about working more overtime. But most engineers I know would rather be doing something beneficial if they had an alternative that would give them security. Red propaganda is only to protect the rich but the middle-class ride along to justify their own prosperity."

"We've done it."

"I know. But with our present understanding that makes us hypocrites. I still do the same work."

"There'll have to be a whole new structure to replace the defense industry, Randy."

"It's not really that complicated. It'll take a little while but there are lots of things that can be done immediately. The hardest part is making the decision to start. We're not going to chop off the whole Pentagon budget with one swing but if enough people care we can start getting some redirection. Many legislators have wanted to investigate economic conversion for years but military lobbyists always swing votes the other way. When the heat is on it's easier to vote for military dollars than to explore new opportunities."

"What are some of the immediate opportunities?"

"Take about a quarter the Pentagon budget and put it to work reconstructing America. Sure there'd be a lot of squealing and hollering but so be it. A lot of fixing up can be done with twenty-five billion dollars. We could start with government subsidized housing and investigate anti-pollution measures. With adequate budget we could develop solar power plants which present no environmental problems. Technology shouldn't control people. It should enrich mankind."

"And then continue converting more military money each year?"

"Right. Then we'd have the satisfaction of seeing something good happen from our tax dollar. Sixty percent is now getting poured into war preparation. That's stupid. Nothing good comes from arms except selective employment. And that's more than offset by the effect on Third World countries alone. Rerouting the budget will create a more uniform work force along with visible benefits. One billion dollars converted to peaceful purposes would create 40,000 new jobs."

That's in addition to the ones converted. The atmosphere of destruction must do something to our national mood -- we think the military is economically justified."

"Won't that plan be called socialistic?"

"It's no more socialistic than what we have now. I'd rather have a socialistic search for betterment than socialistic self-destruction. Yes, the witch-hunters will paint it red but I believe people are beginning to see through that rhetoric. Besides, if we're really worried about being second rate why don't we look into psychic research?"

"Why so?"

"Several communist countries have government sponsored programs to investigate unknown powers of the mind. Scientists agree that only ten percent of the brain is being used. We have some investigation of psychic powers going on but nothing like a fully coordinated national program. We should ask why physicists from the Soviet Union's Joint Nuclear Research Institute have run tests with Nelya Mikhailova, a Leningrad housewife and psychokinesis medium. Also interested is Moscow University's Theoretical Science Program as well as the Institute of Physics of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Mendeleyev Institute of Metrology. We should ask why Dr. Peter Kapista, developer of the atomic and hydrogen bombs for Russia, witnessed these tests of her extraordinary power to move objects by mind force only. Why are they interested in the laws governing that energy?"

"That sounds wierd. Where are you going?"

"I forgot the sauce for the chicken. It'll be tasteless without it. Watch them for a minute."

Randy's words taunt Gloria. "Fear also affects us dependents. It would be nice to water down our consciences but that isn't possible. We must endure the pains of growth because that is necessary for life. Floating with the tide is the powerlessness of death. That lecture I heard about middle-class wage slaves certainly rings true for us. Fear of losing security is more than fear of starving. In America it is fear of losing affluence: the status home, the third and fourth car, the weekend boating trips. It is fear of going back to simpler living. We are truly addicted to our material goods and seduced by the salary that brings them to us. We prostitute our humanity to support our habit.

"I know what's right and I know Randy is struggling toward the right decision. It's up to me to make it a joint decision. We've faced crises before. I'll keep praying for strength and next Sunday we'll plan our escape."

When Randy returns Gloria is braving the heat to turn the chicken. "It's not too late to add seasoning," she allegorizes. "Let me help correct our mistake."

# # # # #

4 - SMITH

"Fresh out of college," thinks Randy as he eyes the dark haired youth with a wispy mustache seated in the far chair of Clem's office. He is about Randy's height but somewhat slimmer. "All polished and ground by academe to fit the huge machine of industry. I wonder what obsolete old model will get pushed out the door to make room for him."

"Meet Smith, Randy," introduces Clem. He's the new associate engineer I was telling you about. Randy Allen here will be your group leader, Smith."

"Welcome," greets Randy as he grabs Smith's outstretched hand.

"Smith got his B.S. from Mariposa Polytechnic last month, mechanical type. This is his first regular job."

"Hope you like this locality. Climate's a little different than Mariposa."

"I've been here before. That's one reason I looked for work in this area."



"I'll turn him over to you now, Randy. You can introduce him to the crew and get him settled."

"Okay. Come on, Smith. I'll show you around."

Smith follows Randy from the office to the design area. "Put your things here and come over to my desk. I'll paint the big picture for you."

When Smith is seated Randy continues. "Our group is known as Exotic Reentry Body Design. Up 'til recently we've been working on the Dino reentry bodies -- are you familiar with Dino? Fine. Engineering work on Dino is going downhill but we're just now getting into design studies on Tricer. One concept reentry body is an advanced ballistic similar to that on Dino but we are also looking at an aerodynamic body capable of maneuvering. We call it MaRV and that's what our group is working on."

"Maneuvering, huh?"

"Yeah. It's a secret project."

"Why?"

"Government security doesn't give reasons. I can only speculate. These bodies are only useful for terminal evasion because, being aerodynamic, they need the atmosphere to maneuver."

"What does that mean?"

"Terminal evasion? That means evading enemy interceptors after it has reentered the earth's atmosphere -- just before impact. It gets into those war games the effectiveness types are always playing. To defend it's territory from hostile missiles a country has two stages of defense; area and terminal. With area defense they have plenty of time. Radar identifies incoming bodies and anti-ballistic missiles are fired at them while still hundreds of miles away. This is preferable for two reasons: the nuclear blast from the interceptor is a long way off and, secondly, if it doesn't score a direct hit the X-rays from the blast <sup>still</sup> can destroy the incoming vehicle."

"And terminal defense?"

"That is a last ditch stand and it's pretty tricky. At the speed the body is moving the defense has a timespan of about thirteen seconds to act. They have to be pretty quick on the draw to identify, sight-in and fire at a target in that time. In my opinion it's strictly theoretical and not practical."

"Sounds spooky."

"Both maneuvering and ballistic bodies depend on penetration aids for exo-atmospheric evasion. Pen-aids consist of decoys, chaff and all sorts of innovations to confuse enemy radar and camouflage the real bodies. Entire design groups spend full time on these devices. The budget for testing is tremendous."

"I didn't realize reentry systems were so complex."

"This is only a brief summary. It'll take you months to get a handle on everything. Well, back to why MaRV is classified. Since it's only good for terminal evasion and that's pretty dubious, it might be difficult to justify the billions of dollars that will eventually be spent. Some influential citizen could create an uproar. And a lot of people would question it as trying to gain another edge in the arms race. It would demonstrate insincerity in trying to reach an effective agreement on disarmament."

"In other words, the MaRV is secret to keep our own people ignorant?"

"Possibly there is even a deeper reason for keeping them uninformed."

"What?"

"Reports I've been reading indicate the Pentagon wants more accuracy with reentry vehicles so they can destroy hardened targets. That would allow us to knock out another country's missiles in their silos during a preemptive first-strike."

"But that's contrary to the whole deterrent philosophy."

"True. And if the administration is really serious about a first-strike they certainly wouldn't advertise it. We play games on paper about avoiding enemy interceptors but inherent with those aerobatics is the capability of

guiding the body directly to a pin-point target."

"That doesn't sound like something that could happen in America. Do you really believe it?"

"I'm only interpreting facts as I see them but you'll have plenty of time to make up your own mind if you keep your eyes open. Let's go meet the crew."

"Stoggs, this is Smith. He's joining our group."

"Pleasta meetcha."

"Hi, Stoggs. Looks like we're going to be neighbors. I'm sitting right here beside you."

"Stoggs is making layouts of the maneuvering body we were just talking about. We have a presentation for some Navy brass on Friday. Stoggs, why don't you explain how this vehicle works."

"It flies like a supersonic glider rather than bullet-fashion as present bodies do. That means it flies at an angle-of-attack which is achieved by various means. The most plausible designs use either an asymmetric body or flaps."

"Don't they need wings?"

"Nope. Not at the speed this baby's traveling. Have you read Jonathan Livingston Seagull? Then you remember what happened when he dived at high speed with his wings outspread. He had to pull them in until only the tip feathers stuck out and that's all the surface he needed to control flight. We accomplish the same thing with small flaps."

After further discussion Randy interrupts. "We'd better move on. Thanks, Stoggs."

"Okay. Take care, Smith."

Deansworth has his nose buried in papers. "Looks like you're really in it deep."

"Huh! Oh, hi Randy. Just trying to get these dang profile layouts moving. We have a visitor?"

"This is Smith. He's going to be one of the crew."

"Hi," greets Deansworth as Smith nods.

"We were just talking to Stoggs. Smith had a little run-down on the flap controls. Maybe you can familiarize him with the other concept -- just enough to give him the gist of what we are working on."

"Will try. We call the flaps Concept-1. Concept-2 is very simple but it won't work because of weight and lots of other reasons. It consists of small rocket nozzles on the back of the body to make it maneuver." Deansworth spends several minutes explaining his analysis of the control systems.

"We'd better let you get back to your layouts," interjects Randy.

"Guess so. Gotta get lots of board time in if I'm to finish by Wednesday. We'll talk more later, Smith. Good luck."

"Right. And thanks," calls Smith over his shoulder.

"Let's get some coffee before we meet the other two. While we're taking a break I'll tell you about some different breeds of maneuvering vehicles that other groups are working on. One is hedgehopper. It's a tricky job to fool defense radar. It reenters on a ballistic path toward a non-target area. Radar observers think it's going to be a wild miss so interceptors are not fired. But when hedgehopper gets to an altitude below radar effectiveness it goes into the maneuvering mode; pulls out of its dive and hedgehops, so to speak, toward the real target."

"That's sneaky."

"Not half as sneaky as backbiter. Here, I'll buy. How do you like it?"

"Black. Thanks."

"Backbiter is fired in the opposite direction, goes into fractional orbit and travels around the world until it approaches the target from behind. Then a rocket fires it down. The enemy don't know they've been had until it's too late."

"That is sneakier."

"Backbiter is questionable because treaties bar satellites from launching nuclear rockets. We're splitting hairs because this isn't a stable satellite and it never completes one orbit. But, even so, these technicalities are hidden beneath the security blanket."

"There really are spooky things going on around here."

"We don't hear of half of them. Think tanks are busy full time proliferating the place with ideas. Many's the time I've been pulled off a hot job just to wring out some hair-brained scheme. Many of these brain-products will eventually be sold to the taxpayers when sentiment is right and there's a choice bit of information to scare them into buying. But right now they are being bootlegged on any number of research budgets. Here's Newspell. He's our computer expert."

Randy performs the introductions and asks Newspell to explain his operations.

"A computer is nothing but a work horse. It does exactly what you tell it to. If you goof, it goofs. But it can calculate in a few seconds what would take several people months to do manually -- once it is programmed to do so. That's what I'm doing. I'm preparing this program that takes about twenty-five

variables and puts them together in every logical combination to package components inside a reentry body. It then outputs size, geometry and mass properties. Take this printout for instance, there are over 250 configurations described. An engineer can quickly pick out the most desirable and make a detailed layout in a couple days. If he had to lay out all 250 he would be at it for years."

"And the computer does it in seconds?"

"Once it's programmed. All we do then is crank in variables."

"That's marvelous."

"Thanks, Newspell," cuts in Randy. Stinelli is back. We'd better catch him before he heads for the shop again. He has problems out there."

"Stinelli is preparing reentry bodies for the Ming Urn underground test," explains Randy as they move away from Newspell's desk.

"Ming Urn?"

"That's a code name for this particular nuclear test in Nevada. You'll get used to the labels we tack onto things around here. Stinelli's pretty swamped right now and your first assignment will be to help him. Stinelli, I'd like you to meet Smith."

"Put 'er there, friend."



"Smith will give you a hand after he gets settled."

"Hot dogs! A savior from heaven."

"Right now, I'd like you to give him a quick briefing on Ming Urn."

"This particular wham-bang is a vertical shot. Those horny old well diggers screw straight down into the desert like they wuz gonna run the Arab oil merchants out of business. Then a pipe-like chamber is lowered into the hole and welded together bit by bit as it goes down. It's gotta be ab-so-lutely leak proof. A hydrogen nuke is lowered to the bottom and our experiments are set over the top. A big steel bell-jar is bolted in place over the experiments and the air is pumped out."

"To simulate space?"

"Right," adds Randy. "Remember I was telling you that if a nuclear interceptor exploded close to a vehicle outside the earth's atmosphere it could disintegrate that vehicle?"

"Yes."

"This simulates that effect. X-rays don't travel far through the atmosphere before they are absorbed. But in space they travel indefinitely until they hit solid matter, and then whammo!"

"How come X-rays don't hurt our bones?"

"Those rays are very weak. They deposit negligible amounts of energy when they are absorbed by flesh and bone. But the rays from nuclear bombs, gamma radiation, deposit hundreds and even thousands of calories in a small area. That's enough to vaporize almost anything. You understand that when radiated energy is absorbed by matter it is converted into heat?"

"Yes."

"Good, Go ahead, Stinelli."

"After the bomb goes off these X-rays come charging up the tube at the speed of sunshine and just as bright. That's why we call it a vertical shot. Draggin' along behind is the shock wave from the blast because it only goes as fast as a good loud yell. A charge of TNT crimps off the pipe at exactly the right instant when the radiation has gone by but not the blast. That keeps our specimens from being blown to smithereens."

"What's the purpose of the test?"

"To find out the effect of these gamma goblins on the reentry body and also on some freakish material samples. We find out real quick-like how well we've designed against zap-damage. If the shielding is ingeniously arranged the radiation is soaked up gradually and our parts don't take off in a steam cloud."

"Sounds interesting but complicated."

"You'll get the hang of it. Now this Ming Urn hole is in Frenchman Flat but all whammys aren't vertical. Rainier Mesa has horizontal squirrel holes all through it. One main shaft goes a mile straight into the mountain and spurs are dug off the side. These spurs are plugged for the test and then sealed permanently after the experiments are pulled out. Then the miners sashay up the tunnel and dig another spur for the next test. There're five of these mole-hole borings in Rainier Mesa alone and I don't know how many in Pahute Mesa. Old miners and well diggers never die. They just migrate to Nevada."

"The tests must be pretty expensive."

"Smith, me lad, the price tag is as long as those tunnels. Two-thousand good old inflated dollar bills per square inch of exposure. In this test the chamber is two-score inches across and that's," he does some quick exercises on his slide rule, "about a quarter-million smackeronians just for the hole. Tunnel shots take more bread yet. Then with the bomb, wierdo experiments and payrolls, the damage climbs close to a million."

"I see we've got the purchase request ready for the gum-drop tape," observes Randy.

"I've filled in all the diddely-dos. You jes hafta slap your 'John Henry' by the red X."

"Gum-drop tape?"

"I told you we have tags for everything," laughs Randy. "Gum-drops are tiny, special-made spheres capable of absorbing radiation energy. They are molded into a matrix that looks like rubber tape. The tape is wrapped around instrumentation wires to shield them against radiation damage."

"Neat."

"Well, fellas, that's enough for this morning. It's noon so let's put on the nose-bags and take in some nourishment."

# # # # #

## 5 - BURNOFF

Lieutenant Commander Brent's office is painted that bilious green so prevalent at Jetahl Rocket Works. Maintenance must have hit a good bargain and bought tanker loads of the stuff. Everything used to be ~~that~~ same hue until someone took an updated management course and learned the psychological effect of cheerful colors. Now walls are being redone in yellows, oranges and browns. But the messengers of cheer -- those overalled fellows with brush and pail -- have not yet morale-ized Brent's cubicle.

Offices are the hallmark of status in industry. At Jetahl, supervisors' areas are fenced in with the rat-maze metal/glass partitioning. A chain across the opening serves futile notice that the supervisor wishes not to be disturbed. He never attains any degree of privacy until his promotion to department manager, at which time he graduates to a chamber with eight foot high metal walls and a hardwood veneer door. Division managers rate a conference room style office with walls all the way to the ceiling, to prevent eavesdropping, and twice the floor area. It is considered security-proof unless the shouting level is reached,

as frequently happens in Jetahl meetings. Offices then take on the customized look as one steps farther up the ladder until the ultimate of status is reached on "mahogany row."

It is the conference room style that Lieutenant Commander Brent occupies in the Navy wing. He has just finished cradling the phone after calling Washington about Randy's proposal. They had informed him that Commander Burnoff left early that morning and could be expected to arrive at Jetahl any minute. Brent could only scratch his ear a couple times before the buzzer on his phone sounded again.

"Yes?" snaps Brent to his secretary.

"Commander Burnoff is on his way up. The gate just called to warn us."

"Send him right in when he gets here. I'll be ready for him."

Almost five minutes elapses before the Commander erupts into the room. No expression of greeting is discernible on his granite features. He plunks a travel-worn briefcase on the table and flops his 190 pounds into the nearest chair.

"Good afternoon, Commander," greets Brent. "You had a pleasant trip, I trust."

"Lousy. But it's better than staying in that D.C. office. Really hot and muggy there."

"We weren't expecting you until tomorrow."

"Hadda change plans. We've gotta discuss some things and there won't be time after that meeting tomorrow. That bullshit session will probably drag out all afternoon and I've gotta catch that five-thirty plane. There's another big golf tournament Saturday."

"How about some coffee?"

After Commander Burnoff has downed half his cup of coffee he opens his briefcase. "We'll discuss specifics tomorrow morning but in a nutshell we must cut back on hedgehopper and backbiter."

"Why is that?"

"Captain Corker put up a good fight but he was overruled at the Pentagon. The joint chiefs need money to demothball a few destroyers."

"I thought there was a separate appropriation for that project."

"There was but the House Armed Forces Committee killed it. Have you heard of Congressman Brimstone? That bastard argues against every military appropriation that comes up. I don't know why he's on the committee. Anyone doing that job should understand military needs. It's too damned difficult when you have to convince a bunch of jokers like him. He shows communist leanings and that alone oughta be grounds to kick his ass out."

"It seems so."

"Well, anyway, the demothballing appropriation didn't pass. Congress thinks they understand military needs but of course we know best and it's our patriotic duty to see that the money goes where it will protect our country's interest. No tin-horned democrats can tell us how to spend our budget."

"But why hedgehopper and backbiter?"

"That was a bad decision. Those Pentagon generals don't know shit from peanut butter. If they'd get their ass outta their swivel chairs they'd see what needs to be done. Everyone knows the Air Force 'Fatso' project is much less valuable from a total defense standpoint. But the Army climbed in bed with the Air Force and they won't cut each other's programs so we wound up on the shit end of the stick. They claim as long as it's a Navy project we should steal Navy budget to pay for it."

"Why is demothballing so important?"

"It's part of the game plan. We've got a whale of a big interest in Mythica. Many corporations have investments down there and we've got to protect them. Local opposition to the new Mythican government is getting out of hand. Our Military Advisory Group is working overtime training riot teams but the leftist movement is gaining strength. Those goddam commies just about caused a shutdown of the Universal Carbon Supplies plant. Workers went on strike for higher wages



and safer working conditions. The damned gooks are never satisfied. If they didn't breed like rabbits they wouldn't be starving. As for safety, shit! The plant they work in is a helluva lot better than their shacks. If they didn't get black lung they'd die from tuberculosis anyway."

"I still don't see how the destroyers enter into it."

"It's because that stupid Army advisory team can't cut the mustard. Weapons are being smuggled onto the island for the Mythica Liberation Front and the MAG boys can't find where they're coming from. The destroyers will encircle the island to cut off contraband. It's a delicate situation to inspect approaching ships but our tactical patrol units are well trained. The whole thing pisses me off though. We've got to rob our projects because the Army fucks up."

"I've heard that hedgehopper and backbiter were to be soft-pedalled anyway."

"That's because they are too advanced to sell to Congress yet. It might be another decade before they're marketable. Weapons business is sort of like Detroit -- you don't come up with a new model until you've stretched minor fixes to the limit. But we've still got to develop technology and we can't do it without budget."

"That's true."

"I want you to understand this fund diversion is really hush-hush. We don't want Brimstone or his cronies to get wind of it."

"I understand, Commander."

"Now the next item. The Navy Strategic Weapons Branch is having trouble getting their procurement bill approved. We've had high ranking personnel pounding the halls of Congress to lay on pressure but it's really tough. Brimstone is our biggest pain in the ass. He's had the Tricer appropriation bogged down in committee for months. We're just able to squeeze out a few bucks now and then to keep the study effort going."

"Jetahl will have to lay off engineers if we don't get money soon. Dino's tapering off fast now."

"I'm aware of that and that's getting to the heart of what I want to talk about. We might not be able to prevent a layoff altogether but maybe we can whittle down the number. It would tarnish Jetahl's image if they made a big contribution to unemployment shortly after their big hiring spree. We gave them the green light to build up manpower because the budget approval looked routine. But that damned Brimstone started a big stink about military spending and now the congressmen are gunshy. They've been getting lotsa flak from their pink-tinted constituents about stopping the arms race. As if we could negotiate with the Russians. All they understand is force."

"How can we minimize the layoff? Jim Bachman . . ."

"Who?"

"Jim Bachman. You remember him-- he was Captain Corker's predecessor before he retired."

"And he's working for Jetahl now?"

"Yes. He says us young punks don't know how to handle congressmen. Says we're too mushy and he's going to have a word with the Admiral if things don't start happening soon."

"He and Admiral Nimrod were Annapolis buddies."

"Jim's Assistant Chief Engineer here now. Jetahl hired him to handle the negotiations. He's turned his hat around and has a lot of pull upstairs."

Commander Burnoff gazes intently at the ceiling while rapping his huge Annapolis ring nervously on the table. "Yeah. We'll have to use a velvet glove over our iron fist but even Bachman couldn't think up a better scheme than we have. Here's the scoop. Tricer is scheduled to be operational in ten years. We planned to accelerate that IOC after funding was approved but now an interim program looks more prudent."

"How is that, Commander?"

"We're thinking of an extended range Dino. That might be easier to finance right now. If Tricer doesn't get jarred loose during the committee hearings next

week, that's the route we'll take. Tricer will remain in the study mode for a couple more years."

"That sounds like a saleable idea. What about MaRV?"

"We'll continue looking at it along with ballistic bodies. The range goal will be 4500 miles. We'll hold to 6000 miles for Tricer although that might be a little optimistic. But that is the main selling point."

"That's right, sir. Legislators wouldn't even consider another generation missile unless it had significantly improved performance. They are not easy to convince."

"That's putting it mild," fumes Burnoff. "The bastards are running scared trying to play both ends against the middle."

"That's what I meant, sir."

"The same applies for the reentry body. Hold out for 190 pounds. I know their studies exceed that limit but we can't allow it yet. Weight means range and range is paramount. Give those engineers an inch and they'll take a mile. More to the point, give them a pound and they'll take ten. We hold firm for 190 pounds and let them sweat it off."

"I received off-the-record information that the latest computer run came out at 210 pounds."

"That's how they ease it into us, Brent. We don't officially know that but by letting the information seep out it's supposed to psych us into thinking heavier. Don't fall for it. Who slipped that information to you?"

"Bachman."

"That old fart knows the tricks all right. Did he give you any other poop? I'd like to get clued in as much as possible for tomorrow's review."

"He said that you'd be happy that they are considering ball-locks."

"A peace offering, huh? He must have a lot more that I won't like. It's too bad that I have to disappoint him about feeling elated."

"What do you mean?"

"I was discussing Tricer with Captain Corker just before flying out here. He said, 'Godammit Burnoff, don't fall ~~for~~ the same trap the Air Force did.' On last month's flight two of their bodies hung up during release. He thinks it's the ball-locks."

"Gads, it's their system we base our design on. How come they're in trouble city this late in the game? They're operational now."

"That's why they're so damned embarassed. They've blown millions on ball-locks. God knows they've had ~~thei~~ problems but things were begining to look up."

Now this screw-up. I don't think we really know what caused those bodies to hang up but Captain Corker insists it's the ball-locks. He never ddd like them. When he makes up his mind it takes a bulldozer to move it."

"It doesn't sound like we have much choice as long as the Air Force is suffering post-certification blues. Parts used for testing are always painstakingly perfect but trouble always pops up on production runs. Economy minded administrators start cranking in short-cuts and cost-savings. Remember the aluminum brazing problem we had on Dino a few months ago?"

"Now you've spoiled my whole afternoon. God yes. I hope that's gone away for good. Speaking of problems, what's the analysis of that last flight failure?"

"It looks the same as the two previous flights. Two more bodies broke up on reentry." . . ."

"Shit, man! I know that. Why?"

"Percival Squire is setting up a task force to investigate. Everything went good until they reached that critical altitude and then two of them went kapooey."

"Something else will go kapooey if we don't get some answers soon. Is the security lid clamped on tight? This is real embarrassing after deployment to the fleet has started."

"It's classified secret, sir. We wanted to make it top-secret but that would have eliminated key men on the task force. Some of them only have a secret clearance."

"Be damned sure nothing leaks out. How about budget?"

"It'll run a couple million extra. Squire is preparing a contingency estimate. We'll probably steal from the tactical demonstration program if we can postpone a couple flights until next fiscal year. Of course that means we'll have to increase next year's budget projection to absorb the cost of those two flights."

"In the meantime I suppose everyone's sitting around with their thumb up their ass."

"Percival says he can't do much until the contingency is approved. But we feel certain it's the nose cap that's causing the trouble and it only happens on maximum range flights. That's probably because of the long time it takes to enter the atmosphere at a shallow angle."

"Same old crap! Jetahl screws up and then sits back until they can rake in more profit to straighten out their crappy design. That play of the game has been abused a lot lately. But what can we do? If we twist the screws too tight on contractors they start screaming 'bankruptcy' and we have to bail them out anyway."

"We can feather our nest like Bachman did. Drawing an executive's salary on top of retirement pay is pretty nice."

"Shhh. Don't shoot off your bazoo so loud. There are some game-plans we don't advertise. Now, about the review tomorrow, you will be there, right? Good. I want you to help field their tricky plays. I'm not living with the design every day like you are."

"I'll be there, Commander."

"Good. I'm going to check into my hotel now. I'll see you in the morning. Good day, Brent."

# # # # #



6 - THE KIDS

Dolly sits down next to her brother on the front steps. "Did the folks talk to you about Dad changing jobs, Timmy?"

"Yeah. What's the big deal? Mr. Ramsey just got a new job and so did Johnny's dad."

"That's not the same, though. Mr. Ramsey got a better offer and Johnny's father went to work on another building -- the union tells him where the construction work is."

"What's the diff?"

"If Dad quits it'll be for moral reasons. He'd probably have to give up engineering and learn something different."

"Why? Can't he just get another job as an engineer?"

"It's not that easy. Even if he could there are lots of things he'd have to give up. Mom says he has almost a hundred days sick leave saved up. Also, Jetahl pays for seventy thousand dollars worth of life insurance and he gets longer vacations 'cause he's been there so long. And he'd lose most of his retirement too."

"Can't he get all that someplace else?"

"No, he'd have to start from the bottom. But the real problem is where else can Dad do engineering without making bombs and stuff. There'd be no sense of quitting if he does the same thing somewhere else."

"What'll he do?"

"Mom says he'll have to learn new work and she'll have to find a job."

"Will he make as much money?"

"Probably not. We'll learn to live a lot simpler."

"Guess I don't like the idea after all. I don't wanna be poor. My friends'll razz me."

"Yeah . . . I don't see why Dad can't just keep working. Things are going good. I don't want to live on welfare like Corine's family."

"How's that?"

"People give them all their clothes. And they live where the welfare office tells them. Corine says her dad gets drunk more and her mom is always cross."

"Are those the kids in that beat-up house on Locust Street?"

"Yeah. They don't like it and they won't fix it up. Guess they can't afford paint anyway."

"Creepers! S'pose we hadda live that way. That wouldn't be fair."

"Here comes Debbie. Let's see how she feels."

"Hey, Debbie. You wanna be poor?"

"No, Timmy. Why?"

"That's where we're heading if Dad quits his job," adds Dolly. "I'll never be able to face my friends if I have to live like Corine."

"Me either. And we'd be stuck in town and not be able to go anyplace."

"An we'd jus' getta pair of socks for Christmas 'steada all the goodies we get now."

"We'll have to move to a poor part of town," whines Dolly.

"And I won't be able to charge makeup at the drugstore."

"Why all the long faces?" Gloria asks, emerging from the house. This sounds like a weeping session. What is the matter, kids?"

"We don't want to be poor and live on welfare," sobs Dolly.

"Now wait a minute. Who said we'd have to do that? Misfortune can strike anyone but let's not anticipate it. But let's assume it might get that bad -- it doesn't mean giving up our dignity. Would you rather have Dad keep on doing something wrong just so we can have money?"

"But Mom," objects Debbie. "Why the big deal? Lots of people do that kind of work."

"Because Dad sees things happening that don't agree with our beliefs. And he has to free himself. We've always taught you kids to search for truth and not just rely on what others are doing."

"He ain't gonna make 'em stop buildin' bombs just by quitting."

"No, probably not. But by setting an example he's going to influence others. That's how real change comes about -- by person-to-person influence. If we as a

family set an example for other families the change will take place quicker."

"But how'll we live?" worries Debbie.

"We won't become destitute if we keep our spirit and work together. We've never lived real high on the hog anyway, so the shock won't be too bad. But suppose Dad were a bank robber. Would you want him to continue at that just so we could have money?"

"No, not as a thief," admits Dolly.

"What Dad is doing is worse. At Jetahl they are planning weapons to take the lives from millions of people. Put bluntly, Dad is helping in a mass murder plot. Can't you see what a conflict that is for him; how it is tearing him apart?"

"Gosh! I didn't know it was that bad," apologizes Debbie.

"Me either," adds Dolly.

"I don't want my Dad to be a killer," blurts Timmy.

"Many people say we won't really use those weapons but when we see the extensive effort going into their planning it's not hard to figure any number of ways they might accidentally or intentionally be used."

"We were pretty selfish. Mom."

"We all have our weak moments. Especially when we're frightened. Dad and I are plagued with mental anguish and doubt. We've tried to rationalize our present lifestyle but even if those tools of war were never used we must consider the waste of resources that could be used to help the hungry and sick."

"What's resources, Mom?"

"All the things available to us, Timmy: money, materials, labor. If these were used for such things as housing, nutritional studies and medical research we could help our fellow human beings. When we squander our resources we are stealing what is rightfully theirs."

"I'll try to be braver," repents Dolly.

"If we make our lives a service to others we'll see it through. After all, we have plenty of talent in this family. And we must live our faith. Praising God with words is meaningless unless we embody those words. We haven't really given God a chance to work in us. When we are willing to risk <sup>losing</sup> ~~A~~ security and human respect for what we think he wants, he will take care of us. That is putting faith into practice."

"Jesus musta had lotsa guts to live like he did. Guess we gotta follow his example."

"That's right, Timmy. I have to go to the store now. Chins up. Focus more on what we can make happen. I'll be back in half an hour."

A few days later Dolly and Timmy are in the living room as Debbie enters.

"Hi. Can I join you?"

"Hi, Debbie. We're talking about family spirit."

"Oh yeah? Got any good ideas? I think the idea of a community approach sounds neat. We can all contribute."

"I guess we should search like Mom and Dad are doing. They're making up a plan to check all kinds of things."

"I heard about that this morning."

"I don't get it. Can't understand all that stuff. Sounds like Debbie's social studies homework."

Debbie laughs. "In a way that's exactly what it is, Timmy. A study of social conditions to see where they can fit in and what training they will need. They write down everything they can think of to check and decide which to do first. We can do the same."

"Like what?" asks Dolly, leaning forward eagerly.

"What I've done so far is contact the work-study counselor at school. They have contacts for part time work where students can get paid experience. I'm looking into a waitress job at the Hamburger Hut."

"That's great," encourages Dolly.

"I figure I can earn enough to take care of my spending money and clothes. That'll help a little."

"Maybe I can get some baby sitting jobs to pay for my stuff. I've had a couple jobs so far and I'm sure they'll give me a good recommendation. Mother won't let me sit too late but there are still plenty of opportunities."

"You guys are lucky. I'm too little to do anything."

"No you're not, Timmy. There are all kinds of things you can do. There are lawns to mow and it'll be fall soon with acres of leaves to rake. In spring you can wash windows only I don't think Dad would want you to do any second story work yet. What else? Gardening, sweeping, hedge trimming."

"Guess you're right, Debbie."

"Besides," encourages Dolly, "we'll help you too. You can go to the show with us sometimes and we'll buy you some clothes once in a while. There are things you can do for us, too."



"That's right, Timmy. We'll help each other as well as Mom and Dad. That's the kind of spirit they are talking about."

"Yeah. That's great. I c'n empty waste baskets, sweep rooms and help with the dishes. Gee, it sounds like fun when we do it together."

"That's exactly what we will do," affirms Dolly. "How about it, Debbie?"

"Ab-so-lutely right!"

# # # # #

7 - CONFRONTATION

"Bring the design package for this afternoon's presentation up to the reference table, Stoggs. We'll give it one more check before the meeting."

"It's all here. Whadda yah wanta see first?"

"Let's go through in sequence. Clem'll make the presentation and after we check it we'll brief him on the latest intricacies."

"Heard there was more trouble on the last Dino flight."

"Yeah. Two more bodies broke up. Seems to only happen when they fly the minimum number of bodies to achieve maximum range. On short range shots the reentry vehicles come down steep and get through the atmosphere before the heat soaks into the nose cap. But on long flights they come in at a shallow angle. They travel a long distance through the atmosphere and soak up enormous amounts of heat from air friction."

"The nose cap must be marginal. Only a few bust up."

"We don't understand it all yet. Percival is putting together a working group to investigate the failures. The Navy is really pissed. They're deploying Dino in the fleet and now this pops up. Captain Corker really blew his cork."

"Does that make him Captain Un-Corker?"

"I guess so," laughs Randy. "I hear they even looked into the possibility of some swabby sticking chewing gum on the nose cap. Claimed it could cause uneven heating. I guess there must have been two gum chewers before the last flight."

"They'll probably issue a general-order banning gum in the fleet. Or would it be an admiral-order?"

"Sounds like an admirable possibility, Stoggs."

"Seriously, Randy, I can't see how we can double the range for Tricer when the nose cap won't take it now. We've got a real material problem."

"Jetahl's banking on miracle carbon. It's really stretching material technology and we won't get the results for a long time. It takes almost a year's processing to get from coke to the finished product. We're putting all our eggs in that basket, though, because it's the only hope."

"And if it fails?"

"Then we dicker for shorter range. But we don't think of that right now. A 6000 mile missile sounds impressive when presenting the program to Congress. If they got wind of how shaky that figure is it would jeopardize appropriations."

"Does ~~the Navy~~ understand this gamble?"

"Probably. But they like to play ostrich too. They'll scream if it's unsuccessful but we'll be able to talk them into less range after funding is approved. We've done something like that on every contract so far. Dino wound up with considerably less X-ray hardness than the design goal. Jetahl got a tongue lashing but we still made the same profits and that's management's prime concern."

"Why is extra range so critical? It seems that Dino is a good deterrent. I don't wanta talk myself out of a job but the Russians'll think twice before shooting at us."

"You know that this is a game of bureaucracy and profits. The Navy bombasts the people with propaganda about losing our technological lead and they start a clamor for bigger and better weapons. A 6000 mile missile will theoretically give the Navy ten times the ocean area to hide launching platforms. They could fire from almost anywhere on the globe which sounds enticing when convincing scared Americans that we need Tricer."

"Still can't see why we need all that."

"This is how the argument goes. Soviet advances in sea warfare allegedly threaten our ocean based launching platforms. By increasing operating area ten-fold it makes that type warfare too expensive to be practical. So if the threat to launch platforms is greatest the missiles will have fewer reentry bodies, fly longer range, and be scattered all over the ocean. On the other hand, if the defensive ABM threat is more critical the platforms move in closer, load up more bodies and use the shotgun approach for penetration."

"But that's all based on a 6000 mile range which in turn hinges on the success of miracle carbon. If that flops all the flexibility ballyhoo gets flushed down the john."

"That's the way the game is played, Stoggs. But that'll all happen after we corner the contract. But miracle carbon has more problems yet."

"What's that?"

"The only acceptable raw material is Mythica coke and Mythica is very unstable right now. Universal Carbon Supplies is our subcontractor and their Mythica plant is falling behind schedule due to a strike. In addition, the leftist Mythica Liberation Front is gaining strength. U.S. military advisors and the CIA are trying to prop up the dictatorship and are having a tough time."

"How do you know that?"

"I read a UCS progress report. It was more alibi than progress. Miracle carbon development is a month behind already. And they are having trouble with the processed coke meeting specifications. Here comes Clem now. I hope he hasn't got any last minute changes."

After lunch Randy and Stoggs start across the quad toward the Naval offices. Clem is to meet them there. As they leave the security perimeter Stoggs exclaims: "There's those spooky long-hairs. They piss me off. I'd like to jam those leaflets up their ass."

"I was talking to them yesterday. They claim to identify with victims of U.S. exploitation. They're circulating petitions to stop arms sales to Mythica."

"Would you gentlemen sign this petition? At the top it explained what it's about; the plight of Mythica. We're collecting signatures all over the United States to stop U.S. intervention."

"Not interested," grunts Stoggs.

"I signed yesterday," explains Randy. "Are you having much luck?"

"Not really. We've also been trying to alert defense workers of the dangers in the arms race but they're a hard lot. I guess one has to put up a solid front to work in a place like this."

"It's not easy. Where are you people from?"

"Alta Verde. We are part of the Non-Violent Action Group. Our aim is to alert people on the immorality of our national trend."

"Nobody asked for your goddam advice. You snotty nosed kids think you've got all the answers and you don't even know how to work for a living yet."

"Now Stoggs. Take it easy."

"I'm sorry if we offended you. We do respect your sincere intention to support your family. But what you do here affects the whole community and the welfare of the world. We're only trying to promote dialogue to find alternatives. We can learn from each other. If you're convinced of your beliefs you certainly can't be afraid to discuss them."

"Bullshit! I don't need some freak to educate me. We'd better get going, Randy. We'll be late."

"Yeah . . . So long fellows . . . and good luck."

"How come you encourage those assholes, Randy?"

"They are actually expressing the true sentiment of the community. No one really respects our work except maybe the merchants and them only because we receive a fat paycheck."

"That's the way I wanta keep it -- with a nice fat paycheck coming in every week. Well here we are, Randy."

Clem has already arrived and is deep in conversation with Commander Burnoff. Lieutenant Commander Brent helps Randy and Stoggs arrange the design package in preparation for Clem's pitch. Jim Bachman arrives as they complete the task. His sharp facial profile sets off a six-foot-two height; an erect frame fills the blue suit -- a near replica of his old captain's uniform -- leaving no doubt as to his military background. Even Commander Burnoff stiffens unconsciously as the Assistant Chief Engineer of Jetahl enters.

Now that everyone's here we can begin," announces Clem. As you all know, this is the monthly status review of the maneuvering reentry vehicle. We have here the latest concept of such a vehicle along with trade-off studies for yield and guidance sophistication. . ."

"How much does it weigh?" interrupts Burnoff.

"I was just getting to that, Commander. One hundred and ninety pounds is the figure we're advertising with the 50 kiloton warhead."

"And what's the figure you're not advertising?"

"The present design is 190 pounds. Of course there are more trade-offs to perform and it's too early to firm up anything. Ground rules say to keep all options open."



"Right. But from past experience if the weight is right on the maximum at this stage it's bound to get heavier'n hell by the time we're finished."

"If future direction leans toward a more sophisticated gimbal platform, for instance, it will be a trade-off of accuracy versus weight. Those bridges have to be crossed when we get to them."

"That's possible but right now the emphasis is on weight reduction. The less the weight, the greater the range. And, gentlemen, the name of the game is range."

"Clem is right," interjects Bachman. "There are many configurations to study. If we want higher kiloton yield or greater accuracy or more maneuverability or increased hardness it's going to cost weight."

"I'm not making myself clear," snaps Burnoff. "Those are trade-offs, true, but this goddam design right here in front of us is baseline and I don't want that weight to change. If the decision comes for increased performance the added pounds can be offset by fewer bodies but let me repeat, the name of the game is range. We are basing all our funding proposals on that. No funding, no contract. Now let's get on with the presentation."

"All right, Commander," continues Clem. "Let's start at the nose and work back. The cap is fabricated from miracle . . ."

"Where's the fusing circuit?"

"Right here," answers Clem pointing triumphantly to View-D. "We made a cutaway to illustrate it."

"He feels pretty proud of himself right now," thinks Randy. "But I've got to hand it to Clem. He's getting clever at outguessing the brass."

"What option is that?"

"Option-1."

"Shit! You don't think safety'll buy that?"

"It's the lightest and we have to cut corners. Besides, fleet safety is so friggingconservative we don't have room to design in. Someone just mentions nuclear and they crap in their pants. There aren't those kinds of restrictions on torpedoes and bombs."

"They have reasons for their concern," defends Burnoff. "But we'll look into the situation. If it saves weight it has merit. Let's skip to the release system. What've you got there?"

"The release system, as you can see, has four ball-lock mechanisms with separate electrical signals to each. We used Air Force state-of-the-art as much as possible but had to build in stronger shear registers because side loads are much higher than in a silo. Then . . ."

"Scratch that."

"Commander?"

"Captain Corker has absolutely ruled out ball-locks. After the Air Force screw ups he won't buy into their design. You'll have to figure a far more reliable scheme."

"I believe that should be considered in light of emperical design decisions, Commander. The ball-locks have a lot of testing behind them and it's not palatable to budget critics that millions of dollars in technology be tossed off in such an arbitrary manner." Besides . . ."

"You can make the decision in light of whatever you wish but be damn certain it's not ball-locks. Now, about separate electrical signals, you're not really serious there, are you?"

"We feel the best reliability can be obtained by . . ."

"That's a lot of horse shit. Just last month you gave strong arguments why separate signals were no good. Why the change?"

The meeting continues on this tone until 3:30, at which time Commander Burnoff states he has an important meeting Saturday morning in Washington and excuses

himself to catch his plane. Randy receives instructions from Clem regarding layout revisions and Stoggs mumbles to himself about the show being run by a bunch of old women who can't make up their minds. In this typical fashion another monthly design review comes to a chaotic end.

# # # # #

## 8 - DAYDREAMS

Randy is tired after the review. These hassles drain his patience. If it were a case of deciding the best design the time would be better spent but political faldral always enters the picture. As he drives home his thoughts ramble.

"Deansworth was smart taking off today to make a long weekend. It's part of the game to play sick once in a while. Just call in ill and noone ever questions -- no one wants to start a precedent. Maybe in two weeks I'll take a long week end. Then we can attend the seminar on justice in America."

That causes Randy to recall the inefficiency of the FBI. "I jeopardize my security clearance every time I participate in peace activities. 'It makes you a poor security risk,' they say. But they've never tumbled -- not even when I was introduced at one speaking engagement as a defense worker. I often wish they'd catch on as that would solve my dilemma but it doesn't look like my decision will be made by default. Guess I do threaten some people's corrupt security but



certainly not the national well-being. Anyone interested enough in society to do something about it is immediately suspect in the eyes of vested interest. Unless you blindly follow directions you are not patriotic. 'America: love it or leave it' they say; really meaning accept it the way it is or you'll be squashed. Outwardly things appear rosy for middle America but that is not actually the case. We are never satisfied. We always want more. This lack of fulfillment makes life unstable. That pattern is woven deep into the fabric of our culture. And we never profit from history. As far back as the Ming Dynasty there has been exploitation of the masses. Invariably those masses rise to take everything. The rich of that time knew it and feared it. They provided a secret passage called 'the gate of peace' through which to escape while they hid their wealth in secret places hoping to someday recover it. Today it's the same picture. Knowing they bask in luxury while multitudes are desperate the wealthy guard their estates with burglar alarms, high fences, and vicious dogs. It's a terrible existence to live in such selfish fear."

A zig-zagging motorist interrupts Randy's meditations but only momentarily. "I wonder if I'm just fortunate or if awareness is possible for anyone. It was a long haul for me. Our niece, Jennie, the only child of my only sister, had a part to play in that process. She has always been like an oldest daughter to us. Her sensitivity is like her mother's. Things jumped to a new plateau that weekend she stayed with us. It started with an after dinner discussion that went into the wee hours of the morning . . ."

"Tell us more about the peace rally you are attending tomorrow, Jennie."

"It's to make people aware of our part in Third World killing and starvation, Uncle Ran. Many are scandalized when we demonstrate against the self-serving behavior of America but it causes them to think. No matter how unconscious it may be, they become more aware of surroundings. Then starts the painful process of conscience formation and forming a conscience is always painful. But it's an integral part of our humanity and can't be suppressed if we are to be a complete being."

"From remarks I've heard it doesn't sound like demonstrations are having that effect."

"Those who profit most from repressive activities give us the greatest abuse. They have built a rigid wall around themselves. Subconsciously they know that to face the truth means change and they don't want that. But challenging their conscience stimulates the latent energy for change that may someday surface. On campus we are presently demonstrating against the Honeydew Company."

"Honeydew? Why Honeydew? They manufacture appliances. What's wrong with that?"

"They also make those zap-tubes our military advisors are teaching the special forces in Mythica to use. It's an inhuman weapon."

"Their leaders have requested our help. We are only responding to an appeal from their government."



~~"Based on what the papers say~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~that's the story you get~~ <sup>(from the papers)</sup> but when you talk to people who have lived there it comes out different. The sad part is the way news is censored. I've heard first hand stories which leave no doubt that our CIA was involved in the coup last year. Remember how the U.S. immediately endorsed the new government as a victory over communism -- just because the previous regime was returning some benefits to the people?"

"We must draw the line somewhere, Jennie. The communists have threatened to bury us."

"We seem to always picture communism as a monolithic bogieman ready to gobble us up at the first chance. I'm not defending its evils but it has problems too. It is so divided that when you say communism you need a descriptive adjective: Marxist, Maoist, Cuban or whatever. Communism has never flourished in a country seriously trying to develop. Take Mexico, for instance. As violent and radical as their revolution was, communism never gained popularity. People saw that their government was trying to meet needs of the people and they supported it. It is only when government is corrupt that communism offers hope. If we are really interested in stopping communism we should help poor countries develop and share in the wealth of the world. But the motive of most Americans is to maintain their well-being at the expense of undeveloping countries. Thus, we Americans, six percent of the world's population, control half of the global wealth."

"What else is happening besides the Honeydew campaign?"



"I'm worried about that, Uncle Ran. I'm afraid resistance activities will focus on your work pretty soon. Your company is the nation's number one military contractor, you know."

Randy is caught off guard. Until now he had not visualized his work as anything but most imperative for national defense. She was really worried that they may soon be at opposite ideological poles.

"But why, Jennie? We are holding off a shooting war until a real peace can be negotiated. That's preventing a lot of killing and suffering. How can we stop when we are involved in an arms race?"

"But how much deterrence do we need? Right now the Russians have the capability of destroying our urban and industrial areas thirteen times over and we can inundate their cities and factories thirty four times. Who is ahead? Totality is totality. We have our guns pointed at each other's head. They have thirteen bullets and we have thirty four. Does getting more bullets help our advantage?"

"It's not that simple, Jennie. There is penetration of the enemy's defense to consider and how many of our missiles they can knock out if they attack first."

"Military minds make up those exercises to scare us and justify their position, Uncle Ran. I've read expert opinions on defensive missiles and they are not what they're cracked up to be. Regarding an enemy attack, we could still



fire our missiles before theirs got here -- those who should know claim our early warning system would detect them. So that leaves our present deterrent capabilities still effective."

"We've got to be sure, Jennie. And how long do you think our deterrent will remain effective. We've got to start thinking of the years ahead. This is a nasty game and we can't gamble with lives."

"That's exactly what we are doing. The more weapons we have the more chance there is they will be used. That's really gambling with lives. And what's going to happen when other nations get into the nuclear business as China, and France have? They'll have missiles scattered all over the world and if one of them fires how will we know which country to retaliate against? Maybe the deterrent philosophy had some convincing arguments when only two countries were involved but they go out the window with a third party."

"But we have to update our weapons."

"Why? I'm sorry to speak so bluntly, Uncle Ran. I know it's not easy to hear criticism about something you are so close to but we can't keep going the way we are and avoid catastrophe. Someone must have the courage to change."

Randy slams the brakes hard. In his deep thoughts he failed to see traffic slowing up. But soon he was parked safely in his driveway. Jennie's words still ring through his mind: "Someone must have the courage to change." Those words have

sparked my increasing awareness of what is happening in the defense industry. How gullible I was to swallow those euphemisms for money and status. It was comfortable at the time, though. I was happy with my job and enjoyed a lavish salary. Ignorance was bliss but I had to get smart sometime. I'm not completely free yet but the hold is almost gone and soon the liberation will be complete."

"Hi Dad. Why are you just sitting there?"

"Oh! Hi, sweetheart. Just thinking. How's my favorite freshman tonight?"

"I'm a sophomore now. You got a letter from Mr. Burns. What's he writing to you about?"

"Let's go see."

Randy opens the letter from Keystone P.L. Burns, president of Jetahl. "I sent him a copy of my note to the Jetahl Blast along with one of those peace institute brochures. He writes back: 'The proposed institute sounds very interesting. Of course we must <sup>(exercise)</sup> prudence in what we print in company publications but I would like to discuss this with you at an early opportunity. For the next couple weeks I will be on travel status but will contact you soon after my return.'"

"Are you in trouble, Dad?"

"No," laughs Randy. "That's probably just a nice way of saying no. Where is Mom?"

"In the kitchen. Gee, I hope he puts an article in the Blast."

"Me too. But don't build up your hopes. I've got to see Mom now."

Gloria is putting the finishing touches on dinner as Randy enters the kitchen.

"Hi, honey. Have a nice day?"

"Hi. I didn't hear you come in. I had a good day. How about you?"

"I've got bad news but you probably expect it. We'll have to postpone our Hawaii vacation indefinitely. I'm going to Washington next week and the trip to Nevada is coming up soon. It's just too tight now and I have a lot of things to get ready."

"Washington! D.C.?"

"Yep."

"When did this come about?"

"Today. Commander Burnoff wants someone from reentry systems to be there for consultation while the budget hearings are going on. It'll only be a couple days and maybe I'll get a chance to do a little lobbying for the peace institute bill."

"When are you leaving?"

Probably Wednesday. Should be back Saturday. Don't forget, though, we start our disengaging plan this week end."

"I haven't forgotten. I've got lots of notes on my ideas and I've talked with the kids. Maybe tomorrow we can find out more of their feelings."

"Gotta work tomorrow. There are lots of changes to make before I go to Washington. Aw honey, don't look so sad."

"Sorry Randy. Just disappointed about the Hawaii trip, that's all. Family considerations always have lower priority than your job."

"We'll make that trip eventually. As a metter of fact we'll work it into our plan. Okay? And as for priorities, we'll get them straightened out too."

"Okay."

"That's the brave girl. What's cooking for dinner?"

"Pork chops. You'd better get washed up."

"Right. I'll be back in a jiffy. Start serving because I'm hungry as a bear. And don't forget the applesauce."

# # # # #

## 9 - SUNDAY

Sunday dawns bright as sparrows serenade from the apricot tree outside the Allen's bedroom window. But they have slept in and "old sol" is well above the horizon when they throw back the covers. Gloria suggests the 11:15 liturgy in the hall at St. Andrew's -- a less churchy service having meaning for youth and oldsters alike. Afterward they stop for a dozen donuts which allows two apiece with an extra for Timmy and Dolly -- they burn off calories quickly. Randy and Gloria sip coffee after the others have finished.

"The homily was very appropriate this morning," observes Gloria.

"It was," agrees Randy. "Not too many ministers address today's problems so straightforwardly. And the Gospel really hit home."

"It's in the bulletin. I'll read it again to set the mood for today's task."

"As Jesus was starting on his way a man ran up and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life?'"

"'Why do you call me good?' Jesus replied. 'No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not lie, do not cheat, honor your father and mother.'"

"'Teacher,' the man said, 'ever since I was young I have obeyed these commandments.'

"Jesus looked straight at him with love and said, 'You need only one thing. Go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me.' When the man heard this, gloom spread over his face and he went away sad, because he was very rich."

"There's no beating around the bush there," remarks Randy. "Not many of us measure up to those standards. We are religious as long as we don't have to give up our material comfort. How does middle-class America measure up to those standards? We can't judge people's intentions but we should certainly judge situations as we see them -- and what we see within ourselves."

"That's where it has to start, Randy. <sup>(Within ourselves.)</sup> Just like the preacher said, we are no more free from wordly goods than the young man who questioned Jesus. We'd like Christ to tell us how great we are doing but Jesus commanded us to be free. Freedom is not a right, it is a mandate. Instead, we are slaves to our wealth and lack the courage to be real Christians."

"You're batting perfect. We've forfeited the power to determine our own destinies. To cure our sick society we must reclaim that control over our lives. It takes faith to overcome the fear."

"I'm willing to try. How about you?"

"I can't live with myself if I don't. Let's start planning."

"Where do we begin? I mean . . . what do we do first?"

"Maybe my engineering experience will help. When I start planning something I usually begin with a statement that explains what I want to accomplish."

"Like setting down a goal."

"Right." Randy brings out an empty notebook. "Let's use this for our liberation plan. On the first page we can spell out what our general goal is. We want to work together on whatever new vocation we choose. Let's set our sights high and put down the ideal."

"And we want to improve our lives as well as help others."

"Good. About working together, I believe our work should compliment each other but not necessarily be the same. Do you agree?"

"Yes. But it still has to be adequate to support our family."

"I think we have the general goal pretty well defined now. Let's write it all down and see how it looks. This is flexible. We'll modify it as we acquire more insight."

Randy writes:



GENERAL GOAL:

TO REDIRECT OUR OCCUPATIONAL EFFORTS INTO A HUSBAND/WIFE TEAM THAT WILL:

- \* IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS.
- \* COMPLIMENT BUT NOT NECESSARILY PARALLEL EACH OTHER'S EFFORT.
- \* PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE LIVELIHOOD FOR OUR FAMILY.

"That's good. What next?"

"I think we should break these points down finer. Let's do that on page two. What more can we say about the quality of life for ourselves?"

"We want to enjoy our work. And we want to still have time for other activities."

"It must have dignity -- not the demeaning effect I experienced at Jetahl. Then about others, the work must be of value to mankind and, hopefully, show some visible fulfillment."

"That's important when it comes to providing an example for our family and friends. Do you realize that for seventeen years I haven't even seen your office to say nothing about knowing what you do?"

"Thank God for that. You and the kids would be scandalized if you knew the details. Yes, it's important that our new vocation be completely open so as to motivate others to improve their own life. Now, about our sharing that effort."

We should use all our talents through an autonomous division of labor. The feminist movement has some good points in that respect. There's no valid reason why a woman's job must be in the home and a man's to earn the living. There may be times when I'm out working while you're doing the wash. Can we agree that there is dignity and necessity in both functions and not put each other in preconceived boxes?"

"No problem there. And we should each share the time with the kids. I've often envied you being able to see them more during the day. They're usually just getting up when I leave for work and everyone is tired by the time I get home."

"Let's put that all down."

Randy records their discussion:

#### DEFINITION OF GOAL

##### \* IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OURSELVES

- WORK MUST BE FUN AND ENJOYABLE
- THERE MUST BE PLENTY OF TIME FOR OTHER ACTIVITIES
- WORK MUST HAVE DIGNITY, NOT THE CORPORATE SCENARIO

##### \* IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OTHERS

- WORK MUST BE OF VALUE TO MANKIND
- WORK MUST PROVIDE VISIBLE WITNESS TO OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS
- WORK MUST HELP OTHERS FULFILL THEIR NEEDS

##### \* COMPLEMENTARY EFFORTS

- WORK MUST BE PERFORMED EQUALLY AS A TEAM
- EACH

\* COMPLIMENTARY EFFORT

- WORK MUST BE SHARED EQUALLY
- EACH OF OUR FUNCTIONS MUST BE AUTONOMOUS
- WORK MUST ALLOW EACH OF US TO USE OUR TALENTS, EDUCATION,  
TRAINING AND SKILLS TO THE FULLEST

\* PROVIDE A LIVELIHOOD FOR OUR FAMILY

- OUR OBLIGATION TO THE MATERIAL WELFARE OF OUR CHILDREN  
MUST BE FULFILLED

"Is that it, Gloria?"

"Yep. Looks exciting, doesn't it? I wonder if we're asking too much."

"Aim for perfection or we'll never get it. That's the trouble with the way we've been educated. We were only trained for a good paying job. All that was considered was our intellect and that as if it were a disembodied entity. There was no real effort to form the physical, emotional, psychological or spiritual aspects of our personality let alone the interaction of all five together. Yes, I think we should be optimistic . . . even utopian. Let's not let pragmatic pessimism dampen our drive."

"I guess we are overconditioned to accepting someone else's ideas of reality."

"I'm anxious to spend my time in a happy atmosphere where I feel I have value. At Jetahl I have a strong feeling of aloneness. Amidst all the competition



and pressure I don't feel there are many close friends. I feel most of my acquaintances would sacrifice our friendship if it were in their interest to do so."

"I've experienced some of that myself. Well, let's get on with it. Do we start making a schedule now?"

"Okay. I'd say the first item should be to define a plan to realize our goal. How long do you think that should take?"

"What would it consist of?"

"All the study necessary to set our direction: talking to people, library research, checking on school courses. We should give ourselves a target date to complete those things. What do you think is reasonable?"

"Let's say three months. We want enough time to do something yet we don't want it to drag out."

"Okay. I'll draw a chart with months going across the top. It's almost August so we'll start there. In the left column we can write the phase of liberation. In this case it'll be DEFINE PLAN TO ACHIEVE GOAL. Then straight across to the right we'll draw a horizontal bar under August, September and October. How does that look?"

"Good. The next item is to train and prepare for what we decide to do. That should take a year at least."



"Sounds like a long time but I guess it's realistic. Maybe existence at Jetahl won't be so bad when I see headway being made to escape. Okay, TRAINING AND PREPARATION and the horizontal bar goes from November through October of next year. Let's remember, though, we want to accelerate that if we can."

"We certainly will if we can, honey. Now what?"

"Let's itemize PARTIAL INVOLVEMENT and FULL INVOLVEMENT. Partial involvement would probably start after the preparation phase although there could be an overlap -- let's hope so. For now we'll run the bar from October of next year to . . . it'll run off the page. Well, we'll make a continuation schedule when we get a better handle on how things are developing. Full involvement will be entirely off the page. Okay. That's that. Now we should define the phases."

Why don't we put index tabs in the notebook and assign a section for each? We can outline a description of the phase and also have a place to keep notes on our research."

"Good idea, honey. But I think we'll only be able to outline the first one -- definition of plan to achieve our goal -- right now."

"To me the most important thing there is to set aside time each week to discuss our progress. The whole family. I'd recommend Thursday evenings but we should hold to that seriously. It'll open up communication and make this an action of our family community."

"I agree. Thursdays sound okay to me so I'll list that as step one."

"Another idea on communication is to talk with other people and organizations. If we make our intentions known we can profit from their suggestions. I know of several people to list already and we'll add names as we go along."

"Good. That's step two. Along the lines of research I suggest we review adult education and community college courses and that we ~~look up~~<sup>look up</sup> occupational fields of interest in the library. Those are steps three and four but these first four needn't be done in order. They'll probably be going on simultaneously."

"I'm not certain what you have in mind by library research."

"Say, for instance, that one of us is interested in social work. We could look up information under therapy, social service, counselling and rehabilitation to start with. These would inevitably lead to other areas. There's a wealth of information available that we can't afford to overlook."

"Great."

"We can add more steps as we think of them. And somewhere in there we should identify the work we want. I estimate that milestone should come between half and two-thirds the way through the definition phase; the latter half of September."

"After that we narrow our efforts to that specific field, right?"

"Right, Gloria. We'll have to determine what we need in the way of training, money, and stuff like that to get started."

"A separate step on just financing seems needed. There are many arrangements and foundation grants to become informed about. I can see this definition phase is going to be a real project to accomplish properly."

"A logical approach to solving problems does help. When things are listed in some form of order they don't seem so insurmountable."

"I feel better, Randy. Not so lost. Before it was like looking through the jungle and just seeing trees and tangled vines. Now I can make out a faint trail. I don't know where it leads but I'm encouraged there's a way to go."

"I know what you mean. I'm still scared of changes looming ahead but I can feel us moving and it makes me braver. The excitement of a new adventure is challenging. Say, Gloria, I've got an idea. Let's take the kids to the lake this afternoon and we'll explain what we've worked out. Then we'll stop at the Burger Pit for supper on the way home."

"That sounds neat. Let's go."

# # # # #

## 10 - D.C.

The 747 jumbo-jet groans to a halt and huge mobile lounges pull into position at the doors. Dulles International Airport is an experiment in handling heavy airport traffic from a compact facility. Airplanes do not park next to a sprawling, spider-like terminal with numerous boarding lounges to accomodate the masses. Instead, they park nose-to-tail on a long strip while mobile passenger lounges, big as a cottage, shuttle people between plane and terminal. The terminal itself is nothing more than a large lobby with numerous gates opening into the mobile lounges.

Randy deplanes and seats himself in the people-mover, as he calls it, and settles back for the brief journey to the terminal. He recalls yesterday's briefing session with Clem and Percival. They had formulated responses for every eventuality. He assured them he had the stories straight but Clem and Percival were nervous about the trip. They certainly would have come themselves had it not been for other commitments..



Arriving at the terminal gate, Randy remains seated until the body-crushing rush is over. Then he weaves his way through the crowded lobby to the car rental booth. Minutes later he noses a gremlin compact toward D.C. to the east. Where Dulles Airport Road meets Capital Beltway he swings south as far as Arlington Boulevard. Then he bears east again, skirting Arlington Cemetery and the Pentagon, until he turns south on George Washington Memorial Parkway just before crossing the Potomac. As he reaches Crystal City and his hotel the sky is closing in. It looks like the storm they flew through over Ohio will soon catch up."

After checking into his ninth floor room Randy decides to scout out the Navy Strategic Weapons Branch offices located in the building across the quad. After taking the elevator to the basement floor he finds the subterranean mall which interconnects the Crystal City complex. Upon reaching the other building he boards an elevator for the ninth floor -- the highest it is possible to go with regular services; NSBW offices occupy the tenth and eleventh story but a security pass is required to enter. Tomorrow he will establish the necessary clearance but tonight -- after depositing his secret package with a security officer -- he retraces his steps, retrieves the gremlin from the basement garage, and sets out to find a relaxing place to eat.

He crosses the Rochambeau Memorial Bridge into D.C. and hugs the right lane that bears south toward the waterfront. There Randy chooses one of the two seafood restaurants and enjoys a leisurely dinner. The atmosphere is comfortable but he misses Gloria and the kids. "Separations make me really appreciate them. Someday I hope to bring them here. We'll eat in this very restaurant. Gloria will love the seafood."

After finishing the creamed clam chowder and swordfish steak Randy cruises around Capitol Mall. It is beautiful with all the lighting. Then he circles the Senate and House office buildings to orient himself. After getting the "feel" of D.C. he returns to his hotel. Shortly after midnight the weather front arrives. Each cataclysmic crack of lightning follows before the rumbling from the previous flash dies away. Rain pours in a deluge. The muggy, ionized atmosphere of Washington is washed down the storm drains as cool air moves in. But Randy hardly notices as he sinks into deep sleep.

Promptly at six-thirty the switchboard operator buzzes. The first rays of morning sun rebound off the glass faced walls of Crystal City. Randy pulls open the drapes to view the new day. The crisp morning is beautiful with puffy white clouds drifting across the sky; a sure sign that it will be mucky hot by noon. He showers and dresses quickly so there will be time to pick up a bite of breakfast before keeping his appointment with Commander Burnoff. After ham and eggs with a couple pieces of toast washed down by steaming coffee he is ready to meet the day head on.

Commander Burnoff is in a tense mood. He gives Randy a perfunctory handshake and dispatches his secretary to inform Captain Corker they are ready to perform the briefing. Hardly having had time to seat themselves in the conference room, Captain Corker enters.

"Captain, this is Randy Allen," introduces Burnoff.

"Glad to meet you, Allen," responds the Captain, a slightly built man with a stern face and leathery skin. "Your timing is just right. We start the House budget hearing on Tricer at ten. Admiral Nimrod will meet us there. I'll be responsible for the technical part of the presentation and that's why I want you and Burnoff to give me a quick run-down on last week's review. We haven't much time so let's get on with it."

"You brought some viewfoils along, didn't you?" asks Burnoff. "Oh yes, I see. I presume they are up to date with the revisions we discussed."

"They are," affirms Randy. "It'll take about twenty minutes to run through this presentation and that'll leave ample time to clarify any hazy points."

When Randy finishes his pitch the Captain remarks, "I'm glad you aren't considering ball-locks. I was afraid you might use the Air Force system as a precedent. I'm pleased that you have more sense."

"Yes sir," exclaims Burnoff. "We foresaw their dilemma and decided right then to stay away from ball-locks."

"Good thinking. Now, in the hearings I expect Admiral Nimrod and I will do most of the talking. However, I want you two there for consultation in case things take a turn we don't anticipate. I don't believe they will but with Brimstone on the committee anything can happen. At any rate, keep your ears cocked and tip me off if you see a trap."

Burnoff gives a clipped "yes sir" and Randy agrees.

"Fine," declares Corker, not sounding at all like things are fine. His every nerve appears tweaked to rigid attention. "My chauffer is waiting so why don't you two join me? I'll see that you get back right after the hearing."

The driver makes short work of the trip through D.C. traffic. It is quarter-to-ten when they enter cavernous Room 2118 in Rayburn Building. The walls are lined with portraits of previous Armed Services Committee chairmen along with photographs of planes, ships, guns and battles that were paid for by the committee's authorizations. Only half the forty-three committee members have arrived but their neat rows of chairs are filling up fast. Corker sights Admiral Nimrod seated with his aides. The Captain leads the way in a smart procession as Randy and Burnoff follow. Randy is introduced to the Admiral and all take their seats. Corker and the Admiral huddle for the few remaining minutes before the hearing begins.

Congressman Jones, acting chairman of the committee, bangs his gavel. "The committee will please come to order. This morning it is our pleasure to have with us Admiral Joseph Nimrod, commandant of the Naval Strategic Weapons Branch of the Pentagon, and Captain Raymond Corker, executive officer of NSWB, and other witnesses who will present the Navy fiscal year program for the Tricer weapons system including appropriations amounting to \$1,587,700,000. This program has been the subject of considerable debate over the past months. The last presentation failed to muster enough committee votes to put it on the floor. Weaknesses in the program were pointed out and the Navy was asked to reevaluate their proposal in

light of those recommendations. Admiral Nimrod, have you reconciled our differences for today's presentation?"

"Yes sir. I believe so."

"Good. Then we can proceed. To expedite matters we will abide by our standard rule that each member of the committee will be allowed five minutes to examine each witness after his presentation. Please proceed, Admiral Nimrod."

"Five minutes," thinks Randy. "That isn't much time to find out why they need a new weapon costing billions and having the damage potential that Tricer will have. They'll only be able to find out whether it's bigger and better than the previous system. They'll never get into the whys or what-fors to justify a new weapon and they'll certainly never tie it in with any present philosophies on foreign policy. I can see this hearing is going to be a lot of routine motions. If they took a vote right now it would be the same as later. The real bargaining for votes has already taken place."

Admiral Nimrod begins, "We have finished restructuring the program in accordance with the discussion that took place at the last hearing. I believe we have a mutually acceptable program at this time. Let me first present this prepared statement which will illustrate today's approach and will save presentation time. We shall then address the high points of the statement."

"Very good, Admiral. This statement will be entered for the record. Please proceed."

Testimony continues for the remainder of the morning. The committee recesses for lunch and reconvenes at two. Congressman Brimstone questions Captain Corker.

"Captain, you say that Tricer is required to provide a credible deterrent for the next twenty years, starting about seven years from now. Yet you have stated we don't really know to what degree Soviet technology will advance in that time. Admittedly, your estimates are conservative but we can't really tell how conservative. Maybe we don't have to move as fast as predicted."

"It is true, Mr. Brimstone, that our predictions are our best estimate based on intelligence data. Looking back twenty years we could not have predicted they would come as far as they have with ocean based weapons."

"We have been discussing what SALT agreements allow in terms of numbers of missiles, numbers of launching platforms, and numbers of reentry bodies," continues Brimstone. "The idea behind SALT is to slow down the arms race yet we treat those treaties as technicalities to condemn Soviet programs while looking for loopholes through which we can accelerate our weapons technology. To me this does not represent a sincere attitude toward negotiations. Now we have proposed a bigger and more powerful weapon and all within the specifications of SALT."

"Our responsibility, sir, is to provide the American people with security," defends Corker. "We have certain guidelines and we fulfill our mission as best we can within those guidelines."

"And this committee's responsibility is to ascertain that security is, in fact, achieved and not thwarted by overzealous efforts in certain bureaucratic areas. A few minutes ago you referred to the fact that we could not predict twenty years ago how far the Soviets have developed weapons from then until today. Have you noticed similar advances on the part of China or, perhaps, even Cuba?"

"I do not have that information available, sir, but I can produce it for the record."

"Please do. But we know from general knowledge that China has made significant advances with nuclear bombs. How soon is she predicted to have launching platforms hidden in the oceans? What effect will that have on the deterring capability of Tricer? How can a deterrent be effective with more than two powers involved?"

"I don't see the point you are getting at, Mr. Brimstone."

"What I mean is, if an offensive missile is launched from an ocean platform how do you know whose missile it is? How do you know what country to retaliate against? These are crucial questions when considering a deterrent system. It reflects upon the weapon's credibility over the twenty year period. When is it anticipated that China will have that capability? Will it be by the time Tricer is deployed? Or shortly after? That possibility doesn't seem too remote. ~~That~~ that eventuality we would wind up with a very expensive white sea-elephant that is virtually useless. Do you have the answers to those questions, Captain?"

"We have no intelligence evidence that China will become a threat during the useful life of Tricer."

"Do you have information assuring that threat will not arise? Has there been any effort to ascertain China's development rate?"

"To the first question I can only answer that I have no information regarding such a threat. As regards the second, sir, I believe that query should be directed to the National Security Council."

"Will you ask that question, Captain? And submit the answer for the record?"

"Yes sir, I will ask the question."

"Thank you. As you well know, Captain, I am an outspoken critic of the outrageous defense budget. I advocate looking for alternatives to mutual survival other than being armed to the teeth. Yet there is virtually no budget to uncover such alternatives except disarmament talks and those have degenerated to a legalized system of jockeying for the lead in weapons technology. Meanwhile, two-thirds of our tax dollar goes to the DoD and now you come before us with a new weapon which we should finance because it's more sophisticated than what we have now. Yet you have not investigated some of the simple eventualities which any high school political science student would consider. With that statement I shall rest my interrogation, Mr. Chairman."



"If there are no further questions we shall be in recess until tomorrow morning at which time we shall hear testimony on Air Force appropriations. Thank you very much, gentlemen, for appearing."

Randy follows the Navy delegation from the chambers. "That Brimstone is a real thinker," muses Randy.

"That Brimstone is a bastard," storms Captain Corker when they are back in the limousine. "He must be taking payola from the commies."

"You are absolutely correct, sir," agrees Burnoff.

Randy tries to stay out of the conversation during the drive back. Dog tired after the grueling day in the hearing room he dines in the hotel, calls Gloria, and retires to his room with a good book. He will stay an extra day in Washington on his own time. "Tomorrow I'll lobby for the National Peace Institute Bill. I promised the kids to bring home notes so they can write a report on the position of local legislators. I believe I'll also leave a message of encouragement for Congressman Brimstone. Then, tomorrow evening I'll be racing the sun on my way home. But that's another day's agenda. Right now I'm bushed."

# # # # #

11 - GUM DROPS

"This is short notice, Randy, but Clem said to tell you about the security indoctrination at eight-thirty."

"What a way to welcome me back, Abigale. Okay, thanks. Is it at the usual place?"

"The conference room downstairs. What's this security indoctrination business all about? I just went through that when I started work."

"It's a contract requirement that every person working with classified information be briefed every six months. That's supposed to bring us up to date. Sometimes we get chewed out a little for carelessness but all in all it's a boring show." The main thing is to get your name on the roster to show you've attended. Some slip in five minutes before the end, sign the paper and they're home safe. I'd better get going. I've got a couple things to take care of first."

Randy makes it to the indoctrination on time. As he signs the roster the government security man in charge of the engineering building, an ex-marine sergeant, lays down rules like he was reading the riot act to a platoon of recruits. With balding head and pot belly, ex-sergeant Cullen reviews the traditional oversights and voices the same warnings that have stultified these bi-annual meetings for years.

"We are getting entirely too many violations for leaving file cabinets unlocked," growls the ex-sergeant. He only has three-tenths of an hour that can be charged to the government for this meeting. "We can't keep the enemy from knowing our secrets if this carelessness continues."

"That 'enemy' again," thinks Randy. "Why do we relate in terms of friends and enemies? Will we ever break out of that syndrome?"

"As you know, every time one of you gets a violation Percival gets one too," drones on Cullen, "'cause he's responsible for what happens in this department. We've discussed this problem and Percival's got a scheme to make certain those locks are locked. Percival?"

"Thank you, Cullen. You are all familiar with our security monitoring system but we have been lax. The monitor checks the cabinets but late workers reopen them to put material away. Then they fail to lock up properly. All that is going to stop. We are going to have clothespins."

"Clothespins!" echoes the department in chorus.

"Yes, clothespins. Red ones, green ones, yellow ones and blue ones. Each supervisor will be assigned a color. All the locks in his area will be numbered and there will be a corresponding numbered clothespin. As the security monitor checks each lock each night he will attach a clothespin to the hasp. Before the supervisor goes home he will pick up all the clothespins and check the lock again -- after everyone has gone home! If there are any violations the monitor and supervisor will also get one."

Eighteen minutes are almost up so questions are cut off and the meeting dismissed. It wouldn't do to overrun today as Lt. Commander Brent is sitting in. So the briefing breaks up promptly after expiration of the allotted time.

"Clothespins!" muses Randy. "How screwed up can you get. Timmy would laugh if he saw us grown people running around playing games with colored clothespins. It's an insult to our integrity -- particularly for supervisors. If we've got to be treated like kids how can anyone expect a responsible engineering job from us? Hell, we haven't had a violation in the design area for years. They've all been in Percival's staff area. What a crappy game."

"Randy!"

"Slow down, Stinelli. What's up?"

"We've got troubles, man."

"Okay, okay. What's it all about?"

"The gum-drop tape! Those shitheads in procurement didn't flag the order. It's supposed to be secret and it's sitting big as daylight out there on the loading dock."

"So someone screwed up. Well, let's not lose our cool. Hop out there and get security to classify it."

"They'll hang a ticket on us."

"It can happen in the best of families. But I think they'll be reasonable."

Before Randy can start on his trip report he is interrupted again. "Morning, Smith. How are things? Is Stinelli keeping you busy?"

"I'm staying out of mischief. Have a nice trip?"

"It was interesting. That was the first time I ever witnessed a Congressional hearing. Sorry I haven't had much time to talk with you since you started work. Did you attend that bull session this morning?"

"Yes. I'd just gone through a security indoctrination but this was different."

"I'll bet it was. More colorful anyway -- at least the clothespins."

"Did Stinelli tell you about the gum-drop tape?"

"Yeah. He's out getting it locked up now."

"Will you get any static?"

"Probably. If Security is looking for something to do they'll stir up a little fuss but I don't expect anything serious."

"You sure sound cynical about this work, Randy."

Randy laughs. "I guess I've been around here too long and know all the game patterns. But the fact that this work has outlived its usefulness is what really makes me scornful. The deterrent capability is saturated and continued escalation of arms is tightening international tensions."

"But we're only trying to hold our own."

"Call it what you will. It still keeps things popping."

"Maybe the disarmament talks will be successful soon."

"The only hope of a breakthrough is to make one. That would take a lot of courage but if we seriously want disarmament we have to show good intent. Otherwise let's call a spade a spade and say we're out to whip their ass."

"What would you suggest?"

"Suppose we stopped right where we are on Tricer and told the world, 'Look, we could have built this weapon which could have been launched from almost anywhere in the world but we didn't. This is a gesture to show our good faith. Now what can you do to reciprocate?' It's just that simple. And we can do it."

"It'd mean our jobs."

"I said it would take courage. To us it means a job -- to others it's survival."

"It's not a comfortable prospect."

"And the cheese gets more binding when we realize we are violating international law."

"How?"

"You've heard of the Nuremberg Principles?"

"I've heard of them. Something to do with German war crimes."

"They intrigued me so much that I looked them up at the library." Randy rumages through his drawer. "Ah, here are my notes. When I explained our group's activities to you we discussed reasons why the maneuvering reentry body was classified. I pointed out it's capability for greater accuracy and we touched on how that could allow us a preemptive first-strike capability."

"I remember."

"Planning that capability is a Crime Against Peace. Authorities use tranquilizing language to justify a need for flexibility in responding to a hostile strike but the fact still remains: we are planning the possibility of an aggressive attack."

"Did the United States agree to the Nuremberg Principles?"

"The seven precepts were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1950 and the United States is a member."

"What is a Crime Against Peace?"

"The sixth principle describes that. It includes participation in a conspiracy to plan or prepare for a war of aggression."

"And we are doing that?"

"We are at least preparing. And if I read some of those secret reports correctly the administration has done some contingency planning along those lines, too. How far can you stretch the deterrent philosophy? 'Offense is the best defense' is an old cliché in military circles."

"That sounds wild. How many people would believe it?"



"Not many, I suppose. But if we believe it what should we do? If we were making ovens in a German factory in the early '40s and evidence indicated those ovens were being used for people, what would we do?"

"I see your point. We have to be responsible on our own."

"Right. As the fourth principle says, acting under orders from a government or superior does not free one from responsibility."

"There goes the 'My Country; Right or Wrong' policy."

"That's a non-thinker's philosophy -- a cop-out for someone not interested enough to dig up the facts. If something doesn't hit 'em between the eyes they don't believe it. We should search hard for the answers and then make the best decision with the options we can see."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm working on an escape plan. But even aside from all the legal and moral aspects we've been rapping about there seems to be a violation of some natural law. Something's wrong when a hundred billion bucks goes ~~for~~ destruction while basic human needs go uncared for."

"You've given me a lot to think about, Randy. Well, I'd better get out to the shop. Stinelli asked me to check hardware status because he's all wrapped up in gum-drop tape."

When Smith leaves, Randy meditates on their conversation. "It's hard to recognize corruption when there's no support from others. It's hard to steer a course for justice when the majority are going the other way. In Hitler's day it was hard for the German people to see what was happening. Even Jews entering the gas chambers didn't know what was going on. But today it's obvious if you look -- people just don't want to see."

At lunchtime Randy decides to eat in the cafeteria. Not being very hungry he selects a pineapple salad and iced tea. Returning a few minutes late after lunch he finds a memo on his desk that a government security man will stop by at one o'clock. It's five after now. Randy glances down the aisle and spots a person who is unmistakably his visitor.

"You can always tell a government man. They just look different. They try so hard to be inconspicuous that they appear artificial."

"You Randy Allen? My name's Moss -- Herb Moss. Government Security," The beefy, balding man clamps teeth firmly on a black cigar.

"I'm Randy Allen. What can I do for you?"

"You the guy responsible for that gum-drop tape that came in today?"

"I ordered it. It didn't get classified and we remedied the error as soon as we found out."

"That's what compromises our secrets. How do we know some enemy agent hasn't already found it?"

"I think we can be assured that foreign agents don't snoop through the hundreds of boxes that come in every day. Besides, the odds are pretty meager that they'd zero in on that one box and discover it's secret material. They'd have to run tests to tell what it is."

"They may have cut off a small piece."

"Oh come on now."

"I get paid to look into all possibilities. Why wasn't that order flagged?"

"Because we screwed up. I made <sup>the</sup> mistake of assuming the buyer would know from his previous records."

"You can't make those assumptions in this business. We're playing for keeps."

"All right, all right. I admitted I screwed up. I know we're supposed to be infallible but it's a fact of life we're not."

"You're open for a violation."

"Technically, yes. But we could have shipped that box to Nevada and nobody would have known. Instead, we chose to play ball with you."

"You still violated a rule. We could make an example of this."

"Bullshit! You're over reacting. If you tag me nobody will cooperate with your office again. They'll cover up and play it cool."

"You got any more information that'll throw light on this case?"

"That's the whole story. Are you going to write me up?"

"Don't know yet. Have to think it over. Goodbye."

"So long, Mr. Moss."

Stinelli had walked up during the conversation. "Will he hang a ticket on you, Randy?"

"I doubt it. If he does every boo-boo from now on will be covered up and he knows it. He's stirred up a little dust and I don't expect we'll ever hear from him again."

# # # # #

## 12 - MERCURY

Panorama in miniature rolls by the small, rectangular window as the DC-9 approaches McCarran Airport's east-west runway. ~~as~~ The huge wing dips abruptly toward the ground <sup>and</sup> Randy can view the desert city unobstructed. ~~Swimming~~ pools glamorize every back yard like a collage of blue gems. High-rise hotels along "The Strip" erupt like pinnacles from the desert sand. Sophisticated neon signs repose atop each of the spires to hawk business in luminous color. Las Vegas is a glittering metropolis.

The aircraft sinks toward the ground over less populated territory. Extended landing gear and unfolded wing flaps lend a hawklike appearance as the giant craft swoops lower. Randy sees a different kind of existence below -- tarpaper shacks with back yards cluttered by old appliances and junked automobiles; typically American; riches surrounded by poverty.

The airplane slides onto the runway and the roar of reversed engine thrust drowns out all thought. Randy braces against the deceleration force. Soon the craft is bouncing along the taxi strip and then groans to a stop at gate ten. Randy

steps from the forward cabin door. The sun is low in the August sky and sinking rapidly toward the rugged red mountains to the west.

Inside the sprawling terminal he walks quickly along the familiar carpeted passageway, along the lobby balcony above the gift shops, and finally down the escalator to the baggage retrieval area. While making out car rental forms he keeps one eye on the carousel, watching for his suitcase.

Routine activities accomplished, he is finally behind the wheel of a cold-blooded Pinto heading north on Paradise Road. He makes a left onto Tropicana and continues until he crosses Las Vegas Boulevard, otherwise known as "The Strip." Then he enters Interstate 15 northbound. "Stinelli thinks I'm nuts to bypass the bright spots of Vegas but I can't stand this honky-tonk town. It's pathetic to hear people rationalizing away their bad luck while claiming it will soon change. Just sitting in one of those gaudy establishments makes me realize it wasn't built from charitable donations."

After a few miles Randy turns west on Charleston and then north again on Rancho Road. Finally he is on US 95 heading northwest with the speedometer needle nudging seventy. He relaxes in the bucket seat for an hour's drive that will put him in Mercury. Switching on the radio, he is greeted by a full, rich soprano voice which penetrates the desert atmosphere: "Lord I'm one, Lord I'm two, Lord I'm three, Lord I'm four; Lord I'm five-hundred miles away from home." A pang of nostalgia grips him as he thinks of Gloria and the kids hundreds of miles away. "Tomorrow is Dolly's birthday and I'll be running around Frenchman



Flat playing hero for the national security game. But if everything goes well I'll be home the day after."

Then Randy's thoughts flash to the Blue Ribbon Committee meeting two days ago. "Jetahl and the Navy go through that exercise before every test. Stinelli and I had to describe the condition of every specimen and produce hardware histories for verification. All blueprint deviations had to be adequately justified. The material response group also made their pre-test predictions. Everyone knows there won't be a change this late in the schedule but the brass insist on accurate predictions so there will be no surprises --they are embarrassing. Of course if I'd been careless about buying-off the shop's boo-boos I'd have gotten a good chewing out. But I always consult specialists on every discrepancy. I'm fortunate to enjoy a good working relationship with both specialists and shop personnel. Cooperation is better than competition."

"Kent Wallace made the usual ass of himself though. Roscoe says he's a very unstable manager to work for. Kent has to approve all Jetahl visit requests to the Nevada Test Site and that's gone to his head. It's a status symbol for him but it often leads to bitter bureaucratic clashes that have to be resolved at the General Manager level. He gave a lot of static about one of my visits but Clem laid it on the line. 'All right,' he snorted, 'but when management asks why an engineering rep wasn't there the monkey will be nipping your ass.' My papers were signed that afternoon and I've never had any trouble since."

Randy eases up on the accelerator as he approaches Indian Springs. This

small community in the middle of the desert has a 35 MPH limit on the four-lane divided highway going through its middle. After traveling seventy it seems like crawling but Randy dares not disregard it; the town's only constable earns his keep from traffic tickets. But when Randy sights the local patrol car getting ~~refueled~~ at a service station he cheats a little. And once outside the city limits he romps it up to seventy again.

Twenty miles farther a familiar sign greets him:

~~SE~~MERCURY  
NEXT RIGHT  
~~NO~~ SERVICES

The highway has bent west. Darkness has set in solid as he edges into the Mercury turnout. Then comes the two-lane road pointing directly toward the town lights five miles ahead. "I hope everything is in order at the badge office."

Badging accomplished and lodging secured, Randy drives to the cafeteria. A secluded room, "The Steak House", provides a quiet atmosphere in dim candle-light. There he meets Roscoe and Buckley -- Buckley had arrived earlier in the day. After his steak is ordered he quaffs from a mug of beer while listening to Roscoe explain the next day's agenda.

"The 'event' is scheduled for oh-eight-hundred. We report to CP-1 by seven-thirty. We'll be in a room with closed-circuit TV to watch ground zero. There'll also be a glass panel through which we can view the test control center. TV monitors are also in the hall so we won't miss anything if we step out for a cup of coffee."



"Are we cleared for the CP area?" queries Buckley.

"Colonel Morgan has a list of Jetahl visitors and your name is on it."

"Is he in charge of this shot?" asks Randy.

"Yes. He's the DNA officer."

"Yes. He's the DNA officer."

"DNA?"

"That's Defense Nuclear Agency. It's the DoD agency that runs this test site and interfaces with the AEC."

The conversation then trails off to miscellaneous chit chat. Randy renews acquaintances with Roscoe and some of his crew. Buckley relates earlier experiences when he was assigned to the test site years before while an active duty flight colonel. "At that time they were still testing above ground. It was much more spectacular." Then Roscoe expounds their experiences in Las Vegas and the difficulties he has keeping his crew out of trouble. Long, lonely hours at the site makes men restless and horny. A weekend in Vegas affords ample opportunity to remedy both situations.

When the meal is finished Buckley suggests, "Why don't <sup>we</sup> take a ride to the Control Point and check things out?"

"Sounds good," Randy agrees. "We have a long evening ahead and I'd rather

not spend it looking at the walls of my room. Let's take my car. I just gassed it up."

Randy stops at the pay phone to let Gloria know he arrived safely. Then he and Buckley squeeze into the Pinto and drive north on Mercury Highway. About a mile from Mercury they come to the last guard station before entering the "forward area." Red lights are flashing and signs warn everyone that a nuclear "event" is in final countdown. A badge indicating proper clearance is required to pass this station. Everyone in Mercury wears a badge but uncleared personnel have a different color.

A guard checks their identification and waves them on. Fifty feet up the road they pass a more permanent sign warning against collecting souvenirs because of radioactivity. The highway snakes through a pass before coming out on the desert again. "That group of lights way over there is the CP area," explains Buckley.

"How far away is it?"

"About twenty miles. It overlooks Frenchman Flat to the south and Yucca flat to the north."

From their slightly elevated position Randy can see numerous flashing red lights dotting the black stillness of Frenchman Flat. These are temporary check points set up for evacuating the area and restricting travel to the Ming Urn location. Leaving the hilly stretch the road unkinks and Mercury Highway veers

off slightly to the left.

"The right fork goes to the Ming Urn well," explains Buckley. "It's a few miles past Sugar Bunker where the final assembly of the bodies took place. It's in the northeast corner of the flat; just north of Frenchman Lake. You can't see it tonight but the lake is off to our right. There's no water in it now and the bottom sand is as white as salt."

"Can we get to the CP area tonight?"

"Yes. This highway won't be closed until the last minute. It's the main access to Yucca Flat and Rainier Mesa. They'll close it after the morning rush and run a couple patrol cars across to make sure nobody is stranded."

"All this activity is creepy. It reminds me of a TV show years ago. Two people were lost in the desert and came upon this village but it was uninhabited -- there were only manikins in the houses. When they realized it was a model city for an atom bomb test they panicked, In the end a patrolman saved them. After that the actual test was shown. Wooden buildings first caught fire from radiation and then were blown to smithereens by the blast. Concrete and brick structures fared better."

"That took place right over there on Frenchman Lake," points out Buckley. "Of course the movie was fiction but the test was real. It took place in the early fifties. You'll be able to see what's left of the block buildings tomorrow morning when it's light."

"Radiation was a spooky thing in those days. I guess that was because it's invisible but so are germs and people don't get so upset about them."

It takes twenty minutes to drive across Frenchman Flat. The guard at the CP area gate won't have the access list until morning but he points out CP-1 and is helpful with other information. Then, having done all the investigation possible this night, Randy and Buckley return to Mercury.

"Which dorm are you in, Buckley?"

"307."

"So'm I. We lucked out. The housing office guy told me carpeting has been installed in 307 and 308."

"Yeah. Indoor-outdoor stuff. I saw it this afternoon. It really helps. Now if there were private showers the place would be livable. Haven't you been to your room yet?"

"No. After I checked-in at the housing office I headed straight for the cafeteria. Let's see now, our dormitories are straight up Ranger Street from the cafeteria, right?"

"Roger. 307 is next to the last one on the left."

Randy parks the Pinto at the end of a long, narrow, single story, wooden building that was a barracks when Mercury was an Army camp. They enter the end door and find themselves in a small recreation room which takes in one end of the building. It contains a telephone, a TV set, several chairs and a table. The rules and regulations are posted on the wall: no female visitors, no gambling, etc., etc. A door on the opposite wall opens into a narrow hallway which divides the building lengthwise, with an outside exit at the far end. Approximately half way down the hall on the right is a lavatory. It is partitioned in two. The cubicle on one side is lined with toilets, urinals and wash bowls. The other half is a dressing room and shower complete with decades-old benches and wooden duckboards.

Randy finds his room. It contains two single beds but, unless conditions are crowded, only one person is assigned per room. Other furniture consists of a writing table, a chair and two lockers, each with a hasp. Padlock and key is standard equipment to bring on a visit to NTS.

Randy pulls the covers back to check the sheets. On previous visits they had not always been clean. Bored custodians can save work if the sheets are not too badly ruffled -- even clean ones are badly wrinkled. But tonight they pass Randy's inspection. After setting his alarm he settles back to read a while. "Tomorrow is the big day," he thinks as sleep engulfs him.

# # # # #

## 13 - MING URN

Randy's feet hit the floor as the alarm clock shatters the six a.m. stillness. "Thank God for these carpets," he ejaculates, recalling the cold linoleum he had encountered on previous visits. Carrying toothbrush, towel and razor he shuffles down the hall to the shower room. Fifteen minutes later and much wider awake he returns to finish dressing. As he is lacing his safety boots (safety boots and hard hat are required items at NTS) Buckley appears in the doorway.

"Ready to grab some morning chow?"

"Almost. Soon as I padlock my locker."

"Let's take my car today."

"That's fine with me."

At the cafeteria they order a couple eggs apiece 'over easy' with a side order of hash browns. Randy fills a mug with scalding coffee. We'd better eat



hearty. We might not have a chance for lunch. I'm going to put an apple in my pocket just in case."

They have a second cup of coffee and relax while reading the paper Randy had bought at the door. Finally the time comes to move out. They bus their dirty dishes and head for the car. Buckley maneuvers onto Mercury Highway and they start retracing their previous night's journey.

"Now you can see Frenchman Lake."

"I see what you mean about it looking like a salt flat. It sure is white and there's not a stick of vegetation."

"On the far side you can see the remains of houses."

"Yes. I see them."

"That's what's left of the model town. The wooden and stucco buildings were completely demolished. The brick ones suffered extensive damage but the concrete block construction was best of all. The walls were in good shape although the roof was gone and all the windows were blown out. It was a mess inside, though. Maybe someone would have had a chance down in the basement."

"Were you here then?"

"Not at that time. But I was here for Sedan. Have you heard of that?"

"I saw picture postcards of the crater back at the PX and I've seen the crater from Ranier Mesa. It's huge."

"The largest on the test site . . . far as I know. The amount of energy involved to lift those thousands of tons of dirt into the air and deposit <sup>it</sup> around the crater boggles my mind. It's one of the sightseeing wonders of the base. Maybe someday this'll be a national monument."

"It'll be a monument to man's ignorance and brutality . . . like the German concentration camp, Dachau. It's a museum but the Germans don't like it. They'd rather have Kay Zay, ~~it's~~ old code name, torn down so they can forget about it. Or maybe this would be like the Hiroshima national shrine which a friend of mine told me about. He and his family visited it. While viewing the exhibits of broken and burned bodies ~~they~~ suddenly realized they were the ones on display. This occurred during American involvement in Vietnam and a class of school children came into the museum. Every child was watching them . . . like they were wondering what Americans were really like; if dropping bombs on people who disagree with them is the American way. Yes, a shrine at ~~NTS~~ would help remind us how foolish we can be when we rely on violence to solve our problems."

"What kind of prattle is that? This work is important. If it weren't for our advances in nuclear science this world would be in a helluva mess. This base is essential to national security. It's not like a concentration camp or Hiroshima . . . although I do believe that bomb was necessary."



"I respect your convictions, Buckley, although they're different from mine. I still believe this place exemplifies the morbid, negative side of man even though the actual slaughter doesn't happen here."

"You've sure got the wrong attitude for a defense engineer. If you disagree with this business so much why don't you get out?"

"I probably will do that eventually."

"You'd better watch yourself. If the government agents hear you talking this way they'll cancel your security clearance. Then you'll really be up the creek. You're making a big deal out of nothing. The intelligence types have a lot of information we don't know about. Trust them. They are the experts."

"That's exactly what I can't do. Those experts have lost credibility. They say the U.S. is helping other countries but there's plenty of solid evidence that we support repressive dictators because that serves the interests of corporate investors -- they get cheap resources and labor. And that national security business is all bullshit. If there's really a threat that justifies such enormous expenditures we really ought to know more about it. The only reasons the military can give to justify their outrageous budget are exaggerated bits of propaganda that are usually proved false at a later date. Meanwhile the welfare of America really suffers because domestic needs are not met. But we have money to blow holes in the Nevada desert."

"You're really mixed up, Randy. Well, here's the CP area."

"What a beautiful morning. ~~Evening~~ But it's going to be a scorcher before the day is over. There's not a whisper of a breeze."

"See that little knoll over there across the road? That's where we used to watch the tests. We'd use dark glasses, of course, and the explosions were far enough away not to be of danger. Sometimes the blast would fan our pant legs."

"That looks like a good view of both Frenchman and Yucca Flats. Which one did you watch tests on?"

"Mostly Yucca ~~Flat~~. And that's Yucca Lake just across the road -- north of the knoll. Notice the little airstrip along it's edge?"

"Yeah. It's funny, I've been here several times but I've never noticed all those details."

"It makes a difference when you know what to look for. Otherwise it's just so many thousand acres of desert. See that range of hills north of Yucca Flat?"

"Yes."

"Look beyond them and you can barely make out another valley."

"It's a long ways away but I think I can see what you mean. What about it?"

"That whole area's classified to the hilt. There were some kind of experiments going on a long time ago and nobody's allowed in there anymore."

"I read about a place in Nevada that's unsafe for any form of life. I wonder if that's it."

"Could be. What did you read?"

"Something about it being so contaminated that it's closed to human beings for 24,000 years. It's an area the size of Los Angeles."

"That could be it. I don't know what testing they did but 24,000 years sounds like plutonium. It remains lethal for 24,500 years."

"We'd better get inside and see what's going on. Let's hope Roscoe's list is in order or it'll take us another half-hour."

"Roger on that."

They meet Roscoe in the hallway of CP-1. "Morning fellas. Everything's A-OK except there's no wind. We need a little breeze to disperse any radioactive leakage."

"It's not going on schedule?" inquires Randy.

"H-hour has been postponed 'til oh-eight-thirty. If a breeze comes up before then it's GO all the way. If not, we'll have another thirty minute hold. See the monitor up there?" Roscoe points to the TV set mounted on a wall bracket in the hallway. "Keep your eye on those flags. When they start rustling we can proceed with the test."

Randy stares at the monitor. The screen shows ground-zero. He can see the bell-jar over the well. It is inside that that the specimens and bodies are mounted. The bell-jar has skid-like runners ~~with~~ a cable stretched between it and a winch a hundred yards away -- it cannot be seen on the screen. Laid out on the ground between the well and the winch is a runway of old World War II airport matting -- the type used for temporary runways in the Pacific. Within a couple minutes after the test an explosive charge separates the bell-jar from the pipe and the winch pulls it away from the hole. Many dry runs were performed to make certain the system would slide smoothly. The least jerk could ~~cause~~ damage to the ~~specimens~~ suspended inside.

Also on the TV screen is a flag pole with two flags draped limply about the halyard. The upper banner appears to be blue with a white "X" across the entire face and the lower one is a four-square red and white checkerboard.

"What kind of flags are those," asks Randy.

"They are Navy signal pennants. They hang them from the masts of ships to send messages. The top one is "M" and the bottom is "U" -- Ming Urn."

The three go downstairs to the snack bar for coffee. At eight-thirty the test is delayed until nine and then again until nine-thirty. Still no wind. Randy and Buckley explore the observation room. It is like a balcony above the control center and, being glassed-in, conversation does not disturb the people below. On one wall of the control center are several TV monitors and a few charts. Two of the monitors are of ground zero and the third displays current weather conditions which are constantly updated.

One chart displays the words MILK COWS. "Is that a code name for something?"

"No. That locates milk cows in the area," explains Buckley. "The information underneath indicates there are some cows northeast of here. If there should be leakage the fallout on pastures may be ingested by the cows and radioactive isotopes appear in their milk. Milk is susceptible to picking up those particles."

"Will it delay the test if the wind blows that way?"

"It's a trade-off. The value of the test must be weighed against some possible but not too probable contamination of a few gallons of milk. The threat to our security is the real thing."

"Who's performing the trade-off? I'm sure it isn't the parents of milk-drinking kids."

"It's not that big a thing, Randy."

"It seems important to me. I guess I'm begining to relate to people rather than being completely 'thing' oriented. I can't help questioning the sanity of our national priorities. Life is of the highest esthetic value in this world and yet we continually aim for death."

"You really have got a problem. I hope you straighten yourself out pretty soon."

At nine-thirty the test is again delayed but at nine-forty-five a faint rustling of the signal pennants can be observed. The control center begins to buzz. H-hour minus ten minutes is announced. Everyone sits erect in their places. H minus five. The air is charged. H minus one minute. Everyone stiffens; eyes darting between the clock and the monitor.

"H minus thirty seconds," continues the monotone voice over the intercom. Randy isn't certain what to expect. "The blast will be nine miles away but will I feel the shock?"

"Ten seconds, nine, eight, seven . . ."

Randy thinks about the radar room down the hall. "What are they watching for? What would happen if a plane flew over? Would Central Control 'hold' if someone should appear on the TV screen? Could they now?"

". . . four, three, two . . ."

Randy's back is stiff. He leans forward, eyes glued to the tube.

". . . one, ZERO."

The TV image rocks. It looks like a tremendous earthquake. Finally the disturbance subsides and the picture looks the same as before except for black, sooty smoke coming from a pipe atop the bell-jar. Another underground nuclear explosion has taken place in Nevada.

# # # # #

## 14 - ALPHA, BETA AND THE WATER WAGON

Randy's eyes are glued on the TV. Thoughts race through his head. "Is that all there is to it. The TV program with the model town was more exciting. Oh well, what did I expect? An underground test is an underground test." Then he asks Buckley, "What's that black smoke coming from the pipe?"

"That's what's left of the carbon foam."

"That cushioned the experiments?"

"Roger. Some of the blast always leaks up the pipe. When the overpressure reaches the bell jar it crushes the foam and forces it out the exhaust pipe."

"Is it radioactive?"

"Some of the hot stuff does get through. You can't have a completely sanitary test."



"And it's carried by the wind to contaminate milk that children drink? Why doesn't the whole story get in the papers?"

"Come on, Randy. Don't start that again. The amount escaping is so small. And it dissipates quickly. No one can tell the difference."

"That's what we've always been told. But I wonder how true it is."

Now Randy sees a puff of smoke come from beneath the bell-jar. The cable becomes taut. "What's that?"

"An explosive cord separated the bell-jar from the pipe. The winch is starting to pull it away. Watch."

The bell-jar does not slide smoothly as in practice runs. It jerks violently. Randy visualizes the suspended bodies banging like bell clappers.

"Hey! What happened to all those dry runs?" quips an AEC man a few seats down. "Somebody forget to grease the skids?"

"That's bad," mutter Buckley.

"Nothing can be done about it now," philosophizes another voice in the room.

"Murphy's law wins again," chimes in another.

A disturbance occurs on the TV screen. Dust billows up to obscure visibility. When it clears there is a huge crater at ground-zero.

"I hate to keep showing my ignorance but what happened?"

Buckley chuckles. "You never appreciate that phenomenon until you've seen it. That's why the bell-jar was pulled away. It's called subsidence."

"Subsidence?"

"Roger. The energy from the blast compresses the earth all around it. And you can imagine how compact the earth already is at that depth. It makes a spherical void thirty to fifty feet in diameter filled with extremely hot gasses. As those gasses cool and contract the column of earth above it caves in -- subsides."

"Wow!" Is it safe to go out there now?"

"UnhuhwonIt could settle more. And there's still plenty of pressure down there. If it breaks through it'd be like sitting on top of 'Old Faithful'."

"Pretty shaky, eh?"

"Roger. There won't be any more excitement for a while. Let's grab a cup of coffee. When the rad-safe\* crew arrives they'll turn the camera around so we can see the bell jar again."

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\*Rad-safe is the abbreviated term for the radiation safety organization responsible for monitoring radiation levels and controlling access to contaminated areas.

Randy agrees. After the tenseness of the last hour he is ready to throw a caffeine fit. The steaming black fluid is delicious. Even though the day has warmed up, the building is still chilled from an overactive air conditioning system.

Back upstairs in the hall they see activity on the screen. Ghostly figures entirely shrouded in coveralls, hood, boots, gloves and masks are moving around the bell-jar. One is taking readings with a geiger counter. Another is attempting to talk through his mask into a handi-talkie.

"People are there already!"

"Roger. Rad-safe gets in there quick after the blast. They have to check things out before we can see the specimens. It must not be too hot. They're right up to the bell-jar. We'll probably be there in a couple hours."

"Sounds risky."

"It's not bad. There's no gamma radiation now. All we have to worry about is alpha and beta types. Thank God we don't have neutron particles in this test. They are really nasty."

"I'm rusty on my nuclear physics. What are the alpha and beta types?"

"Alpha particles are nothing but an ionized helium atom. If you remember your chemistry, helium contains two protons and two neutrons in the nucleus and

two electrons in orbit. To ionize an atom is to strip off the outer layer of electrons. Since helium only has one layer it means removing all electrons. That's an alpha particle -- the nucleus of a helium atom. A sheet of paper will stop it but they are very reactive. They can be washed off, as can beta particles, but the danger is more severe if breathed or eaten."

"And beta particles?"

Beta decay of particles releases neutrinos and electrons. Occasionally beta-plus decay is encountered when positrons are released instead of electrons. Basically, they are electrons with a positive charge. If beta particles are too concentrated the radiation level can be dangerous to living tissue. That's why they check with geiger counters. Otherwise, protective clothing and gas masks keep us safe."

"These particles are radioactive fallout?"

"Roger. And I can see it coming again . . . about the little kids drinking milk. Before we get into another discussion on nuclear morality let's hop in the car and head for where the action is. We've seen all there is to see around here."

Pulling onto Mercury Highway Buckley suggests: "You be the navigator. Check the map. If my memory serves me correctly, about half way across Frenchman Flat there should be a road running east that ties in with Sugar Bunker Road. I believe it's called Triple Point but it'll probably be identified by a

number. It'll save going clear back to the fork.

"I found it. The number is 5-07. It's about ten miles from here and meets Sugar Bunker Road just a little south of the bunker."

Fifteen minutes of driving get them to that intersection. There they encounter a roadblock. "Can't go any further 'til rad-safe gives the okay," explains the patrolman.

"That's the rad-safe van over there," points Buckley. "Let's see if anyone knows what's happening."

As they walk around the van, a vehicle the size of a school bus, Randy peers inside. A narrow aisle down the middle is lined on both sides with bins of coveralls, boots, masks and all the other paraphernalia worn in radiation areas. While he is gawking inside, a jeep skids to a halt amid a billowing cloud of dust. The driver, garbed in yellow coveralls, boots and a hood thrown back on his shoulders, has just come from the Ming Urn site.

"He must be one of the spooky characters we saw on the screen," contemplates Randy.

Buckley walks toward the jeep. Roscoe has arrived with Lieutenant Mudd; Brent's man who covers underground testing. They converge around the driver."

"Things look good. The crane is placing a prefabricated wall around the bell-jar for security. Those with established need-to-know will be admitted if properly suited-up. We're moving the van in now and the rest of you can follow."

"Hop into the car and let's get going, Randy. We want to be suited-up and watching when the cover is removed from the bell-jar."

"Right. Let's hope we can tell actual test damage from what might have occurred from jerking. If Roscoe's crew did a good job putting up that nylon webbing it may have kept the bodies from banging together."

"Roger. If there's any post-test damage it'll have to be conclusive or the AEC'll insist it's a failure. Their bombs inside the bodies have been having so many failures that they need company in their misery."

The rad-safe van pulls into position. Rope boundaries are strung to control access. Randy and Buckley follow Roscoe's crew through the van to get into suits. The Jetahl crew will do the work of removing the experiments. "The radiation isn't too hot so you'll only need single suits," announces the attendant.

"Thank God for that," mutters Buckley. "It's bad enough running around the desert in August with one pair of coveralls."

In the field it is customary to don the rad-safe suits over regular clothes rather than strip to skivvy shirt and shorts. It would be cooler if this could

be done but the crowded van just doesn't have the facilities for locker space. Randy picks out a medium-sized pair of white coveralls and slips into them. Then he pulls a pair of rubber boots over his safety boots, tucking in his pant legs. This is a tricky chore in the crowded van and perspiration is breaking out already. Next comes surgeons' gloves which are pulled over the sleeves of the coveralls. Over the head goes a hood which drapes about the shoulders with only a hole for the face to protrude. At this point Randy and Buckley take turns "taping" each other up. Two inch wide yellow plastic tape is used to seal all openings in the clothes. The zipper from directly under the chin to around the crotch is taped as are all the pockets. Gloves and boots are taped to the coveralls where they are tucked in and, finally, the hood is taped all around the shoulders. An attendant places Randy's badge inside a plastic bag and clips it to ~~his~~ **his breast** pocket along with a dosimeter. The dosimeter, a cylindrical object looking not unlike a pencil flashlight, records the radiation dosage in milliroentgens. Inside the NTS badges are film and other substances to accurately determine radiation to which each person is exposed but they are only checked monthly. On occasions of high exposure it is easy to exceed the monthly allowable dose in short order. Therefore, dosimeters, although less accurate, are used for on-the-spot monitoring. A log is kept on each individual. When he reaches the allowable he is grounded for the rest of the month.

Randy selects a gas mask, squirts anti-fog spray on the inside of the lenses and wipes them dry. He remembers to remove the paper seal covering six holes in the bottom of the cannister. Once he had forgotten this minor detail and couldn't breathe.



The suiting-up is complete. He dons the hard hat furnished by Roscoe and a pair of plastic work gauntlets over the delicate surgeons' gloves. Stepping from the van looking like a white ghoul, Randy is checked by an attendant and admitted to the walled-off area by a guard.

The walls contain an area thirty feet square and <sup>they</sup> are twenty feet high. The reentry bodies can be lifted from the bell-jar without exposing them to view from the outside. The dangling cable from an overhead crane is attached to the bell-jar cover. As Randy mounts the wooden steps of the scaffolding, Roscoe's crew is unbolting the cover. A rad-safe man, distinguished by his yellow garb, is standing by with a geiger counter.

The cover is loose and the crane operator hoists away. As it rises the geiger leaps off scale. Waving feverishly at Randy amid unintelligible grunts, the yellow-clad figure lays down his counter and hastily starts taping a plastic tarp over the open end of the ~~bell-jar~~ cover. Randy jumps in to help. Containing the soot minimizes the radiation level.

Straining to see through the gas mask lenses into the dark interior of the bell-jar bottom, Randy notices that one body is tangled in the webbing with a broken nose tip. "That's obviously post-test damage. But I suppose the AEC boys will say it can't be proved and insist we haven't demonstrated structural integrity." Waving to a photographer Randy gesticulates that a picture be taken of the entanglement before the vehicle is removed.



An hour and a half later the recovery operation is complete. It seems like half a day and twenty pounds of sweat to Randy. Everything visible has been scrutinized and photographed before and during recovery. Buckley has pages of comments in his notebook and if he has succeeded in keeping it clean he will be able to take it with him. If contaminated, he'll have to copy everything into another book and leave that one behind.

Now comes the decontamination process. Masks, boots and gloves are removed. An attendant recovers the dosimeter and badge from Randy's pocket and helps him peel out of his coveralls without contaminating his clothes. He then scrubs up with cold water -- a welcome treat after that sweat bath. "Wish they had a shower here." After drying with a paper towel, his hard hat, which had been scrubbed with alcohol, is returned. Next comes the geiger counter test.

"What size boots are those?" asks the geiger operator.

"Never mind. They won't fit you. Besides, I'm watching that needle and they aren't hot."

"Okay, okay," quips the operator with a smile. "Can't blame a guy for trying." It is legend that rad-safe men acquire their footwear by condemning boots they like and this little exchange is a role-play of that reputation.

After retrieving their badges, Randy and Buckley walk a couple hundred yards to the Jetahl office trailer. Randy calls Percival to report on condition of the

~~experiments~~. This develops into a charade of hints and double-talk in order to relay classified information -- a gross violation of security rules.

That completed, they relax and enjoy one of Roscoe's ice cold beers. There are always plenty on hand. At five o'clock they leave for Mercury to shower-up before supper. Then, refreshed and fed, Randy and Buckley spend the evening in the dormitory discussing test results.

Next morning as they arrive at the cafeteria a discussion is taking place outside the front door. Roscoe, Lt. Mudd and others are involved in a hand-waving conversation. "What's all the excitement?" asks Buckley.

"Don't you know? Weren't you there?"

"No. What?" adds Randy.

"The well blew it's top last night. It vented. At quarter after five. Dust and ashes shot fifty feet into the air. The wind had shifted. All that shit fell all over the office trailers. People were scurrying for shelter. We had to evacuate fast. Came back here to clean up."

"That was right after we left. Guess we didn't get out any too soon."

"Rad-safe has the area closed off again. Can't go back until it's cleaned up. I'm glad we got those specimens boxed up and out of there."

"What happens now?"

"Water wagons are hosing off the trailers and equipment. Transit-mix trucks are shuttling concrete in there to seal off the leak. When everything's restored to order we can get back to work."

"I think my job's about finished in there," says Randy. "I want to spend a little time with you to clear up some details and then I think I'll head back home."

"Ditto on that," adds Buckley. "We can fly back together. But right now why don't we get some coffee and vittles?"

"Roger," chorus Roscoe, Randy and Mudd.

# # # # #

15 - ZERO DEFECTS

"Morning, Newspell. How was the Labor Day holiday?"

"So-so, Randy. The family and I visited relatives but we could've used more time. It was a good weekend, though."

"I hear you represent us on that new committee management started . . . the one to improve employee relations."

Newspell nods his red head affirmatively. "The crew elected me while you were in Nevada. We call ourselves the Drudge Committee. Jake is chairman . . . better known as Captain Drudge."

"You guys have a great sense of humor."

"Things would be unbearable if we didn't have some fun. I guess the Drudge Committee came about because of the scare Jetahl got a couple months ago. The

NLRB election went against unionization but it was a close call. Management thinks it's worth while spending a little money on employee appeasement."

"How is the committee working out?"

"It's too early to tell. I don't expect any big shakeups. We have no real pressure on management. So far we've won some token concessions such as new name plates for everyone's desks and Industrial Relations now publish a green sheet spelling out information that helps employees. But as far as real renewal, we always get sidetracked. The few answers we do receive are loaded with all kinds of apologies to maintain the status quo."

"That figures. If it doesn't make money it's not workable. I saw their rejection of the four day week at ten hours a day. ~~It would cause problems re-~~ garding shift schedules, security surveillance and accounting -- nothing insurmountable but extra work and, therefore, extra expense."

"Another case was the argument against a portable pension plan. The union was pushing that. Management never openly debated the issue. Their replies were always in writing with carefully chosen words. A legislative survey showed that a portable plan is absolutely feasible if industry would post bonds in a retirement account periodically instead of waiting until the employee retires. Then his benefits would be guaranteed. If he left for any reason he wouldn't lose what was accumulated. And when he hires-on with another company his retirement endowment would grow. But the bonds would cause the company to tie up money and they are fighting it."

"You lost me somewhere. Doesn't the company put money in a retirement fund for us right now?"

"Nope. Bonds for your retirement are not posted until the date ~~we~~ retire. If Jetahl went bankrupt today we'd lose all our benefits. What we have right now is paper security. We are okay as long as the company is solvent . . . and as long as we continue to work here. But if they can lay us off before retirement age that's a big chunk of profit for them."

"I didn't know that. How'd you find out?"

"When we started the Drudge Committee we began researching company policy. Each of us took a subject. Mine, obviously, was the retirement system."

"Don't shake things up too much or you'll be abrogated. You can't expect much working in the system. The dog isn't going to bite its own tail."

"You're probably right. By the way, the division administrator stopped by to see you. He'd like you to contact him."

"York? Okay. Thanks. I have to go up to the front offices pretty soon."

Later, after leaving some papers for Percival, Randy stops by the engineering administrator's desk.

"Oh yes," recalls York, it was about the defense bond drive. We'd like the division to be 100 percent. Maybe because of your recent business trips you didn't get a chance to sign up."

"No, that wasn't it. I cashed-in my war bonds and stopped the payroll deduction. I don't like the way the government uses my money to suppress Third World countries ."

"Oh! Well! You'll only have to allow a twenty-five cent deduction and it'll help our division image. That won't hurt you."

"It's not the money. I'm saying 'no' to injustice. I know it's a token resistance -- just like not paying the telephone war tax. But when people see that our division is not 100 percent they'll start wondering why."

"I can't talk you into it?"

"No, you can't."

Randy is churned-up as he returns to the design area. Abigale beckons to him. "Clem wants to see you."

Clem is bent over his desk. "You wanted me, Clem?"

"Yes. At one-thirty this afternoon Stoggs is going to receive the Zero

Defects award from Jim Bachman. You and I will accompany him. He was chosen as the honoree from our department this month."

"Stoggs? I thought he worked too slow to suit you?"

"Speed has nothing to do with ZD. You've often pointed out that he's very accurate. He makes practically no errors, virtually zero defects. We have to pick someone and Stoggs is as good a choice as any. Maybe it'll motivate him to speed up a little."

"I doubt that. He knows this business inside out. He's not about to change his routine."

"Probably not. Anyway, meet me here at a quarter after one. Be sure he's wearing a tie. If he didn't bring one, borrow one. They'll take his picture when Bachman hands him the plaque and pin. Right now I've got to get this rush report out for Percival so I'll see you then."

"Okay. A quarter after one."

Abigale hands Randy a brochure as he emerges from Clem's office. "This is for a political donation to the party of your choice. Jetahl's goal is 100 percent investment in America's future."

"Bullsh. . . "Scuse me. I'm feeling too pushed. I just had a set-to with



York over war bond deductions. Now management wants contributions to political parties so it can crow about the patriotism of Jetahl people."

"It's all voluntary."

"There's a lot of pressure on these voluntary things. I guess there's a big squeeze on industry by the administration to donate to their campaign. The president has been favoring big business for four years and now he wants a kick-back. Jetahl must be really under the gun after the \$250 million federal loan guarantee to bail them out of bankruptcy. Jetahl's too broke to kick out any payola but by asking employees to donate, management can claim credit for the outcome. And the employees see the handwriting on the wall. They know the incumbant party means big weapons contracts. It's all very clever and very subtle."

"I'm sorry to upset you. But I do have to pass these out."

"I know. Just send mine back marked 'declined'. I'll see you later."

Randy notifies Stoggs of the presentation and then asks Stinelli to come to his desk.

"Today is the day of ZD, bond drives and political contributions. We might as well complete the circle and talk about the Cost Improvement Program. Did you submit that CIP suggestion on the antenna ring manufacturing technique?"

"I did, man. But York didn't dig it."

"No?"

"Gotta be a direct savings for Jetahl. The mounting ring is a contract job."

"If it lowers production costs it helps the incentive bonus."

"York sez, 'no way.' It just doesn't tingle his dick. Sez the paperwork and retooling would eat up all the savings."

"Bullshit! What does he know about tooling? We've run through all that and there's still a substantial savings."

"True, Randy, true. But the rules say a CIP's gotta be <sup>a</sup> direct savings. York's a company man. The policy book's his bible."

"Okay. We'll just drop it."

"Sure glad to hear you say that. I was rapping with Tom. He cranked one in last month. It bounced back three times. Each time he hadda make the savings more seductive. He tried to chuck the whole kaboodle but his boss leaned on him. Their department is draggin' behind their CIP quota and their manager won't get a magabuck shingle to nail in his office."

"What the hell is that?"

"When a department shows a million bucks saved the manager joins the mega-buck club. That's why the savings are jacked up so high. It's all a paper exercise. But, on the other hand, if a department falls behind its quota the manager gets a lot of static from upstairs. And he passes it down to the troops."

"I'm convinced. We'll forget the whole thing. I'm going over to Aero to discuss the nose cap contour. If anyone calls, I'll be back in half an hour."

"Shortly after lunch Stoggs appears at Randy's desk. "Guess there's no way to get outta this Mickey Mouse bullshit."

"It's not really that bad. Receiving the ZD award is somewhat of an honor."

"Horse manure! Uncle Whiskers makes the defense contractors institute a ZD program so they go through the motions. Remember when all this first started? We had ZD coordinators and meetings and bulletins and . . . Management pushed all that master craftsmanship crap. Said we should take pride in our work. But they're really only interested in how much they can get out of us. The ZD program gets lip service while the push is on production. Now I get a tin pin for **quality** work but I've been put down on performance reviews and pay raises for poor quantity. I almost decided to get sick this afternoon."

"Sometimes it's best to just go through the motions and say 'to hell with it'."

"I got my twenty-five year pin and a pat on the back two months ago. I was turned down for a raise last month. Today it's the ZD award. The next logical

step ia a surplus notice."

Randy knows it's useless to console Stoggs. He's happiest while griping. So he just listens sympathetically.

Clem, also, is far from a humorous mood. "Do you know who's getting the Supervisor-of-the-Month award. Jock Kester! What he deserves is the Kiss-Ass-of-the-Year button. . . right up anus!"

"Ridiculous," agrees Randy.

"He can't even keep track of his section. That's why his jobs are draggin'. But he's got Percival fooled."

"Don't worry," adds Stoggs. "It's all a rotation deal. Today is Jock's turn for a hero medal and mine for the ZD pin. Next month someone else'll be in the barrel. When they go through the roster they'll either have to start over or hire a new crew."

Randy welcomes quitting time. "But then," and he shrugs, "today is just another slice of corporate life . . . another play in the game. Every day presents a **fresh** challenge to reason soundly in this insane drama of motions and manipulations."

# # # # #

## 16 - GLAD WE GOT SMART

"Can we make it quick tonight, Dad? There's a TV special on at eight."

"We'll try, Timmy. If we get down to business quickly we can be through by then." Randy and Gloria are seated on the couch with Timmy while Dolly and Debbie sprawl on the floor. "We've been having family councils for six weeks now. According to our plan we should decide what our future work is going to be. Mother and I have made a decision. Gloria, why don't you tell yours first?"

"Are you going to work with retarded kids like you were telling us about?" Debbie asks excitedly.

"Not exactly retarded. Those with learning handicaps. Sometimes it's a perception problem or maybe it's difficulty coordinating two or more senses . . . like not being able to visualize what you feel. I've started a couple of courses and I've applied for a part time job with the school district. Maybe I'll be able to start in a couple weeks as an aide to the EH teacher -- that means educational handicapped

educational handicapped. I'll probably work mornings. That'll give me on-the-job experience while I'm taking courses."

"Will you be at my school?"

"No, Dolly. I won't be working in junior high. I might be at Timmy's school sometimes, though. Only don't go spreading the word yet because I haven't been formally accepted for the job."

"Tell me when you are so I can let the kids in my class know."

"I will. Now, let's hear from Dad."

"Well," starts Randy, rubbing his jaw. "You know that I've been taking a community college course too. We jumped the gun on the preparation phase so we could get in at the beginning of the semester."

"Whatcha taking, Dad?" prods Timmy.

"It's called 'Writing For Publication.'" I like writing and I believe I've had experiences that would be valuable to others. I've only done technical writing in the past but journalism always intrigued me. Now that I have a chance I'm going to try it."

"Are you going to write a book?"

"Not yet, Debbie. I'll concentrate on magazine articles at first. It's a hard field to break into -- at least in the markets that pay enough to live on. I'm going to start writing now. When I do resign from aerospace work it won't be such an abrupt transition although we can go for a while on our savings."

"What are you going to write about," Dolly asks.

"My experiences in the military-industrial complex. And the insight I've gained from being inside the corporate structure. Then, too, I'd like to write about family experiences. Also, there are a lot of outdoor adventures to tell about. How's that for a starter?"

"You ought to write a book."

"Maybe I will someday, Dolly. Our experience might help another family renounce affluence."

"What's affluence, Dad?"

"An abundance of wealth, Timmy. Having more than is needed for a decent life."

"Are we that way?"

"We're not real rich, Debbie. But we're not hurting, either. Just look in our garbage can. Many families would live on what we toss out."



"Is it wrong to have what we have?"

"I think so, Dolly. If everyone lived as we do our key resources would be depleted in a few decades. And humanity would probably become extinct because of the unbalance of nature. Millions of people are starving right now while our cupboards bulge and our garbage cans overflow. That is not right. Americans are only six percent of the world's people but we consume over half the resources. That's not right either. We'll have to live more modestly than we do now if everyone is to share equally."

"Margie's father says things are pretty risky now. He says if you've got a good job you'd better hang onto it."

"I know things are risky, Dolly. But let's look at ~~them~~ realistically. Being deluded into performing unjust work is a cancer in America. When Mother and I first started out in marriage we were poorer equipped to meet the future than we are now. But by golly we made it. Now that we are comfortable it'd be nice to sit back and enjoy it. The hard part is going back to stretching paychecks. Yet we call those earlier struggles the 'good old days.' They really were more romantic . . . spiced with the challenges of life. That's more than we can say about the present rat-race. So if we can purge ourselves of that mental block about security that society imposes upon us we really free ourselves for a more exciting life."

"I see what you mean," says Debbie. "Worrying about money is the root of all evil."



"That's right. And we should look at that in proper context, too. We immediately associate destitution and shame with unemployment. Yet, aerospace workers face job losses all the time. It's an occupational hazard. But I've never heard of one engineer who has starved or even had to go on welfare. Some have sold their homes to work in another area but I've never heard of any who were forced to sell."

"From that viewpoint it doesn't look so gloomy," Debbie agrees. "But how about this communism business. I still get confused there. My social science teacher thinks it's pretty bad. We had a discussion in class last week. Some of her arguments sound convincing. If what she says is true your work is real important."

"I've been through those thoughts many times. You probably remember how I used to argue about how important it was to stop the communists in Vietnam. But after some serious study I've arrived at a different picture of that threat.

It has a lot of bad in it but it must be seen in proper relationship with other -isms. The facts should be studied. Where has communism flourished and why? Ask the same question about where it has failed. Why are some countries that have tried communism now moving away from it? You should also study the effects of capitalism, fascism, imperialism and all the others. Be able to recognize what is good and bad in each."

That's what I'm trying to do. I'm writing a paper on it. You saw my outline last night.

"I noticed you always spelled communism with a capital 'C'. Many people do. I think that's a subconscious expression of fear. We don't capitalize democracy or fascism but we use a large 'C' when we spell communism. Well, . . . we only have a little time left before Timmy's TV special starts. Do you kids have anything to share?"

"I told Mom already," begins Debbie. "I heard from the Hamburger Hut. My application has been accepted. I start work next week. It's only an after school job but I'll get a free dinner and the pay will take care of my clothes and spending money."

"Great! It gives me courage to know you are pitching in to help."

"That's right," Gloria agrees. "We're proud to have a daughter so responsive. And I believe Dolly has something to share, also."

"I have two baby sitting jobs now. On Wednesday evenings I can't stay up too late because of school but I sit with the Potter children until nine-thirty. On Friday nights I sit for Mr. and Mrs. Roberts until midnight. That takes care of my spending money and leaves a little for special clothes."

"I'm real proud of the way you kids jump in to help."

"I got somethin' to say too."

"Go ahead, Timmy."

"I been savin' it for a sup-rize. Mr. Cottle gives me fifty cents a week to mow his lawn. It's not very big but he's awful old. He can't do much work. He's real glad to have me do it. Look, I've got two dollars already. You don't have to gimme no more 'lowance."

"Real neat, Timmy. You're not only earning your own allowance but someone else is better off because of your service. That's an example of wholesome work. Everyone is fulfilled and there is no exploitation. All of you have been a real source of strength to me tonight. We can't help but achieve our goals with this kind of sharing."

"That is a wonderful surprise," adds Gloria. "I was wondering where you've been disappearing every Monday. I might also add that Timmy has been taking the garbage out every day without being asked. I'm real happy with the way all three of you have taken on responsibility."

"It's eight o'clock. Can I go now?"

"Okay, Timmy. This has been a wonderful meeting. Thanks again ... to all of you."

Randy and Gloria sit in silence for several minutes. Then Randy speaks, "Our efforts are paying off in ways we hadn't anticipated."

"They really are, honey. We started out trying to revive our own degenerating style of living and now we see the effects on the children. I never realized we

weren't setting an example for wholesome living. I saw that responsibility in abstraction but I didn't understand its full dimension. I believed responsibility meant unquestioned loyalty to one's job. Now we've shaken up that bag of beliefs and the kids are trying to fit the pieces back together into a more meaningful pattern."

"I know. It's easy to forget we have the primary responsibility for educating our kids, Gloria. We do delegate some to the schools because of their special talents. A healthy society should pool talents. In that way our culture can really be a co-op. But too often we relinquish all responsibilities -- or allow them to be usurped -- to pursue some self-serving endeavor."

"It's hard to hold on to that responsibility. Or maybe it's because we've given up so much that we can't regain control."

"It's important that we do regain control. Except for a few conscientious teachers, the kids learn only social norms and today that's not the best moral teaching. The sad part is that they learn the same thing at home. We are so busy pursuing the art of money-making that we have no time to interact with the kids. Albert Einstein said that it's essential for students to acquire a lively feeling for values. That if they don't have a vivid sense of the beautiful and the morally good they would be more like well trained dogs than harmoniously developed personalities."

"He was a smart man. He understood the danger in our education system. I learned a lot about the values our kids have acquired when they were so worried about being poor."

"That's the way we educated them. Poverty is a sign of failure . . . or so we've always implied. During the last few weeks the kids have been receiving the best education possible on how to get along in this world. They are becoming aware of values other than money or security. They are learning cooperation and service to others. I believe they really are beginning to see the enrichment in our efforts as a family community."

"I'm happy, Randy. I'm glad we got smart."

"Me too, honey. Better late than never."

# # # # #

17 - HALF AN HOUR

"This is Mr. Burns' secretary. I'm calling in regard to a letter you wrote some time back."

"Letter? Oh, yes, about the National Peace Institute."

"Mr. Burns would like to set up an appointment with you to discuss your proposal. Will you be available Friday morning?"

"Yes. That's fine."

"How about ten o'clock?"

"That'll be good."

"Fine. We'll see you at ten on Friday. Goodbye now."

That evening at home: ". . . and I have an appointment to discuss publishing that information in the Blast. I can talk with Burns for half an hour."

"That's neat, Dad!" Debbie clasps her hands in excitement. "When will it appear in the paper?"

"Whoa now. Just because he's willing to talk about it doesn't mean it'll get published. This may be his way of saying 'no' without repercussions. But I believe he really is sincere about this meeting."

"What'll happen when you see him?"

"I'll have to play that by ear, Dolly. I'll give him copies of all the information you can get from Mrs. Ross along with a short briefing. Then I'll see what course he wants to pursue. He may have some hang-up and I'd want to find that out early. I don't want to waste the limited time telling him something he's already sold on."

"Do you feel comfortable about this meeting, honey?"

"I don't feel too uncomfortable. I am a little awed. But regardless of the outcome about getting something published, this is an opportunity to discuss moral issues with someone influential. High ranking executives get very insulated. Too often we reject them as hopeless cases but we should continue confronting them with truth to fan any spark of conscience that may still be alive. They are still human beings and have the potential to love others."

"I thought he was one of the bad guys, Dad."

"We should stop thinking in terms of good guys and bad guys, Timmy. It's wrong. That thought pattern is the cause of much violence. We don't know a person's motivations and that's why we've always taught you kids to judge actions but not people."

"You've said that people in the defense industry are too scared of losing money to change their habits," observes Dolly. "Isn't that judging them?"

"Partly. The part about being afraid is judging the behavior I've seen and even experienced myself. But to say they can't change is wrong. We don't know anyone's ability to revise his behavior."

Gloria adds, "There were many people who thought Dad couldn't change. He was deeply entrenched in weapons work with a prosperous future ahead. But when he saw the aching needs of less fortunate people he was able to revise his values. Any person can do the same."

Randy is nervous on Friday morning. Realizing this unique opportunity to affect Jetahl's president causes him to dwell on his inadequacies. At nine-thirty he slips into his coat and starts toward the administration building which houses mahogany row. As he walks slowly in the September sun a flash of humor touches him. "Clem and Percival would pee in their pants if they knew what I was up to."



Approaching the administration building, Randy marvels at the landscaping -- shrubbery-lined gravel paths curving around cool reflecting pools with flashing goldfish and splashing fountains. A far cry from the sterile crushed rock moonscaping around the engineering building. Inside, Randy goes directly to Keystone Burns' office. The spacious reception room is warm with wood veneer. He addresses the matronly secretary.

"I'm Randy Allen. I have an appointment with Mr. Burns at ten."

"Oh yes, Mr. Allen. Will you please have a seat? Mr. Burns will be finished with our purchasing agent in a few minutes."

Randy picks a strategically located chair in sight of Burns' door and also with a window view of reflecting pools and shrubbery. Soon, a harried looking executive erupts into the room. "Phyllis, I've got to see Keystone right away. It's about the press release on the last Dino flight."

"He's almost through with Tom. I'll slip you in for a minute then."

Promptly at ten she presses a button and shortly thereafter the office door opens and Burns escorts his guest out. The secretary intercepts him and whispers in a low voice. Burns looks at the frustrated executive and motions for him to enter.

"He'll just be a minute," apologizes the secretary. "He's the public relations manager and he's got something urgent."

"That's okay," says Randy. And then to himself, "He would have to cut into my time. I need every second I can get."

At exactly 10:05 the anguished PR man darts out and the secretary nods for Randy to enter. Keystone Burns, a man in his early 60s with crew cut gray hair, blue-gray eyes behind dark-rimmed spectacles, drawn cheeks and wide mouth, gives him a warm handshake. "I'm happy to meet you, Randy. Let's sit over here." Burns points to a round table near the picture window. A Cyclopean walnut desk with high-backed swivel chair dominates the ~~carp~~ carpeted chamber. A naugahyde sofa rests against the far wall.

Sinking into the pedestal seat, Randy comes directly to the point. I appreciate this opportunity to discuss the National Peace Institute with you, Mr. Burns."

"Glad we could arrange it. Why don't you just go ahead and give me the highlights."

"Here is some material you can look over at your leisure. I think this is something the people at Jetahl would be interested in. That's why I suggested a little write-up in the Blast. I've noticed several employee-information type articles lately. The NPI would be timely. And it's not controversial."

"In my reply to your letter I mentioned that we must exercise some prudence in what we put in ~~in~~ company publications. You say this is not controversial but it might be considered as such by some of our customers. For instance, the

Department of Defense might look upon it with disfavor. It competes, somewhat, with the military academies. It's that type of reaction we must look out for."

"I believe the article could be slanted so it wouldn't be offensive. One institute to research a better order in this world certainly couldn't be considered a threat to four well-established service academies."

"Things aren't always that simple. Our contracts are very complex and we must exercise caution. We owe it to the community to maintain a level of stable employment. When we lose a contract and have to cut back on manpower it affects everyone. I just want to point out some of these considerations. You may be right. There might be a way of presenting it that is acceptable. Go ahead."

"Basically this legislation provides for a government subsidized university which would award degrees to peace majors. Many of the courses would be conventional disciplines but some, such as economics, anthropology, history and civics, would have a new slant with different emphasis. In addition, specialized courses in areas such as conflict resolution, world order, and alternatives to violence would be introduced. That's a thumbnail sketch of the academic side."

"There are other aspects?"

"Yes. There would be a research function such as most institutes of learning presently carry out. Only this research would focus strongly on world and domestic unrest. Some of the investigation would be undertaken for papers by peace majors

but there would also be funded programs in such areas as social problems, whole-some economics, interrelationships of nations, long term effects of short term profit goals, and many others that we don't even know yet. Funding may come directly from congressional appropriations or through institutional grants. This research should turn up new opportunities for business. I can see diminishing defense contracts as work increases in other areas."

"That's an example of what may not be palatable to our present customer."

"I'm just speculating. We wouldn't publish it in that light. If that sort of change takes place it'll unfold gradually. Even so, the DoD was formed to serve the country and, if you will pardon my bluntness, it's pretty much the other way around right now."

"Our future-business people are continually trying to find out what other agencies are interested in but they haven't had much success. Other departments just don't have the budget. But I do believe we owe the community something better than just building weapons. I can see the time coming when we'll have numerous small contracts rather than one big one. All our eggs won't be in one basket, so to speak."

"Now you're beginning to see the opportunities offered by the NPI. We've been talking for a long time about economic conversion but no one will start a study -- neither industry as an initiative nor congress as government funded."

Economic conversion will be demanded in the near future and it behooves business to look ahead. Our present military economy won't survive indefinitely. There are signs of it collapsing already. The research function of the NPI will be an ongoing study of the best investment for our national budget. Companies with the foresight to appreciate this will be the best prepared when changes do take place."

"This is very interesting, Randy. Please proceed."

"The last objective is coordination. Over 200 foundations and organizations in the United States are now pursuing peace research of one kind or another. They are all going about it more or less independantly except for some low level coordination. A cross-feed of ideas would stimulate thought and prevent duplication of effort."

"You present a very convincing argument. I've thought a lot about economic conversion and I see ways we could put the national budget to better use. On the other hand, I see a need to protect our country. It would be nice if we could beat our swords into plowshares but I've seen too much of war and I just don't trust the communists."

"I appreciate your concern. But I keep asking myself which of my apprehensions stem from a sense of right and what ones are merely fear for my job. When I get that sorted out and look at the facts I then ask myself how far we have to go to defend ourselves. It seems to me we have passed that point. And the information available to us in the weapons industry gives us a better insight to make that judgment."

"As I said before, you present a strong argument. But I can't help having some reservations."

Randy glances at the clock on the wall. It is twenty-five after. He must work fast. "I have an idea. Suppose I write to the 'Employee Question Box' asking for information about the NPI -- how it could affect us in industry? Couldn't it be answered without taking sides?"

"Now that's an idea." Burns picks up the material Randy brought. "I would have enough information here to answer that kind of question. Why don't you do that?"

"I will."

The buzzer on Burns' desk sounds. "That's Phyllis letting me know it's time for my next appointment. This has been very interesting, Randy. I'm happy we could get together."

"Me too, Mr. Burns. Thanks for your time."

As Burns gives Randy a final handshake at the door he suggests again, "You send in that question and we'll do our best to answer it."

# # # # #

18 - SURPLUS

"Randy! Stoggs didn't get that job after all."

"How do you know, Smith?"

"I met him in the shop. Asked how the interview turned out but he didn't answer. Just gave the thumbs-down sign and walked off. I've gotta run. Stinelli needs the post-test charts by noon. Just thought you'd want to know."

Randy is worried about Stoggs. It is still vivid in his mind how it all started. Clem announced at the staff meeting, "Budget hasn't been approved for Tricer and we've gotta cut manpower ten percent. I know word just came out that layoffs weren't anticipated but things didn't work out as expected."

We had it figured right," Randy snaps. "It was obvious months ago. Dino's pooping out and the Tricer budget is all screwed up. Then when management says they don't expect a layoff . . . that cinches it."

"I don't like it either but at least we are safe. But the Navy really is having a hassel selling Tricer to Congress. I guess you got a taste of that on your Washington trip."

"The Navy has problems all right but maybe Congress is acting half-way responsible for a change."

"By withholding funding? That'll ruin the economy. What's this shit about Congress acting responsible?"

"Half-way responsible," corrects Randy. "By not kissing-off more money to weapons. They can complete the other half of responsible action by allocating funds for domestic reform. This thing called economic conversion has been mouthed around capitol hill for years but not enough legislators have the guts to do anything about it. All it takes is a few admirals and generals running up and down the halls to make lawmakers tremble with fear and give their 'yeas' in favor of the Pentagon."

"All right, Randy. I know how you feel. But there's a department meeting at nine. Percival wants to tell everyone at once. So pass the word and be sure the area is secure before we leave."

"Clothespins and all?" asks another group leader.

"No. Not this time. Just see that the monitor checks good. Those security guys really glob onto these opportunities to catch someone."



"How bad will it hit our section?" asks Randy.

"By the strict ten percent we'd lose three but I'm hoping we'll only have to surplus two."

Randy winces. That dehumanizing word. In corporate jargon "surplus" means to lay off. Randy once told a friend that 3000 people were declared surplus at Jetahl. The friend's spontaneous reaction was, "That sounds like disposing of extra equipment." That observation was close to the truth. The old, worn out ones are purged first. Seniority means little in nonunionized engineering circles. If anything it counts against a person. It means more company expense in the way of higher pay, using more sick leave, and imminent retirement benefits.

Randy remembers that department meeting well. The people took it in good spirits. Some asked "How soon?" and "How many?" Percival indicated it would be a ten percent cut which meant eight or nine from his department. It was not yet decided who they would be. Notices would be served next week.

Then Randy recalls the department staff meeting the next day. He was acting supervisor while Clem was away. Percival gave instructions on picking the men who were to go: ". . . Of course the bottom ones on the stacking chart will be the ones selected but we must exercise caution. Most of the lower personnel are over forty and it won't look good if we show discrimination. Contrail Corporation had a big layoff a couple months ago and cleaned out all their older people. But some of them took it to the National Labor Relations Board and won their case because

all those let go were over forty. Contrail had to hire them all back and make a layoff list approved by the NLRB. So be careful. An unfavorable NLRB ruling would hurt the company image. You can just pass this information on to Clem when he gets back tomorrow, Randy. Don't spread it around. Tell him he'll have to work fast because we want to present all the surplus notices Monday. If he has any questions he can see me."

"And that's Jetahl's regard for the fair employment practice they are always bragging about," thinks Randy. "We maintain our equal opportunity profile on paper so as not to jeopardize government contracts but discriminate in a subtle way to increase profits. That was a bad show for Contrail. If they hadn't reinstated those people they would have lost all their government work which is about ninety percent of their business. The office of federal contract compliance will be watching them closely. Even their minority count will have to be more honest than the padded figure Jetahl gets by with."

"On Monday Stoggs was told. Clem gave him the notice. That one sentence really digs into a guy: 'Regretfully, I must inform you that you have become surplus to the requirements of your present organization.' Stoggs took it hard. He still hasn't told his wife. Wish I could get him to a doctor before he does something drastic."

"I hear Stoggs didn't get the job," interrupts Newspell, bringing Randy back to the present. "Think he has a chance of finding something?"

"Don't know. It's tight now."

"The drudges made a presentation to management on the result of that cutback option survey. We thought ten percent reduction in working hours would be a good alternative and the survey showed that engineers were overwhelmingly in favor of it. I was surprised. Even those not vulnerable voted for it."

"Great. That would help turn the inflation cycle around."

"That's what we thought. If we only worked 36 hours a week everyone would benefit. Employees would still have a job with an extra afternoon off. The company would be able to cut expenses while maintaining a full work force with high morale. It sounded like a terrific plan. Everyone on the drudge committee was excited about it."

"What was management's response?"

"Turned it down cold. Gave all kinds of bullshit reasons. It was different and they wouldn't buy it."

"Balls! Too bad the engineers didn't vote to unionize. Maybe this could have been worked into a contract."

"That's another thing. Did you know Graeber got surplussed? He did. He was an active union organizer before the election. Something's fishy. The only ones getting laid off are old farts or agitators."

"Good observation, Newspell."

"We brought that up at the last drudge meeting with management and were told that is beyond the scope of our function. They said surplus decisions come from the stacking charts which take many things into consideration and that there is no fairer way to determine who goes. We pointed out that those stacking charts reflect a lot of personal opinions and prejudices. They didn't budge a bit. Jake kept pushing the point because he claimed it affects employee welfare and that's exactly what the drudges are for."

"Who were you talking with?"

"The Assistant General Manager . . . Maxwell Brane III."

"How did he react to Jake's pressure."

"Cut him off flat. Excused himself for another appointment. We hadn't used up the allotted time for our meeting but he claimed his schedule was crowded and he had to shave all appointments."

"You guys had him over a barrel."

"No kidding, Randy. He was really nervous. But that's not all."

"What else?"

"This morning a memorandum came out that the drudge committee had fulfilled its objective and we could return to normal operating policy. It pointed out

that the accepted way of handling employee grievances is through supervisory channels."

"Too bad. But not unexpected. You guys were rocking the boat too much. Now management is back to dealing with gripes on a private one-to-one basis and the advantage is all on their side."

"I'd better go pick up that computer run. Can I have a long lunch period? I have a dentist appointment at one o'clock. I'll be back by two."

"Okay. I'll see you this afternoon."

Abigale had just dropped the morning mail into Randy's IN basket and he starts thumbing through it. His attention centers on an envelope from the Jetahl Blast. Tearing it open he reads:

Thank you for your inquiry regarding the National Peace Institute Bill. Since it is not the policy of this publication to address specific political or legislative issues we suggest that you write your Congressman for full particulars as to content and status of this bill. We do encourage employees to take an interest in national and local legislation.

"Gobbledegook! Maybe I sent that inquiry in before Burns talked to them. I'll write a memo back and suggest they contact Burns as he expressed interest in the topic. I'll send a copy to Burns too."

A couple hours later Stinelli returns. "I don't dig those bring-your-lunch meetings. I missed my poker game."

"How did it go?"

"We got hung up on how to chop tensile specimens out of the metallic body. Material Response sez thisaway . . . and Material Analysis sez thataway."

"When will they get their 'druthers worked out?"

"Before next week. Say . . . coming back from the shop I ran into Grumblock from Planning. He sez Stoggs was there this morning."

"Yeah?"

"Stoggs really got ripped off. He had that planning job all lined up 'til Maxwell Brane came by yesterday. Grumblock heard Brane rapping with his manager. Brane asked why they were considering a man of Stoggs' age for that position. Today when . . ."

The shrill note of a siren drowns out conversation. They dash to the window. "Looks like it went into the parking lot. Must have been an accident. Go ahead. What were you saying?"

"They told Stoggs the opening was cancelled. Grumblock sez he bleached out like a ghost. His hands were shaking and his lips went white."

"That was shitty. Can he prove discrimination?"

"No way. There's jillions of reasons for not needing another man. Grumblock sez he can't testify. He has to look out for his own family."

"Randy!" Newspell is breathless. "That was Stoggs."

"What are you talking about?"

"Stoggs. I saw . . . when I was coming from the dentist . . . the ambulance. It was Stoggs. He must have had a pistol in his camper. And he . . . God! I saw them carry him out. He left a note . . . God!"

Randy's head swims. He sinks into his chair. "This lousy game! This lousy God-damned game!"

# # # # #

19 - THE BEST LEGACY

"That's horrible! Who told his wife?"

"Clem and Percival went to see her, <sup>Gloria</sup> I haven't talked to them since."

"I don't understand how he could take things so seriously. Did he have a psychological problem?"

"Everyone has that kind of problem. In our work they become manifold. But no one wants to admit it. Yet, most of the patients at the local psyche clinic are Jetahl employees. Most of those are cases of desperation and they are a small percentage of those needing it."

"Is there an answer?"

"Not a simple one. I see it related to values. We drive ourselves crazy with the meaningless obsessions we have now. If we could see them for what they



are we would be enlightened. At Stoggs' age it's hard. Concepts are deeply ingrained. He'd been steeped in the necessity of steady work and income ever since he could remember. Experiences during the depression left their mark. We are a disgrace if we're not working. Our twelve to sixteen years in school amplify that. And it takes a real effort to recognize how we've been conditioned. How do you feel about financial security?"

"I see what you mean. I still have qualms."

"Imagine how it was for Stoggs. He had worked all his life and was within sight of retirement. Then poof! Everything is gone -- job, income, sick leave, medical and life insurance, adequate retirement, literally everything he has worked for decades to achieve. He felt like a disgrace."

"I see how it can be traumatic. For him it was a tragedy."

"Our life pattern doesn't prepare us for this. It's just the opposite. Employment is used as a threat . . . or reward if you compete hard and do a good job. The stacking list is the corporate pecking order and you have to push and shove to work your way up. Fear of layoff is an axe held over the worker's head . . . and when you don't produce it falls."

"Isn't there a solution?"

"Not until people start questioning their present value system. Something

is wrong. You can tell by the poverty and dissidence and the lack of interest in esthetic values . . . to say nothing of resource depletion and pollution. People need to ask more questions."

"If the Ad Hoc Group had been successful would it have helped?"

"Some. But it'll take many of those groups throughout the country to have any effect on industry's goals."

"What was it's purpose?"

"To find other uses for aerospace technology. The aerospace industry has developed materials and know-how that could have other applications. Our group got a pretty good handle on the needs in prosthetics. Remember how we used to drive up to the Veteran's Hospital after work? They had a really dedicated team in the prosthetics lab. They gave us a lot of information on artificial limbs and the problems they have. We compiled a long list of needs . . . called it the prosthetics wishing list. But none of our engineers tackled the problems. This took place during the last layoff and about then, Jetahl got another contract. Everyone went back to padding their own security and didn't have time for the group."

"Sounds like they were only after personal gain."

"Don't be too hard on them, honey. We did stipulate humanitarian motives

for this research but, looking back, I see that was a mistake. We were trying to put morality and economics in separate compartments. Our present economic system is corrupt and I assumed that all economics was bad. Mahatma Gandhi did some good thinking on economics. He said that true economics never conflicts with the highest ethical standard. And that all true ethics must at the same time be good economics. The Ad Hoc Group would have been more fruitful had we launched our efforts in the framework of a decent livelihood. We should stop thinking of breadwinning as a necessary evil and relegating charitable activities to our spare time."

"How would you do it now?"

"I'd get the idea out right away that we're tired of squandering our efforts. We want to search not only for alternative uses for technology but for a more fulfilling profession. The goal would encompass the ethical and the economical in a complimentary fashion. Then, too, I guess it would be better to start such a project while things are prosperous and employment stable."

"Why?"

"The few who would be attracted would be ~~better~~ motivated. They would influence others. I believe the spirit would spread . . . especially after we had a success or two. That's another criteria. We'd pick some quickly attainable goals as a morale booster. When things drag out, people lose interest. To keep a group alive they need achievement. Then, when we tackle a large project we'd

work out a plan with decision points and milestones. That's the type of visibility engineers relate to."

"Sounds snappier."

"I believe a third necessity is communication with similar groups. There are national organizations coordinating social responsibility in engineering and through them we could share ideas."

"That's important. People are socially inclined. They are more confident when it's a community undertaking."

"Such a coalition of groups would fill a need that Congress has been neglecting."

"What's that?"

"Economic conversion. The escape from this arms treadmill is a different economy . . . a true economy."

"That came up the other night at the Mothers For Peace meeting. We were discussing how to reduce military spending. The conversation got around to what would happen to all the defense workers put out of a job. A whole new system would have to replace what we have now."

"Right. It would be disastrous to start chopping military budget without working in other programs. Our legislators know this but they can't get up

courage to face it. That's why we are stuck with the weapons merchants. What lawmaker is going to vote in such a way that will cause economic chaos in his district? Congress is afraid not to give the Pentagon what it wants. And that fear isn't of the Russians. No, it's all part of the big plan of easy profits and no competition while the nation's work force awaits the beck and call of vested interests."

"No competition?"

"Big business has cornered a monopoly and not just the price-fixing kind. They control politicians and politicians control state and federal budgets. The military is the action arm of this conspiracy that represses resistance in Third World countries so big business can get cheap labor and materials."

"Like Mythica?"

"Like Mythica. We need our military if we are going to exploit poor countries. The whole picture is much more complicated but the disregard for justice is becoming ever more blatant. Anyway, there are enough legislators bought by the corporations to block any attempt toward converting our priorities. Reform is not going to start from the top. That's why I believe these ad hoc groups among the working people are essential."

"But during a layoff isn't a good time to start?"

"I don't think so. We'd attract a lot of people worried about their job . . . like last time. But it really burns me to see money wasted when there are places it's really needed. We literally spent millions to study those lousy nose tip failures. Meanwhile, the prosthetics research lab get by with \$100 thousand a year. Out of that comes three salaries. We spend more to blow people apart than to put them back together."

"That's bad. And it's all done in the name of peace . . . like the sticker they gave you at work."

"The 'Peace Through Seapower' decal? Yeah, they expected us to put them on our cars, I stuck mine on the waste basket. I saw a similar war-cry last time I was in Florida. A bill board at the gate of Mc Coy Air Force Base read 'Peace Is Our Profession.' We saw enough of that type peacemaking in Vietnam."

"You should start another group before you leave, Randy. It seems important. When other citizens see defense workers trying to correct our economic evils it will cause them to look closer at their <sup>own</sup> priorities."

"Maybe you're right. When the Tricer budget gets approved . . . which it will be eventually -- after Congress finishes with its part in the game . . . when that budget is approved and things look stable again I might start another group. I believe I could make it work this time."

It will be the best legacy you could leave behind. I'm going to bed now, Randy. It's getting late."

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RECEIVED BY TAYLOR

ALDRIDGE 19-8

"Gee, you're right. I lost track of time. I'll be along in a few minutes.  
I'm going to have a little snack first.

# # # # #

20 - EXEDIN

"That's stupid, Clem. We need a task force like we need another hole in our head."

"We've gotta get this thing done fast, Randy. This is the way it's done. The Armed Services Committee is still sitting on Tricer money. We've gotta get something soon. Admiral Nimrod thinks maybe going from Dino to Tricer is too big a jump. Maybe we should slip in an interim project. The EXEDIN task force will look into extending the range of Dino. EXEDIN stands for EXtended Energy DINO. Jim Bachman will head it up."

"And you're telling me because I'm going to be part of it."

"Bachman wants you to handle the maneuvering body. It'll be for a slightly smaller missile which will affect the number of bodies you can get aboard. And the attachment pattern will undoubtedly be different. But, aside from that, the design should be the same."



This isn't the first task force Randy has served on. Temporary units comprised of multiple specialties under one technical leader are a potent tool of management when urgent problems require quick solutions. These groups bypass established organizational lines and thereby minimize parochial interests. Alvin Toffler described this trend from Bureaucracy to ad-hocracy in Future Shock.

"I suppose it'll be located in the old SESMA area."

"Jim's having a meeting there at one o'clock. You'd better inform your crew and have them ready to move. Jim'll probably want everyone to relocate right after the meeting."

"Okay." Randy shrugs his shoulders and goes to call his men together.

"Now we's gonna hear all about that EXEDIN task farce," says Stinelli.

"The grapevine came in first again. Where'd you hear?"

"One of the aero cats asked me if I wuz moving over."

"Jim Bachman is having a meeting right after lunch. We'll probably move after that. We'll still be working on the maneuvering job. I'd suggest you get ready for the move this morning. The meeting will be in the old SESMA task force area. That's all I know right now."

Smith lingers behind as the other three move away. "What was the SESMA task force?"

"A little while back the SALT talks were close to banning multiple reentry bodies. The SESMA task force was set up to find something else to put on Dino if we couldn't use MIRVS. That flap went on for months and burned up hundreds of thousands of dollars. As it turned out the MIRV was allowed to become operational so we didn't need the gruesome option they came up with. SESMA stands for Salt Evasion Studies for Mirv Alternate."

"So we could keep Dino in production?"

"Correct. Instead of helping the spirit of disarmament we had to find ways of getting around treaty agreements. Failing to use Dino would have hurt corporate profits and would have closed the door on a new generation weapon like Tricer. As it was, we capitalized on disarmament negotiations through a comprehensive study of alternatives."

"Isn't the United States serious about stopping the arms race?"

"We haven't shown any real desire to reduce arms. But I don't mean to imply the Soviets are all goody-goody either."

"Sounds like bureaucracy on a world scale."

"That's nationalism, Smith. It serves a needed function in helping a country develop. It sparks the spirit necessary to face the obstacles a poor nation must overcome. But, like anything else, when it is carried past a useful limit it becomes a drag. In America our corporate structure beats the drums of patriotism to rally support behind our crappy behavior in undeveloping countries. Eventually the pressure of truth will push both the American and Russian people to a new level of enlightenment. They will see how they are being duped."

"How about the task force that's starting now?"

"The Navy's having problems with Tricer budget. Congress might be worried about public reaction if they take too big a bite. This exercise will provide an interim scheme of updating our existing capabilities. But you can rest assured the Navy will get what they want eventually. When EXEDIN is proposed it will set up an option. Then, whichever is approved, Congress will merely have to justify its choice. No one will be likely to question why either is necessary."

"You make it sound so transparent."

"I'm really oversimplifying. Well, it's almost eleven. We'd better get organized. After you see the task force in action we'll discuss this again."

After lunch, Randy punches the prescribed sequence of numbers to open the cipher-locked door to the task force area. "Another combination to remember," he grumbles. Inside, he sights his crew and walks over to them. Jim Bachman steps

up on a desk to get everyone's attention. "Friends and fellow workers," he begins. "We have a big job ahead." Stinelli makes a clandestine motion of playing a violin. "The Navy has commissioned this task force to optimize our Dino missile for a more stringent mission. We must stretch its range to 4500 miles. The missile people will look into putting another rocket motor on the reentry body deployment platform. That will give us a third stage. After the platform has flown the extra distance it will then go through the usual maneuvers to target the bodies. Fewer bodies will be carried to make room for the extra rocket but that's a trade-off. Some studies have already been started.

"Meanwhile," he continues, "the reentry people will design a vehicle to withstand the severe heating conditions associated with greater range. The nose cap is the main problem and that will be magnified on the maneuvering body. We will require acceleration of our miracle carbon development."

Bachman goes on to explain the administration of the task force and then turns the meeting over to Cullen to talk about security. Attendees are then dismissed to move their equipment. Operations start tomorrow.

As Randy returns to his desk the telephone rings. "Please hold a minute," says a secretary! When a man's voice comes through the receiver. "Hello, Randy Allen?"

"This is Allen."

"I am Frank Mooney, manager of Public Relations. I have your letter saying something about a National Peace Institute and that Mr. Burns was to give us some information. We have nothing from him and we advised you that the best way of getting information is to write your Congressman."

"You haven't heard from Mr. Burns?"

"No. You see, it isn't the policy of a company publication to get into partisan political issues."

"This isn't partisan. It's a case of stating facts and letting people make up their minds."

"I know but . . ."

"Have you asked Mr. Burns about this?"

"No. We are not in the habit of . . ."

"Then I suggest you do. If you prefer, I'll give him a call."

"Oh no, that's all right, Allen. I'll check with him. Maybe I'll have to call you back later. Goodbye."

"The officious old fart," mutters Randy to himself. "Trying to intimidate me with his pompous manner."

"What'sa matter, boy. You look pissed."

"Nothing, Stinelli. What's eating you?"

"Just wondering where I fit into this dog-and-pony show. I've cooled all the Ming Urn reports."

"I've got a live one for you. You're just the man to tackle the nose problem."

"Big deal! The smelliest turd in the pot. A third of the Dino noses bust up and now some ding bat ~~wants to~~ get 'em hotter and zig-zag to boot."

"Think miracle carbon. It's the only hope."

"Balls!"

"I'd like you to handle it because of your experience with stress and strain at high temperatures. Besides, all we can do is design the best we can and hope miracle carbon can cut the buck."

"I'll doodle up some cartoons. And ole' father Bachman can put it in his book so's he can snow the D.C. brass. What does he call it? The Admiral's Sales Package?"

"That's the name they tacked onto it. Admiral Nimrod will use it for his next sales pitch to Congress."

"This Jim Bachman has surfaced like a messiah. What's with him?"

"He's a former Navy Captain. He retired and got this position with Jetahl."

"Turned his bonnet plumb around, huh?"

"It's not uncommon. There are over two-thousand senior officers now working in industry. They pave their way toward a good retirement job while in the service. It's an accepted arrangement by both industry and the military. It makes the complex more binding. And both profit from this conspiracy against the taxpayer."

"Sounds like a real rip-off."

"Conflict of interest is recognized selectively. If it behooves industry or the military to complain about it, they do. But if it serves their best interests to look the other way, they do that, too."

"And there's over 2-K of them?"

"That's just senior officers. It doesn't include the thousands of junior officers or the many thousands still in the service who are jockeying for position."

With only two-hundred companies controlling two-thirds the manufacturing assets of the country it's obvious how big an effect two-thousand retired senior officers can have. Evenly distributed there would be ten to each company. How efficiently do you think those contracts are administered?"

"Real nasty, man. Well, the sands are going down. We'd better get moved."

"Right. We'll discuss the nose job tomorrow. Take care."

# # # # #



21 - MYTHICA

"I'm off again, Gloria. Another trip's coming up Monday."

"I knew it. I could sense it. What business demands are to separate us this time?"

"Mythica."

"Mythica! Really? How come?"

"Problems. The weak part of our design is the nose cap material. And Universal Carbon isn't moving as fast as anticipated with miracle carbon. The main trouble is their Mythica plant. That's where the coke is mined. Miracle carbon requires that fine grade of coke to achieve the strain rate needed for a maneuvering nose tip. I'm going to investigate why the processed coke coming out of there isn't meeting specification."

"How long will you be away?"

"Hard to say, hon. At least a week. Probably closer to two. I doubt that I'll be home for Thanksgiving. At least the climate should be good. It's springtime south of the equator."

"We'll miss you."

"I'll miss you, too. Let's do something special this weekend. I told Jim Bachman I couldn't work Saturday. If Debbie doesn't have to wait tables maybe we can go someplace."

"Did they want you to work Saturday?"

"I didn't give anyone a chance to ask. Jim probably would have liked for me to 'cause he just got back from Washington with a new list of tasks. It was kind of funny. I told you about putting together a book which we facetiously called The Admiral's Sales Package. Well, that went over like a lead balloon with the Navy. Now the words "sales" and "selling" are no-nos. Congress is sensitive about being sold a bill of goods."

"But the trip, isn't it risky? I've heard there's a lot of unrest and anti-Americanism down there."

"Our image isn't good but, with certain precautions, there'll be no trouble."

"I hope not. It would be ironic if something happened to you . . . the way you sympathize with repressed people. Be careful."

As the 747 nears the small Pacific island Randy recalls Gloria's concern. "There's no danger as long as I follow instructions but it'll certainly restrict me. I'd like to see as much of the culture as possible. I've got a suspicion the main reason for keeping me out of circulation is to prevent me from seeing too much."

Mythica's capital city is centered on a crescent-shaped bay. The shoreline of white sand beach is lapped by waves and fringed with palm trees. Coconut palms also line the airport. Randy's contact, Gregory Clint, is waiting at the bottom of the steps as he leaves the plane. A burly figure with a Latin-brown complexion, Clint greets him with a hearty handshake. "Welcome to Mythica. I'll be your escort during your stay."

"He reminds me of a government security man," thinks Randy. "Maybe he's a CIA agent."

Baggage and brief case reclaimed, Randy follows Clint to a battered old sedan parked at the curb. A native driver with handlebar mustache slouches behind the wheel. "Excuse the appearance but this jalopy is less conspicuous."

Randy mulls over Clint's last remark. As they leave the curb he sees a car pull out behind them. Several blocks and three turns later it becomes evident they are being followed. Clint notices Randy's concern. "Don't worry. They are with us."

"Why?"

"You're a sharp observer, Randy. They are security guards. There has been a little trouble. I didn't want to alarm you. Coming abruptly into this environment can be scary but things are under control. Now relax and enjoy your visit."

"I'll try. What's first on the agenda."

"For today, we'll just get you settled in your hotel. Eat in the dining room tonight and don't go out until you're more familiar with local conditions."

"I feel like I'm under house arrest," contemplates Randy. "I don't like it."

"I'll meet you here in the lobby at eight-thirty in the morning," instructs Clint as the clerk hands Randy his key. And then in a lower voice, "Don't tell anyone who you are. You're registered as a tourist. Take care. I'll see you tomorrow."

"This whole business gives me the creeps. There's more than Gregory is telling me. I'll bet he has a stakeout to watch me . . . probably that fellow sitting by the registration desk. He came in a few minutes after we did and has been on the sofa ever since."

The evening passes uneventfully. After dinner Randy returns to his room and is content to retire early. The next morning he breakfasts in the hotel coffee shop and meets Clint at the appointed time.

"Sleep well?" inquires Clint. "You look much fresher."

"Fine," assures Randy as they start for the door. "Same transportation, I see."

"Yep."

"And our friends are parked half-way down the block."

"Don't sweat it, Randy. We're probably overcautious but it's better that way."

Randy muses about the warm morning as they drive through the town. "Most people are in shirt-sleeves. Wonder why Gregory wears a coat?" Then his gaze shifts to a slight bulge under Clint's left arm. "Aha, that's it. The mystery of the coat is solved."

"You'll see a lot of people around the plant as we approach. There is a labor dispute and they are strikers. But we have troops by the main gate to see that we get in safely. Just keep your window rolled up."

The Universal Carbon Products plant is a modern facility with the typical chain-link fence topped with triple strands of barbed wire. A large crown is outside the main gate. Troopers carrying rifles with fixed bayonets clear the road as their sedan approaches.

"How come this strike hasn't been settled by now? It's been going on for several months."

"They want too much -- huge salary increases and all sorts of benefits. We're paying them more than they're worth but the damn gooks are never satisfied. If it weren't for our plant they'd be grubbing in the rice paddies."

"How much do they make?"

"I don't have the figures but it's a helluva lot more than they ever made before."

"I see," comments Randy.

Randy pursues his questioning along another line. "How does Universal Carbon keep the plant in operation?"

"There are plenty of people hungry enough to cross the picket line. We bring them in in buses. They're not what you'd call skilled help but, after a little training, they get the job done."

"Could that be why the coke products aren't meeting spec?"

"If the stuff wasn't good our quality control people would catch it."

"But there is a problem. That's the reason I'm here. If your inspectors are no better than Jetahl's I can see how a lot of crap gets through."

"That's not a very complimentary way to talk about your own company."

"Is there a big turnover of unskilled labor?"

"They're not really unskilled. We give them training in the essentials. But, yes, there is a turnover. When they earn enough to keep them going for a few weeks they don't show up. We have to hire someone else. That's expensive 'cause it means more training. But quite frequently the old ones reappear when they're broke and hungry again."

They park in front of the administration building and Randy follows Clint into the main office to meet the plant manager. After the formality of checking-in is accomplished, Clint takes Randy for a tour of the plant. Most of the day is spent getting familiar with the various processes. Finally, they enter a large room.

"This area houses the most delicate operation of the whole process. We call it B-area. That fellow over there is Tony Rozza. He's a quality control inspector -- the only native working in that capacity. He was educated in the United States when his father was on the diplomatic staff of a previous ruler."

"Why isn't he out on strike?"

"His job isn't covered by the union. Most inspectors and supervisors are Americans. Oh, Tony. Come over here a minute. I want you to meet Randy Allen."

"Glad to meet you, Tony," says Randy as they shake hands. Then Clint suggests, "Why don't you show Randy around? I have some things I should take care of today."

"I'll be happy to."

"How do you like our country?" Tony asks as Clint leaves.

"I haven't seen much. Most of what I've seen I like."

"And there're some things you don't like?"

"I guess it's the Americanization. The worst aspects of our culture always flourish in a foreign land. For instance, the chain link fence . . . and the military guards."

"Ah. You've noticed that."

"Yes. It spoils the beauty. Another thing that surprises me is the Latin flavor. I expected more of a Polynesian atmosphere."

"My people are of Polynesian descent, true, but we also have a Spanish heritage. That's why my name and so many others are Latin. Our society has become a blending of two cultures. And you are correct. American traditions are making inroads. Some good and some . . . well . . ."

"I'd really like to see the normal lifestyle. When I travel I always see a front put up for transients. I'd like to get through that barricade to meet families and experience everyday living."



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Randy and Tony continue their conversation as Tony explains the workings of B-area. His biggest problem is purity. Stray elements significantly degrade the products made from this stock. At quitting time, Clint returns and escorts Randy back to his hotel.

# # # # #

22 - A PHONE BOOTH AND A BLACK SEDAN

"It's been a week and still no solution, Tony. I believe miracle carbon is just pushing technology too far. Have I overlooked anything?"

"Not a thing, Randy."

"This visit has been a fizzle. None of my objectives have been achieved."

"You had more than one objective?"

"I wanted to learn more about the people . . . and see first hand what American business has done to their lives. But so far I haven't had a chance to talk with any natives except you."

"Why?"

"Gregory has someone watching me all the time. When I leave the hotel a

bodyguard goes with me. We've become quite friendly but every time I want to go where I can talk to people he says no -- even gets adamant about it. I wouldn't be in any more danger at a ~~party~~ than a movie house."

"It's true that the American image isn't good but why are you interested in Mythicans?"

"Like I said, I want to see the effect of our capitalistic system on other countries."

"You seem dissatisfied with things in your country. And you seem concerned about poor people. Yet, you are involved in the very behavior that brings on their oppression. How do you live with that contradiction?"

"I guess I'm still groping with the problem. My family and I are making plans to end our complicity in the corporate-military monopoly and I realize the severance must come soon."

"Yes, it would be good for you to meet some of my people. But you'll never do it with your companion. Can you give him the slip?"

"I think so. I can call the desk clerk from the pay booth and tell him it's important for my friend to come to my room immediately. I don't believe they'll suspect anything. When he goes up the elevator I'll duck out the front door."

"Good. Make it at seven this evening. Go three blocks south and turn right on Azzuronga Boulevard. A car will pick you up there."

Randy's neck hairs tingle. Is this a trap? Can he trust Tony? But Randy knows he'll accept the challenge. He must find out what Tony has to offer."

At five-to-seven Randy slips down the stairs and into the darkened phone booth from which he can view the elevator. He completes the call. As Clint's man goes up, Randy smiles and hurries out the front door. Sprinting the three blocks he turns right and looks about. His watch says exactly seven o'clock. A black sedan across the street grinds to life and flips on its headlights. Swinging a U-turn it pulls alongside and a slightly built man with a scarred face alights on the curb.

"Get in," he commands gruffly.

Randy's surprise at the man's manner turns into alarm as he feels the hard nose of a pistol prodding him toward the car. He climbs into the back seat. The scar-faced man jumps in and the sedan lurches ahead.

"Put out your hands," commands another voice from the shadows of the far corner. The pistol gives his ribs another prod. Randy extends his hands. A pair of handcuffs are clamped on his wrists and he is searched. "God damned Yankee," mutters scar-face.

"Why the handcuffs? Are you police?"

A loud guffaw is the only answer as a black cloth is tied over his eyes. Thoughts of Gloria race through his mind. "Isn't it risky?" she had asked.

"Where are you taking me?"

"Shut up, Yankee."

"Maybe Tony's people saw this abduction and will rescue me," Randy thinks. "No, Tony is the only one who knew I'd be there at seven and these men were obviously waiting for me. He must be behind the whole plot."

The sedan turns frequently through city traffic. Silence pervades the dark interior. Finally scar-face grunts, "No one is following. Go to headquarters."

The car picks up speed on a long, straight road. Twenty minutes later they pull into a driveway with a crunching of gravel. When the car stops, Randy is jostled out the door and into a nearby building.

"You can remove the blindfold and manacles," instructs a familiar voice.

When released, Randy replied, "You sure had me fooled, Tony."

"Did I? You haven't seen anything yet. This will be a real experience for you. But we had to take a few precautions."

"But why the handcuffs and blindfold?"

"Please excuse that inconvenience. There are reasons why you mustn't know where this place is."

"What are you going to do with me?"

"Exactly what we discussed this afternoon -- arrange for you to talk with people. You'll get a true picture of repression in Mythica." Do you still want to go through with it?"

"I . . . I guess so. You can understand why I'm a little nervous."

"Okay, let's get with it. First is Madame Salilong. She is a leader in the Mythica Liberation Front."

"The Mythica Liberation Front!"

Tony chuckles. "I thought you'd have guessed by now. You are in MLF headquarters."

Scar-face has gone to call Madame Salilong. He now escorts her in, a portly woman of apparent Polynesian descent with long, black hair parted in the middle and pulled tight around her head. She greets Randy with a wide smile.

"Tony tells me about you, Mr. Randy. He impressed you want to learn about Mythica. I hope I say things to interest you."

"I'm sure you will."

"I get right to point. It all start for me about four year ago. Husband and I and two sons live in beautiful Kalali Valley not too far away. We have small farm. Raise rice, hemp and coconuts. We harvest for own use but sell some to market. One day strange men come through valley with survey instruments. I not know what they were. Later, people from town say we must move. Americanos buy our land from government. We say no. This our home. Government no sell what ours. King Kapouta not do that to his people. They say King Kapouta not there. We hear story about trouble in town some time ago but that not concern us, we think."

"Did they actually sell your land without your consent?"

"They do. Later, one of our people come running down the valley. It ten miles long. He tell us about big machines in upper end. We find out later that they bulldozers but we know by big blades they for knocking things down. Someone say they going push away our homes so everyone in valley come together. We make human line to stop metal monsters. That work for little while but soon troops come with clubs and big knives on ends of guns to force us away. Choppers drop tear gas. We must leave. Many people die and hurt. My husband killed."

"I am sorry, Madame Salilong."

"We find out later that huge open-pit mine to be built on island. Our valley to be dump for waste. You must see before go. Strip mining is big deal. Much land needed. Our valley now look like hell. Big Yankee bank -- you know which one -- send engineers to check on mining but not send one person to find out what happen to us. Thousands must leave. No money and no rice. No place to go. We mad at Americanos. New dictator just puppet for imperialist Yankees. I join MLF when it started by Colonel Bangalum. Also my sons. More and more business come. Government troops get more bad. MLF grow from small guerrilla band to powerful army. One of my boys killed in raid. Other is MLF leader in next province."

"That's a very moving testimony, Madame Salilong. I don't know what to say. I can only ~~apologize~~ for my people. You've seen us at our worst but there are many dedicated Americans who would not condone such actions."

"Are there any questions you would like to ask?" inquires Tony.

"There's one thing that bothers me. I can empathize with your feelings but it's still hard for me to accept violence as a solution."

"We not want violence, Mr. Randy. But we get kicked off our land and we bitter. Before that we be peaceful people. It was Americanos who bring violence."

"I know. I'm just wondering if there might be a more effective alternative than to retaliate with more violence. I an thinking of how Mahatma Gandhi resisted the British in India."



"I hear about Mr. Gandhi. I admire him. Wish our people have that kind of leader. But no. Colonel Bangalum, he very sincere. But he only know military way. I not know how we teach people to be like Mr. Gandhi say. We determined to get back what is ours."

Randy and Madame Salilong discuss the plight of the island people late into the night. Finally Tony suggests they all get some rest because Colonel Bangalum will arrive early in the morning. Madame Salilong returns to her quarters and the rest curl up on cots. Randy passes a fitful night and is wide awake when the first rays of dawn bounce against the east window. His two guards are still present, taking turns sleeping. But they no longer disturb Randy. He realizes precautions must be taken and as long as he does nothing foolish he is quite safe.

At sunrise, a breakfast tray is brought in. The meal is barely consumed when a tall, robust Polynesian-Spanish half-caste erupts into the room. He extends a hand to Randy. "Good morning. I am Colonel Bangalum. I hope your night was not too uncomfortable. We do not have the best accommodations here."

"I was fine, Colonel," assures Randy, grasping the proffered hand. "So you are the leader of the MLF?"

"Si. I was an officer in King Kapouta's army years ago. After the coup, many of us who were loyal to the king banded together. Since then we have grown. We control all the agrarian areas and have penetrated the urban and industrial sectors."

"What brought on the coup?"

"Many things. Under King Kapouta the country was swelling in a spirit of nationalism. Some said we were anti-American but that was not really true. Mythicans were just beginning to feel good about themselves. We wanted to develop our own country and determine our own destiny. That meant we had to control our own economy and resources. That was contrary to American interests."

"What was the reaction?"

"Not good. We allowed foreign investors to keep forty percent interest in their business but that was not good enough. The United States cut off all aid except military aid -- arms and ammunition kept coming in to bolster the military faction. We could not get spare parts for commercial machinery and as it broke down we had to patch and improvise. This made distribution of goods unreliable. Later, foreign credit was cut off which created new economic problems in addition to those occurring from the normal transition to industrialization. All these outside aggravations heaped upon our own growing pains created a crisis that set the stage for a coup."

"And what triggered it?"

"New resources. Oil in the coastal waters and an extremely fine grade of coke in the mountains. It looked like we Mythicans were going to extract our own resources -- new industry would be completely domestically owned. Development would

be slower but we would be reaping our rightful benefits. We did have some foreign contacts for machinery. The chance to grab this wealth was rapidly slipping from the United States' grasp and our complete independence from foreign manipulation was almost assured."

"Then came the coup."

"Si. In spite of the rosy looking future the country was still in a state of crisis. Left alone we could have overcome the difficulties but your CIA instigated the military takeover. I am well aware of what happened. I was exposed to much of the clandestine planning. As soon as I started objecting, however, I was squeezed out of the inner circle. You know the details of the overthrow."

"It was widely publicized. What was it like afterward?"

"All newspapers and communications were siezed by the new dictator. US Military Advisory Groups immediately came to train the Army which was now being used to supplement the police force. US AID sent their so-called public safety specialists to train our police in riot control. A new American ambassador with prior counter-insurgency experience was assigned."

"How about American investment?"

"They were encouraged to develop the new resources. Now, there is no limit to the amount of stock Americans can hold. Universal Carbon Supplies is developing

the coke fields. They wiped out thousands of acres of fertile farm land with wasteful strip mining. Pollution flowing out of the Kalali River has ruined commercial fishing for miles around, to say nothing of the river itself. Working conditions are poor. Health and safety of the miners is neglected. And pay is another complaint. Alongside our twenty-five cent average daily income the eighteen cents an hour paid by industry looks good but compared to the profits it is unjust."

"That's why the MLF is gaining support?"

"Si. We Mythicans fear foreign business. We see the big investors removing our valuable resources in exchange for poor wages. And they dominate the local market -- they control the economy and crush competition. Meanwhile, Mythica becomes an outlet for sophisticated equipment and irrelevant goods which make us even more dependent on foreign business. What we really need to develop a self-sufficient economy are cheap, simple implements that are easily maintained and will produce our necessities. Also, we rely on foreign sources for technology which minimizes our competition in the world market and threatens our national security. All of these things interact."

"There's a domestic picture in the United States which is similar. We have slums where people are so dependent on our industrialized society that it is virtually impossible for them to extricate themselves. Even our so-called middle-class have become slaves to a corporate way of life. I see your plight as an extension of what is happening at home. We are all influenced by the behavior of industry."

"Do the police use torture? Here it is common place. Did Madame Salilong tell you how one of her sons was killed?"

"She said in a raid."

"He was captured in a raid and died later under torture. The police tried to extract information he didn't have. Electric shock was applied to his tongue and penis. When that failed, they hanged him upside down and poured water in his nostrils. Next morning he was dead. I could tell many stories about the way our people are treated to support your country's prosperity but I'll let you hear some first hand. Come and meet my troops. I hope you will let your people know what their comfort is costing us."

Randy learns much about the Mythicans and their struggle for independence. At dusk he finds himself back in the sedan and this time Tony accompanies him. Once back in town the blindfold is removed.

"How do you know I won't inform on you, Tony?"

"It does not matter. I must now go underground. In one way that is fortunate. It has allowed you to see things that are not on the tourist route. We'll leave you here, Randy. You only have a block to walk."

"Their goodbyes are deep with feeling. It is a very different Randy Allen that returns to his hotel.

# # # # #

23 - BEGINNING THE SWIM

"That's the whole story, Gloria. The visit to Mythica will always be a high point in my life."

"I was worried. My intuition told me something would happen. I was afraid it would be bad."

"It was a revelation."

"It's interesting how pieces of understanding fall into place when we respond to events -- and people."

"I guess we started that responsiveness when we first moved here. Do you remember the resolution we made at that time?"

"That we'd never let money ruin us -- we'd always listen for a call from God. I believe we tried to keep that promise. Our present transition is certainly a whole-hearted response."

"We must accelerate our schedule. After the Mythica experience I can't work at Jetahl much longer."

"I could sense that coming. How soon?"

"This is November. How about two months -- the end of January. I'll give Clem notice right after the holidays. The time has come for us to embody our faith. When Jesus calls a person he expects a response then . . . not some undefined time in the future."

"If you feel the time has come, I'll have faith that's what must be done . . . and faith in both of us that we can do it."

"You're a wonderful partner, Gloria. I'm glad we've set the date. And that we can face the challenges ahead. I can't help remembering poor old Stoggs. He couldn't face uncertainty. For years he'd worked to build security. Then everything collapsed. Only the unknown he so desperately tried to avoid was left. He couldn't face it. Many others are shaping up the same. Deansworth is still young. I hope it's not as tragic for him."

That reminds me of the man who built his house on sand. When the sand shifted, his house washed away. Jetahl is like a sandbar on which we are building our house of life. To escape we must swim the turbulent river. When we've conquered the waters of fear we can build our house on solid ground. Does that sound corny?"

"I like it. Visualizing our actions symbolically helps us understand them. That's the way our mind works. To understand what someone says we must receive the same image that person is sending. Same with our actions. When we do things mechanically, out of habit, there is no meaning. Most of our activity at Jetahl is meaningless. We strive for artificial goals -- to finish the job, to impress the boss, to earn our paycheck -- and we don't see the outcome of our behavior. When I went to Mythica the outcome became vivid."

"Randy, I see another aspect. We have often discussed the need to minimize competition and stress cooperation. Competition stems from the instincts of self-preservation and status in the pecking order. This is, usually unthinkingly, fostered in the family and from there it pervades society. Yet, loving cooperation is seldom tried and people can't visualize it as a way of life. But cooperation is really a deeper rooted instinct -- protection of the young and survival of the species are definitely established as stronger drives. Both of these are manifestations of cooperation in that personal concern is subordinated to the well-being of others. Everyone has experienced cooperation only they don't expand it enough to relate to everyday actions. Yet, when a crisis occurs everyone pitches in to overcome the emergency. A typical example took place during the 1965 Watts riot in Los Angeles. Firemen were being harassed by a crowd. Then a wall collapsed on one of the firemen. Everyone present, firemen and rioters alike, worked feverishly to save that one person. For a few minutes their differences were transcended."

"It seems paradoxical that humanity has evolved to a rational level and still can't perceive the effect of much subdued but still active instincts."



"This same analogy applies to our struggles in early marriage, Randy. When we had a serious goal to achieve, you might say one of survival and the welfare of our children, we really worked together to overcome the obstacles. Those times were more romantic -- more spiced with challenges that kept us alert. Then comfort set in. Our senses became numb. We strived to hold on to comfort and became more self-centered. That could be the reason for many divorces late in life -- there is no common goal, no demanding action, to bond people together."

"Then the coming trials should reenergize our unity and make life more exciting. I'm looking forward to the challenge. I hope our family will be welded into a tighter community. We'll witness cooperation and maybe others will be able to see its goodness. I've been happier since we put together our liberation plan and that happiness has increased now that we've set the date. Our complicity with destruction will soon end. Thanks again, Gloria, for being my partner."

# # # # #

## 24 - LOOKING INSIDE

"This is great, Randy. What a swell idea to spend a few days in the mountains. Look out the window at Timmy and the girls exploring the redwood grove. They're really excited."

"And the relaxed atmosphere. What a treat to be away from the rat-race. We'll be able to do some serious contemplation. I hope this experience will mean growth as a family, Gloria . . . a family of resistance to evil. Let's light up the fireplace. This is the coldest winter in many years."

A few days ago Randy and Gloria were looking for a way the whole family could spend time contemplating what the future holds. The family meetings had been so successful that several days devoted to that same spirit of sharing seemed desirable. A camping trip would work in the warmer months but not this time of year. Then they remembered the Cursillo Center cabin in the mountains. Gloria was able to reserve four days between Christmas and New Years when everyone was off from school and work. The entire family was excited about this

adventure -- especially Timmy who spent hours deciding what clothes and games to take. Randy and Gloria asked the kids to bring books to share and other things such as family liturgy ideas and games that might provide enlightenment. Then, this morning, the station wagon was packed and the Allen family set off for the hills.

There was some difficulty locating the cabin because of the network of back roads and driveways that interlaced the heavily wooded country. But when it was finally sighted the kids squealed with excitement. Gloria and Randy were taken aback by its rustic beauty among oak, laurel and redwood. A veranda spanned the front and half way back on both sides. A moss covered shake roof and weathered board-and-batten walls provided the back-woods atmosphere for a secluded retreat. It was love with the place at first sight and the next few days were to become treasured memories for the Allen family.

Although it was mid-day, the valley was so deep and the trees so dense that lights were needed to explore the interior. Entering from the veranda on the driveway side, they found themselves in a small kitchen. One can walk in a loop through the cabin. Going toward the back, the next room was originally a dining area but now contained a set of bunk beds and a small breakfast table. Across the back of the building is a huge living room with a peaked, exposed-beam ceiling and a great stone fireplace centered on the back wall. On either side of the fireplace are double French-doors opening onto a patio which is too damp and chilly to enjoy this time of year. Settees and padded chairs are comfortably arranged and on one side of the room is an octagonal table that can be used for dining

and games. Coming back on the other side of the bungalow one passes through a bedroom, a bathroom, and another bedroom in that order. The last bedroom connects back with the kitchen.

A memento from the previous occupants -- a freshly picked rose in a bud vase -- is in the center of the octagon table. The card propped alongside says, "May this bit of God's creation make your stay more enjoyable."

Soon flames are crackling around the oak logs as the Allens warm themselves from the radiant heat. Gloria remarks, "I feel warm in more ways than one. That rose expresses more than the message or card could ever relate."

"It was a beautiful welcome," agrees Randy. "A big difference from the motel receptions I've been used to. Everyone can afford those little actions yet they are so seldom offered."

"Let's fix a snack for lunch and then we can make plans. I know the kids need time to explore so why don't we take a walk after we eat . . . and enjoy the mountain crispness? The green smell is almost intoxicating. Even the chill is exhilarating."

Gloria's suggestion is eagerly accepted and carried out with enthusiasm. After the walk the family delves into books and games until Randy and Timmy announce supper. At the meal Debbie says, "I have a symbolic exercise after Dolly and I clean up the dishes. Do you want to try it?"

"Yes," chorus Dolly and Timmy in unison.

"Me too," follows Gloria.

"So would I," exclaims Randy, making it unanimous. "Maybe after that we could discuss a passage from Thomas Merton that impresses me."

Dishes washed, the family gathers around the table. An empty pitcher is in the center and each person has a glass of water.<sup>1</sup> Debbie asks everyone to relax and think about their glass of water. "You realize that the water in the glass before you represents one of the joys of your life -- a joy that no one can take from you. This joy may have been known only to you or even forgotten until this moment but it is present now in that glass of water."

After waiting a few minutes for everyone to center their consciousness, Debbie continues, "We will pass the pitcher around and everyone will pour their glass of joy into it." Then Debbie explains, "All of our joys are now in this pitcher. We have pooled them together and they have merged in such a way as not to ever be separated again into individual experiences. We will pass the pitcher around again and refill our glasses." This done, Debbie proceeds, "Now we will drink our portion of this shared joy -- remembering as we do that this symbolizes the joy and love we continually share as a family." Everyone drinks. They then silently contemplate the significance of this simple liturgy.

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<sup>1</sup>This exercise is from Passages: A Guide For Pilgrims Of The Mind by Louis M. Savary and Marianne S. Andersen.

The quiet ensues for several minutes until it becomes unbearable for Timmy. "I like this puddle of joy game," he bursts out. The spell is broken amid a chorus of laughter and a renewed feeling of unity.

Moving around the fire, the Allens prepare for the first of many sharing sessions during the next few days. "This is from Thomas Merton's book New Seeds of Contemplation," explains Randy. "It almost seems that he is talking to us. Many sincere people have tussled with situations similar to ours." He reads:

In order to become myself I must cease to be what I always thought I wanted to be, and in order to find myself I must go out of myself, and in order to live I have to die.

The reason for this is that I am born in selfishness and therefore my natural efforts to make myself more real and more myself, make me less real and less myself, because they revolve around a lie.

People who know nothing of God and whose lives are centered on themselves, imagine that they can only find themselves by asserting their own desires and ambitions and appetites in a struggle with the rest of the world. They try to become real by imposing themselves on other people, by appropriating for themselves some share of the limited supply of created goods and thus emphasizing the difference between themselves and the other men who have less than they, or nothing at all.

They can only conceive one way of becoming real; cutting themselves off from other people and building a barrier of contrast and distinction between themselves and other men. They do not know that reality is to be sought not in division but in unity, for ~~they~~ are "members one of another."<sup>2</sup>

"That hits home," responds Gloria. "We are born into a society that stresses selfishness. It is necessary that we get outside ourselves so we can see how messed up we really are. That means critical analysis . . . looking at our lives

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<sup>2</sup>Thomas Merton, New Seeds of Contemplation. (New York: New Directions, 1961) pp 47-48

objectively as an outsider without all our emotional hang-ups. It's hard but I believe our family is making a start."

"It's a good picture of competition," adds Debbie. "I mean, we really do try to outdo each other and set ourselves apart. We become a nation of individuals with no feeling for each other. I didn't see the division in America until you and mother started me thinking, Dad."

"I'm glad we ain't like those selfish people no more," puts in Timmy.

"We shouldn't put ourselves on a pedestal," rebukes Randy. "It's another form of division when we look upon ourselves as more perfect than our neighbors. Merton warns against that, too. Listen."

And now I am thinking of the disease which is spiritual pride. I am thinking of the peculiar unreality that gets into the hearts of the saints and eats their sanctity away before it is mature. There is something of this worm in the hearts of all religious men. As soon as they have done something which they know is good in the eyes of God, they tend to take its reality to themselves and to make it their own. They tend to destroy their virtues by claiming them for themselves and clothing their own private illusion of themselves with values that belong to God. Who can escape the secret desire to breathe a different atmosphere from the rest of men? Who can do good things without seeking to taste in them some sweet distinction from the common run of sinners in the world? . . .

I must look for my identity, somehow, not only in God but in other men. I will never be able to find myself if I isolate myself from the rest of mankind as if I were a different kind of being.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid, pp 48-51



"That doesn't leave much room to feel good about what we do," observes Debbie. "I can't help feeling good when I've accomplished something worthwhile."

"I don't believe it restricts us from being happy," opines Randy. "It's just a case of giving God credit. Somehow, we should relate to all men . . . even the most sinful."

"Like loving our enemies," cries Dolly. "Turning the other cheek if someone hits us."

"That'll be the day," snaps Timmy. "The kids'd laugh me outta school if I did a stupid thing like that."

"Why?" asks Gloria

"Because it'd show I ain't got no guts, Mom."

"I wonder if that's how Peter felt when he denied Jesus three times?"

"Whadda ya mean?"

"Remember how Jesus said Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crows? Peter swore he'd never do such a thing. But when people jeered him for being a friend of that fool Nazarine he even denied Jesus angrily. Peter was willing to die 'honorably' to prevent Jesus' arrest but he wasn't strong



enough to take ridicule . . . at least not until he received the Holy Spirit. Is that how you feel, Timmy? That you'd rather take a beating than be made fun of by your friends?"

"Huh? Gee, I dunno. I've gotta think about it."

"Most of us are the same way," comforts Randy.

"It takes a real conviction to renounce human respect," continues Gloria. Most people can face physical danger but few can endure ridicule. Jesus asks a lot of us. We must risk physical danger by being non-violent and we must also endure being scoffed at. To do that and still love those people takes courage. And the trial reduces our feeling of superiority. ~~We're kept too busy to feel~~ proud."

"Gandhi called it reducing ourselves to zero," adds Randy. "Submerging our personal desires to the desire of God. If we can do that we'll experience a humble service of joy. We'll show weakness at times but that's not cause for despair. We should rally and submit ourselves as Jesus' hands in the world. There was a church bombed during World War II and only a statue of Christ remained but there were no hands. Some soldier attached a sign reading, 'I have no hands but yours.'"

"I have a problem about that zero business," admits Gloria. We are very important to God."

"Sure, Mom," contributes Debbie. "But it's only relative. Without God we are nothing -- literally nothing. Recognizing that puts things in proper context."

"Now I'm all mixed up again," yelps Timmy. "How can we have all this courage stuff if we ain't nothing?"

"Nothing of our own making," corrects his father. "Courage comes from God and that applies to more than just fighting. Many people will accuse us of being unpatriotic and gutless. But when we realize that true liberty doesn't require physical strength and that patriotism isn't subduing other nations we receive the strength to live a life of love. Does that make sense to you, Timmy?"

"Yeah. It's beginning to. I'm gonna hafta think about it."

"I have a reading. It compliments Merton's statement about getting outside of ourselves."

"Let's hear it, Mom," encourages Debbie.

"It's from a book by Martin Luther King, Jr. He sort of sums things up in the last chapter."

I do not minimize the complexity of the problems that need to be faced in achieving disarmament and peace. But I am convinced that we shall not have the will, the courage and the insight to deal with such matters unless in this field we are prepared to undergo a mental and spiritual reevaluation, a change of focus which will enable us to see that the things that seem most real and powerful are indeed now unreal and have come under sentence of death. We need to make a supreme effort to generate the readiness, indeed the eager-

ness, to enter into the new world which is now possible, "the city which hath foundation, whose Builder and Maker is God . . ."

So we must see that peace represents a sweeter music, a cosmic melody that is far superior to the discords of war. Somehow we must transform the dynamics of the world power struggle from the nuclear arms race, which no one can win, to a creative contest to harness man's genius for the purpose of making peace and prosperity a reality for all the nations of the world. In short, we must shift the arms race into a "peace race." If we have the will and determination to mount such a peace offensive, we will unlock hitherto tightly sealed doors of hope and bring new light into the dark chambers of pessimism.<sup>4</sup>

"I'm amazed how men of insight support each other's statements," Randy marvels.

"That's right, Dad," Debbie agrees. "I read some of Tolstoy's works in my literature class. His is another prophetic voice and this time from Russia. I wonder why we continue to rely on power when so many have pointed out its futility."

"That's because we're on the inside looking out," Randy explains. "Many things will have to change and the only place to start is within ourselves. The world waits for another great leader but great leaders have done all they can. Now we should follow their example and renew our lives. But we find it hard to look at ourselves. Maybe that's because we haven't understood the message. Or maybe we just don't like what we see. But I suspect the main reason is that if we really evaluate ourselves we'll have to change and that is painful."

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<sup>4</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr., Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos Or Community? (New York: Bantam Books, 1967) pp 215-216



"And then, too, many people are not prepared to meet the challenge to change," Gloria adds. "Their upbringing has not anticipated the agony of growth. I blame this on the degeneration of the family unit. Those in poverty and with broken marriages are extreme cases although most broken marriages stem from the same ill. But even today's best families are stricken by isolationism when they should be an integral unit of society . . . and the desocializing action where children learn self-fulfilling goals. Even families that try to extricate themselves from this pattern find it tough. Evil is so mixed with good that it's hard to sift out."

"But that doesn't excuse people from trying to recognize what is right," interjects Debbie. "Then they can make some self-improvements. The only one who can change me is me. Others can give me hope because it's hard to walk the road alone but I must make my own change. I was lucky because it started in my own family. I feel closer to all of you than I ever felt before."

"We all feel that closeness," agrees Randy.

"I found something else in King's book," Debbie cries. It's about picking out the good things."

Truth is found neither in traditional capitalism nor in classical communism. Each represents a partial truth. Capitalism fails to see the truth in collectivism. Communism fails to see the truth in individualism. Capitalism fails to see that life is social. Communism fails to realize that life is personal. The good and just society is neither the thesis of capitalism nor the antithesis of communism, but a socially conscious democracy that reconciles the truths of individualism and collectivism.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid, p. 217

"I guess he's talking about America, huh?" Timmy ventures.

"No way!" gasps Debbie. "America is capitalistic, isn't it, Dad?"

"That's right, Debbie. You see, Timmy, we must discriminate between democracy and capitalism. They are not the same. We use the free enterprise aspect of democracy interchangeably with capitalism but that is not proper. Capitalism is a rampage of the powerful rich which denies free enterprise to others. Look at the supermarkets which have run corner grocery stores out of business. The poor feel it first but the middle-class are not immune. Our psuedo-well-being soon turns into a peculiar form of powerlessness. Thinking we are prospering, we actually become deeper enmeshed in a servile system. Tethered by a taste of luxury and hobbled with the fear of losing security, our white-collar class has forfeited one human right after another until we have been reduced to a miserable subculture of wage-slaves. That's capitalism. But democracy says free enterprise stops when it interferes with anothers right."

The days at the cabin are joyful and adventurous. The Allens share hikes, games, chores and ideas. They sort out thoughts and fortify determinations to become a family community of resistance to the injustices in our society. A discussion on the last evening is a continuation of the first night's sharing. It starts with Randy reading from the works of Gandhi:

My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunities as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence.

I have always held that social justice, even unto the least and lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. I have believed that it is impossible

by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure the redress of wrongs suffered by them. That means is non-violent non-co-operation. At times, non-co-operation becomes as much a duty as co-operation. No one is bound to co-operate in one's own undoing or slavery. Freedom received through the efforts of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn. In other words, such freedom is not real freedom. But the lowliest can feel its glow, as soon as they learn the art of attaining it through non-violent non-co-operation.

Civil disobedience is the inherent right of a citizen. He dare not give it up without ceasing to be a man. Civil disobedience is never followed by anarchy. Criminal disobedience can lead to it. Every state puts down criminal disobedience by force. It perishes if it does not. But to put down civil disobedience is to imprison conscience.<sup>6</sup>

"Is it civil disobedience to stop working at Jetahl?" Dolly asks with deep concern.

"No, little one. The law doesn't tell us where we have to work -- except for those drafted into the military. It's perfectly legal to quit a job. It is non-cooperation, though, which is a form of non-violent resistance . . . a form anyone can use even if they can't bring themselves to civil disobedience. I feel it's a step. And it'll surely lead to other steps until civil disobedience may become demanding. As we become more and more committed to life we are willing to take greater risks. In our family we should progress together. It's not good to force one member to keep up with the rest. None of the people who influenced me tried to coerce me. They affected me by their sincerity."

"Then what is civil disobedience?" asks a puzzled Timmy. "Is it when you throw a brick through the bank window?"

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<sup>6</sup>M. K. Gandhi, All Men Are Brothers. (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1968) p. 177

"No. That's criminal disobedience . . . wanton destruction of property."

"Then isn't destroying of draft files a criminal act?" quizzes Debbie in her cross examining tone.

"Many think it is. I don't. I agree that they are illegitimate property . . . records of death that have no right to exist. The act of destruction is symbolic. It illustrates our warped values that jail people for destroying paper but pin medals on them when they destroy life in war. Also, the ones who burned draft records accepted the consequences for their act. Their trial and imprisonment was further witness. I never heard of brick-throwers and pipe-bombers showing that kind of dedication."

"Are we going to do civil disobedience, Dad?"

"We are doing some already, Dolly. Everyone doesn't perform dramatic actions like those at Cantonville, San Jose, Hickam and many other places but there are things we can do. Refusal to pay war taxes is a positive way. We haven't paid the federal tax on our phone bill for several years because it was imposed specifically to finance the Indochina conflict. Being self-employed at writing, I'll be able to hold back the portion of income tax that goes to the military. Tax refusal is an effective method of expressing one's concern. When enough people refuse, federal spending will be reformed mighty pronto."

"There's another point in that reading that's very important," Gloria observes.

"People must start acting for themselves. We depend so much on experts that we don't value our own ability. When we get up on our hind legs and demand what is right we'll have a true democracy."

"Well said, honey."

"Maybe this is a good place for another reading. It's getting late and this might be a good one to close on. It's from St. Matthew's Gospel."

Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks will receive, and he who seeks will find, and the door will be opened to him who knocks. Would any of you who are fathers give his son a stone, when he asks you for bread? Or would you give him a snake when he asks for fish? As bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, your father in heaven will give good things to those who ask him!

"Why did you pick that one?"

"In spite of our committment, I still worry about the future . . . how we are going to get necessities. I feel that you and the children also share that anxiety. It's better that we all recognize it. These words give me hope."

"All right. We'll swallow our pride and reduce ourselves to zero. We'll ask and seek and knock. And we'll expend our energies unselfishly to embody our faith."

"It's late. Let's sleep on those thoughts," suggests Gloria.

"Day after tomorrow is ~~New Year's~~ Day. The day after that I go back to work. On that day we'll announce our intention. We'll start the new year with a new life. Good night, everyone."

# # # # #



25 - OUT

"I'd like to speak with you, Clem."

"Sure. Sit down. I'll be right back."

Randy is nervous in spite of his conviction. It is a big decision.

"Sorry. I wanted to get that letter in type. Did you have a nice holiday?"

"Great. Yours?"

"We had a good time. Santa Claus was good to us, as usual, but I sure need more overtime to repair the hole in my bank account. Well, what's on your mind?"

Randy summons all his courage. "I've decided to leave Jetahl."

No response from Clem. Only a look of mild surprise.

"I guess you could tell something's been bugging me."

"Yes, I could tell something was on your mind but I didn't know what."

"Guess it's my conscience. I just can't work on weapons anymore."

Clem's eyes pop open. Randy continues, "I'm convinced we've saturated our deterrent capacity. We need to get more serious about disarmament. I can't see how that is possible when we are continually scrambling to get one more step ahead in weapons technology."

Clem stares at the floor before answering. Then, "You may be right, Randy. I've often wondered about it. But I keep telling myself this is <sup>just</sup> a game we are playing. No one will really use these weapons."

"It's a pretty serious game, Clem. Even if we never do use them, we're wasting too much money. Wouldn't you rather be working on something to help people?"

"That's a good point. Well, I'm sorry to hear you're leaving but, knowing you, I believe you've made up your mind. Is there anything I can say to change it?"

"Not a thing."

"How soon do you want to leave?"

"At the end of the month. Thought I'd give you a month's notice."

"Okay. I'll pass the word on to Percival and get all the necessary paperwork in order. You're certain?"

"I'm certain."

Randy then calls his crew together. "I want you to know before you hear it on the grapevine. I just told Clem I'm resigning."

Newspell's jaw drops. "What! When?"

"At the end of this month."

"Why?" asks Deansworth in a voice he hasn't quite recovered.

"It's a matter of conscience. I can no longer build instruments of destruction. Guess you'd call me a conscientious objector to the defense industry."

"Let me shake your paw," booms Stinelli. "Glad I finally met someone with guts enough to cut the cord. We all know this work is bullshit but we can't give up that Friday afternoon payoff."

"I'm not too surprised," adds Smith. "I just didn't know it would be so soon. What are you going to do now?"

"Freelance writing. There's lots of competition but I have things to say and I'm going to try saying them. Gloria has a part time job and with the money we have saved we can survive at least a year."

"We wish you luck. It's a tough racket but you'll make it."

Later, at home, "It's done, Gloria. We're playing for real now. How does it feel?"

"Scary. You?"

"Relieved yet nervous. No regrets, though. We did what had to be done. I hope we'll have the strength to carry our non-violent witness as far as God wants us to."

"We'll weather whatever storms lie ahead. What were the reactions?"

"Surprise, mostly. But it wasn't a shock to anyone. Even Clem almost agreed with me but you could still see the fear in his eyes. He almost recognized his self-delusion and had to change the subject quickly. I hope he's starting to think."

"Me too. Clem seems like a nice guy. Everyone I met from Jetahl seems decent."

"They are. I wish I'd have been able to help them understand themselves better. I even failed in my attempt with the Jetahl Blast."

"They never did print an answer to your question, did they?"

"Nope. Never heard from Mooney again. Don't know if he ever talked to Burns or if he just let the issue die."

"I thought Mr. Burns seemed cooperative."

"He was at the time. But maybe his business prudence got the best of him. Or maybe his legal staff advised him against rocking the boat."

"Well, one more month. Won't it seem funny going to work when everyone knows how you feel?"

"It's a real opportunity. Think of how many peace workers would like to have access to the inside of a defense plant for one month to speak as they please."

"How many of your friends will agree with your moral outlook?"

"Quite a few. Those who approach me will be more inclined to think as I

do. They're the ones I can influence most. Discussing the moral aspects can reveal their rationalizations. But pointing out the misuse of resources hits home quicker with most. It provides an alternative."

Randy was right. Many friends stopped by his desk. He studied their reactions as he explained his plans. But even that brought surprises. One visitor, in particular, made Randy wonder.

"I came to see Clem but he's not in. How are things going?"

"Pretty good, George. Sit down and take the weight off your feet."

"Can't stay. Gotta lotta work to do," states George as he pulls up a chair.

"Do anything exciting over the holidays?"

"Just stayed home. Couple of the kids had sniffles. But we enjoyed a simple Christmas."

"I'm finding that's the best kind. I'm trying to simplify my whole life pattern. You've heard I'm leaving?"

"Yeah." And then quickly, "I went into business once. A little engineering job-shop down south. I had six people working for me at one time. But the big defense plant that gave me a lot of business lost a contract and . . ."

"I'm not leaving just to be on my own."

"I know. Well after they slacked off there wasn't enough to keep me going. Hadda let my people go. Started working twelve to fourteen hours a day by myself." He pats his stomach. "Ulcers started acting up and hadda fold."

"I don't expect it to be easy, George. But it's a matter of conscience. I can't continue . . ."

"If you're going to be on your own you can expect to sweat. I prefer to have my health and work for someone else. There's more security and not all the worry."

"I can't compromise my beliefs for security or health. I must accept responsibility for . . ."

"Oh sure, I enjoyed being on my own . . . at least when business was good. It was prestigious to be your own boss and all that."

"George, I'm not seeking prestige."

"I understand, Randy. I'm just saying the novelty wears off soon. Take it from a boy with experience. Don't burn your bridges."

"I'll try not to."

"I gotta go. I'm up to my ears in work. Lotsa luck on your venture." And then over his shoulder, "I respect your decision."

"George is hard to figure out," ponders Randy. "His crutch is his ulcers."

The last day arrives. A termination interview is required. The personnel relations man escorts Randy into a private office and gives him a pat spiel while shoving papers under his nose to sign-- certification that all classified documents are turned in, verification that security locks have been returned, acknowledgment of company proprietary information policy, etc., etc. Then Randy is asked to sign a form certifying that he understands the federal security laws. "But I haven't read those for years," objects Randy.

"Never mind," explains Mr. Personnel Relations. "Here's a copy." Randy is handed six pages of extracts from various espionage, sabotage and other federal statutes. "You can read them at your convenience."

Randy glances at the sheaves of paper and then again at the form. His signature means he is familiar with these laws and won't reveal information to unauthorized persons. "What the hell. I won't do that." He picks up the pen. "But my idea of who is authorized may not be in agreement with the Defense Department."

After the interview Randy thinks of Buckley. "He hasn't even come by during this last month. I can't leave without seeing him. I like him even though we are poles apart ideologically."



Randy stops by Buckley's area. They make the conventional exchange of farewells. It is a strained parting. Randy really wishes they could transcend their differences. Could this be a precursor of acceptance by others?

Randy's co-workers and Clem take him out for a farewell luncheon. His crew presents a parting gift. Soon he is in the badge office to turn in his identification. An impersonal clerk hands him a receipt and jerks a thumb mechanically toward the outside door. "Through there," he grunts. Turning from the counter, Randy hears the resounding clang as his badge hits the bottom of an empty waste basket.

"And thus ends the seventeen year career of Randy Allen with Jetahl Rocket Works."

"Huh?"

"Nothing," says Randy as the self-locking door bangs with finality behind him. "Now I'm out on the street . . . scared but confident." Then Gloria's reading echos through his thoughts:

Ask, and you will receive;  
Seek, and you will find;  
Knock, and the door will be opened to you . . .

# # # # #

## 26 - EPILOGUE

Time passed quickly after the weapons industry door closed on Randy's past with that final symbolic bang. But as one door closed, another opened -- knock, and it will be opened. Randy has knocked often on the door to a literary career as his file of rejection slips testifies. But little by little the portal creaked ajar. First suggestions from editors. Then encouraging words. At last one of his essays was accepted for publication and then another and another. Rejection slips still come but they have changed from the cold, pre-printed format to warmer personal notes. Many months after leaving Jetahl, Randy wrote a book depicting life inside the military-industrial complex -- all those little day-to-day incidents that affect family life but are not consciously realized because the people involved accept them as the way things must be. But Randy dramatized these subtle machinations in a new light so that those still enslaved within the complex might be given hope. He also revealed internal policies and behavior which is kept secret from America's citizens under the guise of national security. Confronted with this exposure, the government faces the dilemma of prosecuting Randy and proving in the public eye that his accusations are true or keeping

quiet and letting his writings provide the wick whereby clandestine knowledge can slowly seep through the layers of corporate-military insulation. Of course the corporate arm has categorically denied Randy's description. And he correctly predicted they would do just that.

Gloria, also, has found her new work experiences coated with enrichment. Her compassion for children whose learning processes are physically and psychologically handicapped has caused her to plunge into her new career with enthusiasm. She is also pursuing every course obtainable which better prepares her for this life of service. There are other jobs that would pay more but she and Randy have resolved not to let economics predominate in their new-lifestyle choices. That has been difficult but it has worked.

Embodying this revised philosophy has been equally fulfilling for the children. Adjustment has resulted in learning new responsibilities to themselves, their family and society. Trying incidents do arise but the kids have adopted a new outlook. Their struggle has been a lesson in morality and an experience in love.

Once free from the fetters of industry, the Allen family learned of others who have escaped from the corporate trap. The secret seems to be a revision of values. Once someone gets the idea through his head that a lot of money is not needed to be happy he begins to see new sources of enlightenment. New opportunities unfold. Earning a living falls into proper perspective and less prestigious jobs take on dignity as leisure time manifests a creative flavor. Having

adopted this outlook, former engineers are starting small businesses and accepting lower paying jobs. Some leave military contracting because of conscience while others just want to escape from the rat-race.

So this period of transition for the Allen family has been their trial. They are winning. They have become responsive to opportunities and people in a search for their reality. Having fulfilled the mandate -- to ask, to knock and to seek -- they have been endowed with material and spiritual needs. Yet, in spite of encouragement from new friends of similar feelings, the Allens do feel a sense of aloneness as the ideological rift with relatives and former friends widens. But all pilgrims in the quest of truth have experienced this isolation not unlike a refugee in a strange land. And, as voiced by one of their dear friends, they are indeed refugees -- "refugees in the flight from immorality."

# # # # #