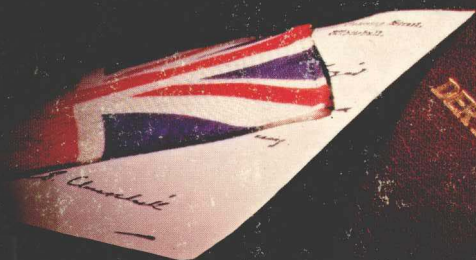


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**Published by Ballantine Books*

**"The Second World War produced, in the end,
one victor, the United States, one hero,
Great Britain, one villain, Germany . . ."**

***Hitler*, by N. Stone**

In May 1979, only days after Britain's new Conservative government came to power, the yellow box that contains the daily report from MI6 to the Prime Minister was delivered to her by a deputy secretary in the Cabinet Office. He was the PM's liaison with the intelligence services.

Although the contents of the yellow box are never graded into secret, top secret and so on—because all MI6 documents are in the ultra secret category—one rather hastily handwritten report was “flagged.” The PM noted with some surprise that it was the handwriting of Sir Sydney Ryden, the director general of MI6, and selected that document for immediate attention. Attached to the corner of it there was an advertisement, clipped from a film journal published in California the previous week.

A film producer, unlisted in any of the department's reference books, announced that he was preparing what the advert described as “A major motion picture with a budget of fifteen million plus!” It was a Second World War story about plundering German gold in the final days of the fighting. The cutting bore the rubber stamp of DESK 32 RESEARCH and was signed by the clerk who had found it. WHAT IS THE FINAL SECRET OF THE KAISERODA MINE? asked the advertisement. Kaiseroda had been underlined in red pencil to show the word which had alerted the Secret Intelligence Service clerk to the advert's possible importance.

Normally the space the blue rubber-stamp mark provided for reference would have been filled with a file number but, to his considerable surprise, the research clerk had been referred to no file under the Kaiseroda reference. Instead the Kaiseroda card was marked, “To director general only. IMMEDIATE.”

The Prime Minister read carefully through Sir Sydney Ryden's note, baffled more than once by the handwriting. Then she picked up a telephone and

changed her day's appointments to make a time to see him.

The elderly police constable on duty that afternoon inside the entrance lobby of 10 Downing Street recognized that the man accompanying Sir Sydney was the senior archivist from the Foreign Office documents centre. He was puzzled that he should be here at a time when the PM was so busy settling in but he soon forgot about it. During the installation of a newly elected government there are many such surprises.

The Foreign Office archivist did not attend the meeting between the PM and Sir Sydney, but remained downstairs in the waiting room in case he was required. In the event, he was not.

This was the new Prime Minister's first official meeting with the chief of the espionage service. She found him uncommonly difficult to talk to: he was distant in manner and overpowering in appearance, a tall man with overlong hair and bushy eyebrows. At the end of the briefing she stood up to indicate that the meeting must end, but Sir Sydney seemed in no hurry to depart. "I'm quite certain that there is no truth in these terrible allegations, Prime Minister," he said.

He wondered if "madam" would be a more suitable form of address or perhaps "ma'am," as one called the Queen. She looked at him hard and he shifted uncomfortably. Sir Sydney was not an addicted smoker, in the way that his predecessor had been, but now he found the new Prime Minister's strictures about smoking something of a strain, and longed for a cigarette. In the old days, with Callaghan and before him Wilson, these rooms had seldom been without clouds of tobacco smoke.

"We'll discover that," said the Prime Minister curtly.

"I'll get one of my people out to California within twenty-four hours."

"You'll not inform the Americans?"

"It would not be wise, Prime Minister." He pressed a hand against his ear and flicked back errant strands of his long hair.

"I quite agree," she said. She picked up the news-

paper cutting again. "For the time being all we need is a straight, simple answer from this film producer man."

"That might be rather a difficult task, if my experience of Hollywood film producers is anything to go by."

The PM looked up from the cutting to see if Sir Sydney was making a joke to which she should respond. She decided not to smile. Sir Sydney did not appear to be a man much given to jesting.

2

The exact details of the way in which the Soviet Union's intelligence services were alerted to the activities which had so troubled Britain's Prime Minister are more difficult to piece together. Soviet involvement had begun many weeks earlier and certainly it was the reason behind a long two-part radio message beamed in the early evening of Easter Sunday, April 15, 1979, to the Soviet embassy main building on the east side of 16th Street, Washington, D.C. This unexpected radio transmission required the services of the senior Russian cipher clerk who was enjoying an Easter dinner with Russian friends in a private room at the Pier 7 restaurant on the Maine Avenue waterfront near the Capital Yacht Club. He was collected from there by an embassy car.

Intercepted by the National Security Agency and decoded by its ATLAS computer at Fort George Meade, Maryland, that Sunday evening's radio traffic provided the first recorded use of the code name that Moscow had given this operation—Task Pogoni. The written instructions issued in 1962 by the GRU, and later given to the KGB and armed forces, order that the choice of such code names must be such that they do not reveal either the assignment or the government's intention or attitude, and adds a supplementary warning that the code names must not be trivial or of such grandeur that they would attract ridicule should the operation go wrong. And yet, as the NSA transla-

tors pointed out in their "pink flimsy" supplementary, Moscow's choice of code word was revealing.

Literally, *pogoni* means epaulette, but for a citizen of the U.S.S.R. its implications go deeper than that. Not only can it be used to mean a senior personage or "top brass"; it is a symbol of the hated reactionary. "*Smert zolotopogonnikam!*" cried the revolutionaries, "Death to the men who wear gold epaulettes!" And yet the possible overtones in this choice of the KGB code name can be taken further than that; for nowadays the senior Russian military men who control one of the U.S.S.R.'s rival intelligence organizations (the GRU) again wear gold epaulettes.

How Yuriy Grechko interpreted the code name assigned to this new operation is not recorded. Grechko—a senior KGB officer—was at the time the U.S.S.R.'s "legal resident." Under diplomatic cover it was his job to keep himself, and Moscow, informed on all Soviet espionage activities in the U.S.A. In seniority Grechko ranked a close second to the ambassador himself, and he was there solely to keep all the covert operations and "dirty tricks" entirely separated from official diplomatic business. This made it easier for the ambassador to deny all knowledge of such activities when they were detected by the U.S. authorities.

Grechko was shown in the diplomatic listings as a naval captain third rank, working in the capacity of assistant naval attaché. He was a short man with dry curly hair, blue shiny eyes and a large mouth. His only memorable feature was a gold front tooth which was revealed whenever he smiled. But Grechko did not smile frequently enough for this to compromise his clandestine operations. Grechko was a man who exemplified the Russians' infinite capacity for melancholy.

It was difficult to reconcile Grechko's diplomatic listing with his appearance and life-style. His expensive hand-made suits, his gold watch, pearl tie-pin, the roll of paper money in his hip pocket, the availability of sports cars and his casual working day all suggested to those men in Washington who are employed to study such details that Grechko was a KGB man, but at this date it was not realized that he was the

“legal”—the senior espionage administrator in the embassy.

Since Grechko's movements were restricted, he summoned his senior secret agent to Washington. It was contrary to the normal procedures, but his radioed instructions had stressed the urgency of his task. Grechko therefore took a trip that morning to the Botanic Gardens on the other side of the Anacostia River. He took his time and made quite sure that he was not being followed when he returned downtown to keep his appointment at the prestigious Hay-Adams Hotel which commands a view across Lafayette Square to the White House.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Parker met Grechko at the 16th Street entrance to the hotel where Grechko had booked a table in the name of Green. Edward Parker was a thick-set, bear-like man, with Slavic features: a squarish jaw, wavy grey hair fast becoming white, and bushy eyebrows. He towered over his Japanese wife and Grechko, whose hand he shook with smiling determination. Parker, prepared for Chicago weather, was wearing a heavy tweed overcoat, although Washington that day had temperatures in the high fifties with some sunshine.

Grechko gave Fusako Parker a perfunctory kiss on the cheek and smiled briefly. She was in her middle thirties, a beautiful woman who made the most of her flawless complexion and her doll-like oriental features. She wore a coat dress of beige-coloured wool, with a large gold brooch in the shape of a chrysanthemum pinned high at the collar. To a casual observer, the three luncheon companions looked typical of the rather conservatively dressed embassy people who crowd into Washington's best restaurants.

Parker was an importer of components for cheap transistor radios. These were mostly manufactured and partly assembled in Taiwan, Korea and Singapore, where the labour forces were adroit enough to do the work but not yet adroit enough to demand the high wages of the U.S.A. and Europe. In this role Parker travelled freely both in the U.S.A. and abroad. It was perfect cover for the U.S.S.R. “illegal resident.” Parker was the secret spymaster for the Russian oper-

rations in America, with the exception of certain special tasks controlled from the Washington embassy and the extensive "Interbloc" network centred on the United Nations in New York City.

It was 2:20 by the time Grechko finished his cheesecake. When they ordered coffee and brandy, Mrs. Parker asked leave to depart to do some shopping before returning to Chicago. Grechko and Parker agreed to this, then the two men began their business discussion.

Parker had been planted in North America for nearly twelve years. His English was more or less faultless and he had easily assumed the bluff and amiable manner of the successful American man of business. Yet Parker had been born a citizen of the U.S.S.R. and had served for three years with the KGB First Main Directorate's Scientific and Technical Section before his U.S. assignment. Now he listened with care and attention as Grechko talked rapidly in soft Russian, telling him of the priority that had been given to Task Pogoni. Parker was empowered to assign any of his sleepers to active duty. Such freedom of decision had only five times before been given to the American resident during Parker's tour of duty. Similar powers had now been provided to the residents in Bonn, Paris and London.

Furthermore, Grechko confided, the First Main Directorate had assigned control to "Section 13." Both men knew what that meant. Although since 1969 it had been renamed the Executive Action Department, what old-timers still call Section 13 of the KGB First Main Directorate handles "wet business" (*mokrie dela*), which is anything from blackmail through torture to murder. The section was at that time headed by the legendary Stanislav Shumuk, a man highly regarded by the Communist Party's Administrative Organs Department, from which the KGB is actually controlled. Shumuk reputedly would go to any extreme to provide results.

Parker did not reply. Grechko sipped his black coffee. It was unnecessary to point out that failure could result in unpleasant consequences for both men. After that they resumed conversation in English. It mostly

concerned the mechanical problems that Parker had experienced with his wife's car, which was still under warranty. Parker noticed, not for the first time, that Grechko was a miserable sort of man. It contradicted the stories he had heard about him, and Parker wondered why Grechko should become so despondent only with him.

Mr. and Mrs. Parker flew back to Chicago on the evening flight. Yuriy Grechko kept an appointment with his girlfriend, a Russian citizen employed by the Trade Delegation. In the early hours of the following morning he was heard arguing loudly with her in a motel where they spent the night just across the state line in Virginia. Grechko had been drinking heavily.

3

In spite of his smooth assurances to his Prime Minister, the director general of MI6 did not immediately dispatch an agent to California. The reason for this delay arose out of a conversation that the DG had with his daughter Jennifer. She had a candidate for a task on the far side of the world: her husband.

"Boyd is being quite beastly," she told her father. "Not all our friends know we are separated and I have a horror of finding him sitting opposite me at a dinner party. I wish you'd send him to do some job on the far side of the world." She gave her father a hug. "Just until the divorce is over."

The DG nodded. He should never have agreed to her marrying a man from his own department, especially such a rootless disrespectful young man. It would have been better to have let the love affair run its course; instead Sir Sydney had pressed them to marry with all the regrettable consequences.

"He's on the reassignment list, Daddy," she coaxed.

Boyd Stuart, a thirty-eight-year-old field agent, had just completed the mandatory one year of "administrative duties" that gave him a small rise in salary before returning him overseas. Such field agents, put behind an office desk in London for twelve months,

seldom endear themselves to the permanent staff there. They are often hasty, simplistic and careless with the detail and the paperwork. To this list of deficiencies, Boyd Stuart had added the sin of arrogance. Twelve years as a field agent had made him impatient with the priorities displayed by the staff in London.

"There is something he could do for us in California," said the DG.

"Oh, Daddy. You don't know how wonderful that would be. Not just for me," she added hastily. "But for Boyd too. You know how much he hates it in the office."

The DG knew exactly how much Boyd Stuart hated it in the office. His son-in-law had frequently used dinner invitations to acquaint him with his preference for a reassignment overseas. The DG had done nothing about it, deciding that it would look very bad if he interceded for a close relative.

"It's quite urgent too," said the DG. "We'd have to get him away by the weekend at the latest."

Jennifer kissed her father. "You are a darling," she said. "Boyd knows California. He did an exchange year at UCLA."

Boyd Stuart was a handsome, dark-complexioned man whose appearance—like his excellent German and Polish and fluent Hungarian—enabled him to pass himself off as an inhabitant of anywhere in that region vaguely referred to as central Europe. Stuart had been born of a Scottish father and Polish mother in a wartime internment camp for civilians in the Rhineland. After the war, Stuart had attended schools in Germany, Scotland and Switzerland by the time he went to Cambridge. It was there that his high marks and his athletic and linguistic talents brought him under the scrutiny of the British intelligence recruiters.

"You say there is no file, Sir Sydney?" Stuart had not had a personal encounter with his father-in-law since that unforgettable night when he had the dreadful quarrel with Jennifer. Sir Sydney Ryden had arrived at four o'clock in the morning and taken her back to live with her parents again.

Stuart was wearing rather baggy, grey-flannel trou-

ers and a blue blazer with one brass button missing. It was not exactly what he would have chosen to wear for this encounter but there was nothing he could do now about that. He realized that the DG was similarly unenthusiastic about the casual clothes, and found himself tugging at the cotton strands remaining from his lost button.

"That is a matter of deliberate policy," said the DG. "I cannot overemphasize how delicate this business is." The DG gave one of his mirthless smiles. This mannerism—mere baring of the teeth—was some atavistic warning not to tread further into sacred territory. The DG stared down into his whisky and then suddenly finished it. He was given to these abrupt movements and long periods of stillness. Ryden was well over six feet tall and preferred to wear black suits which, with his lined, pale face and luxuriant, flowing hair, made him look like a poet from some Victorian romance. He would need little more than a long black cloak to go on stage as Count Dracula, thought Stuart, and wondered if the DG deliberately contrived this forbidding appearance.

Without preamble, the DG told Stuart the story again, shortening it this time to the essential elements. "On 8 April 1945 elements of the 90th Division of the United States Third Army under General Patton were deep into Germany. When they got to the little town of Merkers, in western Thuringia, they sent infantry into the Kaiseroda salt mine. Those soldiers searched through some thirty miles of galleries in the mine. They found a newly installed steel door. When they broke through it they discovered gold; four-fifths of the Nazi gold reserves were stored there. So were two million or more of the rarest of rare books from the Berlin libraries, the complete Goethe collection from Weimar, and paintings and prints from all over Europe. It would take half an hour or more to read through the list of material. I'll let you have a copy."

Stuart nodded but didn't speak. It was late afternoon and sunlight made patterns on the carpet, moving across the room until the bright bars slimmed to fine rods and one by one disappeared. The DG went across to the bookcases to switch on the large table

lamps. On the panelled walls there were paintings of horses which had won famous races a long time ago, but now the paintings had grown so dark under ageing varnish that the strutting horses seemed to be plodding home through a veil of fog.

"Just how much gold *was* four-fifths of the German gold reserves?" Stuart asked.

The DG sniffed and ran a finger across his ear, pushing away an errant lock of hair. "About three hundred million dollars worth of gold is one estimate. Over eight thousand bars of gold." The DG paused. "But that was just the bullion. In addition there were three thousand four hundred and thirty-six bags of gold coins, many of which were rarities—coins worth many times their weight in gold because of their value to collectors."

Stuart looked up and, realizing that some response was expected, said, "Yes, amazing, sir." He sipped some more of the whisky. It was always the best of malts up here in the DG's office at the top of "the Ziggurat," the curious, truncated, pyramidal building that looked across the River Thames to the Palace of Westminster. The room's panelling, paintings and antique furniture were all part of an attempt to recapture the elegance that the Secret Intelligence Service had enjoyed in the beautiful old houses in St. James's. But this building was steel and concrete, cheap and practical, with rust stains dribbling on the façade and cracks in the basement. The service itself could be similarly described.

"The American officers reported their find through the usual channels," said the DG, suddenly resuming his story. "Patton and Eisenhower went to see it on April 12. The army moved it all to Frankfurt. They took jeeps and trailers down the mine and brought it out. Ingenious people, the Americans, Stuart." He smiled and held the smile while looking Stuart full in- to the eyes.

"Yes, sir."

"It took about forty-eight hours of continuous work to load the valuables. There were thirty crates of German patent-office records—worth a king's ransom—and two thousand boxes of prints, drawings and en-

gravings, as well as one hundred and forty rolls of oriental carpets. You see the difficulties, Stuart?"

"Indeed I do, sir." He swirled the last of his drink round his glass before swallowing it. The DG gave no sign of noticing that his glass was empty.

"They were ordered to begin loading the lorries just two days after Eisenhower's visit. The only way to do that was simply by listing whatever was on the original German inventory tags. It was a system that had grave shortcomings."

"If things were stolen, there was no way to be sure that the German inventory had been correct in the first place?"

The DG nodded. "Can you imagine the chaos that Germany was in by that stage of the war?"

"No, sir."

"Quite so, Stuart. You can *not* imagine it. God knows what difficulties the Germans had moving all their valuables in those days of collapse. But I assure you that the temptation for individual Germans to risk all in order to put some items in their pockets could never have been higher. Perhaps only the Germans could have moved such material intact in those circumstances. As a nation they have a self-discipline that one can only admire."

"Yes, sir."

"As soon as the Americans captured the mine, its contents went by road to Frankfurt, and were stored in the Reichsbank building. A special team from the State Department were given commissions overnight, put into uniform and flown from Washington to Frankfurt. They sifted that material to find sensitive papers or secret diplomatic exchanges that would be valuable to the U.S. government, or embarrassing to them if made public. After that, it was all turned over to the Inter-Allied Reparations Agency."

"And was there such secret material?"

"Let me get you another drink, Stuart. You like this malt, don't you? With water this time?"

"Straight please, sir."

The DG gave another of his ferocious grins.

"Of course there was secret material. The exchanges between the German ambassador in London