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Ken -

In the interest of keeping
the volume of pages down,
I eliminated those pages
that had only a page
left.

Ken -

In the interest of keeping the
volume of pages down, I eliminated
the pages that had only [illegible].
Merv

*- Extra attachment.

and loyal.'

'We'll get on it right away,' Sculley said enthusiastically.

The phone rang, and Coburn picked it up. 'Hi, Keane! Where are you? ... Hold on a minute.'

Coburn covered the mouthpiece of the phone and looked at Perot. 'Keane Taylor is in Frankfurt, on his way home. If we're going to do something like this, he ought to be on the team.'

Perot nodded. Taylor, a former Marine, was one of his eagles. Six foot two and elegantly tailored, Keane was a somewhat irritable man, which made him the ideal butt for practical jokes. Perot said: 'Tell him to go back to Tehran. But don't tell him why.'

A slow smile spread across Coburn's young-old face. 'He ain't gonna like it.'

Sculley reached across the desk and switched on the speaker so they could all hear Taylor.

Coburn said: 'Keane, Ross wants you to go back into Iran.'

Taylor said: 'What in hell for?'

Coburn looked at Perot. Perot shook his head. Coburn said: 'Uh, there's an awful lot to do, in terms of tidying up, administratively speaking - '

'You tell Perot I'm not going back in there for any administrative bullshit!'

Sculley started to laugh.

Perot said: 'Give me the phone.'

Coburn said: 'Keane, I have somebody here wants to talk to you.'

He passed the phone to Perot.

'Keane, this is Ross.'

'Oh, hi.'

'I wouldn't send you back on there for any administrative b.s.'

If speaker is
switched on ...
They could all hear
...
...
They could all
speak too. That is
the way it works ...
So perot would not
say 'Give me
the phone'

If speaker is switched on ... they could all hear...
The could all speak too. That is the way it works...
so perot would not say 'Give me the phone'

Do you understand what I'm saying?'

There was a long pause, then Taylor said: 'Uh, yessir.'

'Good.'

'I'm on my way.'

'What time is it there?'

'Seven o'clock in the morning.'

Perot looked at his watch. It said midnight.

Nineteen seventy-nine begun.

*

'Mr Perot? It's Henry Kissinger,' Sally called.

Perot's heart missed a beat as he picked up the phone on his desk. Could Kissinger possibly have achieved something in just twenty-four hours? Or was he calling to say he had failed?

'Ross Perot.'

'Hold the line for Henry Kissinger, please.'

A moment later Perot heard the familiar guttural accent. 'Hello, Ross?'

'Yes.' Perot held his breath.

'I have been assured that your men will be released tomorrow at ten a.m., Tehran time.'

Perot let his breath out in a long sigh of relief. 'Well, that's just about the best news I've heard since I don't know when. I just can't thank you enough.'

'The details are to be finalised today by U.S. Embassy officials and the Iranian Foreign Ministry, but this is a formality: I have been advised that your men will be released.'

'Well, that's just great. We sure appreciate your help.'

'You're welcome.'

welcome

*

welcome

and made him personally responsible for insuring that EDS never paid bribes. During the negotiation of the Ministry contract Luce, an aggressive lawyer, had offended not a few people by the thoroughness and persistence with which he had cross-examined them about the propriety of their dealings.

Perot was not hungry for business. He did not need to expand into Iran. If you have to pay bribes to do business there, he had said, why, we just won't do business there.

His business principles were deeply ingrained. His ancestors were Frenchmen who came to New Orleans and set up trading posts along the Red River. His father, Gabriel Ross Perot, had been a cotton broker and part-time horse trader. The cotton trade was seasonal, and Ross Senior had spent a lot of time with his son, often talking about business. 'There's no point in buying cotton from a farmer once,' he would say. 'You have to treat him fairly, earn his trust, and develop a relationship with him - then you're doing business.' No, EDS did not pay bribes.

At one-thirty Perot called Tehran again. Still there was no news. 'Call the jail, or send somebody down there,' he said. 'Find out when they're getting out.'

He was beginning to feel uneasy. What will I do if this doesn't work out? he thought. If I put up the bail, I'll have spent thirteen million dollars and Paul and Bill still won't be allowed to leave Iran. Any other legal means of getting them out ran up against the problem raised by all three Iranian lawyers - that this case was 'political', which meant, as far as Perot could make out, that the question of Paul and Bill's guilt or innocence was secondary. But political methods of getting them out had so far failed - neither the U.S. Embassy in Tehran nor the State Department in Washington had been

*There was no answer...?
Is he talking to himself?*

There was no answer...?
Is he talking to himself?

able to do anything. If Kissinger failed, the political approach failed. What then was left?

Force.

The phone rang. Perot snatched up the receiver. 'Ross Perot.'

'This is Rich Gallagher.'

'Are they out?'

'No.'

Perot's heart sank. 'What's happening?'

'We spoke to the jail. They have no instructions to release Paul and Bill.'

Perot closed his eyes. The worst had happened. Kissinger had failed.

He sighed. 'Thankyou, Rich.'

'What do we do next?'

'I don't know,' said Perot.

He did know.

He said goodbye to Gallagher and called T.J. Marquez's home number. It was two o'clock in the morning, but T.J. would not be surprised: it was not the first time Perot had woken him up in the middle of the night, and it would not be the last.

A sleepy voice said: 'Hello?'

'Tim, it doesn't look good.'

'How so?'

'They haven't been released and the jail says they aren't going to be.'

Tim or Tom?

'Aw, heck.'

'Conditions are getting worse over there - did you see the news?'

'I sure did.'

'Do you think it's time for Simons?'

Tim
or
Tom?



4.0

'Yeah, I think it is.'
 'Do you have his number?'
 'No, but I can get it.'
 'Call him,' said Perot.

→ There should be a pause!
 The answer is too sharp...

There should be a pause. The answer is too sharp...

3

Bull Simons was going crazy.

He was thinking of burning down his house. It was an old wood-frame bungalow, and it would go up like a pile of matchwood, and that would be the end of it. The place was hell to him - but it was a hell he did not want to leave, for what made it hell was the bitter-sweet memory of the time when it had been heaven.

Lucille had picked the place. She ^{SAW} saw it advertised in a magazine, and together they flew down from Fort Bragg to look it over. It was at Red Bay, in a dirt-poor part of the Florida Panhandle. The ramshackle house stood in forty acres of rough timber. There was a two-acre lake with bass in it.

Lucille had loved it.

It was 1971, and time for Simons to retire. He had been a Colonel for ten years, and if the Son Tay Raid could not get him promoted General, nothing would. The truth was, he did not fit in the General's Club: he had always been a Reserve officer, he had never been to a top military school such as West Point, his methods were unconventional, and he was no good at going to Washington cocktail parties and kissing ass. He knew he was a goddamn fine soldier and if that was not good enough, why, he was not good enough. So he retired, and did not regret it.

He had passed the happiest years of his life here at Red Bay.

O.K



All their married life he and Lucille had endured periods of separation, sometimes as much as a year without seeing one another, during his tours in Vietnam, Laos and Korea. Now they were together all day and all night, every day of the year. Simons raised hogs. He knew nothing about farming, but he got the information he needed out of books, and built his own pens. Once the operation was under way he found there was not much to do but feed the pigs and look at them, so he spent a lot of time fooling around with his collection of guns, and eventually had a little gunsmithing shop where he would repair his neighbours' weapons and load his own ammunition. Most days he and Lucille would wander, hand in hand, down to the fishing hole and maybe catch a bass. In the evening, after supper, she would go to the bedroom as if she were preparing for a date, and come out later, wearing a housecoat over her nightgown and a red ribbon tied in her dark, dark hair, and sit on his lap ...

Memories like this were breaking his heart.

Even the boys had seemed to grow up at last, during those golden years. Harry, the younger, had come home one day and said: 'Dad, I've got a \$700-dollar-a-day heroin habit and a \$400-dollar-a-day cocaine habit, and I need your help.' Simons knew little about drugs. He had smoked marijuana once, in a doctor's office in Panama, before giving his men a talk on drugs, just so that he could tell them he knew what it was like; but all he knew about heroin was that it killed people. Still, he had been able to help Harry by keeping him busy, out in the open, building hog pens. It had taken awhile. Many times Harry left the house and went into town to score dope, but he always came back, and eventually he just stopped going into town.

The episode had brought Simons and Harry together again. He would never be close to Bruce, his elder son; but at least he had been

able to stop worrying about the boy. Boy? He was in his thirties, and about as bull-headed as ... well, as his father. Bruce had found Jesus and was determined to bring the rest of the world to the Lord - starting with his father. Simons had practically thrown him out. However, unlike Bruce's other enthusiasms - drugs, I Ching, back-to-nature communes - this one had lasted, and at least Bruce had settled down to a stable way of life.

Anyway, Simons was through biting his nails over the boys. He had brought them up as well as he could, for better or worse; and now they were men, and had to take care of themselves. He was taking care of Lucille.

She was a tall, handsome, statuesque woman with a penchant for big hats. She looked pretty damn impressive behind the wheel of their black Cadillac. In fact she was the reverse of formidable. She was soft, easygoing and lovable. The daughter of two teachers, she had needed someone to make decisions for her, someone she could follow blindly and trust completely; and she had found it in Art Simons. He in turn was devoted to her. By the time he retired they had been married for thirty years, and in all that time he had never been in the least interested in another woman. Only his job, with its foreign postings, had come between them; and now that was over. He had told her: 'My retirement plans can be summed up in one word: you.'

They had seven wonderful years.

Lucille died of cancer on 16 March 1978. And Bull Simons went to pieces.

He knew that every man was supposed to have a breaking-point, but he had thought he did not have one. Now he knew he did: Lucille's death broke him. He had killed many people, and seen more die, but he had not understood

Is this necessary?

Is this necessary?

together for thirty-seven years: and now, suddenly, she just wasn't there.

Without her, he did not see what life was supposed to be about. There was no point in anything. He was sixty years old and he could not think of a single damn reason for living another day. He stopped taking care of himself. He ate cold food from cans and let his hair - which had always been so short - grow long. He fed the hogs religiously at 3.45 p.m. every day, although he knew perfectly well that it hardly mattered what time of day you fed a pig. He started taking in stray dogs, and soon there were thirteen of them, messing on the floor and climbing over the furniture.

He knew he was close to losing his mind, and only the iron self-discipline which had been part of his character for so long enabled him to retain his sanity. When he first thought of burning the place down, he knew his judgement was unbalanced, and he promised himself he would wait a year, and see how he felt then.

Stanley Simons, Art's elder brother, was worried about him, and Art knew it. Stan had tried to get him to pull himself together: had suggested he give some lectures, had even tried to get him to join the Israeli army. But Art could not pull himself together. It was as much as he could do to live from one day to the next.

He did not need someone to take care of him - he had never needed that. On the contrary, he needed someone to take care of. That was what he had done all his life. He had taken care of Lucille, he had taken care of the men under his command. Nobody could rescue him from his depression, for his role in life was to rescue others. That was why he had been reconciled with Harry but not with Bruce: Harry had come to him asking to be rescued from his heroin habit; but Bruce had come offering to rescue Art Simons by bringing him to the Lord. In

probably guessed.

Joe Poche was a short, quiet, blank-faced man. He knew Bill Gaylord well, having worked under him in Minnesota as well as in Tehran. Joe had spent two years in Iran as a systems engineer. He had designed the enrolment system for the Ministry's health care programme, and had later been responsible for loading the files which made up the data base for the whole programme. Before working for EDS he had spent four years in the army, and had seen action as commander of a howlitzer battery in Vietnam. Coburn knew that Poche's marriage was breaking up, and he felt an affinity for him, for his own marriage was pretty rocky.

Ralph Boulware was a full five inches taller than Poche. One of the two black men on the list, he had a chubby face and small darting eyes, and he talked very fast. He had spent nine years in the Air Force as a technician, working on the complex inboard computer and radar systems of bombers. In Tehran for only nine months, he had been in charge of data preparation at the Ministry's computer centre. Coburn was not close to Boulware, but Sculley had got to know him in Tehran, and said he was a good man to have around in a tight spot.

Glenn Jackson had no military experience but he was an enthusiastic hunter and an exper shot, and he knew Tehran well, having worked there for Bell Helicopter as well as for EDS. A mild man with spectacles, he looked less like a mercenary than any of them.

Pat Sculley had put his own name on the list. Coburn knew that Sculley had spent twenty months in Tehran as a project manager. He had also been five years in the army, ending up as a Ranger instructor with the rank of Captain. At Ranger Schook he had taught the Son Tay Raid. But he had no combat experience.

Of the two missing men, one was the most qualified for a rescue

and the other the least.

Jim Schwebach knew more about combat than he did about computers. Eleven years in the army, he had served with the 5th Special Forces Group in Vietnam, doing the kind of commando work Bull Simons specialised in, clandestine operations behind enemy lines; and he had even more medals than Coburn. Because of his years in the military he was still a low-level executive, despite his age - he had still been a trainee systems engineer when he first went to Iran - but he was a mature and dependable man, and Coburn had made him one of the team leaders in the evacuation back in December. Only five feet six inches, Schwebach had the erect, chin-up posture of many short men. He had a lopsided smile that made you wonder whether he knew something you did not. He enjoyed fooling around with anything mechanical, and his hobby was an ugly-looking stripped-down '73 Oldsmobile Cutlass that went like a bullet out of a gun.

The other missing man was Ron Davis. At thirty years old he was the youngest man on the list. The son of a poor black insurance salesman, he had also been the baby of the family, the youngest of ten children. He was cheerful, flippant, and full of fun. He had spent a year and a half in Tehran as operations manager of the Bank Omran project, working under Keane Taylor. He had no military experience at all, but he was a karate Black Belt.

They were all in their thirties, they were all married, and they all had children. ~~_____~~ (I think)

Ross Perot turned left on Forest Lane and right on Central Expressway, heading for the Hilton Inn.

He wondered what the men would say when he told them he wanted them to go to Tehran and bust Paul and Bill out of prison.

He arrived in Dallas early that evening and was taken straight to Perot's office. He had never before met Perot, and he was surprised when Perot said: 'Hi, Ron, how are you?' as if he had known him all his life.

Davis liked Perot instantly, but he was not yet ready to lay down his life for the man. He wanted to know a little more about the project. He would be glad to help Paul and Bill, but he wanted to be sure the rescue would be well-organised and professional.

Perot told him about Bull Simons, and that settled it.

*

Perot was just so proud.

Every single one of them had volunteered.

He sat in his office. It was dark outside. He was waiting for Simons.

Every single one!

He was grateful as well as proud, for the burden they had shouldered was his more than it was theirs.

In one way and another it had been quite a day. Simons had agreed instantly to come and help. Paul Walker, an EDS security man, had jumped on a plane in the middle of the night and gone to Red Bay to take care of Simons's pigs and dogs. And five young businessmen had dropped everything at a moment's notice and agreed to take off for Iran to organise a prison jailbreak.

The operation already had a code name: HOTFOOT, for Help Our Two Friends Out Of Tehran.

Simons had arrived in Dallas, checked in to the Hilton Inn, and gone to dinner with T.J. Marquez and Merv Stauffer.

Perot thought about Merv. He had not been heavily involved in this until now. Merv was plump, bespectacled, forty years old, an

economics graduate, and Perot's right-hand man. Perot had had some trouble with right-hand men: after a year or two in the job they tended to get a wild gleam in their eyes and start biting their fingernails and talking to walls. Somehow Merv had lasted. He was smart, he was thorough, he had a wonderful mind for detail, and - most important of all - he was completely unflappable. Perot decided that the best way he could help Simons was to give him Merv.

He wondered whether Simons had changed. It was years since they last met. He recalled the story Simons had told him on that occasion. They had been at some kind of banquet. Sitting between the two men was a woman. Both of them assumed she was connected with the military - It was a military affair - and therefore thought she must be used to hearing soldiers' tales.

On the Son Tay Raid, Simons's helicopter had landed in the wrong place. It was a compound very like the prison camp, but some four hundred yards distant; and it contained a barracks full of sleeping enemy soldiers. Awakened by the noise and the flares, the soldiers had begun to stumble out of the barracks, sleepy, half-dressed, carrying their weapons. Simons had stood outside the door, with a lighted cigar in his mouth. Beside him was a big black sergeant. As each man came through the door, he would see the glow of Simons's cigar, and hesitate. Simons would shoot him, the sergeant would heave the corpse aside, and they would wait for the next one.

Perot had been unable to resist the question: 'How many men did you kill?'

'Must have been seventy or eighty,' Simons had said.

Then they both noticed that the woman sitting between them was looking distinctly ill, and they changed the subject.

But all that was eight years ago, Perot recalled. Simons was no

Is this necessary?

Is this necessary?

they would discuss it. That was fine in the boardroom but useless on the battlefield.

They were also squeamish. The first time they talked about setting fire to a car as a diversion, someone had objected on the grounds that innocent passers-by might get hurt.

Finally, they had a tendency to forget the seriousness of what they were about. There was a lot of joking and a certain amount of horseplay, particularly from young Ron Davis.

He was working on them carefully. There was no point in his telling them that his judgement on military matters was better than theirs: they had to come to that conclusion for themselves. Similarly, his tough-guy act was intended to lead them to realise that from now on such things as keeping warm, eating and drinking would not occupy much of their time or attention. The shooting practice and the knife lesson also had a hidden purpose. The last thing Simons wanted was any killing on this operation - but learning how to do it reminded the men that the rescue was a life-and-death affair.

The biggest element in his psychological campaign was the endless practising of the assault on the prison. Simons was perfectly sure that the prison would not be exactly as Coburn had described it, and that the assault would have to be modified. A raid never went precisely according to plan. He should know.

He smiled as he recalled the Son Tay Raid. The rehearsals for that had gone on for weeks. A complete replica of the prison camp had been built of two-by-four timbers and target cloth at Eglin Air Base in Florida. The bloody thing had to be dismantled every morning before dawn and put up again at night, because the Russian reconnaissance satellite Cosmos 355 passed over Florida twice every twenty-four hours. But it had been a beautiful thing: every goddam

tree and ditch in the Son Tay prison camp had been reproduced in the mock-up. And then, on the raid itself, one of the helicopters - the one Simons was in - had landed in the wrong place.

? [Simons remembered the moment he realised the mistake. The helicopter was taking off again, having discharged the raiders. A startled Vietnamese guard had emerged from a foxhole and Simons had shot him in the chest. Shooting broke out, a flare went up, and Simons saw that the buildings surrounding this compound were not the buildings of the Son Tay camp. 'Get that fucking chopper back in here!' he yelled to his radio operator. He told a sergeant to turn on a strobe light to mark the landing zone.

He knew where they were: four hundred yards from Son Tay, in a compound marked on intelligence maps as a school. This was no school: there were enemy troops everywhere. It was a barracks, and Simons realised that his helicopter pilot's mistake had been a lucky one, for now he was able to launch a pre-emptive attack and wipe out a concentration of enemy troops who might otherwise have seriously threatened the whole operation.

? [That was the night he stood outside a barracks and shot eighty men in their pyjamas.

No, the operation never went according to plan: but familiarisation was only half the purpose of rehearsals anyway. The other half - and, in the case of the EDS team, the important half - was teamwork. Oh, they were already terrific as an intellectual team - give them each an office and a secretary and a telephone and together they would computerise the world. But working as a physical team was different. On 3 January the seven of them would have had trouble launching a rowboat as a team. Five days later they were a machine.

And that was all that could be done here in Texas.

children how much he loved them, for he thought he might never have another chance to let them know. They were like the letters written by a pilot before a dangerous mission.

Sometimes Keane would bring letters from home, and once Emily sent a snapshot of Christopher, their six-year-old son, standing in front of the Christmas tree.

A make-work project which filled several days was Bill's survey of the jail. He measured the cells, the corridors, the windows and the bunks, and drew an exact plan.

But the time was literally endless, for they had no release date. There was no point in counting the days or the weeks, no reason to make a calendar of scratch-marks on the cell wall, nothing to look forward to.

Coburn's visit cheered Bill, but the following day there was bad news. On 16 January the Shah left Iran, never to return.

The television set on the wall in the hall of the jail was switched on, exceptionally, in the afternoon; and Paul and Bill, and the other prisoners, watched the little ceremony in the Imperial Pavilion at Mehrabad Airport. There was the Shah, with his wife, three of his four children, his mother-in-law, and a crowd of courtiers. There, to see them off, was Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar, and a crowd of generals. Bakhtiar kissed the Shah's hand, and the royal party went out to the airplane.

It could only mean further chaos and confusion, less chance of a swift release, and more danger to all Americans in Tehran, Bill thought gloomily.

Soon after the television showed the Shah's jet rising into the sky, Bill began to hear a background noise, like a distant crowd, from outside the jail. The noise quickly grew to a pandemonium of shouting

and cheering and hooting of horns. The TV showed the source of the noise: a crowd of hundreds of thousands of Iranians was surging through the streets of Iran, yelling: 'Shah raft!' The Shah is dead! All cars were driving with their lights on and most were hooting continuously. The crowd pulled down all the statues of the Shah in the city. Truckloads of jubilant young men drove through the streets, celebrating.

Bill wondered what was going on in the minds of the prison guards and the Iranian prisoners. It was a day for the release of pent-up emotions, and one of those emotions might be hatred of Americans. Paul and Bill left the others watching TV, and retired to their cell, where they sat quietly, trying to be inconspicuous, for the rest of the day.

*

Two days later, on the morning of 18 January, a guard came to their cell and said something in Farsi to their cellmate Dr Reza Neghabat, the former Deputy Minister of Health.

'You must get your things together,' Neghabat translated. 'They are moving you.'

'Where to?' Paul asked.

'To another jail.'

Alarm bells rang in Bill's mind. What kind of jail were they going to? The kind where people were tortured and killed? Would the EDS people know where they had gone, or would Paul and Bill simply disappear?

It was the work of a couple of minutes to collect their shaving gear, toothbrushes and change of underwear. Then they sat and waited - for three hours.

It was unnerving. Bill had got used to this jail, and he knew the people; he was afraid the change would be for the worse. Paul asked Neghabat to try to get news of the move to EDS, maybe by bribing

the Colonel in charge of the jail.

Another of the prisoners in their cell, an old Iranian who spoke very little English, seemed upset that they were leaving: he had apparently grown fond of them. Paul was so touched that he gave the man the photograph of Karen and Ann Marie which he had stuck on the cell wall.

At last they were taken out into the courtyard and herded on to a mini-bus, along with half a dozen other prisoners from different parts of the jail. As the bus pulled out of the jail, Bill spoke to one of the other prisoners, a Frenchman.

'Do you know where we're going?'

'I am to be released,' the Frenchman said.

Bill looked at Paul. This was good news! Perhaps they would be released too.

There was another familiar face on the bus, Bill realised as he looked around: the big, burly Iranian who had been cell leader in the basement jail the first night Paul and Bill were incarcerated. Why was he being moved?

Bill turned his attention to the scene in the streets. It was the first time for three weeks that he had seen the outside world. The government buildings all around the Ministry of Justice were damaged: the mobs really had run wild. Burned-out cars and broken windows were everywhere. The streets were full of soldiers and tanks but they were doing nothing, neither controlling traffic nor maintaining order. It seemed to Bill only a matter of time before the Bakhtiar government would collapse.

What had happened to the EDS people - Gallagher, Taylor and Coburn? They had not appeared at the jail since the Shah left. Had they been forced to flee, to save their own lives? Somehow Bill was sure they

were still here, still trying to get their friends out of jail. He began to hope that this transfer had been arranged by them. Perhaps, instead of taking them to a different jail, the bus would divert and take them to the airport. The more he thought about it, the more he believed that everything had been arranged for their release. No doubt the American Embassy had realised, since the departure of the Shah, that Paul and Bill were in serious danger, and had at last got on the case with some real diplomatic muscle. The bus ride was a ruse, a cover story to get them out of the Ministry of Justice jail without arousing the suspicion of hostile Iranian officials such as Hosain Dadgar.

The bus went north. It passed through districts with which Bill was familiar, and he began to feel safer as the turbulent south of the city receded behind him.

Also, the airport was in the north. ^{WEST} WEST

The bus pulled into a wide square dominated by a huge stone structure like a fortress. Bill looked interestedly at the building. Its walls were about twenty-five feet high and dotted with guard towers and machine-gun emplacements. The square was full of Iranian women in black robes, all making a heck of a noise. Was this some kind of palace, or mosque? Or perhaps a military base?

To his horror the bus drove right up to the huge metal gates set centrally in the front of the fortress. It stopped for a moment, its nose to the gateway; then the gates opened and the bus drove in.

Bill realised that he was not going to the airport, EDS had not arranged a deal, the Embassy had not got moving, he was not being released. This was the new jail.

The bus stopped just inside. The gates closed behind it and a second set of metal doors opened in front.

The bus passed through into the fortress, and stopped. The doors

working on the Paul and Bill problem. On New Year's Eve he had arrived home to find Angela and baby Michael huddled in front of the wood fire in a cold, dark house: the blizzard had caused a power cut. He had moved them into his sister's apartment and gone off to New York again. Angela had had about as much as she could take, and when he announced he was going to Tehran again, despite the riots there, she hit the roof. It took him a long time to talk her round, and when eventually she agreed that he should go, it was a distinctly lukewarm blessing that she gave. He had called her a couple of times since, and he knew that she was watching the riots on the TV news and worrying about him. They had been planning to move house, and he encouraged her to go house-hunting without him: it would help to take her mind off her worries.

He pushed domestic problems to the back of his mind as he headed for the office Dadgar had taken over. Keane Taylor went with him. Taylor was acting Country Manager because Lloyd Briggs had gone back to New York. Taylor was a full seven inches taller than Howell. We must look an odd couple, Howell thought; like Batman and Robin. He knew Taylor well. They had worked together on several EDS contracts in the States. As they stood outside Dadgar's door, Howell said: 'Mutt and Jeff?'

Taylor grinned. 'Mutt and Jeff,' he agreed.

They went in.

Howell introduced himself to Dadgar and shook hands, thinking: He doesn't look like a monster, he looks like a rather weary man of middle age who is losing his hair.

There were two interpreters in the room: an Iranian woman for Dadgar, and an EDS employee, [REDACTED], ^{Abolhasan} for Howell and Taylor.

Howell began by repeating to Dadgar what he had said to Dr Kian.

[REDACTED]

'EDS is a reputable company which has done nothing wrong, and we are willing to co-operate with your investigations. However, we cannot tolerate having two senior executives in jail. Now, what are the charges against them?'

Through his interpreter, Dadgar replied: 'We will let you know what the charges are when we are ready.'

Taylor said: 'So this is nothing but blackmail.'

'Now, wait a minute, Keane,' said Howell. He turned to Dadgar. 'Our men are in jail now, so we need to know what the charges are now.'

'There are no charges,' said Dadgar imperturbably.

'You see?' Taylor said. 'They're just hostages! This is plain extortion!'

Abolhasan

Dadgar pointed at Taylor as he spoke. [REDACTED] translated: 'You must hold your tongue or you will be arrested.'

Taylor was overdoing his side of the good-guy, bad-guy act, Howell thought. He said: 'There must be charges.'

'I am conducting an investigation,' Dadgar said. 'When the investigation is concluded, I will know whether there are any charges against Chiapparone and Gaylord.'

'So what are you investigating?' Howell said.

'I do not like to be cross-examined,' Dadgar replied, with just a hint of anger showing in his expression.

Careful, Howell told himself. 'My clients have done nothing wrong.'

'If they have done nothing wrong, why have you not posted the bail?'

Howell was taken aback. 'There is no connection between the two,' he said. 'Bail is a guarantee that someone will appear for trial, not a sum to be forfeited if he is guilty. Guilty or innocent, the bail

will be repaid as soon as my clients appear in court.' He waited while the woman translated. Dadgar made no reply, so presumably he agreed, but all the same Howell wondered whether 'bail' was the correct translation of whatever Farsi word Dadgar was using describe the \$12,750,000 he had demanded of EDS.

Howell continued: 'However, there is a reason why we have not posted bail: so far we have been unable to bring thirteen million dollars into the country because your banks are on strike.' That was not strictly true; but, Howell felt, if he tried to explain to Dadgar that American banks did not want to get involved in helping EDS pay what they saw as extortion money, Dadgar would probably put him in jail.

When this was translated, Dadgar shrugged, as if to say that the bank strike was EDS's problem, not his.

Howell continued: 'Nevertheless, we will post bail as soon as possible, and to that end we need to know exactly what kind of documentation you will require.'

Dadgar began to give him details of the form of bank guarantee he would require before releasing Paul and Bill. As he made notes, Howell thought: Well, he hasn't arrested me.

Yet.

3

Jay Coburn sat in the lobby of the Sheraton Hotel in Tehran, reading Newsweek magazine and feeling like a character in a bad spy movie.

He was waiting for [REDACTED], nicknamed Deep Throat.

Coburn had never met [REDACTED], but he knew him. [REDACTED] was Deep Throat an American living in Tehran and working as a consultant, giving Throat advice to businessmen on how to deal with the Iranians. Before Paul and

Bill were arrested, he had called EDS and told them that they were in deep trouble, but for a payment of two and a half million dollars the Ministry of Justice would close the file and give them a clean bill of health. They had not believed ^{Deep Throat} [REDACTED]: the government owed money to EDS, not vice versa; it was the Iranians who needed a clean bill of health.

When Paul and Bill were arrested, it became clear that ^{Deep Throat} [REDACTED] had been right about how much trouble EDS was in, so Lloyd Briggs had called the man and asked him to try to find out what was going on.

^{Deep Throat} [REDACTED] subsequently called back and said the problem could be solved by six million dollars. He wanted to meet with Perot to set up the deal. Perot had asked Coburn to see ^{Deep Throat} [REDACTED]. (Perot had first carefully asked Simons's permission to borrow a member of the rescue team.)

Coburn heard a voice say: 'Do you know where Pahlavi Avenue is?'

He looked up and said: 'No, I don't. I'm new in town.'

That was the identification code. ^{Deep Throat} [REDACTED] was being very cloak-and-dagger about this whole thing - hence his nickname.

LoBello seemed very nervous, looking around him constantly.

'Let's go,' he said. 'Over there.'

Coburn got up and followed him to the back of the hotel. They stopped in a dark passage. 'I'll have to frisk you,' ^{Deep Throat} [REDACTED] said.

Coburn raised his arms.

^{Deep Throat} [REDACTED] searched him.

'What are you afraid of?' Coburn said.

'There are no rules any more in this town,' said ^{Deep Throat} [REDACTED]. 'You can't trust anyone.'

'Okay,' Coburn said when ^{Deep Throat} [REDACTED] finished frisking him. 'What's the deal?'

would tell him to go in there and cheer them up.

His hopes were pinned on the notorious inability of government to let its right hand know what its left was doing. The Ministry of Justice was looking for him; the police ran the jails; the military was running the airport. He was confident that the search for him would be hopelessly inefficient.

Nevertheless, he took care to look like one of the regular team of EDS men visiting Paul and Bill. He even carried a box of groceries for them; and he wore his usual casual clothes.

The bus pulled into the square, and he got his first sight of the Gasr Prison. It was formidable: he could not imagine that Simons would find a way to break into it.

The bus stopped and Perot got out. Keane Taylor and Rich Gallagher were with him, and Coburn had come to reconnoitre the inside of the jail for Simons.

Outside the prison were scores of people, mostly Iranian women, making a lot of noise. The four EDS men pushed their way through the crowd to the huge steel gates. Someone looked out through a small window set in the wall, then the gates swung open and the four men walked in.

The gate clanged shut behind them.

Perot had passed the point of no return.

He gave the guard a five-dollar tip, as was normal - he wanted to do everything completely normally - and walked on, through a second set of steel doors, into a reception area.

He showed his passport. There was a \$5 bill inside it. He was betting that neither his face nor his name would mean anything to anyone in the prison. If he was wrong, the receptionist would blow a whistle, or pick up a phone, or just start hollering, and the game would be up.

The receptionist handed his passport to him - minus the bill - and pointed to a visitors' book.

He signed it 'H.R. Perot.'

He had been right. Nobody here had ever heard of Ross Perot.

He walked into the waiting-room - and there, to his horror, he saw someone who did know him. It was Ramsey Clark, the human rights campaigner and former U.S. Attorney-General. Perot had met Clark several times and knew Clark's sister Mimi very well.

For a moment Perot froze. Could he keep out of Clark's sight? Clark was talking to an Iranian in general's uniform. Perot thought: Any minute now Ramsy will see me and say: 'Lord, there's Ross Perot, the owner of EDS,' and it will be worse if I look as if I'm trying to hide.

He made a snap decision. He walked over to Clark, stuck out his hand, and said: 'Hello, Ramsey, what are you doing in jail?'

Clark laughed and shook hands. 'How's Mimi?' Perot asked, before Clark could perform introductions.

'She's fine - '

'Good to see you,' Perot said, and he walked on.

His mouth was dry as he went out of the waiting-room and into the prison compound. That had been a close one. He wondered what Clark was saying to the Iranian general now ...

*

Paul was depressed. He had thought that Coburn's rescue team would ambush the bus that brought them from the Ministry of Justice, and when the bus entered the formidable Gasr Prison he had been bitterly disappointed.

~~MOHARRI~~ Moharri
General Mohari had explained to Paul and Bill that he was in charge of all the jails in Tehran, and he had arranged for their transfer

Perot said: 'We don't know whether we'll get you out quickly or slowly. Tell yourselves it will be slowly. If you get up each morning thinking "Today could be the day," you may have a lot of disappointments and become demoralised. Prepare yourselves for a long stay, and you may be pleasantly surprised. But always remember this: we will get you out.'

They all shook hands. Paul said: 'I really don't know how to thank you for coming, Ross.'

Perot smiled. 'That's all right.'

They all went out. The EDS men walked across the compound toward the prison gate. Watching them walk away, Bill was seized by a longing just to go with them. Not today, he told himself; not today.

*

Perot headed for the front of the prison, wondering whether he would be allowed to leave.

MOHARRI Moharri

Had Ramsey Clark told General Mohari who he was? Had someone recognised the name in the visitors' book? Would there be a reception committee waiting for him in the administration block at the prison entrance?

His heart beat faster as he entered the waiting room. The General was not there. He walked through, and into the reception area. Nobody looked at him.

With Coburn, Taylor and Gallagher close behind, he walked through the first set of steel doors, giving the guard a five-dollar tip.

He crossed the little courtyard and waited by the big gates.

The gates opened.

He walked out of the prison.

He had made it.

*

He need not have worried. Clark, who was there at the invitation of Iranian human-rights groups, did not have such a good memory. He had known that Perot's face was vaguely familiar but thought he was Colonel Frank Borman, the president of Eastern Airlines.

*

Later that day Keane Taylor drove Perot to the rescue team's hideout. Perot was wearing his jogging suit with tennis shoes and a dark businessman's overcoat. The rescue team had moved into their second apartment, one which had been used by Bill Dvoranchik. Taylor showed Perot into the house, then went outside with Coburn, leaving Perot alone with Simons.

Perot looked around distastefully. Perhaps the place had been spotless when Dvoranchik lived here, but now, inhabited by a bunch of men none of whom was very interested in housekeeping, it was dirty and run-down, and it stank of Simons's cigars.

'You've seen the new prison,' Perot said to Simons.

'Yeah.'

'What do you think?'

'The idea of taking that place with the kind of frontal attack we had in mind just isn't worth talking about any more.'

'That's what I figured.'

'Which leaves a number of possibilities. One: I understand there are cars parked in the prison compound. We may find a way to get Paul and Bill driven out of there in the trunk of a car. Two: We may be able to bribe or blackmail this General who is in charge of the jail. One of your Iranian employees is getting us a rundown on the man.'

'General Mohari.'

'Right. Three: The negotiating team may be able to get Paul and Bill released on bail, or under house arrest. If that happens we can

'Uh, Mr Dadgar,' Howell said quickly, 'would you be able to give a legal guarantee that any returning staff would not be arrested or harrassed in any way?'

'I could not give a formal guarantee,' Dadgar replied. 'However, I would give my personal word of honour.'

Howell darted an anxious glance at Taylor. Taylor said nothing but his expression was eloquent.

Howell said: 'We could certainly investigate ways of arranging the turnover. There would have to be safeguards, of course. For example, you would have to certify that the machinery was handed over to you in good condition - but perhaps we could employ independent experts to do that ... ' Howell was shadow-boxing. Dadgar had just handed him a bargaining counter, and it was the only one he had. If the small data centre was handed over, there would be a price: the release of Paul and Bill.

Howell said: 'Would it help if EDS were to renegotiate its contract with the Ministry?'

'This would not be a legal solution to our problem, but it might be a practical solution,' Dadgar said. 'It would be a pity to waste all the work that has been done to computerise the Ministry.'

Howell decided to be blunt at this point. 'Of course, it would be quite out of the question to switch the computers on again while Chiapparone and Gaylord are still in jail.'

Dadgar replied: 'Still, if you commit to good faith negotiations, the Ministry will call me and the charges might be changed, the bail might be dropped, and Chiapparone and Gaylord might even be released on their personal guarantees.'

Was this what it was all about, Howell wondered? Was the whole wretched business no more than a scheme to get EDS to reduce its

charges?

The SSO officials started speaking. They all had complaints about EDS. The most vociferous was a man whom EDS had had downgraded for inefficiency. As the meeting degenerated into a gripe session, Howell thought over the idea of renegotiating the EDS contract.

A similar suggestion had come from Paul Bucha. Bucha had gone to Rome and talked to Condotta D'Acqua, the construction company who had managed to spring from jail their employee Lucio Randone, Paul and Bill's cellmate. Condotti D'Acqua had been building apartment blocks in Tehran with Iranian finance. The Iranian partners had run out of money and consequently the Italians had stopped construction. Unfortunately many Iranians had already paid for their apartments, and in the furore Randone had been jailed as a scapegoat. Condotti D'Acqua had found a new source of finance and resumed building, and Randone got out of jail.

Bucha also said that the Italians were not being completely candid with him, but had hinted that a bribe was required to make the deal happen. Everything had been arranged by an Iranian lawyer called Ali Azmayesh.

Howell had met with Azmayesh, who told him that EDS did not have a legal problem, it had a business problem: if EDS could come to a business arrangement with the Ministry, Dadgar would go away.

Now Dadgar was saying something similar.

Minister
MINISTER

Howell decided that he and Taylor had better go see the Ministry of Health.

*

'Mr Taylor, the head of the American company EDS, is calling you, Minister,' said the secretary.

Dr Razmara took a deep breath. 'Tell him that American businessmei.

hesitated a moment, then said: 'I'm not even going to ask.'

Boulware met Schwebach and Sculley in London, gave them five of the six radio sets, and - keeping one radio for himself - flew on to Istanbul. There he contacted [REDACTED] ^{Mr. Fish}, the travel agent.

Boulware knew that EDS had tipped [REDACTED] \$150 for all his help during the evacuation, and that seemed to Boulware grossly inadequate, so the first thing he did was to tell [REDACTED] ^{Mr. Fish} that there had been some confusion about showing him EDS's appreciation, and give him a thousand dollars. Then he invited [REDACTED] ^{Mr. Fish} to dinner to talk about some other things.

He knew that [REDACTED] ^{Mr. Fish} liked him. Their daughters had played together during the evacuees' stopover in Istanbul. However, Boulware figured that by now [REDACTED] ^{Mr. Fish} was suspicious of EDS, since Pat Sculley had come over with a transparent tale about smuggling computer tapes into Iran. ^{Mr. Fish} [REDACTED] was neither a fool nor a criminal, in Boulware's estimation; it would be best, he judged, to tell the plain truth.

'We have two people in Iran without passports,' he told Tuna over dinner. 'I need to meet them at the Iran-Turkey border. I have to make sure they get into the country without too much hassle. I have to take them to the nearest American consulate to get new passports, then I have to get them on a plane to the United States. If things go wrong, I may even have to sneak across the border into Iran to bring them out. Can you help me?'

[REDACTED] ^{Mr. Fish} was horrified. 'You don't understand,' he said. 'That is a terrible place, around the border. The people are Kurds and ~~AZARBAIJANEAS~~ Azerbaijanis - wild mountain men, they don't obey any government. You know how they live up there? By smuggling, robbery and murder. I personally would not dare to go there. If you go there, an American, you will never come back. Never.'

Boulware thought he was exaggerating. 'I have to go there, even if it's dangerous,' he said. 'Now, can I buy a light aircraft?'

Mr. Fish
shook his head. 'It is illegal in Turkey for individuals to own aircraft.'

'A helicopter?'

'Same thing.'

'All right, can I charter a plane?'

'It is possible. However, such a thing would invite the attention of the authorities ... '

'Are there scheduled flights to the border area?'

'No.'

'All right. Let's set up the option of chartering. Find out about price and availability, but hold off from making any kind of booking. Meanwhile, I want to know more about getting there by land. If you don't want to escort me there, fine; but maybe you can find somebody who will.'

Mr. Fish
'I'll see what I can do,' said.

A few days later he introduced Boulware to a man who had relatives among the mountain bandits. Mr. Fish said the man was a criminal, and he certainly looked the part: he had a scar on his face and little beady eyes. He said he could guarantee Boulware safe passage to the border and back, and his relatives could even take Boulware across the border into Iran, if necessary.

Boulware called Dallas and told Merv Stauffer about the plan. Merv relayed the news to Coburn, in code; and Coburn told Simons. Simons vetoed it. If the man is a criminal, we can't trust him, Simons pointed out.

Boulware was annoyed, having gone to some trouble to set it all up; but Simons was the boss, and he had no option but to start all over

*

That evening, Simons explained his plan.

Simons, Coburn, Poche, Paul and Bill would come from Tehran to Rezaiyeh in the two Range Rovers. They would be driven by Nabi and the professor: they would need Iranians to talk them through the roadblocks, and Simons was now prepared to trust these two.

At Rezaiyeh they would stage at the professor's house. It was ideal for the purpose. The building was detached, and no one else lived there; and it was on the outskirts of the city for easy egress.

Between Tehran and Rezaiyeh they would be unarmed: judging by what had happened on the reconnaissance trip, they could get into trouble with the people who manned the roadblocks if they carried guns. However, in Rezaiyeh they would pick up firearms. Nabi had made a contact in the city who would sell them Browning 12-gauge shotguns for six thousand dollars apiece.

Coburn would cross the border legitimately in one of the Range Rovers and link up with Boulware, who would also have a car, on the other side. Simons, Poche, Paul and Bill would cross on horseback with the smugglers. That was why they needed the guns: in case the smugglers should decide to 'lose' them in the mountains.

Coburn and Boulware would pick them up on the other side. They would drive to the nearest American consulate, where they would confess all and get new passports for Paul and Bill.

It was a good plan, Coburn thought; but he recalled the last plan Simons had made, for the assault on the jail, and he wondered whether changing circumstances would render this plan as useless as the last.

*

They returned to Tehran by a different route. They went around the

southern, instead of the northern, end of Lake Rezaiyeh, passing through the small town of Mahabad, and rejoining their original road at Zanzan. This route was more mountainous, and the roads were narrower, but they were paved and presented no problems to the Range Rover, which never needed its four-wheel drive. The towns they passed through on the southerly route were smaller, and Simons decided there would probably be less trouble with the authorities there; so it was agreed that they would come this way if and when they returned with Paul and Bill.

4

On 22 January hundreds of homafars, ^{new} ~~or~~ ^{Air Force pilots} ~~warrant officers~~, mutinied at air bases in Dezful, Hamadan, Isfahan and Mashad, and declared themselves loyal to Khomeini.

or Air Force new pilots

The significance of the event was not apparent to National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, who still expected the Iranian military to crush the Islamic revolution; nor to Premier Shahpour Bakhtiar, who was talking about meeting the revolutionary challenge with a minimum of force; nor to the Shah, who instead of going to the United States was hanging on in Egypt, waiting to be summoned to save his country in its hour of need.

The people who did see its significance were Ambassador William Sullivan and General Abbas Gharabaghi, the Iranian chief of Staff.

Sullivan told Washington that the idea of a pro-Shah counter-coup was moonshine, the revolution was going to succeed and the U.S. had better start thinking about how it would live with the new order. He received a harsh reply from the White House suggesting that he was disloyal to the President. He decided to resign, but his wife pointed

He implemented the system for 18 branches in just two months which was important to E.D.S then.

'Okay.'

Simons lit a cigar. 'That isn't enough,' he mused. 'I need someone in the mob. Have you got an Iranian who could pose as a revolutionary?'

Coburn thought immediately of Rashid. Rashid was a dark-skinned, rather good-looking twenty-three-year-old from a middle-class Tehran family. He had completed EDS's training programme for systems engineers. He was intelligent and resourceful, and he had bags of charm. Coburn recalled the last time Rashid had demonstrated his talent for improvisation. The striking Iranians had refused to key the data for the Ministry payroll system, but Rashid had got all the input together, taken it down to Bank Omran, talked someone there into keying the data, then run the programme on the Ministry computer. The trouble with Rashid was that you had to keep an eye on him, because he never asked permission for his unconventional solutions to problems. Breaking the strike that way might have got EDS into big trouble, and when Bill Gaylord heard about it he had been more anxious than pleased. Rashid was excitable and impulsive, and his English was not so good, so he tended to dash off and do something crazy without telling anyone about it. But he could talk his way into or out of anything. Meeting people, or seeing them off, at the airport, he always managed to pass through all the barriers and checkpoints into the areas reserved for passengers, although he did not have a boarding card or passport to show. Coburn knew him well - Rashid had been to his house for dinner - and Coburn had no doubts about Rashid's loyalty to EDS, especially since the strike, when Rashid had been one of Coburn's spies among the hostile Iranian employees.

'I'll call Rashid,' Coburn said. 'When do you want to see him?'

'Tomorrow.'

He wrote a letter to Ross Perot and decided to get all the managers sign it so he could get his training in Dallas and not Tehran. Due to the events he never mailed the letter.

~~He implemented a system for 18 branches in just two months which was important to E.D.S then~~

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not true

not true

OUT

OUT

*

When Rashid was eight years old he had wanted to be President of the United States.

At twenty-three he knew he could never be President, but he still wanted to go to America, and EDS was going to be his ticket. He knew he had it in him to be a great businessman. He was a student of human psychology, and it had not taken him long to figure out the psychology of the EDS people. They wanted results, not excuses. If you were given a task, it was always better to do a little more, rather than a little less, than was expected of you. If for some reason the task was difficult, or even impossible, it was best not to say so: there was nothing they hated more than people whining about problems. You never said 'I can't do that because ...' You always said 'This is the progress I have made so far, and this is the problem I am working on right now ...' It was an attitude that suited him perfectly. He had made himself useful to EDS, and he knew they appreciated it.

Mr Simons did not seem like an EDS executive. For one thing, they were all in their thirties or forties, and Simons looked nearer sixty. On top of that, his long hair and white moustache and big nose seemed more Iranian than American. Finally, he did not come right out with whatever was on his mind. People like Coburn would say 'This is the situation and this is what I want you to do and you need to have it done by tomorrow evening ...' Simons just said: 'Let's go for a walk.'

They strolled around the streets of Tehran. Rashid found himself talking about his family, his work at EDS, and his views on the psychology of human beings. They could hear continual shooting, and the streets were alive with people marching and chanting. Everywhere they saw the wreckage of past battles, the overturned cars and the burned-out buildings. 'The Marxists smash up expensive cars and the Moslems trash

the liquor stores,' Rashid explained.

'Why is this happening?' Simons asked him.

'This is the time for Iranians to prove themselves, to accomplish their ideas, and to gain their freedom.'

They found themselves in Gasr Square, facing the prison. Rashid said: 'There are many Iranians in these jails simply because they ask for freedom.'

Simons pointed to the crowd of women in shodorahs. 'What are they doing?' CHADORS CHADORS

'Their husbands and their sons are unjustly imprisoned, so they gather here, wailing and crying to the guards to let the prisoners go.'

Simons said: 'Well, I guess I feel the same about Paul and Bill as those women do about their men.'

'Yes. I, too, am very concerned about Paul and Bill.'

'But what are you doing about it?' Simons said.

Rashid was taken aback. 'I have done everything I can to help my American friends,' he said. He thought of the damn dogs. One of his tasks at the moment was to care for all the pets left behind by EDS ^{OUT} _{OUT} evacuees. He had never had pets and he did not know how to deal with large aggressive dogs. Every time he went to the apartment ^{TWO} where he had stashed the dogs to feed them, he had to hire two or three men off the streets to help him restrain the animals. Twice already he had taken them all to the airport in cages, having heard that there was a flight out; both times the flight had been cancelled. He thought of telling Simons about this, but somehow he knew Simons would not be impressed.

'Do you know anything about the French Revolution?' Simons asked.

'A little.'

'This place reminds me of the Bastille - a symbol of oppression.'

am doing
am doing

Apartment and
households

Apartment and
households

Simons was right, Rashid thought.

Simons went on: 'The French revolutionaries stormed the Bastille and let all the prisoners out.'

'I think the same will happen here.'

Simons nodded. 'If it does, someone ought to be here to take care of Paul and Bill when they get out.'

'Yes.' He wants me to do that, Rashid thought. 'I will be here.'

'Good.'

They stood there, looking at the high stone wall of the prison and the huge gates. Rashid remembered that you always had to do a little more than you were asked to. Maybe he could make sure the mob stormed the prison. It would help not only Paul and Bill but the whole Iranian people. Wouldn't that be something, he thought. Wouldn't that be something.

—

TWO
OUT

'yes.' I will be here. Rashid thought

OUT 'Yes.' I will be here. Rashid thought

Dadgar surely knew that the U.S. guarantee was as good as gold. Why was he being so obstructive? 'Did you say anything about Bakhtiar?'

'Yes. I told him we would take this proposal to the Prime Minister.'

'What did he say to that?'

'He said it was typical of the Americans. They try to resolve things by bringing influence to bear at high levels, with no concern for what is happening at lower levels. He also said that if his superiors did not like the way he was handling this case, they could take him off it, and he would be very happy, because he was weary of it.'

Howell frowned. The motives of the Iranians were still a complete mystery. Evidently they did not want the money - otherwise they would have accepted the U.S. guarantee. Now it seemed that Dadgar's personal motivation did not enter into the picture, for he had more or less admitted that he was taking orders from above. The case was therefore political. But who was behind it?

'Sorry it didn't work,' said Goelz.

'Yeah. Thanks for trying, anyway,' Howell said.

*

The revolution began on Friday 9 February.

In just over a week Khomeini had destroyed what was left of legitimate government in Iran. He had called on the military to mutiny and the members of parliament to resign. He had appointed a 'provisional government' despite the fact that Bakhtiar was still Prime Minister. His supporters, organised into revolutionary committees, had taken over responsibility for law and order and garbage collection, and had opened more than a hundred Islamic co-operative stores in Tehran. On 8 February at least a million people marched through Tehran in support of

the Ayatollah. Although the military had no instructions to put down the revolutionaries, nevertheless street fighting went on continually between stray units of loyalist soldiers and gangs of Khomeini men.

On 9 February, at two Tehran air bases - Doshen Toppeh and Farahabad - formations of homafars (warrant officers) and cadets gave a salute to Khomeini. This infuriated the Javadan Brigade, which had been the Shah's personal bodyguard, and they attacked both air bases. The homafars barricaded themselves in and repelled the loyalist troops, helped by crowds of armed revolutionaries milling around the inside and outside the bases.

Units of both the Marxist ~~FADAEIAN~~ FADAEIAN and the Muslim Mujahedeen guerillas rushed to Doshen Toppeh. The armory was broken open and weapons were distributed indiscriminately to soldiers, guerillas, revolutionaries, demonstrators and passers-by.

That night at eleven o'clock the Javadan Brigade returned in force. Khomeini loyalists within the military warned the Doshen Toppeh rebels that the Brigade was on its way, and the rebels counter-attacked before the Brigade reached the air base. Several senior officers among the loyalists were killed early in the battle. The fighting continued all night, and spread to a large area around the base.

By noon on the following day, the battlefield had widened to include most of the city.

*

That day John Howell and Keane Taylor went downtown for a meeting at Bank Omran.

It was a scary ride, but they were on the point of getting Paul and Bill released.

ammunition. 'Let's go to the jail,' he said. He repeated it several times. Then he started walking.

Some of the crowd went with him.

SOUTH

On the way they passed the military garrison to the east of the prison. There was a mob outside, shooting at the gates. A few soldiers returned their fire in a desultory way. Rashid and the crowd with him joined in the shooting.

SOUTH

It was a funny kind of battle, Rashid thought. He had never imagined the revolution would be like this: just a disorganised crowd with guns they hardly knew how to use, wandering around on a Sunday morning, firing at stone walls, encountering half-hearted resistance from invisible troops.

After ten minutes the shooting stopped. The battle seemed to be over, although Rashid did not really see why it had ended. There were no casualties on either side.

'I'm going to the prison!' Rashid shouted.

A handful of people around him shouted their agreement.

'The people in there are prisoners of the regime - if we are against the regime we should let the prisoners out!'

'Yes!'

He started walking.

They followed him.

It's the mood they're in, he thought; they'll follow anybody who seems to know where to go. They want excitement and adventure. For the first time in their lives, they have guns in their hands; they just need a target, and anything that symbolises the regime will do.

As he walked, the crowd following him grew bigger: anyone with nowhere to go automatically joined in.

Rashid had never imagined it would be so easy to become a

A man at a 6 feet distance from Rashid got shot in his forehead

A man at a 6 feet distance from Rashid got shot in his forehead

OUT

OUT

I don't think anything is difficult

I don't think anything is [illegible]

revolutionary leader.

He stopped just before Gasr Square and addressed his army. 'The jails must be taken over by the people, just like the police stations and the garrisons; this is our responsibility. There are people in the Gasr Prison who are guilty of nothing. They are just like us - our brothers, our relatives. Like us, they only want their freedom. But they were more courageous than us, for they demanded their freedom while the Shah was in power, and they were thrown in jail for it. Now we shall let them out!'

They cheered.

He remembered something Simons had said. 'The Gasr Prison is our Bastille!'

They cheered louder.

Rashid turned and ran into the square.

He took cover on the street corner opposite the front of the jail. There had already been a fair-sized mob in the square before he arrived with his troops, he realised: probably the prison would have been attacked today with or without his help. But the important thing was, he was here to help Paul and Bill.

He raised his gun and fired high in the air toward the prison gates.

The mob in the square scattered, taking cover, and the shooting began in earnest.

Once again the resistance was half-hearted. A few guards fired back from the gun towers on the walls and from the windows over the jail entrance. As far as Rashid could see, no one on either side was hit. Once again, the battle ended not with a bang but a whimper: the guards simply disappeared from the walls and the shooting stopped.

Rashid waited a couple of minutes, to make sure they had gone,

then he ran across the square to the prison entrance.

The gates were locked.

The mob crowded around. Someone fired a burst at the gates, trying to shoot them open. Rashid thought: He's seen too many cowboy movies. Another man produced a crowbar from somewhere, but it was impossible to force the gates open. We would need dynamite, Rashid thought.

In the brick wall next to the gate was a tiny window, through which the guard could see who was outside. The window was too small to climb through, but it gave Rashid an idea. He smashed the glass with his gun, then started to attack the brickwork around the window frame. The man with the crowbar helped him, then three or four others crowded around, prying bricks loose with gun barrels, with their hands, and with anything else they could find. Soon there was a hole eighteen or twenty inches square in the wall.

[Illegible] the steel bars

And the steel bars



Rashid climbed through.

The little office was empty of guards. A big bunch of keys hung from a hook on the wall. Rashid snatched up the keys and went out of the office door. He tried all the keys in the big lock, which would open the giant steel gates; but none fitted. He tried again with the small door-within-a-door, and was able to open that.

The mob poured in.

Rashid stood back. He gave the keys to someone, shouting: 'Open every cell you can - just let the people go!' *SOME PEOPLE* Some people



He watched them spread through the prison compound. He did not want to dead them any more - his moment of glory was over. All he wanted now was to find Paul and Bill among the eleven thousand inmates of the Gasr Prison.

LEAD LEAD

and eight hundred and eight hundred

*

Bill woke up at six o'clock and said a rosary.

He washed, shaved and dressed, then he sat looking out of the window, waiting for breakfast, wondering what EDS was planning for today. Every time a helicopter flew overhead he watched for a ladder to come dropping out of the sky into the courtyard. The alternative to helicopters would be a break-in through the high brick wall near Building No. 8. There might be a small group of EDS men led by Coburn and an older man, or there might be a large force of American military. Would they blast a hole in the wall, or come over with rope ladders?

Paul woke up around seven. He looked at Bill and said: 'Couldn't sleep?'

'Sure I slept,' Bill said. 'I've been up an hour or so.'

'I didn't sleep well. The shooting was heavy all night.'

Paul got out of his bunk and went to the bathroom.

A few minutes later breakfast came: bread and tea. Bill opened a can of orange juice which had been brought in by Keane Taylor. The guards did not seem to be following their normal routines: they appeared nervous, whispering in corners, hurrying everywhere. The sounds of gunfire, which had been sporadic at dawn, grew heavier. The prisoners speculated about what might be going on outside, but no one had any hard information. However, they could hear, and during the morning it gradually became evident that there were battles going on all over the city.

At about ten-thirty Bill saw most of the officers crossing the prison compound, heading north, as if they were going to a meeting. They came back half an hour later, hurrying. The major who was in charge of Building No. 8 came in and went to his office. He emerged a couple of minutes later in civilian clothes. He carried a shapeless parcel out of the building. Bill looked out of the window, and saw

The phone rang in the bedroom, and Taylor went to get it. When he came back he looked excited but puzzled. 'That was Rashid,' he said. 'He asked me if Paul and Bill were here.'

'What did he mean? Where was he calling from?' said Gayden.

'I couldn't get anything else out of him. He seemed kind of breathless, and you know how bad his English is when he gets wound up.'

'Didn't he say any more?'

'He said: "I'm coming, I'm coming," then he hung up.'

'Shit.'

It was late afternoon in Iran, early morning in Texas. Gayden called Dallas and got Tom Walter. He told Walter about Rashid's call, about the meeting with Dadgar, and about the street fighting. If the phone lines went down, Gayden said, he would try to get messages through via the U.S. military in Tehran: Kathy Gallagher worked for the military and she thought she could swing it.

'That's all I got to report,' Gayden said.

Walter said: 'Other than that a quiet day, huh?'

A few minutes after Gayden hung up, Rashid burst into the room, dirty, smelling of gunsmoke, clips of ^{G.3} M16 rounds falling out of his pockets, talking a mile a minute so that nobody could understand a word. Taylor calmed him down. Eventually he said: 'We hit the prison. Paul and Bill were gone.'

Paul and Bill stood at the foot of the wall outside the jail and looked around.

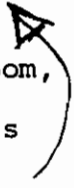
The scene in the street reminded Paul of a New York parade. In the apartment buildings across from the jail everybody was at the windows, hollering and clapping as they watched the prisoners escape over the walls. At the street corner, a vendor was selling fruit from

very funny!

very funny!

[Handwritten scribbles and notes on the left margin, including "Gallagher" and "from the..."]

[Handwritten note: "to Rashid"]



~~Eventually he said: 'We hit the prison. Paul and Bill were gone.'~~

a stall.

But they could still hear gunfire not far away, and then, as if to remind them that they were not yet out of danger, a car full of revolutionaries came down the street, bristling with machine-guns.

'We've got to get out of here,' said Paul.

'Where do we go? The Hyatt?'

Paul considered. 'We don't even know that our people are still there.'

'The American Embassy?'

'They'd hand us over to Dadgar.'

'The French Embassy? The Iranians seem to be friends with the French - Khomeini came in from Paris.'

'Do you know where the French Embassy is?'

'No.'

'Me neither.'

'We need to get away from here. Who knows when the police might decide to start rounding up escaped prisoners.'

'Let's just head north. That's bound to take us away from the fighting.'

Paul started walking. Bill walked a little behind him, with his coat collar turned up and his head bent to hide his pale American face. They came to an intersection. It was deserted: no cars, no people. They started to cross it. Suddenly shots rang out.

Both of them ducked and ran back the way they had come.

There were no more shots.

'How are you doing?' Paul said.

'Still alive.'

Paul headed south and east through the city streets, intending to circle around until he could head north again. Close to the prison

they had to push their way through a large crowd. Paul avoided meeting people's eyes: he did not want anybody to notice him, much less speak to him. The people were yelling and chanting, almost hysterical. If they were to learn that there were two Americans in their midst they might turn ugly.

After that the streets were quiet for half a mile or so, then they turned a corner and ran into a battle. There was a barricade of overturned cars across the road and a bunch of youngsters with rifles shooting over the barricade. Paul turned away, circling again, to look for a clear way around the fighting. He was worried about being hit by a stray bullet.

They passed an unfinished building, and Paul stopped. 'We could duck in there and hide until nightfall - after dark nobody will notice that you're American.'

'We might get shot for being out after curfew.'

'You think there's still a curfew?'

Bill shrugged.

'We're doing all right so far,' Paul said. 'Let's go on a little longer.'

They walked south east, braving the crowds and dodging the gunfights, for a couple of hours before at last they were able to turn north. Soon they found themselves in a relatively affluent area of pleasant villas. The gunfire receded into the distance, and they even saw children on bicycles.

Paul was tired. After forty-four days in jail he was not in good shape. 'What do you say we hitch-hike?' he said.

'Let's give it a try,' said Bill.

Two Iranians in a car picked them up and took them north. Paul and Bill were grateful for the chance to rest. The car dropped them

off near the Catholic Mission.

'We could take refuge in the Mission,' Bill said.

'I don't know,' Paul said. Father Williams had visited them in jail, and Dadgar presumably knew that. 'That might be the first place Dadgar looks for us.'

'Maybe.'

'I think the Hyatt is our best bet. There'll be phones, some way to get plane tickets ... '

'And hot showers.'

'Right.'

'Keane and Rich may still be there, anyway.'

They walked on. Suddenly they heard a voice: 'Mr Paul! Mr Bill!'

Paul's heart missed a beat. He looked in the direction of the voice, and saw one of the prison guards in a car. The guard was in civilian clothes with a bunch of people, and he looked as if he had joined the revolution. His big smile seemed to say: Don't tell who I am, and I won't tell who you are.

He waved and drove on. Paul and Bill laughed with relief.

They started hitch-hiking again. Paul walked in the road, holding out his thumb, while Bill stayed on the pavement, so that motorists might think there was only one man hitching, an Iranian.

A young couple stopped. Paul got in the car and Bill jumped in after him.

'We're headed north,' Paul said.

The woman looked at her man. The man said: 'Okay,' and pulled away.

They drove into a mob. The Iranian couple began to look nervous, as well they might with two Americans in the car; but nobody tried to give them a hard time and they emerged unscathed from the crowd. A

*holding out thumb
in IRAN is the
same as finger
in U.S
How dangerous!*

holding out thumb
in IRAN is the
same as finger
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dangerous!

little later they passed the Niavron Palace. There were still tanks outside, Paul noticed, but they had white flags attached to their radio antennae: they had surrendered to the revolution.

Bill leaned forward to talk to the Iranian people. 'Boy, it's getting a bit late, it sure would be nice if y'all could take us all the way to the Hyatt hotel - we'd be, you know, happy to thank you and give you something for taking us there.'

They had money, for Keane Taylor had frequently given Bill a pack of cigarettes with money rolled up inside on his prison visits. The driver of the car said: 'Okay.' He did not ask how much he would be given.

They were back in battle territory now. They passed wrecked and burning buildings, and continually came up against street barricades and had to turn back. And then they saw the Hyatt.

'Oh, boy,' Paul said feelingly. 'An American Hotel.'

They drove into the forecourt. Paul was so grateful to the Iranian couple that he gave them two hundred dollars.

Paul and Bill thanked the couple and waved goodbye, then they walked into the lobby of the hotel.

Suddenly Paul wished he were wearing his EDS uniform of business suit and white shirt, instead of prison dungarees and a dirty raincoat. He went up to the reception desk and asked for Bill Gayden's room number.

There was no Bill Gayden staying here, the clerk told him.

'How about Bob Young?'

'No.'

'Rich Gallagher?'

'No.'

'Jay Coburn?'

'No.'

They've all gone home, Paul thought. He did not blame them, but he was disappointed all the same.

'How about John Howell?' he said, remembering the lawyer.

'Yes,' the clerk said at last, and he gave Paul a room number on the eleventh floor.

Paul and Bill went up in the lift.

They found Howell's room and knocked on the door. There was no reply. Maybe he had left without checking out.

'What now?' said Bill.

'I'm going to check in,' Paul said. 'I'm tired. I want a bath and a meal and a rest. We can call the States, tell them we're out, let them handle it.'

'Okay,' Bill said.

They walked back to the elevator.

*

Bit by bit, Keane Taylor got the story out of Rashid: how he had led the storming of the Gasr Prison, how he had looked for Paul and Bill at the entrance. Later he had gone to Building No. 8 and searched it. It had been empty. He had searched all the other cell blocks without success. He had returned to the hotel on foot and by hitch-hiking. They had refused to let him into the hotel with a machine-gun, so he had given it away at the door, simply handing it to the nearest Iranian.

Coburn and Nabi turned up while Rashid was telling the story.

They were planning to go looking for Paul and Bill as soon as darkness fell. Taylor asked Rashid to go back to the area of the prison and look again. Rashid agreed. There were several EDS cars in the hotel car park, and Taylor decided to give Rashid one. Gayden got on the phone to Dallas to tell them about the latest development.

Rashid asked for a car from Taylor to go back and look for them

Rashid asked for a car from Taylor to go back and look for them

Taylor and Rashid left the suite and walked down the corridor. At the elevator they saw Paul and Bill.

Rashid rushed up to them and hugged them both. He said: 'My God! I thought you guys were dead! I couldn't find you!'

Paul and Bill did not know what he was talking about but they did not care. They both embraced Taylor.

Rashid rushed back into Gayden's suite, yelling: 'Paul and Bill are here! Paul and Bill are here!'

A moment later they walked in, and all hell broke loose.

*Rashid
never uses
these phrases
my God ...*

Rashid never uses these phrases my God...

PART TWO: OUT

with us where you supply all the extras, crew and so on? We'll pay you for it.'

'It'll be complicated. The insurance alone ... '

'But you'll do it?'

'Yes, we'll do it.'

It was complicated, T.J. learned during the course of the day. The unusual nature of the deal did not appeal to the insurance companies, who in addition did not like to be hurried. It was difficult to figure out which regulations EDS needed to be in compliance with. Omni required a cash deposit in an offshore branch of a U.S. bank. The problems were sorted out by EDS executive Gary Fernandes in Washington and lawyer Claude Chappellear in Dallas: the contract, which was executed at the end of the day, was a sales demonstration lease. Omni found a crew in California and sent them to Dallas to pick up the plane and fly it on to Washington.

By midnight on Monday the plane, the crew, the extra pilots and the remnants of the rescue team were all in Washington with Ross Perot. T.J. had worked a miracle. That was why it took so long.

CHAPTER TEN

1 and Rashid

John Howell and the negotiating team stayed at the Hyatt for the night of Sunday 11 February. They spent most of their time looking through the windows. In the distance, the city was burning. Close by, the mob was attacking an armory. It seemed that more of the military had joined the revolutionaries, for the mob now had tanks. Toward morning they blew a hole in the armory wall and got in. From dawn on, Howell could see a stream of orange-coloured Tehran taxis loaded down with guns, ferrying the weapons from the armory to where the fighting was heaviest downtown. ~~Rashid left~~

They all packed their suitcases and left them in their rooms, just in case they got a chance to have them picked up later. At seven o'clock they gathered in Bill Gayden's suite: John Howell, Keane Taylor, Bob Young, Rich and Kathy Galagher and the dog Buffy. Together they went down in the elevator.

In the foyer the hotel manager saw them all leaving. 'Where are you going?' he asked incredulously.

'To the office,' said Gayden.

'Don't you know there's a revolution going on out there?'

'Life must go on,' said Gayden.

Joe Poche was waiting in the forecourt in a Range Rover.

They got into two cars and followed Poche out. There was a revolutionary checkpoint at the exit from the forecourt, but when they drove through the two guards were preoccupied with trying to jam a banana clip into a machine pistol which did not take that kind of ammunition, and they paid no attention to the three cars.

Rashid left to work early morning and told people to get out of hotel as soon as possible. because after the military bosses, mobs come to hotels and look for Americans.

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The scene on the street outside was a little scary. Many of the weapons from the armory had found their way into the hands of teenage boys who had probably never handled firearms before, and the kids were running down the hill from the armory and past the hotel, yelling and waving their guns; then they would jump into cars and tear off along the highway, shooting into the air.

The EDS convoy headed south-west. They slowed down for the roadblock at the Hilton, but the people manning it were celebrating, playing with their guns, and having a good time, and the cars went through without being stopped.

They passed through several roadblocks in the same way, then arrived at the Dvoranchik apartment. Howell had never seen it before, but it was a typical Tehran apartment - the bottom half of a duplex, with the landlord living upstairs. They went through the street gate into a walled courtyard, then into the house.

As soon as they were inside, Rich Gallagher said to Simons:

'Katy's not well - she needs to lie down.'

*

'We've got to get out of here,' Simons said that afternoon.

Coburn looked at them. Ten men, a woman and a dog: it won't be easy, he thought.

'Dadgar is obviously still looking for Paul and Bill,' Simons went on. 'His staff have called EDS twice today asking for them. And someone - we're not sure who - was at the Hyatt, showing photographs of two Americans, asking if anyone knew where they were.'

Rich Gallagher had learned that from his military contacts.

Coburn wondered what went on in Dadgar's mind. What was so important about Paul and Bill that, in the middle of a revolution, Dadgar could find people to search for them?

Rashid went back to the hotel about noon to check that if they have not already left, he takes them with him. Hotel was surrounded by the mobs and they didn't let Rashid in. There was a political prison next to the hotel, so Rashid told mobs that he is from radio station and he wants to call the radio station to make an announcement that if anybody knows the short passages to the prison. So they let him in and he picked up the phone in the lobby and called the rooms upstairs instead. 'They are gone. good boys', he said, and went back to work.

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'No planes are taking off in this country, and we've no idea how long that situation will last,' Simons said. 'That means we have to drive. We'll go north-west, to the Turkish border. I want you all to ransack this apartment for warm clothes - it get cold up in those mountains. Also. the roads aren't too good, so we'll use jeeps.'

The trouble was, Coburn thought, they only had two Range Rovers. He had called Nabi earlier and asked him to find a third jeep, but so far Nabi had not called back. And how would Kathy Gallagher manage the journey? She was suffering from prolonged and heavy menstrual bleeding, and was hoping that a day in bed would leave her feeling stronger, but Coburn was not optimistic. And what about the damn dog? 'What about the dog?' Coburn said aloud.

Rich Galagher said: 'We'll carry Buffy in a knapsack.'

That did not sound like a terrific idea to Coburn. Nobody knew what kind of difficulties they might encounter, driving through a completely lawless country: a dog was a burden they did not need.

Bill said: 'I think it's insane for nine people to risk their lives for the sake of two. Now, if Paul and I weren't here none of you would be in any danger - you could just wait here until flights out are resumed. Maybe Paul and I should throw ourselves on the mercy of the U.S. Embassy.'

Simons said: 'And what if you two get out, then Dadgar decides to take other hostages?'

Anyway, Coburn thought, Simons won't let these two out of his sight now.

The bell at the street gat rang.

'Everyone into the bedrooms, but quietly,' Simons said.

Coburn went to the window. The landlady still thought there were only two people living here, Coburn and Poche - she had never

seen Simons - and neither she nor anyone else was supposed to know that there were now eleven people in the apartment.

When the others had left the room Coburn took out his Walther PPK and checked that it was loaded.

He looked out of the window again. The landlady walked across the courtyard and opened the gate. She stood there for a few minutes, talking to someone Coburn could not see, then closed the gate and came back alone.

When he heard her door slam shut upstairs, he called: 'False alarm,' and the others came back into the living room.

Simons brought Taylor over to where Coburn was standing and spoke to them in a low voice. 'I want you two to lose that fucking dog.'

'Okay,' Coburn said. 'Maybe I'll offer to walk it, then just let it go.'

'No,' said Simons. 'When I say lose it, I mean permanently.'

*

Once they had looted all the Dvoranchiks' warm clothes there was nothing much to do. They watched some old football games on a Betamax video. Gayden and Taylor played cards. The dog got on everyone's nerves, but Coburn decided not to kill it until the last minute, in case there was a change of plan and it could be saved. John Howell read *The Deep* by Peter Benchley, because he had seen part of the movie on the flight over and had missed the ending when the plane landed before the movie finished. The bell rang once more, and they all went through the same routine, but again it was for the landlady. Simons wanted no drinking, but there was a bottle of Drambuie in the apartment, and Coburn and Gayden surreptitiously mixed the liquer with their coffee.

They all were remarkably good-tempered, considering how many of

them were crammed into the three-room apartment. The only person to get irritable was - predictably - Keane Taylor. That evening he and Paul cooked a big dinner for everyone, almost emptying the freezer; but by the time Taylor came in from the kitchen the others had eaten every scrap, and there was nothing for him. He cursed them all roundly for a bunch of greedy hogs, and they all laughed, the way they always did when Taylor got mad.

During the night he got mad again. He was sleeping on the floor next to Coburn, and Coburn's snoring was keeping Taylor awake. He could not even wake Coburn to tell him to stop snoring, and that made him even madder.

*

Next day, Tuesday 13 February, the U.S. Embassy announced that it would be organising evacuation flights for Americans left in Tehran.

Simons got Coburn and Poche in one of the bedrooms and said: 'I think we ought to split the group at this point in the game. Kathy Gallagher would obviously be much better off on an Embassy evacuation flight.'

'Rich will want to go with her,' Coburn said.

'And that fucking dog,' Simons added. 'Who else?'

'People who aren't on the EDS payroll?' Coburn suggested.

'That would be Bob Young - he's an employee, but in Kuwait, so Dadgar won't know - and John Howell.'

'Dadgar knows Howell.'

'But he knows everyone else. He knows Taylor, and Taylor's an EDS man. And he knows Gayden's name, at least - Gayden was on the original list of four people Dadgar was after.'

'All right,' Simons said. 'The clean team is Kathy, Rich, Young and Howell. The dirty team is Paul and Bill, Taylor and Gayden. That

leaves us three. One of us ought to go with the clean team, in case something goes wrong. Joe, that's you.'

'Okay,' said Poche.

'Get everyone together so we can tell them.'

They went back into the living room and got everyone sat down. As Simons talked, Coburn admired how he announced his decision in such a way that everyone thought they were being asked for their opinions rather than told what was going to happen. There was some discussion of who should be in which team - particularly with regard to Howell - but the group as a whole ended up with the same conclusion as Simons had already reached.

They agreed that the Clean Team might as well move into the Embassy compound as soon as possible. Gayden and Joe Poche went off to find Lou Goelz, the Consul General.

Simons still wanted two Iranian drivers. These were to have been Nabi and his cousin the professor; but the professor was stuck in Rezaiyeh and could not get to Tehran, so Coburn had to find a second Iranian driver.

He thought of ^{Seyyed} [REDACTED]. One of EDS's young Iranian employees, ^{Seyyed} [REDACTED] came from a wealthy Iranian family: his father had been a senator under the Shah, and all his uncles were generals. He had been educated in Britain and spoke English with a British accent. He was not street-wise, like Rashid and the Cycle Man, but he came from Khoy in the north-west, so he would know the territory through which they had to drive. He also spoke Turkish, which was more common than Farsi in the north-west.

Coburn did not want to brief ^{Seyyed} [REDACTED] on the phone, so he left the apartment and drove to the Bucharest Street office. Luckily ^{Seyyed} [REDACTED] was there. Coburn told him lies.

'I need to gather intelligence on the situation between here and Khoy,' Coburn said. 'I'll have to have an Iranian driver. Will you do it?'

Seyyed

'Sure,' said ██████.

'Okay.' Simons's orders were not to reveal the location of the hideout to ██████^{Seyyed} until it was too late for him to tell anyone else, so Coburn said: 'Can you meet me at ten forty-five tonight?' He named a traffic circle not too far from the apartment.

Seyyed

██████ agreed.

Coburn left him and drove to the home of the other driver, Nabi. As usual, he had to take off his shoes and sit down and drink tea before he could get down to business. 'We're going out tomorrow morning, and we need you to drive us,' he said.

'I can't,' said Nabi. 'I have to kill Hoveyda.'

'Who?'

'Amir Abbas Hoveyda, who used to be Prime Minister.'

'Why do you have to kill him?' Coburn said incredulously.

'It's a long story. He tried to take away my family's tribal lands, and we refused, and he put me in jail ... I have been waiting all these years for my revenge, and now I have the weapons and the opportunity. I am sorry, Jay.'

Coburn was nonplussed. He did not know what to say, and anyway it was clear that Nabi could not be talked round. He took his leave and returned to the apartment.

By this time Gayden and Poche were back from Lou Goelz's house. They had told Goelz that Gayden and Taylor were staying in Tehran to look for Paul and Bill, but the other EDS personnel remaining in the country wanted to leave on the first evacuation flight, and stay at the Embassy in the meantime. Goelz had said that the Embassy was full

but they could stay at his house. Coburn thought that was kind of nice of Goelz, remembering that EDS people had not always been scrupulously polite to Goelz.

They all shook hands and wished each other luck, then the Clean Team, including Joe Poche, left for Goelz's house.

Coburn told Simons that they still had only one driver, then he got on the phone and started trying to reach the Cycle Man. The Cycle Man was as evasive as Coburn himself. He could normally be reached at a certain phone number just once a day, and the regular time for him to drop in was now past. Coburn called the number anyway, but he was not there. He tried a few more numbers, just in case, but he could not reach him.

Meanwhile, Paul and Bill were learning the details of their fake identities. Their passports were still with the U.S. Embassy, and to ask for them back would have been to reveal that EDS knew where Paul and Bill were. In anticipation of such a problem, Bill Gayden had brought from the U.S. fifteen or twenty passports belonging to EDS evacuees, on the pretext that he needed their passports to arrange shipping of their personal possessions. Paul and Bill now went through the passports and each picked the one whose photograph most closely resembled him. Paul's was not a bad likeness, but none of the pictures resembled Bill, and he ended up with the passport of a blond, rather Nordic-looking man. Simons made Paul and Bill learn the names, dates of birth, and all the visas and country stamps in their passports.

With mounting anticipation the six of them discussed details of their journey. There was a lot of fighting in Tabriz, according to reports Rich Gallagher had got from his military contacts; so they decided they would stick to their plan of taking the road south of Lake Rezaiyeh, via Mahabad. The story they would tell, if questioned,

Larry Humphreys

Larry Humphreys

would be as close to the truth as possible, in accordance with Simons's preference. They would say they were businessmen who wanted to get home to their families, the airport was closed, and they were driving out of the country. In support of that story they would take no weapons with them. It was a difficult decision - they knew they might regret being unarmed and helpless in the middle of a revolution - but they knew that the guards at the roadblocks had been looking for weapons when they made the reconnaissance trip, and Simons's instinct told him that they would be better off talking their way out of trouble than shooting their way out.

They would, however, take a lot of money. The Clean Team had taken fifty thousand dollars, but the rest of them still had around a quarter of a million dollars cash in various currencies. They packed fifty thousand into kitchen baggies, weighted the bags with shot, and put them in an oil can. They hid some in a Kleenex box and more in the battery hold of a flashlight. They shared the rest out for each of them to conceal about his person.

At ten-thirty Coburn left to meet ^{Seyyed} [REDACTED]. He walked through the darkened streets to the traffic circle, then picked his way across a construction site and into an unfinished building to wait.

At eleven o'clock ^{Seyyed} [REDACTED] still had not arrived. Simons had told Coburn to wait fifteen minutes. Coburn decided to give ^{Seyyed} [REDACTED] a little longer: without him they had no Iranian drivers.

He waited until eleven-thirty, then admitted to himself that ^{Seyyed} [REDACTED] was not coming. It was a serious setback. Coburn wondered what had happened: given ^{Seyyed's} [REDACTED] family connections, it was quite possible that he had fallen victim to the revolutionaries.

He left the building. As he was walking away he heard a car. He turned around and saw a jeep full of armed revolutionaries swinging

around the circle. He ducked behind a convenient bush and they went on by.

He hurried back toward the apartment, wondering whether the curfew was being enforced tonight. He was almost home when the same vehicle came back in the opposite direction.

Oh, shit, he thought. They saw me last time and they've come back to pick me up.

It was very dark, and he thought perhaps they had not spotted him yet. He turned and ran back the way he had come until he saw a bush, and threw himself into it. He lay there listening to his heartbeat as the jeep came closer.

It went by without stopping.

Coburn picked himself up and ran back to the apartment.

'What happened?' said Simons.

'He didn't show.'

Simons cursed. 'Who else is there?'

'Rashid?'

~~'I didn't want to use him.'~~ He was around the jailbreak, and it's just possible someone might recognise him from that and ask him what he's doing, driving a carload of Americans ... '

'He's all we've got left,' Coburn said.

Simons nodded. 'Call him.'

Coburn dialled Rashid's house. He was at home. ~~Coburn had to give him the location of the Dvoranchik apartment, but did not want to name it over the phone. He recalled that Dvoranchik had a slight squint. He said: 'Rashid, do you remember the guy with the funny eye?'~~

~~'With a funny eye? Oh, yeah - '~~

~~'Don't say his name. Remember where he used to live?'~~

~~'Sure - '~~

~~'Don't say it.~~ That's where I am. I need your help.'

'Jay, I live eight miles away and I don't know how I'm going to get across the city - '

Coburn knew how resourceful Rashid was. 'Just try,' he said.

'Okay.'

Coburn hung up. While waiting for Rashid he called Dallas and spoke to Merv Stauffer. Paul Chiapparone was busy encoding a description of the team's proposed route to the border, and Coburn gave Merv the coded message.

They discussed communications en route. It would probably be impossible for the team to call Dallas from a country pay phone, so they decided they would pass messages through an EDS employee in Tehran, ^{Gholam} [REDACTED]. ^{Gholam} [REDACTED] was not to know what was going on. Coburn would call ^{Gholam} [REDACTED] once a day. If all was well he would say: 'I have a message for Jim Nyfeler: we are okay.' Once the team reached Rezaiyeh he would add: 'We are at the staging area.' Stauffer, in his turn, would simply call ^{Gholam} [REDACTED] and ask if there were any messages. So long as all went well, ^{Gholam} [REDACTED] would be kept in the dark. If things went wrong, the pretence would be abandoned: Coburn would tell ^{Gholam} [REDACTED] what the trouble was and ask him to call Dallas.

Merv explained - still using the letter code - that Perot was making contingency plans to fly into north-west Iran to pick up the Dirty Team if necessary. So that the Range Rovers could be identified from the air, Merv suggested that they should have a large 'X' on their roofs, either painted or in black electrician's tape. If a vehicle had to be abandoned - because it broke down, or ran out of gas, or for any other reason - the 'X' should be changed to an 'A'.

At one-thirty a.m. Rashid arrived.

Everyone breathed a big sigh of relief.

the inertial navigation system did not work properly, the number one engine was losing oil at twice the normal rate, there was insufficient oxygen aboard for cabin use, there were no spare tyres, and the water tank valves were frozen.

While mechanics worked on the plane, Perot sat in the Madison Hotel with Mort Myerson, the president of EDS. (Perot had no title within EDS: he owned most of the shares, and that was all the control he needed.) Perot and Myerson discussed business, reviewing each of EDS' current projects and problems: both of them knew, though neither said, that the reason for the conference was that Perot might not come back.

Even while he discussed business and worried about the plane and fumed against the State Department, Perot's deepest concern was for his mother. Lulu May Perot was sinking fast, and Ross wanted to be with her. If she were to die while he was in Turkey he would never see her again, and that would break his heart.

Myerson knew what was on his mind. He broke off the business talk to say: 'Ross, why don't I go?'

'What do you mean?'

'Why don't I go to Turkey instead of you? You've done your share - you've been to Iran. There's nothing you can do that I can't do in Turkey. And you want to stay with your mother.'

Perot was touched. Mort didn't have to say that, he thought: it's not his company, he's just an employee, despite his title. Boy, it's good to have friends. 'If you're willing ...' Perot hesitated. 'That's something I'd sure want to think about. Let me think about it.'

He was sorely tempted, but he was not sure he had the right to accept Myerson's offer. He picked up the phone, called Dallas, and reached T.J. Marquez.

'Mort's offered to go to Turkey instead of me,' Perot said.

*Myerson is not
the president
of E.D.S at that time!*

Myerson is not
the president
of E.D.S at
that time!

'What's your reaction to that?'

'It's the worst idea in the world,' T.J. said. 'You've been close to this project from the start, and you couldn't possibly tell Mort everything he needs to know in a few hours. You know Simons, you know how his mind works - Mort Doesn't. Plus, Simons doesn't know Mort, and you're aware of how Simons feels about trusting people he doesn't know.'

'You're right,' Perot said. 'It's not for consideration.' He hung up. 'Mort, I sure appreciate your offer; but I'm going to go to Turkey. You just take the Lear jet back on down to Dallas.'

'Whatever you say.'

Myerson left, and Perot took a nap. The phone woke him at two a.m. It was Pat Sculley, calling from the airport: they thought they had the plane's mechanical problems fixed.

Perot got a cab to Dulles airport. It was a hair-raising forty-mile ride on icy roads.

The Turkish Rescue Team was now together: Perot, Sculley, Schwebach, Davis, the crew of the 707 and the two extra pilots, Dick Douglas and Julian 'Scratch' Kanauch. But the plane was not fixed. It needed a spare part which was not available in Washington. Gary Fernandes had a friend who was in charge of ground support for one of the airlines at New York's LaGuardia airport: he called the friend, the friend got out of bed, found the part, and put it on a plane for Washington. Meanwhile Perot lay down on a bench in the terminal and slept for a couple more hours.

They boarded the plane at six a.m. Perot looked around the interior of the aircraft in amazement. It had a bedroom with a king-size bed, three bars, a sophisticated hi-fi system, a television, and an office with a phone. There were plush carpets, suede upholstery,

Is this necessary? Is this necessary?

and velvet walls. 'It looks like a Persian whorehouse,' said Perot, although he had never seen a Persian whorehouse.

As the plane taxied on to the runway, Perot wondered whether he was doing the right thing. He might, after all, have left Paul and Bill to take their chances in Tehran; and who could have blamed him? The Embassy might have been able to get them out unharmed.

Or they might have been picked up by Dadgar and thrown in jail for twenty years, if not killed by the revolutionaries.

No, Perot could not just leave them to take their chances - it was not his way. The trouble with this rescue was that he was putting more men at risk. Instead of having two people in hiding in Tehran, he would now have six employees on the run in the wilds of north-west Iran, and another three, plus the two pilots, searching for them. If it went wrong - if someone got killed - the world would see this rescue attempt as a foolhardy adventure by a man who thought he was still living in the Wild West. He imagined the newspaper headlines:
MILLIONAIRE TEXAN'S IRAN RESCUE BID ENDS IN DEATH ...

Suppose we lose Coburn, he thought; what would I tell his wife? Liz might find it hard to understand why I staked the lives of twelve men to gain the freedom of two.

But if the rescue succeeded ... what a triumph that would be! To bring all the men home, despite the apathy of the State Department, despite the incomprehensible malice of Dadgar, despite police and revolutionaries, despite bad roads and bandit country and faulty aircraft - what a triumph!

The decision was made, now, anyway. Perot's chips were on the table - a very big pile - and the wheel was in spin. The last game had begun.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1

The Dirty Team blew out of Tehran like a breeze.

They saw no fighting, they were not stopped at roadblocks, the streets were deserted.

In the second car, Coburn said: 'I wonder what all the revolutionaries are doing?'

'I can answer that,' said Paul, who was driving. 'They're all having tea.'

They drove past the airport and took the highway north, following the route Coburn knew from the reconnaissance trip he had taken with Simons. Soon they were travelling at seventy miles an hour through a long valley with spectacular mountain scenery all around: steep green hillsides topped by snowy mountain peaks against the blue sky. Coburn looked at the lead car and saw Taylor, in the back, taking photographs through the tailgate window with his Instamatic. 'Look at Taylor,' he said.

'What does he think this is, a package tour?' said Gayden.

Coburn felt optimistic. He had expected trouble getting out of the city, but it had not transpired: maybe the whole country was calming down. Anyway, why should the Iranians give them a hard time? What was wrong with foreigners leaving the country?

You know what's wrong with it, he told himself: Paul and Bill have false passports and are being hunted by the authorities.

They hit the first roadblock thirty miles out of Tehran, just before the town of Karaj. It was manned, as usual, by machine-gun-toting men and boys in ragged clothes.

The lead car stopped. Rashid jumped out before Paul had brought the second car to a halt. He wants to make sure they question him rather than Paul, thought Coburn. Rashid immediately began speaking loud and rapid Farsi, with many gestures. Paul, who understood a little Farsi, wound down the window and listened. 'I don't think he's giving them the agreed story,' he said after a while. 'He's saying something about journalists.'

After a while Rashid said in English: 'We have to get out of the cars. They want to search us. They are looking for weapons.'

They all got out. Simons was right to make us leave the guns behind, Coburn thought. He remembered the thin, very sharp Gerber knife in the quick-release scabbard concealed in the small of his back. Would they find it? And if they did, what would they do?

He held up his arms, and one of the villagers patted him down. The man did not find the knife.

The villagers searched the Range Rovers. The search was perfunctory, and they did not find any of the money. They must believe our story, Coburn thought.

They did. Rashid said: 'We can go,' and they climbed back into the cars.

A hundred yards down the road Rashid pulled into a filling station.

'What now?' said Gayden.

Paul drove in behind Rashid. 'Might as well gas up while we can,' he said. 'Anyway, Taylor didn't get the tanks completely full before he threw up.'

A small crowd gathered while the cars were being fuelled. Coburn looked at the bystanders nervously, wondering what they were thinking. This close to Tehran, people surely could not be fascinated by the sight

of Americans ...

Rashid came into sight carrying an armful of cans of oil. He took out the large can containing the money in plastic bags, and poured twenty quarts of oil in. Coburn presumed that was to conceal the money.

Coburn tried to read the expressions on the faces in the crowd. Were they idly curious? Suspicious? Resentful? Malevolent? He could not tell.

Rashid paid the bill and the two cars pulled slowly out of the filling station.

They had a clear run for the next seventy miles. It was a new road, the Iranian State Highway, in good condition, and it ran alongside the single-track railroad for the length of the valley.

Just outside Qazvin they hit their second roadblock. It was an unofficial one - the guards manning it were not in uniform - but it seemed bigger and more organised than the last one. There were two checkpoints, one on either side of the road, and a line of cars waiting.

Both on the left hand side of the road.

Both are on the left hand side of the road.
The two Range Rovers joined the queue.

Some kind of commotion broke out up at the nearer checkpoint, on the left-hand side. Coburn leaned out of the window to see what was going on. An Iranian was being pushed around and questioned, apparently about a rifle: presumably it had been found in his car. One of the guards knocked the man to the ground.

Suddenly Rashid pulled his car out of the line.

'What's he doing?' said Gayden.

'Follow him,' Coburn said to Paul.

Rashid pulled past the line of cars and inched through the crowd around the first checkpoint.

'What the fuck is he doing?' Gayden said.

Paul kept right behind Rashid as he passed the first checkpoint without stopping.

'This is asking for trouble,' Coburn said.

Rashid slowed at the second checkpoint and yelled at the guard through the window. The guard said something in reply. Rashid kept on going.

Paul stayed right on his tail.

Rashid accelerated away from the roadblock, and Paul followed, without waiting to see what the guard had to say.

Coburn breathed a sigh of relief. That was just like Rashid: he did the unexpected, on impulse, without thinking about the consequences; and somehow he always got away with it. But it made life a little tense for the people with him.

At the next roadblock Rashid persuaded the guards to write a pass on his windscreen in magic marker, and they were waved through the next three roadblocks without stopping.

They took a break at midday. They pulled over to the side of the road near a ski-lift and lunched on dry crackers and cup cakes. They drank water. Keane Taylor produced a cognac bottle from the back of the car, but it was empty: the cork had been loose and all the brandy had leaked out.

At Zanjan they turned off the Iranian State Highway and headed west on an unmetalled mountain road. The Range Rovers were built for conditions like these, and they could still travel as fast as forty miles an hour. Coburn wondered whether they might even make the border tonight, instead of tomorrow as they had anticipated. He was not sure they ought to cross the border before Perot's Turkish Rescue Team had time to get in place.

What happened was that Rashid left the first checkpoint and told the second checkpoint that they had been checked by the first checkpoint.

What happened was that Rashid left the first checkpoint and told the second checkpoint that they had been checked by the first checkpoint.

Suddenly the lead car disappeared from view. Paul slammed on the brakes of the second car. Coburn saw what had happened: Rashid had failed to see a sharp right-hand turn, and had driven straight off the road. Paul stopped the car and they all got out.

Rashid had driven down a steep slope for about eight feet and landed nose-down in mud.

As they watched, Rashid started the stalled engine and put the car into four-wheel drive and reverse gear. It moved, and slowly inched back up the bank and on to the road.

Rashid turned on the wipers and washed the screen. When the mud splashes were gone, so was the pass which had been written on the windscreen in magic marker. 'Anyone got a magic marker?' Rashid said. No one had.

They drove on. After a while Gayden, in the back of the second jeep, leaned forward and said to Coburn and Paul: 'Nobody's going to believe it was this easy. We better make up some stories to tell when we get home.'

He spoke too soon. At the next town they were arrested.

2

About the time the Dirty Team was leaving Tehran, Ross Perot landed at Istanbul in the leased Boeing 707.

Ralph Boulware was waiting on the runway. He boarded the plane and did a double-take. 'What is this thing?'

'Persian whorehouse,' said Perot with a grin.

Boulware sat down. 'I'm catching a plane at six-thirty so I got to make this fast,' he said. 'You can't buy a helicopter and you can't buy a light plane - it's illegal in this country. You can charter.

of the Embassy compound and were now advancing on the ambassadorial residence. Sullivan and most of the staff were in the chancery building.

Sullivan ordered the marines to fall back, not to use their rifles, and to fire their sidearms only in self-defence.

Then Sullivan crawled out of the executive suite and into the corridor.

During the next hour, as the attackers took the residence and the cafeteria building, Sullivan got all the civilians in the chancery herded into the communications vault on the second floor. When he heard the attackers breaking down the steel doors of the building, he ordered the marines inside to withdraw into the vault. There he made them pile their weapons in a corner, and ordered everyone to surrender as soon as possible.

Eventually Sullivan himself went into the vault, leaving the army attache and an interpreter outside.

When the attackers reached the second floor, Sullivan opened the vault door and walked out with his hands over his head.

The others - about a hundred people - followed him.

They were all herded into the waiting room of the executive suite and frisked. There was a dispute between two factions of the Iranians, and Sullivan realised that the Ayatollah's people had sent a rescue force, which had arrived on the second floor at the same time as the attackers.

Suddenly a shot came through the window, and all the Americans hit the floor. One of the Iranians seemed to think the shot had come from within the room, and he swung his AK-47 rifle wildly in the direction of his prisoners; but when he saw them all on the floor in a tangle he realised none of them had shot at him. At that moment

Sullivan found himself next to two journalists who had been in his office moments before the attack started. 'I hope you're getting all this down in your notebooks,' he said.

Eventually they were all taken down into the courtyard, where Dr Ibrahim Yazdi, the Ayatollah's new Deputy Prime Minister, apologised to Sullivan for the attack.

YASDI YASDI

Yaski also gave Sullivan a personal escort, a group of students who would henceforth be responsible for the safety of the U.S. Ambassador. The leader of the group explained to Sullivan that they were well qualified to guard him. They had studied him, and they were familiar with his routine, for until recently their assignment had been to assassinate him.

*

The Clean Team heard about the attack on the Embassy that evening from the lips of Lou Goelz, who had spent most of the morning lying on his ample belly in a corridor. Undaunted, Goelz had gone back to his desk in the afternoon, and he had good news: evacuation flights for Americans would start on Saturday, and the EDS people would be on the first.

Howell thought: Dadgar may have other ideas about that.

4

In Istanbul, Perot had a dreadful feeling that the whole operation was slipping out of his control.

He was in touch with Dallas, so he knew that the U.S. Embassy in Tehran had been overrun by revolutionaries. He also knew that the Clean Team had been planning to move into the Embassy compound as soon as possible: Tom Walter had talked to John Howell early this

because, as Simons had pointed out before they left Tehran, Dadgar might put out a blanket arrest order on everyone connected with EDS. 'We had a contract with Bank Omran,' Gayden went on. 'We weren't getting paid, people were throwing rocks at our windows, we had no money, we missed our families, we just wanted to go home.'

Bolourian asked, and the interpreter translated: 'Did you have a contact with ISIRAN?'

Coburn was astonished. For someone who has spent twenty-five years in jail, he thought, this Bolourian is damn well-informed. ISIRAN - Information Systems Iran - was a data processing company which had once been owned by Abolfath Mahvi and had subsequently been bought by the government. The company was widely believed to have close links with the secret police, SAVAK. Worse, EDS did have a contract with ISIRAN. One of EDS's early, small projects in Iran had been to create, in partnership with ISIRAN, a document control system for the Iranian Navy. The project had been completed in June 1977.

'We have absolutely nothing to do with ISIRAN,' Gayden lied.

'Can you give us some proof of who you work for?'

That was a problem. Before leaving Tehran they had all destroyed any papers connected with EDS, under Simons's instructions. Now they all searched their pockets for anything they might have overlooked.

'I have a health insurance card,' said Keane Taylor. He took from his wallet a Blue Cross (?) credit card with 'Electronic Data Systems Corp.' printed across the bottom and handed it to the interpreter. The interpreter showed it to Bolourian. 'Electronic Data Systems is the parent company of PDS,' Taylor explained.

Bolourian got up and left the room.

The interpreter, the armed Kurds, and the EDS men waited in

silence. Coburn thought: What now?

Could Bolourian possibly know that EDS had once had a contract with ISIRAN? If so, would he jump to the conclusion that EDS people were connected with SAVAK? Or had his question about ISIRAN been a shot in the dark? In that case, had he believed their story about being ordinary businessmen trying to go home?

Bolourian walked back into the room loading a gun.

Coburn tensed.

It was an old M1 carbine that appeared to date from World War Two.

He can't shoot us all with that, Coburn thought.

Bolourian handed the gun to the interpreter and said something in Farsi.

Coburn gathered his muscles to spring. There would be a hell of a mess if they opened fire in this room -

The interpreter tucked the gun into his belt and said: 'And now you will be our guests, and drink tea.'

Coburn muttered to Simons: 'Christ, I thought he was going to shoot us.'

Simons's face was expressionless.

Bolourian wrote on a piece of paper and handed it to the interpreter. Tea was served. The interpreter said: 'You will be our guests for tonight. I will personally look after you.' Now Coburn guessed the reason for Bolourian's little act with the M1 carbine: he was simply issuing the interpreter with a gun. The piece of paper was a gun permit.

'In the morning,' the interpreter went on, 'our mullah will write a note to the mullah of Rezaiyeh, asking him to let you pass.'

It was not dark, and they were still a hundred miles from the

Rashid told Bolourian that we must provide a place to stay for our guests until tomorrow because the roads are not safe to travel at night.

Rashid ~~asked~~ told Bolourian that we must provide a place to stay for our guests until tomorrow because the roads are not safe to travel at night.

border. Coburn said to Simons: 'What do you think? We spend the night here?'

'I don't think we have a choice,' Simons said. 'When he said "guests" he was just being polite.'

They drank their tea, and the interpreter said: 'Now we will go and have dinner.'

They got up and put on their shoes. Walking out to the cars, Coburn noticed that Gayden was limping. 'What's the matter with your feet?' he said.

'Not so loud,' Gayden hissed. 'I got all the money stuffed up in the toes of my shoes and my feet are killing me.'

They got into the cars and drove off. Coburn saw Gayden surreptitiously easing off his shoes and rearranging the money. In the lead car, Rashid pulled into a gas station, and they filled both cars. Gayden murmured: 'If they weren't going to let us go, they wouldn't let us gas up ... would they?'

Coburn shrugged.

They drove to the town restaurant. The EDS men sat down, and the guards sat at tables around them, forming a rough circle and cutting them off from the townspeople. A TV set was on: the Ayatollah was making a speech. The interpreter told them he was saying that Americans should not be molested, but should be allowed to leave Iran unharmed.

They were served ^{CHILLO} chilo kebab, the Iranian national dish of lamb and rice. The guards ate heartily, with their rifles on the tables beside their plates. Coburn could not eat. He should have called Gholam [REDACTED] by now, to let him - and Dallas - know that the Dirty Team was okay. He wondered whether these people would let him make a phone call. He noticed that Taylor was not eating either, but all the others were: maybe they were past worrying.

guard insisted to pay the bill but

guard insisted to pay the bill
but

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When the meal was over, Taylor paid the bill for everyone, guards included.

As they were leaving the restaurant, Coburn said to the interpreter: 'I'd really like to call Tehran, to let our people know that we're all right.'

'Okay,' said the young man.

They drove to the post office. Coburn and the interpreter went in. There was a crowd of people waiting to use the three or four phone booths. The interpreter spoke to someone behind the counter, then said: 'All the lines to Tehran are busy - it's very difficult to get through.'

'Could we come back later?'

'Okay.'

They drove out of town in the dark. They stopped at a gate in a fence. In the moonlight, Coburn could see the distant outline of what might have been a dam.

There was a long delay while keys to the gate were found, then they drove in. They found themselves in a small park surrounding an elegant two-storey building. 'This is one of the Shah's palaces,' the interpreter explained. 'He has only used it once, when he opened the power station. Tonight we will use it.'

They went inside. The place was cosily warm. The interpreter said indignantly: 'The heating has been on for three years just in case the Shah should decide to drop by.'

They all went upstairs and looked around. There was a luxurious bedroom suite with an enormous fancy bathroom, then along the corridor were smaller, but nonetheless comfortable, rooms for the Shah's bodyguard.

The Americans moved into the guards' rooms and the revolutionaries took over the Shah's suite. One of them decided to

take a bath: they could hear him splashing about, hooting and hollering. After a while he came out. He was the biggest and burliest of them, and he had put on one of the Shah's fancy bathrobes. He came mincing down the corridor while his colleagues fell about laughing. He went up to Gayden and said, in heavily-accented English: 'Perfect gentleman.'

Rashid looked worried. ~~'These are bad people,'~~ he whispered to Coburn. ~~'Don't trust them. We've got to get out of here.'~~ ^{get too close to} get too close to

Coburn was not sure he trusted them, but he was quite certain that he and the other Americans would be in trouble if they tried to leave now.

He noticed that one of the guards had a G3 rifle. 'Hey, that's a real neat firearm,' he said.

The guard smiles and seemed to understand.

'I've never seen one before,' Coburn said. 'How do you load it?'

'Load ... so,' the guard said, and showed him.

They sat down and the guard explained the rifle. He spoke enough English to make himself understood.

After a while Coburn realised that he was now holding the guard's rifle. ~~At that moment he decided Rashid was exaggerating.~~

At midnight Coburn asked the interpreter: 'Can we try to place that call again?'

'Okay.'

One of the guards escorted Coburn back into town. They went to the post office, which was still open. However, there were still no lines to Tehran.

Coburn and the guard waited until two o'clock in the morning, then they gave up.

When they got back to the palace, everyone else was fast asleep.

Ralph Boulware, with Ilsman, Charlie Brown, and the cab driver, headed up into the mountains of Central Turkey in the '64 Chevrolet taxi.

The road was of dirt and gravel, with enormous potholes, and it was not much wider than the car. It snaked over the mountainsides, with a breathtaking sheer drop at one edge. There was no guard rail to stop the incautious driver shooting over the precipice into the abyss. But the scenery was spectacular, with stunning views across the valleys, and Boulware made up his mind to go back one day and do the trip again under better circumstances.

At nightfall they saw a roadside restaurant and pulled in. The place was very primitive and filthy dirty. 'All they have is beans and rice,' said Charlie apologetically as they sat down.

Boulware smiled. 'I been eating beans and rice all my life.'

He studied the cab driver. The man was about sixty years old, and looked tired. 'I guess I'll drive for a while,' Boulware said.

Charlie translated, and the cab driver protested vehemently.

'You won't be able to drive that car,' Charlie said. 'It's an American car with a very peculiar gearshift.'

'Look, I'm American,' Boulware said. 'Lots of Americans are black. And I know how to drive a Chevy with a standard shift, for Pete's sake.'

The three Turks argued about it while they ate. Finally Charlie said: 'You can drive, so long as you promise to pay for the damage if you wreck the car.'

'I promise,' Boulware said.

He paid the bill, and they walked out to the car and drove on.

The pilot's radio came to life with a burst of static. As the fighters circled, the pilot replied: Jackson could not understand the conversation, but he was glad the Iranians were talking rather than shooting.

The conversation went on. The pilot seemed to be arguing. Eventually he turned to Jackson and said: 'We have to turn back. They won't let us land.'

'What will they do if we land anyway?'

'Shoot us down.'

'Okay,' said Jackson. 'We'll try again this afternoon.'

2

'Wake up, Coburn, let's move, let's go!'

Simon's gravelly voice penetrated Coburn's slumber and he opened his eyes, thinking: Where am I?

In the Shah's palace at Mahabad.

Oh, shit.

He got up.

Simons was getting the Dirty Team all ready to go, but there was no sign of their guards: apparently they were still asleep. The Americans made plenty of noise, and eventually the guards emerged from the Shah's suite.

Simons said to Rashid: 'Tell them we have to go, we're in a hurry, our friends are waiting at the border for us.'

Rashid told them, and translated the reply: 'They all want to take showers.'

'I don't see the urgency,' said Keane Taylor. 'Seems to me most of them haven't taken a shower in the past year or so, you'd think they could wait another day.'

Simons was patient for half an hour, then told Rashid to tell them again that the team had to hurry.

'We have to see the Shah's bathroom,' Rashid said.

'Goddam it, we've seen it,' said Simons. 'What's the delay for?'

Everyone trooped into the Shah's suite and exclaimed at the shameful luxury of an unused palace, and still the guards would not move out.

Finally the interpreter in the suit showed up: the guards had been waiting for him. He spoke to Simons and Coburn. 'The fighting is heavy north of here,' he said. 'The city of Tabriz is still in the hands of the Shah's supporters. For your own protection, we will provide you with an escort of men from Mahabad to take you to Rezaiyeh.'

'We don't need an escort,' Simons said. 'We'd like to leave now and travel inconspicuously.'

'Oh, no, it would be too dangerous,' said the young man.

'All right, but can we go now?'

'Sure.'

Simons turned to Coburn. 'Okay, move 'em out.'

Coburn got everyone out to the cars.

They drove into town and stopped at a private house. The interpreter went inside. They all waited. Coburn got out of his car and went to Simon's. 'What's happening now?'

'This is the mullah's house,' Rashid explained. 'He is writing a letter to the mullah of Rezaiyeh about us.'

It seemed at least an hour later that the interpreter came out of the house with the promised letter. Next they drove to the local police station, and there they saw their escort vehicle: a big white ambulance with a flashing red light on top, its windows knocked out, and some kind of identification scrawled on its side in Farsi

We all bought some bread and cream cheese for breakfast

*We all
bought some
bread and
cream cheese
for breakfast*

with red magic marker. It was full of gun-toting Kurds.

So much for travelling inconspicuously, Coburn thought.

At last they got on the road, the ambulance leading the way. In the first car, Simons was getting anxious. He was thinking about Dadgar. Clearly no one in Mahabad had been alerted to look out for Paul and Bill, but Rezaiyeh was a much bigger town. Simons did not know whether Dadgar's authority extended into the countryside: all he knew was that so far Dadgar had repeatedly surprised him by his dedication and his ability to persist through changes of government. Therefore it would be better to avoid the attentions of any kind of authority.

He spoke to the interpreter. 'You know, we have a friend in Rezaiyeh.' He was thinking of Nabi's cousin, the professor. 'We can stay at his house. Maybe you should take us there. We'll be quite safe.'

'Oh, no,' said the interpreter. 'If I disobey orders and you get hurt, there will be hell to pay.'

Simons gave up. The revolution in Mahabad was characterised by communist discipline rather than Islamic anarchy, and the only way to get rid of these Kurds would be to fight them. Simons was not yet ready to start a fight.

Just outside the town, the ambulance pulled off the road and stopped at a little cafe.

'Why are we stopping?' Simons said.

'Breakfast,' said the interpreter.

'We don't need breakfast,' Simons said forcefully.

'But -'

'We don't need breakfast!'

The interpreter shrugged, and shouted something to the Kurds getting out of the ambulance. They got back in and the convoy drove

on.

The roadblock on the way into Mahabad was a serious, military-style affair of parked vehicles, sandbags and barbed wire. The convoy slowed, and an armed guard waved them off the road and into the forecourt of a filling station which had been turned into a command post.

The white ambulance did not stop soon enough and ran into a barbed-wire fence.

The two Range Rovers pulled up in an orderly fashion.

The ambulance was immediately surrounded by guards, and an argument started. Rashid and the interpreter went over to join in. Simons could tell that the Reziaiyeh revolutionaries did not automatically assume that the Mahabad revolutionaries were on their side. The Reziaiyeh men were speaking Turkish, Simons realised as he heard snatches of the argument: he understood a little Turkish. From their dress he could tell that the Reziaiyeh men were Azerbaijanis rather than Kurds.

The Kurds were being ordered to turn in their weapons, he gathered, and they were refusing angrily. The interpreter was showing the note from the Mahabad mullah. Nobody was taking much notice of Rashid, who was suddenly a foreigner like everyone else.

Eventually Rashid and the interpreter came back to the cars. 'We're going to take you to a hotel,' said the interpreter, 'then I will go and see the mullah.'

They drove into Reziaiyeh, escorted by guards from the roadblock. It was a fair-sized town with a few paved roads and some concrete and stone buildings. The convoy pulled up in a main street. Distant shouting could be heard. Rashid and the interpreter went into a building - presumably a hotel - and the others waited.

The distant shouting grew louder, and a crowd of people

He must deal with the officers of the defeated army, he must round up suspected SAVAK agents and interrogate them, he must get the town running normally, he must guard against a counter-revolution, and he must send troops to fight in Tabriz.

All he wants to do, Rashid concluded, is cross things off his list.

He has no time and no sympathy for fleeing Americans. If he must make a decision, he will simply throw us in jail for the time being, and deal with us later, at leisure. Therefore I must make sure that he does not decide.

Rashid was shown into a schoolroom. The leader was sitting at a desk. Rashid knew at once that his guesswork had ^{BEEN} ^{BEEN} been right: the man looked completely exhausted.

Rashid's escort said in Farsi: 'This man comes from Mahabad with

no desk on the floor a letter from the mullah - he has six Americans with him.'

'My friends are American businessmen trying to get home,'

Rashid said. 'They have nothing to do with politics, so I'm taking them to the border. But perhaps I should explain all the details to your colleagues.'

'Yes,' said the leader and waved them away.

'I am the deputy leader of the committee,' said Rashid's escort as they went down the stairs. 'You can tell me.'

They went into an office and sat down. There were eight or nine other people in the office. Rashid started talking. 'I have been a Khomeini soldier for fifteen years,' he said. 'But I have also worked with these Americans. They are good men who have never done any harm to Iran, but now Iranians are shooting at them and trying to imprison them and preventing them from going home. They have wives and children at home - one of the men has a little child dying in hospital. I feel it is my responsibility as their friend

no desk.
on the floor.

SUBORDINATES

SUBORDINATES

to help them, and also I believe for the honour of my country they should not be harmed ...'

He kept talking. From time to time the deputy leader would interrupt him with a question: Who did the Americans work for? Why were they driving out? What did they have with them? How did Rashid know they were not SAVAK agents spying for the counter-revolutionaries in Tabriz?

For every question Rashid had an answer, and a long one. While he was talking, he could be persuasive; and if he were silent the others would have time to think of objections.

After forty minutes, the deputy leader was convinced. He picked up a phone and asked for the leader. 'These Americans,' he said. 'I think we should let them go.'

Rashid held his breath.

After a pause the depute said: 'Okay,' and hung up. 'We have to clear you with the main branch of the committee,' he said.

'The main branch?'

'In Tehran.'

Rashid's heart sank. It would take forever to get a call through to Tehran. If and when they got through, there was no knowing what the revolutionaries in Tehran would say.

'I better take the Americans to a hotel,' he said. 'Will you send someone to make sure the hotel will let them in?'

'Yes.'

Well, that was something, Rashid thought. This way, at least the team would be in a position to make a run for the border if things got any worse.

*

Paul was deeply grateful to see Rashid coming down the steps of the schoolhouse. It had been a long wait. Nobody had actually pointed

Rashid said 'Everything has been verified in Tehran and there is no need to reverify, but if you insist then let me take these people to hotel first'

Rashid said
'Everything has
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these people to hotel
first'

No problems, said the hitch-hiker. It could be done any time, and as it happened, his brother had horses ...

There was a paved road for the forty-mile journey to the border, and Rashid made it in a little more than an hour. He talked to the border guards and showed them his letter from the revolutionary committee in Rezaiyeh. They told him that the border station was now under the control of the village of Sero, just half a mile away down a mountain track. Rashid decided he would go there and straighten things out with the village chief.

He stood looking across the border for a while. It was a pleasant sight. They had come through a lot just to be able to walk across there. For Paul and Bill it would mean freedom, home, and family. For all the EDS men, it would mean the end of a nightmare. For Rashid it meant something else: America.

He knew the psychology of EDS men. They had a strong sense of obligation. If you helped them, they liked to show their appreciation. He knew he had only to ask, and they would take him with them to the land of his dreams.

He was about to turn back when two cars drove up on the Turkish side. A tall black man got out of the first car and came to the chain on the edge of no-man's-land.

Rashid started waving and yelled: 'Ralph! Ralph!'

Rashid was arrested at the border as they said they have to check to see if his letter is good or not. Rashid gave them the name of the driver who wrote the letter. After they called they released him.

On Thursday morning in the Istanbul Sheraton Ross Perot got a phone call from the American consul he had spoken to the night before. The consul said he had tried his best, but he could not help Perot buy or rent a small aircraft.

Perot hated to believe that anything was impossible, but now he

Rashid was arrested at the border and they said they have to check to see if his letter is good or not. Rashid gave them the name of the driver who wrote the letter. After they called they released him.

gave up on that idea and decided to fly the Boeing 707 to Van, the nearest airport to the border crossing. He sent Ron Davis and the 707's pilot to the airport to file a flight plan.

Davis called from the airport to say that the 707 was too big to land at Van.

Perot called ^{Mr. Fish} [REDACTED] and asked him to charter a plane to take the Turkish Rescue Team to Van. ^{Mr. Fish} [REDACTED] called back a few minutes later to say he had got them seats on a scheduled flight to Anakara and a charter from there to Van; and he was coming with them.

Perot decided to stay in Istanbul. He had planned to go with the 707, for he could call anywhere in the world on its single-sideband radio. But without that, he would probably be unable to call anywhere from a town as remote as Van. By remaining in Istanbul he could stay in touch with Dallas and had a better chance of keep track of the Clean Team, the Dirty Team, the Turkish Rescue Team and Ralph Boulware.

So he sent Pat Sculley, Jim Schwebach, Ron Davis, ^{Mr. Fish} [REDACTED], and the pilots Dick Douglas and Julian Kanauch to Van; and he made Pat Sculley the leader of the Turkish Rescue Team.

*

The arrival of a jet seemed to be a big event in the town of Van. When they got off the plane they were met by a contingent of policemen who looked ready to give them a hard time.

^{Mr. Fish} [REDACTED] went into a huddle with the police chief and came out smiling.

^{Mr. Fish} [REDACTED] said. 'We're going to check in to the best hotel in town, but I want you to know it's not the Sheraton, so please don't complain.'

They went to the hotel in two taxis. They walked into a room full of Turks watching a soccer match on a black-and-white TV set. The room gradually fell silent and everyone stared at them.

Rashid talked to the cab driver, then the cab went on and Rashid got back into the Range Rover. 'I asked him to show us a way out of town by the back streets,' he explained. 'I want to avoid a roadblock. He has a fare already, but he's coming back. We'll wait.'

'We won't wait very goddam long,' said Simons.

The cab returned ten minutes later, and they followed it through dark, unpaved streets to a main road. Bill could see the roadblock on his left, just a few yards away. Rashid turned right, taking the corner fast, and accelerated away before the boys at the roadblock could realise that someone had snuck past them.

At the edge of the town the taxi pulled into a filling station. Taylor got the tanks topped up while Rashid dealt with the taxi driver. The two of them seemed to be arguing. Taylor paid for the gas. Rashid was still arguing with the cab driver.

'What's the problem?' Taylor asked Rashid.

'he wants five dollars - it's too much.'

Taylor sighed. 'Rashid, just give him whatever he's asking for and let's get out of here.'

'He'll get suspicious if I don't haggle.'

Eventually they settled, and the Dirty Team hit the road.

As they drove up into the mountains, Rashid told Simons about his reconnaissance trip that afternoon. Bill was delighted to hear that Boulware had made it to the Turkish side of the border. It began to seem that he might really get out of Iran tonight.

The narrow road followed a ridge, with deep wooded gulleys on either side. 'There was a checkpoint around here somewhere this afternoon,' Rashid said. 'Maybe they went home.'

Then Bill saw two men standing beside the road, waving them down. There was no barrier, and Rashid did not slow down.

'I guess we better stop,' Simons said.

Rashid kept going right past the men.

'I said stop!' Simons barked.

Rashid stopped.

Bill stared out through the windscreen and said: 'Would you look at that?'

A few yards ahead was a bridge over a ravine. ~~There was a chain across the bridge,~~ and as he watched, twenty or thirty tribesmen with machine guns emerged from the ravine either side of the bridge.

If they had tried to rush the checkpoint, Bill realised, they would have killed themselves crashing the chain, or driven over the edge into the ravine, or got shot up, or all three.

'Thank God we stopped,' he said fervently.

Rashid jumped out and started talking. The tribesmen surrounded the cars. They were the most unfriendly people the team had yet encountered. They questioned Rashid aggressively, then started pushing him around.

'Do nothing,' Simons said. 'Stay in the car, let him handle it.'

Bill decided Rashid needed some help, so he touched his pocket rosary and started praying for all he was worth.

*

In the second car, Coburn sat frozen still while a tribesman outside pointed a rifle directly at his head.

Gayden, sitting behind, was seized by a wild impulse, and whispered: 'Jay! Why don't you lock the door!'

Coburn felt hysterical laughter bubble up in his throat.

*

Rashid was scared. These people just didn't care. They were bandits, that's what they were, and they would kill you for the coat on your back.

~~for a moment~~
~~he thought~~
"I am walking these people on the sharp edge of death" Rashid thought for a moment.

"I am walking these people on the sharp edge of dead" Rashid thought for a moment.

They pull the chain after the car stopped.

They pull the chain after the car stopped.

The tribesmen were joined by a man in a suit who spoke fluent Farsi. He seemed to be in charge. He demanded to see passports.

'Sure,' said Rashid. He went to the second car first. 'Show this man your passports, please,' he said.

The man in the suit examined each passport carefully, checking the picture against the face of the owner.

He moved to the lead car. When he looked at Bill's passport he said: 'The picture is not of this man.'

'Yes, it is,' Rashid said. 'He's been very sick. He's lost weight, his skin has changed colour - don't you understand he's dying? He has to get back to the States as quickly as possible so he can get the right medical attention, and here you are delaying him - do you want him to die because Iranian people had no pity for a sick man? Is this how you plan to uphold the honour of our country?'

'They're Americans,' the man said. 'Follow me.'

He turned and went into a little hut beside the road.

Rashid followed him in. 'You have no right to stop us,' he said. 'I have been instructed by the Islamic Revolution Commandant Committee in Rezaiyeh to escort these people to the border, and to delay us is a counter-revolutionary crime against the Iranian people.' He flourished the letter written by the chauffeur and stamped with a library stamp.

The man in the suit looked at it. 'Still, that one American does not look like the picture in his passport.'

'I told you, he has been sick!' Rashid yelled. 'They have been cleared to the border by the revolutionary committee! Now get these bandits out of my way!'

'We have our own revolutionary committee,' the man said. 'You will all have to come to our headquarters.'

Rashid had no choice but to agree.

*

Coburn saw Rashid come out of the hut with the man in the suit. Rashid looked really shook.

'We have to go to their village to be checked out,' he said.

Tribesmen got into each of the Range Rovers and they drove along a dirt track through the mountains. After three or four miles they came to a village.

The place was dirt-poor. There was one brick building with a courtyard, surrounded by mud huts. But in the courtyard were about a dozen jeeps.

Coburn said: 'Jesus, these people live by stealing cars.' Two Range Rovers would be a fine addition to their collection, he thought.

Two jeeps were parked behind the Range Rovers in the courtyard, so the Americans could not drive out in a hurry.

They were herded into the building. They took off their shoes and sat in a circle on a Persian rug in a big, bare room.

On trial again, just like Mahabad, Coburn thought.

Thirty or forty tribesmen stood around the room, watching, then in came the biggest, ugliest mullah Coburn had ever seen.

Rashid was interrogated in a mixture of Turkish and Farsi with snatches of English. He produced his letter again. All the passports were examined again. Tribesmen kept coming in and out. 'They say they are checking us out,' Rashid said.

Coburn thought: How will they check us out? Surely there's no phone in this godforsaken place!

What if there is, and the Rezaiyeh people have heard from Dadgar?

We might be better off if they do check us out, he thought; at least that way somebody knows we're here. At the moment we could be killed, our bodies would disappear with trace in the snow, and nobody

Rashid mentioned the name of the driver who wrote the letter, so when they call they ask for him and of course his answer is obvious.

Rashid mentioned the name of the driver who wrote the letter, so when they call they ask for him and of course his answer is obvious.

'What?' yelled Rashid. 'What?'

The car behind honked and flashed its lights.

Out of the corner of his eye Rashid saw two men running out of the filling station locking-and-loading their rifles.

He braked hard and stopped the car, then reversed back to where the guards were and jumped out.

They pointed their rifles at him.

Oh, shit, he thought, here we go again.

*

The two guards got into the cars, one in each, and ordered Rashid to drive on.

A minute later they were at the foot of the hill leading to the border crossing. Rashid could actually see the lights of the frontier station. The guard sitting next to him said: 'Turn right.'

'No,' said Rashid. 'We've been cleared to the border and - '

The guard raised his rifle and thumbed the safety.

Rashid stopped the car. 'Listen, I came to your village this afternoon and got permission to pass - '

'Go down there,' said the guard, pointing to a track.

'I'm under orders from the Islamic Revolution Commandant Committee - ' As he went into his speech, Rashid was thinking: 'We're less than half a mile from the border. There are only two guards, and seven of us. We could make a dash for it.'

A jeep came tearing down the hill from the frontier station and screeched to a halt in front of Rashid's car. An excited young man jumped out, carrying a pistol, and ran over to Rashid's window. He pointed the gun at Rashid's head. 'Go down the track,' he screamed.

Rashid gave in.

They drove along a track even narrower than the last. It was less than a mile to the village. When they arrived Rashid jumped out

Rashid never uses these types of words

Rashid never uses these types of words.

of the car, saying to the Americans: 'Stay here - I'll deal with this.'

The guards got out, and several men came out of the huts to see what was going on. 'Where is the head man of the village?' Rashid said loudly.

'Not here,' someone replied.

'Then fetch him. I spoke to him this afternoon - I am a friend of his - I have permission to cross the border with these Americans.'

'Why are you with Americans?' someone asked.

'I am under orders from the Islamic Revolution Commandant Committee - '

Suddenly the head man appeared out of nowhere, came up to Rashid, and kissed him on both cheeks.

*

'Hey, it's looking good,' said Gayden.

'Thank God for that,' said Coburn. 'I couldn't drink any more tea to save my life.'

The man who had kissed Rashid came over to the car and, leaning through the windows, shook hands with everyone.

Rashid got back into the lead jeep and drove off.

A few minutes later they were climbing the hill to the frontier station.

Paul, who was driving the second jeep, suddenly thought about Dadgar again. Simons had abandoned the plan of crossing the border on horseback after Rashid had returned from the frontier station saying he had permission for them all to cross. Now Paul wondered whether Simons had made the right decision. Was it not possible that Dadgar had sent photographs of Paul and Bill to every airport and seaport and frontier station?

Rashid stopped his car in front of the chain and Paul pulled up right behind him.

One of the guards said: 'You were all to stay here until the morning - '

'The cars are really very valuable, and they must be looked after - '

The guards looked from the cars to the people walking into Turkey and back to the cars again.

Paul and Bill reached the guardhouse on the Turkish side and walked in.

Bill looked at his watch. It was 11.45 p.m. on Thursday, 15 February, the day after Valentine's Day: on 15 February 1960 he had slipped an engagement ring on Emily's finger; the same day six years later Jacqueline had been born - today was her thirteenth birthday. And now it would always be the anniversary of the day he got out of Iran.

Coburn followed them into the guard hut. Paul put his arm around him and said: 'Jay, you just hit a home run.'

The Iranian guards, seeing that most of the Americans were already in Turkey, decided to quit while they were ahead and take the money and the cars.

Rashid, Gayden and Taylor walked up to the chain.

At the chain Gayden stopped. 'Go ahead,' he said. 'I want to be the last guy out of here.'

And he was.

2

Mr. Fish's

Boulware, Ilsman, Charlie and the two sons of [REDACTED] cousin ordered dinner in the hotel at Yuksekova. Food was brought to them wrapped in newspaper. Boulware forced himself to eat it.

Boulware decided they could catch some sleep. As was his

habit, he got a glass of water before lying down. He took a drink, and found himself swallowing something solid.

He lay down on the bed.

Someone banged on the door of the room. Boulware got up.

'Telephone,' said the man.

Boulware went to the phone.

'Hey, Ralph?'

'Yes.'

'This is Keane Taylor. We made it!'

Boulware smiled at the wall. It had all been worthwhile. 'Hey, where are you?'

'Right at the border - but in Turkey.'

'I'll be right there.'

He hung up and rounded up the others. Boulware paid the hotel bill, and they headed down the road where thirty-nine people had been killed last month. On the way they had another flat tyre. The sons had to change the wheel in the dark, because the batteries in their flashlight had gone dead.

They reached the border. Boulware jumped out of the car and ran into the guard hut. A cheer went up as he went through the door, and there they all were: Paul and Bill, Coburn, Simons, Taylor, Gayden, and Rashid. Paul and Bill shook his hand warmly. Boulware produced a bottle of Chivas Regal, and they all had a celebratory drink.

Boulware talked to Simons. 'I called Ross a couple of hours ago,' he said. 'Mr. Fish is on his way here, with Sculley, Schwebach and Jackson. They're in a bus. We could leave right away - the twelve of us could get into two cars, just - but I think we should wait for Mr. Fish. For one thing, we'll all be together, so nobody can get lost any more. For another, the road between here and Van is supposed to be Blood Alley, you know; bandits, and so on. I don't

Rashid does not drink.

Rashid does not drink.

stood in the road with their rifles raised, and the driver was forced to stop.

A sergeant jumped on the bus and dragged the driver off with a pistol at his head.

Now we're in trouble, Paul thought.

But the driver was not a bit cowed: he yelled at the soldiers as loudly as they yelled at him.

Mr. Fish
 [REDACTED], Ilsman, and some of the mystery passengers got off and started talking, and eventually they squared the military. The driver was literally thrown back on to the bus, but he was still yelling at the soldiers through the window as he drove away.

The bus took them to the airport at Van. Their plane was still there.

As they were boarding, Ilsman was stopped; he had a .45 pistol strapped under his arm, and it seemed that even in Turkey passengers were not allowed to go armed aboard aircraft. However, Ilsman flashed his credentials yet again and the problem went away.

Rashid was also stopped. He was carrying the oil can with the money in it, and inflammable liquids were apparently also banned on aircraft. Rashid argued, and eventually he too was allowed to board with his prohibited baggage.

'How did you persuade them to let you bring the oil on?' Paul asked him.

Rashid grinned. 'I told them, it's the oil Americans ~~rub on themselves that makes them smell so bad.~~

are taking home for their wives to rub on themselves to get a good tan.

Paul laughed.

They settled down as the plane began to taxi. Simons and Coburn stretched out, and were asleep within seconds.

As the plane gathered speed and rose into the air, Paul felt as elated as if it were his first plane trip. He recalled how, in

...are taking home for their wives to rub on themselves to get a good tan.

jail in Tehran, he had longed to be able to do that most ordinary thing, get on a plane and fly away. Soaring up into the clouds gave him a feeling he had not felt for a long time: the feeling of freedom.

3

At Ankara airport Simons, Sculley, Paul and Bill got into a taxi and asked for the U.S. Embassy.

Simons brought the oil can.

It was a long drive through the city. Bill noticed that the air seemed brownish and had a strong smell. 'The air's bad here,' he said.

'High-sulphur coal,' Simons said. 'They've never heard of pollution controls.'

Bill recalled that Simons had spent time in Turkey in the fifties. The cab pulled up. Bill looked out of the window, and his heart leaped. There stood a young, handsome Marine guard in an immaculate uniform.

This was the U.S.A.

They went in. Simons said to the Marine: 'Is there a motor pool here, soldier?'

'Yes, sir,' said the Marine, and gave him directions.

'We'll meet you back here,' Simons said to Paul and Bill, and he and Sculley went off.

Paul and Bill went into the passport office. They were ready with passport-sized photographs of themselves which Boulware had brought from the States. They went up to the desk, and Paul said: 'We've lost our passports. We left Tehran in kind of a hurry.'

'Oh, yes,' said the young man, as if he had been expecting them.

Rashid looks at the passport and sees 12 months visa! 'It takes about 6 months to a year and thousands of dollars to get this in Tehran,' Rashid thought. I know, Ross should have called U.S and had told them to call this man about me.

Rashid goes to American embassy. He enters. A man comes down stairs and says: "Can I help you?" Yes, I like to have a visa to U.S' Rashid says. -What is your name - Rashid Kazemi - Can I have your passport? - Sure. Man stamps the passport and says 'there you are!' Rashid looks at the passport and sees 12 months visa! "It takes about 6 months to a year and thousands of dollars to get this in Tehran," Rashid thought. I know, Ross should have called U.S and had told them to call this man about me.

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dog Buffy would be allowed in to the States, and they did not want to get on another plane. They said goodbye.

← The others - John Howel.

Ron Davies to the Boeing 707 Boulware rounded up the rest plane.

Merv Stauffer in Dallas had for the 707. He asked for t fish, fowl and beef; six sea lemon; six hors d'oeuvre tray roast beef, turkey and swiss and bluecheese-and-vinaigret breads and crackers; four de four bottles of brandy; twen club sodas and ten tonics; t of milk; four gallons of fre hundred sets of plastic cutl six dozen paper plates in tw dozen styrofoam cups; two ca Light cigarettes; and two bo

There was a mix-up, and double.

→
*
Perot asked the pilot for a spectacular take-off, and he got one. John Carlen kept the 707 speeding down the runway for as long as possible then took off in a fast, steep climb.

Bill felt good. He had slept through the movie, which was Jaws II. Paul had seen a soft-core porn movie. Gayden thought it was funny as hell to take a guy who had just spent six weeks in jail and make him watch

Ross Perot was concerned German journalists might recognize so Rashid was standing next him and covering his face while waiting for signals from other people to get on board. Ross lost his digital clock in the plane and we looked for it for a while but we could not find it.

Pilot said that we need to call the airport to send a group to deice the wings and it took about 30 minutes. While waiting, Boulware remembered that he had left his leather jacket at the terminal so Rashid got out of the plane and asked one of the boys helping with the deicing to go and get the jacket. he did and Boulware was very happy to get his jacket back.

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a dirty movie, but in fact Paul too had slept in the cinema.

A champagne cork popped. Now there's nothing between me and Emily but a plane ride, Bill thought happily.

He had imagined himself safe before: when he reached the Hyatt in Tehran, when he crossed the border into Turkey, when he took off from Van, when he landed in Frankfurt. He had been wrong each time.

And he was wrong now.

3

Paul had always been crazy about airplanes, and now he took the opportunity to sit on the flight deck of the 707.

There had been some trouble before take-off: flight engineer Ken Lenz had been obliged to get out of the plane and hand-operate the start valve on engine No. 1. But the take-off itself had been sensational.

Paul went back into the passenger cabin afterwards to drink a glass of champagne and listen to John Howell's description of the Clean Team's escape. He found it chilling: Dadgar had been very determined to stop him and Bill getting out of Iran.

He went back to the flight deck. Pilot John Carlen and flight engineer Ken Lenz were having trouble. The compass, the flight director and the Inertial Navigation System were all inoperative.

'What does that mean?' Paul asked.

'It means we'll have to fly across the atlantic by hand and eye,' said Carlen.

A few minutes later Paul felt very cold: the aircraft's pressurization system was failing. Carlen took the plane down to a low altitude, but he explained to Paul that at that height it would be difficult for air traffic control to follow the flight and give proper

clearances. Furthermore, from the start there had been insufficient oxygen on board for the passengers in case of depressurization.

Carlen and Lenz fiddled with the controls for a few minutes, then Carlen sighed and said: 'Would you get Ross up here, Paul?'

Paul fetched Ross.

'We're having trouble with this plane,' Carlen told him. 'I think we're going to lose it.'

'What do you mean, lose it?' Perot asked.

'We'll have to make an emergency landing.'

Paul couldn't believe it. After all he had been through!

He said: 'John, I'll be forever grateful to you if we don't have to land in Germany.'

'Don't worry. We're going to try to make it to London.'

Paul wondered why he said try.

Carlen had full tanks for the transatlantic flight, so he started dumping fuel - he wanted the minimum amount on board for the emergency landing. He called Heathrow airport on the radio. The airport was closed for the night. He told them it was an emergency.

When he had dumped most of the fuel he told Lenz to shut off the dump valve.

A moment later Lenz said: 'It won't shut off.'

Carlen said: 'Oh, my goodness.'

Paul realised that if the valve would not shut they would lose all their fuel and have to come down in the sea.

'I can't believe this!' he said.

Carlen said: 'Paul, can I have a cigarette?'

Paul stared at him. 'You told me you quit smoking ten years ago.'

'Just give me a cigarette, would you?'

Paul gave him a cigarette and said: 'Now I'm really scared.'

He went back into the passenger cabin. They were all busily

stowing trays, bottles and baggage. Simons was asleep. Paul asked Coburn: 'Does Simons know what's going on?'

'Yes,' Coburn said. 'He said he doesn't know how to fly a plane and there's nothing he can do so he was going to take a nap.'

'Wow.'

Paul returned to the flight deck.

A couple of minutes later Lenz said: 'Thank God, the valve shut.'

He went to work on the instruments, changing fuses to see whether that was the trouble. It was not.

They approached Heathrow in dense low cloud. Paul watched the altimeter. As it dropped through six hundred feet, then five hundred, Paul could see nothing but swirling grey fog. Carlen and Lenz were tense, concentrating.

At three hundred feet they dropped out of the cloud and there was the runway, lit up like a Christmas tree, the most beautiful sight in the world.

They touched down, and the fire engines and ambulances came screaming across the tarmac toward the plane; but it was a perfect safe landing.

*

Rashid had been hearing about Ross Perot for years. Perot was the multi-millionaire, the founder of EDS, the super-salesman, the business wizard, the man who sat in Dallas and moved people such as Coburn and Sculley and Boulware around the world like pieces on a chessboard. It had been quite an experience for Rashid to meet Mr Perot and find ~~he was less than nine feet tall and wore no crown.~~ Rashid had walked into the hotel room in Istanbul, and this little guy with a big smile just stuck out his hand and said: 'Hi, I'm Ross Perot,' and Rashid had said: 'Hi. I'm Rashid Kazemi,' just as if he had been talking to an ordinary mortal.

Since then he had felt more than ever one of the EDS team. But at Heathrow airport he was sharply reminded that he was not.

The immigration officer looked at all the passports, one by one, and admitted the Americans; then he saw Rashid's Iranian passport and said: 'You can't come into Britain.'

Chairman

Chairman

Perot was at Rashid's side a moment later. 'I'm Ross Perot, head of Electronic Data Systems of Dallas, Texas. You know we've just made an emergency landing, and we're only staying in London overnight, until the next plane out.'

'I'm afraid I can't admit this gentleman to British soil, sir,' said the official. 'He'll have to stay with us until we put him on the plane.'

'If he stays, I stay,' said Perot.

Rashid was bowled over. If Sculley had made such an offer, or Coburn, Rashid would have been grateful, but not surprised. But that Ross Perot should say such a thing!

Perot said: 'Now I suggest you make a phone call or two and just find out who I am, and reflect on how much I would have to lose by trying to smuggle illegal immigrants into your country; and I think you might find that you can trust me when I say this young man will be out of England within twenty-four hours.'

'I'll just have a word with my supervisor,' said the official, and he disappeared.

He came back a minute later and said: 'I can give you twenty-four hours.'

Oh, boy, thought Rashid; what a guy to work for!

*

They checked in to the Post House hotel near the airport, and Perot called Merv Stauffer in Dallas.

'Merv, we have one person here with an Iranian passport ~~and no U.S. visa~~ - you know who I'm talking about.'

'Yes, sir.'

'This boy has saved American lives and I won't have him hassled when we get to the States.'

'Yes, sir.'

'You know who to call. Just fix it, will you?'

'Yes, sir.'

*

After a few hours sleep, they left the hotel on the morning of Sunday 18 February and went to Gatwick airport to catch Braniff flight 601 to Dallas, leaving at eleven forty-five a.m.

At the airport Perot asked for Braniff's passenger service officer. Braniff was a Dallas airline and all its staff knew the name Perot.

He asked the officer: 'Can I rent the whole of the bubble of the 747 for my party?'

The officer was staring at Mr Perot's companions. Perot looked at them, and realised what was on the officer's mind: Mr Perot's party usually consisted of quiet well-dressed businessmen, and now here he was with what looked like a crowd of garage mechanics who had been working on a particularly filthy engine.

The officer said: 'Uh, we can't rent you the bubble, because of international airline regulations, sir, but I believe if your companions go up into the lounge the rest of the first-class passengers won't disturb you too much.'

*

Keane Taylor, who for the last few weeks had been carrying around anything up to a quarter of a million dollars in cash and handing it out by the fistful, suddenly took it into his head, half way across the Atlantic, to have an accounting.

He went around to each of them and collected up all their EDS cash, then the team spread it out on the floor of the upstairs lounge and commenced to count it.