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Geheime Kommandosache

Berlin, den 18.2.41

Der Oberste Befehlshaber der Wehrmacht

220/41

10 Ausfertigungen
Ausfertigung



Instrument of Surrender – English Text.

Of all British armed forces in United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland including all islands.

1. The British Command agrees to the surrender of all British armed forces in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland including all islands and including military elements overseas. This also applies to units of the Royal Navy in all parts of the world, at port and on the high seas.
2. All hostilities on land, sea and in the air by British forces are to cease at 0800 hrs Greenwich Mean Time on 19 February 1941.
3. The British Command to carry out at once, without argument or comment, all further orders that will be issued by the German Command on any subject.
4. Disobedience of orders, or failure to comply with them, will be regarded as a breach of these surrender terms and will be dealt with by the German Command in accordance with the laws and usages of war.
5. This instrument of surrender is independent of, without prejudice to, and will be superseded by any

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general instrument of surrender imposed by or on behalf of the German Command and applicable to the United Kingdom and the Allied nations of the Commonwealth.

6. This instrument of surrender is written in German and English. The German version is the authentic text.
7. The decision of the German Command will be final if any doubt or dispute arises as to the meaning or interpretation of the surrender terms.

The image shows several handwritten signatures in black ink. At the top left is a large, stylized signature. Below it and to the right are several other signatures, including one that appears to be 'D. G. ...' and another that looks like 'J. ...'. The signatures are arranged in a somewhat scattered manner, with some overlapping.

I

‘Himmler’s got the King locked up in the Tower of London,’ said Harry Woods. ‘But now the German Generals say the army should guard him.’

The other man busied himself with the papers on his desk and made no comment. He thumped the rubber stamp into the pad and then on to the docket, ‘Scotland Yard. 14 Nov. 1941’. It was incredible that the war had started only two years ago. Now it was over; the fighting finished, the cause lost. There was so much paperwork that two shoe boxes were being used for the overflow; Dolcis shoes, size six, patent leather pumps, high heels, narrow fitting. Detective Superintendent Douglas Archer knew only one woman who would buy such shoes: his secretary.

‘Well, that’s what people are saying,’ added Harry Woods, the elderly Sergeant who was the other half of the ‘murder team’.

Douglas Archer initialled the docket and tossed it into the tray. Then he looked across the room and nodded. It was a miserable office, its green and cream painted walls darkened by age and the small windows heavily leaded and smeared by sooty rain, so that the electric light had to be on all day.

‘Never do it on your own doorstep,’ advised Harry now that it was too late for advice. Anyone other than Harry, anyone less bold, less loquacious, less well-meaning would have stopped at

that. But Harry disregarded the fixed smile on his senior partner's face. 'Do it with that blonde, upstairs in Registry. Or that big-titted German bird in Waffen-SS liaison – she puts it about they say – but your own secretary . . .' Harry Woods pulled a face.

'You spend too much time listening to what people say,' said Douglas Archer calmly. 'That's your trouble, Harry.'

Harry Woods met the disapproving stare without faltering. 'A copper can never spend too much time listening to what other people say, Super. And if you faced reality, you'd know. You may be a bloody wonderful detective, but you're a shocking bad judge of character – and that's *your* trouble.'

There weren't many Detective Sergeants who would dare speak to Douglas Archer like that but these two men had known each other ever since 1920, when Harry Woods was a handsome young Police Constable with a Military Medal ribbon on his chest, and a beat littered with the broken hearts of pretty young housemaids and the hot meat pies of doting cooks. While Douglas Archer was a nine-year-old child proud to be seen talking to him.

When Douglas Archer became a green young Sub-Divisional Inspector, straight from the Hendon Police College, with no more experience of police work than comes from dodging the Proctors in the back streets of Oxford, it was Harry Woods who had befriended him. And that was at a time when such privileged graduates were given a hard time by police rank and file.

Harry knew everything a policeman had to know and more. He knew when each night watchman brewed tea, and was never far from a warm boiler house when it rained. Harry Woods knew which large piles of rubbish would have money under them, never taking more than a third of it, lest the shopkeeper found some other way to pay the streetcleaners for their extra work. But that was a long time ago, before the generosity of the

publicans and barmen of London's West End had provided Harry with his ruddy face and expanded his waistline. And before Douglas Archer's persistence got him into CID and then to Scotland Yard's Murder Squad.

'C Division have got a juicy one,' said Harry Woods. 'Everyone else is busy. Shall I get the murder bag ready?'

Douglas knew that his Sergeant expected him to respond in surprise, and he raised an eyebrow. 'How the devil do you know about it?'

'A flat in Shepherd Market, crammed with whisky, coffee, tea and so on, and Luftwaffe petrol coupons lying around on the table. The victim is a well-dressed man, probably a black-marketeer.'

'You think so?'

Harry smiled. 'Remember that black-market gang who killed the warehouse manager in Fulham . . . they were forging Luftwaffe petrol coupons. This could be the same mob.'

'Harry. Are you going to tell me where all this information comes from, or are you going to solve the crime without getting out of your seat?'

'The Station Sergeant at Savile Row is an old drinking pal. He just phoned me. A neighbour found the body and told the police.'

'There's no hurry,' said Douglas Archer. 'We'll move slowly.'

Harry bit his lip. In his opinion Detective Superintendent Douglas Archer never did otherwise. Harry Woods was a policeman of the old school, scornful of paperwork, filing systems and microscopes. He liked to be talking, drinking, interrogating and making arrests.

Douglas Archer was a tall, thin, thirty-year-old. He was one of a new generation of detectives, who'd rejected the black jacket, pin-stripe trousers, roll-brim hat and stiff collar that was almost a uniform for the Murder Squad. Douglas favoured dark

shirts and the sort of wide-brimmed hat he'd seen on George Raft in a Hollywood gangster film. In keeping with this, he'd taken to smoking small black cheroots as often as his tobacco ration permitted. He tried to light this one for the third time; the tobacco was of poor quality and it did not burn well. He looked for more matches and Harry threw a box across to him.

Douglas was a Londoner – with the quick wit and sophisticated self-interest for which Londoners are renowned – but like many who grow up in a fatherless household, he was introspective and remote. The soft voice and Oxford accent would have better suited some more cloistered part of the legal profession but he'd never regretted becoming a policeman. It was largely due to Harry, he realized that now. For the lonely little rich boy, in the big house on the square, Harry Woods, without knowing it, became a surrogate father.

'And suppose the Luftwaffe petrol coupons are not forgeries; suppose they are real,' said Douglas. 'Then you can bet German personnel are involved, and the case will end up with the Feldgericht der Luftwaffe, Lincoln's Inn. Waste of time our getting involved.'

'This is murder,' said Harry. 'A few petrol coupons can't change that.'

'Don't try to re-write the laws, Harry, there's enough work enforcing the ones we've got. Any crimes involving Luftwaffe personnel, in even the smallest way, are tried by Luftwaffe courts.'

'Not if we got over there right away,' said Harry, running his hand back over hair that refused to be smoothed down. 'Not if we wrung a confession out of one of them, sent copies to Geheime Feldpolizei and Kommandantur, and gave them a conviction on a plate. Otherwise these German buggers just quash these cases for lack of evidence, or post the guilty ones off to some soft job in another country.'

For Harry the fighting would never end. His generation,

who'd fought and won in the filth of Flanders, would never come to terms with defeat. But Douglas Archer had not been a soldier. As long as the Germans let him get on with the job of catching murderers, he'd do his work as he'd always done it. He wished he could get Harry to see it his way.

'I'd appreciate it, Harry, if you'd not allow your personal opinions to intrude into the preferred terminology.' Douglas tapped the *SIPO* Digest. 'And I'm far from convinced that they *are* soft on German personnel. Five executions last month; one of them a Panzer Division Major, with Knight's Cross, who did nothing worse than arrive an hour late to check a military vehicle compound.' He tossed the information sheets across to his partner's desk.

'You read all that stuff, don't you?'

'And if you had more sense, Harry, you'd read it too. Then you'd know that General Kellerman now has his CID briefings on Tuesday morning at eleven o'clock, which is just ten minutes from now.'

'Because the old bastard drinks too much at lunch-time. By the time he reels back from the SS Officers' Club in the afternoon he can't remember a word of English except, "tomorrow, tomorrow!"'

Harry Woods noted with satisfaction the way that Douglas Archer glanced round the empty chairs and desks, just in case anyone had overheard this pronouncement. 'Whatever the truth of that may be,' said Douglas cautiously, 'the fact remains that he'll want his briefing. And solving a murder that we've not yet been invited to investigate will not be thought sufficient excuse for my not being upstairs on time.' Douglas got to his feet and collected together the documents that the General might want to see.

'I'd tell him to go to hell,' said Harry. 'I'd tell him the job comes first.'

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Douglas Archer nipped out his cheroot carefully, so as to preserve the unsmoked part of it, then put it into the top drawer of his desk, together with a magnifying glass, tickets for a police concert he'd not attended, and a broken fountain pen. 'Kellerman's not so bad,' said Douglas. 'He's kept the Metropolitan Force more or less intact. Have you forgotten all the talk of putting German Assistant Commissioners upstairs? Kellerman opposed that.'

'Too much competition,' muttered Harry, 'and Kellerman doesn't like competition.'

Douglas put his report, and the rest of the papers, into his briefcase and strapped it up. 'In the unlikely event that West End Central ask for us, have the murder bag ready and order a car. Tell them to keep the photographer there until I tell him to go and to keep the Divisional Surgeon there, as well as the pathologist.'

'The doctor won't like that,' said Harry.

'Thanks for telling me that, Harry. Send the doctor a packet of wait-about tablets with my compliments, and remind him you are phoning from Whitehall 1212, Headquarters of Kriminalpolizei, Ordnungspolizei, Sicherheitsdienst and Gestapo. Any complaints about waiting can be sent here in writing.'

'Keep your shirt on,' said Harry defensively.

The phone rang; the calm impersonal voice of General Kellerman's personal assistant said, 'Superintendent Archer? The General presents his compliments and asks if this would be a convenient time for you to give him the CID briefing.'

'Immediately, Major,' said Douglas, and replaced the phone.

'Jawohl, Herr Major. Kiss your arse, Herr Major,' said Harry.

'Oh for God's sake, Harry. I have to deal with these people at first hand; you don't.'

'I still call it arse-licking.'

'And how much arse-licking do you think it needed to get

your brother exempted from that deportation order!' Douglas had been determined never to tell Harry about that, and now he was angry with himself.

'Because of the medical report from his doctor,' said Harry but even as he was saying it he realized that most of the technicians sent to German factories probably got something like that from a sympathetic physician.

'That helped,' said Douglas lamely.

'I never realized, Doug,' said Harry but by that time Douglas was hurrying up to the first floor. The Germans were sticklers for punctuality.

General – or, more accurately in SS parlance, Gruppenführer – Fritz Kellerman was a genial-looking man in his late fifties. He was of medium height but his enthusiasm for good food and drink provided a rubicund complexion and a slight plumpness which, together with his habit of standing with both hands in his pockets, could deceive the casual onlooker into thinking Kellerman was short and fat, and so he was often described. His staff called him ‘Vater’ but if his manner was fatherly it was not benign enough to earn him the more common nickname of ‘Vati’ (Daddy). His thick thatch of white hair had beguiled more than one young officer into accepting his invitation for an early morning canter through the park. But few of them went for the second time. And only the greenest of his men would agree to a friendly game of chess, for Kellerman had once been the junior chess champion of Bavaria. ‘Luck seems to be with me today,’ he’d tell them as they became trapped into a humiliating defeat.

Before the German victory, Douglas had seldom visited this office on the first floor. It was the turret room used hitherto only by the Commissioner. But now he was often here talking to Kellerman, whose police powers extended over the whole occupied country. And Douglas – together with certain other officers – had been granted the special privilege of entering the Commissioner’s room by the private door, instead of going through the clerk’s office. Before the Germans came, this was

something permitted only to Assistant Commissioners. General Kellerman said it was part of *das Führerprinzip*; Harry Woods said it was bullshit.

The Commissioner's office was more or less unchanged from the old days. The massive mahogany desk was placed in the corner. The chair behind it stood in the tiny circular turret that provided light from all sides, and a wonderful view of the river. There was a big marble mantelpiece and on it an ornate clock that struck the hour and half-hour. A fire blazed in the bow-fronted grate between polished brass fire-irons and a scuttle of coal. The only apparent change was the shoal of fish that swam across the far wall, in glass-fronted cases, stuffed, and labelled with Fritz Kellerman's name, and a place and date, lettered in gold.

There were two men in army uniform there when Douglas entered the room. He hesitated. 'Come in, Superintendent. Come in!' called Kellerman.

The two strangers looked at Douglas and then exchanged affirmative nods. This Englishman was exactly right for them. Not only was he reputed to be one of the finest detectives in the Murder Squad but he was young and athletic looking, with the sort of pale bony face that Germans thought was aristocratic. He was 'Germanic', a perfect example of 'the new European'. And he even spoke excellent German.

One of the men picked up a notebook from Kellerman's desk. 'Just one more, General Kellerman,' he said. The other man seemed to produce a Leica out of nowhere and knelt down to look through its viewfinder. 'You and the Superintendent, looking together at some notes or a map . . . you know the sort of thing.'

On the cuffs of their field-grey uniforms the men wore 'Propaganda-Kompanie' armbands.

'We'd better do as they say, Superintendent,' said Kellerman.

'These fellows are from *Signal* magazine. They've come all the way from Berlin just to talk to us.'

Awkwardly Douglas went round to the far side of the desk. He posed self-consciously, prodding at a copy of the *Angler's Times*. Douglas felt foolish but Kellerman took it all in his stride.

'Superintendent Archer,' said the PK journalist in heavily accented English, 'is it true that, here at Scotland Yard, the men call General Kellerman "Father"?''

Douglas hesitated, pretending to be holding still for the photo in order to gain time. 'Can't you see how your question embarrasses the Superintendent?' said Kellerman. 'And speak German, the Superintendent speaks the language as well as I do.'

'It's true then?' said the journalist, pressing for an answer from Douglas. The camera shutter clicked. The photographer checked the settings on his camera and then took two more pictures in rapid succession.

'Of *course* it's true,' said Kellerman. 'You think I'm a liar? Or do you think I'm the sort of police chief who doesn't know what goes on in my own headquarters?'

The journalist stiffened and the photographer lowered his camera.

'It's quite true,' said Douglas.

'And now, gentlemen, I must get some work done,' said Kellerman. He shoed them out, like an old lady finding hens in her bedroom. 'Sorry about that,' Kellerman explained to Douglas after they'd gone. 'They said they would need only five minutes, but they hang on and hang on. It's all part of their job to exploit opportunities, I suppose.' He went back to his desk and sat down. 'Tell me what's been happening, my boy.'

Douglas read his report, with asides and explanations where needed. Kellerman's prime concern was to justify money spent, and Douglas always wrote his reports so that they summarized

the resources of the department and showed the cost in Occupation Marks.

When the formalities were over, Kellerman opened the humidor. With black-market cigarettes at five Occupation Marks each, one of Kellerman's Monte Cristo No. 2s had become a considerable accolade. Kellerman selected two cigars with great care. Like Douglas, he preferred the flavour of the ones with green or yellow spots on the outer leaf. He went through a ceremony of cutting them and removing loose strands of tobacco. As usual Kellerman wore one of his smooth tweed suits, complete with waistcoat and gold chain for his pocket watch. Typically he had not worn his SS uniform even for this visit by the photographer. And Kellerman, like so many of the senior SS men of his generation, preferred army rank titles to the cumbersome SS nomenclature.

'Still no word of your wife?' asked Kellerman. He came round the desk and gave Douglas the cigar.

'I think we have to assume that she was killed,' said Douglas. 'She often went to our neighbour's house during the air attacks, and the street fighting completely demolished it.'

'Don't give up hope,' said Kellerman. Was that a reference to his affair with the secretary, Douglas wondered. 'Your son is well?'

'He was in the shelter that day. Yes, he's thriving.'

Kellerman leaned over to light the cigar. Douglas was not yet used to the way that the German officers put cologne on their faces after shaving and the perfume surprised him. He inhaled; the cigar lit. Douglas would have preferred to take the cigar away with him but the General always lit them. Douglas thought perhaps it was a way of preventing the recipient selling it instead of smoking it. Or was it simply that Kellerman believed that, in England, no gentleman could offer a colleague a chance to put an unsmoked cigar in his pocket.

'And no other problems, Superintendent?' Kellerman passed behind Douglas, and touched the seated man's shoulder lightly, as if in reassurance. Douglas wondered if his general knew that his internal mail had that morning included a letter from his secretary, saying she was pregnant and demanding twenty thousand O-Marks. The pound sterling, she pointed out, in case Douglas didn't know, was not the sort of currency abortionists accepted. Douglas was permitted a proportion of his wages in O-Marks. So far Douglas had not discovered how the letter got to him. Had she sent it to one of her girlfriends in Registry, or actually come into the building herself?

'No problems that I need bother the General with,' said Douglas.

Kellerman smiled. Douglas's anxiety had led him to address the general in that curious third-person form that some of the more obsequious Germans used.

'You knew this room in the old days?' said Kellerman.

Before the war it had been the Commissioner's procedure to leave the door wide open when the room was unoccupied, so that messengers could pass in and out. Soon after being assigned to Scotland Yard, Douglas had found an excuse for coming into the empty room and studying it with the kind of awe that comes from a schoolboy diet of detective fiction. 'I seldom came here when it was the Commissioner's room.'

'These are difficult times,' said Kellerman, as if apologizing for the way in which Douglas's visits were now more frequent. Kellerman leaned forward to tap a centimetre of ash into a white china model of Tower Bridge that some enterprising manufacturer had redesigned to incorporate swastika flags and 'Waffenstillstand. London. 1940' in red and black Gothic lettering. 'Until now,' said Kellerman, choosing his words with care, 'the police force has not been asked to do any political task.'

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‘We have always been completely apolitical.’

‘Now that’s not quite true,’ said Kellerman gently. ‘In Germany we call a spade a spade, and the political police are called political police. Here you call your political police the Special Branch, because you English are not so direct in these matters.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘But there will come a time when I can no longer resist the pressure from Berlin to bring us into line with the German police system.’

‘We English don’t take quickly to new ideas, you know, sir.’

‘Don’t play games with me, Superintendent,’ said Kellerman without changing the affable tone of voice or the smile. ‘You know what I’m talking about.’

‘I’m not sure I do, sir.’

‘Neither of us wants political advisers in this building, Superintendent. Inevitably the outcome would be that your police force is used against British Resistance groups, uncaptured soldiers, political fugitives, Jews, gypsies and other undesirable elements.’ Kellerman said it in a way that conveyed the idea that he didn’t consider these elements nearly so undesirable as his superiors in Berlin thought them.

‘It would split the police service right down the middle,’ said Douglas.

Kellerman didn’t answer. He reached for a teleprinter message on his desk and read it, as if to remind himself of the contents. ‘A senior officer of the Sicherheitsdienst is on his way here now,’ said Kellerman. ‘I’m assigning you to work with him.’

‘His duties will be political?’ asked Douglas. The SD was the SS intelligence service. Douglas did not welcome this sinister development.

‘I don’t know why he’s coming,’ said Kellerman cheerfully. ‘He is on the personal staff of the Reichsführer-SS and will

remain directly responsible to Berlin for whatever he has to do.’ Kellerman inhaled on his cigar and then let the smoke drift from his nostrils. He let his Superintendent dwell upon the facts and realize that the new man presented a danger to the status quo for both of them. ‘Standartenführer Huth,’ said Kellerman finally, ‘that’s this new chap’s name.’ His use of the SS rank was enough to emphasize that Huth was an outsider. Kellerman raised his hand. ‘Under the direct orders of Berlin, so that gives him a special . . .’ he hesitated and then let the hand fall, ‘. . . influence.’

‘I understand, sir,’ said Douglas.

‘Then perhaps, my dear chap, you’d do everything you can to prevent the indiscretions – more particularly the verbal indiscretions – of your mentor downstairs from embarrassing us all.’

‘Detective Sergeant Woods?’

‘Ah, what a quick mind you have, Superintendent,’ said Kellerman.

Some said there had not been even one clear week of sunshine since the ceasefire. It was easy to believe. Today the air was damp, and the colourless sun only just visible through the grey clouds, like an empty plate on a dirty tablecloth.

And yet even a born and bred Londoner, such as Douglas Archer, could walk down Curzon Street, and with eyes half-closed, see little or no change from the previous year. The Soldatenkino sign outside the Curzon cinema was small and discreet, and only if you tried to enter the Mirabelle restaurant did a top-hatted doorman whisper that it was now used exclusively by Staff Officers from Air Fleet 8 Headquarters, across the road in the old Ministry of Education offices. And if your eyes remained half-closed you missed the signs that said 'Jewish Undertaking' and effectively kept all but the boldest customers out. And in September of that year 1941, Douglas Archer, in common with most of his compatriots, was keeping his eyes half-closed.

The scene of the murder to which, as Detective Sergeant Harry Woods had predicted, they were called, was Shepherd Market. This little maze of narrow streets and alleys housed a mixture of working-class Londoners, Italian shopkeepers and wealthy visitors, who found in these tortuous ways, and creaking old buildings, some measure of the London they'd read of in Dickens, while being conveniently close to the smart shops and restaurants.

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The house was typical of the neighbourhood. There were uniformed police there already, arguing with two reporters. The ground floor was a poky antique shop not much wider than a man could stretch both arms. Above it were rooms of doll's-house dimensions, with a twisting staircase so narrow that it provided an ever-present risk of sweeping from its walls the framed coaching prints that decorated them. Only with difficulty did Harry get the heavy murder bag to the top floor where the body was.

The police doctor was there, seated on a chintz-covered couch, a British army overcoat buttoned up tight to the neck, and hands in his pockets. He was a young man, in his middle twenties, but already Douglas saw in his eyes that terrible resignation with which so many British seemed to have met final defeat.

On the floor in front of him there was the dead man. He was about thirty-five years old, a pale-faced man with a balding head. Passing him in the street one might have guessed him to be a rather successful academic – the sort of absent-minded professor portrayed in comedy films.

As well as blood, there was a large smudge of brown powder spilled on his waistcoat. Douglas touched it with a fingertip but even before he raised it to his nose, he recognized the heavy aroma of snuff. There were traces of it under the dead man's fingernails. Snuff was growing more popular as the price of cigarettes went up, and it was still unrationed.

Douglas found the snuff tin in a waistcoat pocket. The force of the bullets had knocked the lid off. There was a half-smoked cigar there too, the band still on it, a *Romeo y Julieta* worth a small fortune nowadays; no wonder he'd preserved the unsmoked half of it.

Douglas looked at the fine quality cloth and hand stitching of the dead man's suit. For such expensive, made to measure

garments they fitted very loosely, as if the man, suddenly committed to a rigorous diet, had lost many pounds of weight. Sudden weight loss was also suggested by the drawn and wrinkled face. Douglas fingered the bald patches on the man's head.

'*Alopecia areata*,' said the doctor. 'It's common enough.'

Douglas looked into the mouth. The dead man had had enough money to pay for good dental care. Gold shone in his mouth but there was blood there too.

'There's blood in his mouth.'

'Probably hit his face as he fell.'

Douglas didn't think so but he didn't argue. He noted the tiny ulcers on the man's face and blood spots under the skin. He pushed back the shirt sleeve far enough to see the red inflamed arm.

'Where do you find such sunshine at this time of the year?' the doctor said.

Douglas didn't answer. He drew a small sketch of the way that the body had fallen backwards into the tiny bedroom, and guessed that he'd been in the doorway when the bullets hit him. He touched the blood on the body to see if it was tacky, and then placed a palm on the chest. He could feel no warmth at all. His experience told him that this man had been dead for six hours or more. The doctor watched Douglas but made no comment. Douglas got to his feet and looked round the room. It was a tiny place, over-decorated with fancy wallpapers, Picasso reproductions and table lights made from Chianti bottles.

There was a walnut *escritoire*, with its front open as if it might have been rifled. An old-fashioned brass lamp had been adjusted to bring the light close upon the green leather writing top but its bulb had been taken out and left in one of the pigeon-holes, together with some cheap writing paper and envelopes.

There were no books, no photos and nothing personal of any kind. It was like some very superior sort of hotel room. In

the tiny open fireplace there was a basket of logs. The grate was overflowing with ashes of paper.

'Pathologist here yet?' Douglas asked. He fitted the light bulb into the brass lamp. Then he switched it on for long enough to see that the bulb was still in working order and switched it off again. He went to the fireplace and put his hand into the ash. It was not warm but there was no surviving scrap of paper to reveal what had been burned there. It was a long job to burn so much paper. Douglas used his handkerchief to wipe his hands.

'Not yet,' said the doctor in a dull voice. Douglas guessed that he resented being ordered to wait.

'What do you make of it, doc?'

'You get any spare cigarettes, working with the SPO?'

Douglas produced the gold cigarette case that was his one and only precious possession. The doctor took the cigarette and nodded his thanks while examining it carefully. Its paper was marked with the double red bands that identified Wehrmacht rations. The doctor put it in his mouth, brought a lighter from his pocket and lit it, all without changing his expression or his position, sprawled on the couch with legs extended.

A uniformed police Sergeant had watched all this while waiting on the tiny landing outside the door. Now he put his head into the room and said, 'Pardon me, sir. A message from the pathologist. He won't be here until this afternoon.'

Harry Woods was unpacking the murder bag. Douglas could not resist glancing at him. Harry nodded. Now he realized that to keep the Police Surgeon here was a good idea. The pathologists were always late these days. 'So what do you make of it, doctor?' said Douglas.

They both looked down at the body. Douglas touched the dead man's shoes; the feet were always the last to stiffen.

'The photographers have finished until the pathologist

comes,' said Harry. Douglas unbuttoned the dead man's shirt to reveal huge black bruises surrounding two holes upon which there was a crust of dried blood.

'What do I make of it?' said the doctor. 'Gunshot wound in chest caused death. First bullet into the heart, second one into the top of the lung. Death more or less instantaneous. Can I go now?'

'I won't keep you longer than absolutely necessary,' said Douglas without any note of apology in his voice. From his position crouched down with the body, he looked back to where the killer must have been. At the wall, far under the chair he saw a glint of metal. Douglas went over and reached for it. It was a small construction of alloy, with a leather rim. He put it into his waistcoat pocket. 'So it was the first bullet that entered the heart, doctor, not the second one?'

The doctor still had not moved from his fixed posture on the couch but now he twisted his feet until his toes touched together. 'There would have been more frothy blood if a bullet had hit the lung first while the heart was pumping.'

'Really,' said Douglas.

'He might have been falling by the time the second shot came. That would account for it going wide.'

'I see.'

'I saw enough gunshot wounds last year to become a minor expert,' said the doctor without smiling. 'Nine millimetre pistol. That's the sort of bullets you'll find when you dig into the plaster behind that bloody awful Regency stripe wallpaper. Someone who knew him did it. I'd look for a left-handed ex-soldier who came here often and had his own key to get in.'

'Good work, doctor.' Harry Woods looked up from where he was going through the dead man's pockets. He recognized the note of sarcasm.

'You know my methods, Watson,' said the doctor.

'Dead man wearing an overcoat; you conclude he came in the door to find the killer waiting. You guess the two men faced each other squarely with the killer in the chair by the fireplace, and from the path of the wound you guess the gun was in the killer's left hand.'

'Damned good cigarettes these Germans give you,' said the doctor, holding it in the air and looking at the smoke.

'And an ex-soldier because he pierced the heart with the first shot.' The doctor inhaled and nodded. 'Have you noticed that all three of us are still wearing overcoats?' said Douglas. 'It's bloody cold in here and the gas meter is empty and the supply disconnected. And not many soldiers are expert shots, doc, and not one in a million is an expert with a pistol, and by your evidence a German pistol at that. And you think the killer had a key because you can't see any signs of the door being forced. But my Sergeant could get through that door using a strip of celluloid faster than you could open it with a key, and more quietly too.'

'Oh,' said the doctor.

'Now, what about a time of death?' said Douglas.

All doctors hate to estimate the time of death and this doctor made sure the policemen knew that. He shrugged. 'I can think of a number and double it.'

'Think of a number, doc,' said Douglas, 'but don't double it.'

The doctor, still lolling on the couch, pinched out his cigarette and put the stub away in a dented tobacco tin. 'I took the temperature when I arrived. The normal calculation is that a body cools one-and-a-half degrees Fahrenheit per hour.'

'I'd heard a rumour to that effect,' said Douglas.

The doctor gave him a mirthless grin as he put the tin in his overcoat pocket, and watched his feet as he made the toes touch together again. 'Could have been between six and seven this morning.'

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Douglas looked at the uniformed Sergeant. 'Who reported it?'

'The downstairs neighbour brings a bottle of milk up here each morning. He found the door open. No smell of cordite or anything,' added the Sergeant.

The doctor chortled. When it turned into a cough he thumped his chest. 'No smell of cordite,' he repeated. 'I'll remember that one, that's rather rich.'

'You don't know much about coppers, doc,' said Douglas. 'Specially when you take into account that you are a Police Surgeon. The uniformed Sergeant here, an officer I've never met before, is politely hinting to me that he thinks the time of death was earlier. Much earlier, doc.' Douglas went over to the elaborately painted corner cupboard and opened it to reveal an impressive display of drink. He picked up a bottle of whisky and noted without surprise that most of the labels said 'Specially bottled for the Wehrmacht'. Douglas replaced the bottles and closed the cupboard. 'Have you ever heard of post-mortem lividity, doctor?' he said.

'Death might have been earlier,' admitted the doctor. He was sitting upright now and his voice was soft. He, too, had noticed the colouration that comes from settling of the blood.

'But not before midnight.'

'No, not before midnight,' agreed the doctor.

'In other words death took place during curfew?'

'Very likely.'

'Very likely?' said Douglas caustically.

'*Definitely* during curfew,' admitted the doctor.

'What kind of a game are you playing, doc?' said Douglas. He didn't look at the doctor. He went to the fireplace and examined the huge pile of charred paper that was stuffed into the tiny grate. The highly polished brass poker was browned with smoke marks. Someone had used it to make sure that every last piece of paper was consumed by the flames. Again Douglas put

his hand into the feathery layers of ash; there must have been a huge pile of foolscap and it was quite cold. 'Contents of his pockets, Harry?'

'Identity card, eight pounds, three shillings and tenpence, a bunch of keys, penknife, expensive fountain pen; handkerchief, no laundry marks, and a railway ticket monthly return half: London to Bringle Sands.'

'Is that all?'

Harry knew that his partner would ask for the identity card and he passed it across unrequested. Harry said, 'Travelling light, this one.'

'Or his pockets were rifled,' said the doctor, not moving from his position on the sofa.

Harry met Douglas's eyes and there was a trace of a smile. 'Or his pockets were rifled,' said Douglas to Harry.

'That's right,' said Harry.

Douglas opened the identity card. It was written there that the holder was a thirty-two-year-old accountant with an address in Kingston, Surrey. 'Kingston,' said Douglas.

'Yes,' said Harry. They both knew that, ever since the Kingston Records Office had been destroyed in the fighting, this was a favourite address for forgers of identity documents. Douglas put the card in his pocket, and repeated his question. 'What sort of game are you playing, doctor?' He looked at the doctor and waited for an answer. 'Why are you trying to mislead me about the time of death?'

'Well it was silly of me. But if people are coming and going after midnight the neighbours are supposed to report them to the Feldgendarmerie.'

'And how do you know that they didn't report it?'

The doctor raised his hands and smiled. 'I just guessed,' he said.

'You guessed. Douglas nodded. Is that because all *your*

neighbours ignore the curfew?’ said Douglas. ‘What other regulations do they regularly flout?’

‘Jesus!’ said the doctor. ‘You people are worse than the bloody Germans. I’d rather talk to the Gestapo than talk to bastards like you – at least they won’t twist everything I say.’

‘It’s not in my power to deny you a chance to talk to the Gestapo,’ said Douglas, ‘but just to satisfy my own vulgar curiosity, doctor, is your opinion about benign interrogation techniques practised by that department based upon first-hand experience or hearsay?’

‘All right, all right,’ said the doctor. ‘Let’s say three A.M.’

‘That’s much better,’ said Douglas. ‘Now you examine the body properly so that I don’t have to wait here for the pathologist before getting started and I’ll forget all about that other nonsense . . . but leave anything out, doc, and I’ll run you along to Scotland Yard and put you through the mangle. Right?’

‘All right,’ said the doctor.

‘There’s a lady downstairs,’ said the uniformed police Sergeant. ‘She’s come to collect something from the antique shop. I’ve told the Constable to ask her to wait for you.’

‘Good man,’ said Douglas. He left the doctor looking at the body while Harry Woods was going through the drawers of the *escritoire*.

The antique shop was one of the hundreds that had sprung up since the bombing and the flight of refugees from Kent and Surrey during the weeks of bitter fighting there. With the German Mark pegged artificially high, the German occupiers were sending antiques home by the train-load. The dealers were doing well out of it, but one didn’t need lessons in economics to see the way that wealth was draining out of the country.

There were some fine pieces of furniture in the shop. Douglas wondered how many had been lawfully purchased and how many looted from empty homes. Obviously the owner of the

antique shop stored his antiques by putting them in the tiny apartments upstairs, and justified high rents by having them there.

The visitor was sitting on an elegant Windsor chair. She was very beautiful: large forehead, high cheekbones and a wide face with a perfect mouth that smiled easily. She was tall, with long legs and slim arms.

‘Now maybe someone will give me a straight answer.’ She had a soft American voice, and she reached into a large leather handbag and found a US passport, which she brandished at him.

Douglas nodded. For a moment he was spellbound. She was the most desirable woman he’d ever seen. ‘What can I do for you, Madam?’

‘Miss,’ she said. ‘In my country a lady doesn’t like being mistaken for a Madam.’ She seemed amused at his discomfiture. She smiled in that relaxed way that marks the very rich and the very beautiful.

‘What can I do for you, Miss?’

She was dressed in a tailored two-piece of pink wool. Its severe and practical cut made it unmistakably American. It would have been striking anywhere, but in this war-begrimed city, among so many dressed in ill-fitting uniforms or clothes adapted from uniforms, it singled her out as a prosperous visitor. Over her shoulder she carried a new Rolleiflex camera. The Germans sold them tax-free to servicemen and to anyone who paid in US dollars.

‘My name is Barbara Barga. I write a column that is syndicated into forty-two US newspapers and magazines. The press attaché of the German Embassy in Washington offered me a ticket on the Lufthansa inaugural New York to London flight last month. I said yes, and here I am.’

‘Welcome to London,’ said Douglas dryly. It was shrewd of

her to mention the inaugural flight on the Focke-Wulf airliner. Göring and Goebbels were both on that flight; it was one of the most publicized events of the year. A journalist would have to be very important indeed to have got a seat.

‘Now tell me what’s going on here?’ she said with a smile. Douglas Archer had not met many Americans, and he’d certainly never met one to compare with this girl. When she smiled, her face wrinkled in a way that Douglas found very beguiling. In spite of himself, he smiled back. ‘Don’t get me wrong,’ she said. ‘I get on well with cops, but I didn’t expect to find so many of them here in Peter’s shop today.’

‘Peter?’

‘Peter Thomas,’ she said. ‘Come on now, mister detective, it says Peter Thomas on the door – Peter Thomas – Antiques – right?’

‘You know Mr Thomas?’ said Douglas.

‘Is he in trouble?’

‘This will go faster if you just answer my questions, Miss.’

She smiled. ‘Who said I wanted to go faster . . . OK. I know him—’

‘Could you give me a brief description?’

‘Thirty-eight, maybe younger, pale, thin on top, big build, six feet tall, small Ronald Colman moustache, deep voice, good suits.’

Douglas nodded. It was enough to identify the dead man. ‘Could you tell me your relationship with Mr Thomas?’

‘Just business – now what about letting me in on who you are, buddy?’

‘Yes, I’m sorry,’ said Douglas. He felt he was handling this rather badly. The girl smiled at his discomfort. ‘I’m the Detective Superintendent in charge of the investigation. Mr Thomas was found here this morning: dead.’

‘Not suicide? Peter wasn’t the type.’

'He was shot.'

'Foul play,' said the girl. 'Isn't that what you British call it?'

'What was your business with him?'

'He was helping me with a piece I'm writing about Americans who stayed here right through the fighting. I met him when I came in to ask the price of some furniture. He knew everybody – including a lot of London-based foreigners.'

'Really.'

'Peter was a clever man. He'd root out anything anybody wanted, as long as there was a margin in it for him.' She looked at the collection of silver and ivory objects on a shelf above the cash register. 'I called this morning to collect some film. I ran out of it yesterday, and Peter said he'd be able to get me a roll. It might have been in his pocket.'

'There was no film found on the body.'

'Well, it doesn't matter. I'll get some somewhere.'

She was standing near him now and he smelled her perfume. He fantasized about embracing her and – as if guessing this – she looked at him and smiled. 'Where can I reach you, Miss Barga?'

'The Dorchester until the end of this week. Then I move into a friend's apartment.'

'So the Dorchester is open again?'

'Just a few rooms at the back. It's going to be a long time rebuilding the park side.'

'Make sure you leave a forwarding address,' said Douglas although he knew that she'd be registered as an alien, and registered with the Kommandantur Press Bureau.

She seemed in no hurry to depart. 'Peter could get you anything: from a chunk of the Elgin marbles, complete with a letter from the man who dug it out of the Museum wreckage, to an army discharge, category IA – Aryan, skilled worker, no curfew or travel restrictions – Peter was a hustler, Superintendent.

Guys like that get into trouble. Don't expect anyone to weep for him.'

'You've been most helpful, Miss Barga.' She was going out through the door when Douglas spoke again. 'By the way,' he said, 'do you know if he had been to some hot climate recently?'

She turned. 'Why?'

'Sunburned arms,' said Douglas. 'As if he'd gone to sleep in the hot sunshine.'

'I only met him a couple of weeks back,' said Barbara Barga. 'But he might have been using a sun-lamp.'

'That would account for it,' said Douglas doubtfully.

Upstairs Harry Woods had been talking to Thomas's only neighbour. He had identified the body and offered the information that Thomas had been a far from ideal neighbour. 'There was a Luftwaffe Feldwebel . . . big man with spectacles – I'm not sure what the ranks are – but he was from that Quartermaster's depot in Marylebone Road. He used to bring all kinds of stuff: tinned food, tobacco and medical stuff too. I think they were selling drugs – always having parties, and you should have seen some of the girls who came here; painted faces and smelling of drink. Sometimes they knocked at my door in mistake – horrible people. I don't like speaking ill of the dead, mind you, but they were a horrible crowd he was in with.'

'Do you know if Mr Thomas had a sun-lamp?' Douglas asked.

'I don't know what he *didn't* have, Superintendent! A regular Aladdin's cave you'll find when you dig into those cupboards. And don't forget the attic.'

'No, I won't, thank you.'

When the man had gone, Douglas took from his pocket the metal object he'd found under the chair. It was made from curved pieces of lightweight alloy, and yet it was clumsy and heavy for its size. It was unpainted and its edge covered with

a strip of light-brown leather. It was pierced by a quarter-inch hole, in line with which a screw-threaded nut had been welded. The whole thing was strengthened by a section of tube. From the shape, size and hasty workmanship Douglas guessed it was a part of one of the hundreds of false limbs provided to casualties of the recent fighting. If it was part of a false right arm the doctor might have made a remarkably accurate guess and Douglas could start looking for a left-handed ex-service sharpshooter.

Douglas put the metal construction back into his pocket as Harry came in. 'You let the doctor go?' said Douglas.

'You rode him a bit hard, Doug.'

'What else did he say?'

'Three A.M. I think we should try to find this Luftwaffe Feldwebel.'

'Did the doctor say anything about those sunburns on the arms?'

'Sun-ray lamp,' said Harry.

'Did the doctor say that?'

'No, I'm saying it. The doctor hummed and hawed, you know what they are like.'

Douglas said, 'So the neighbour says he was a black-marketeer and the American girl tells us the same thing.'

'It all fits together, doesn't it?'

'It fits together so well that it stinks.'

Harry said nothing.

'Did you find a sun-ray lamp?'

'No, but there's still the attic.'

'Very well, Harry, have a look in the attic. Then go over to the Feldgendarmerie and get permission to talk to the Feldwebel.'

'How do you mean it stinks?' said Harry.

'The downstairs neighbour tells me everything about this damned Feldwebel short of giving me his name and number.'

Then this American girl turns up and asks me if I found a roll of film on the body. She tells me that this man Peter Thomas was going to get a roll of film for her last night . . . ugh! A girl like that would bring a gross of films with her. When she wanted more, she'd get films from a news agency, or from the American Embassy. Failing that, the German Press Bureau would give her as much as she asked for; you know what the propaganda officials will do for American newspaper people. She doesn't have to get involved with the black market.'

'Perhaps she *wanted* to get involved with the black market. Perhaps she is trying to make contact with the Resistance, in order to write a newspaper story.'

'That's just what I was thinking, Harry.'

'What else is wrong?'

'I took his keys downstairs. None of them fits any of the locks; not the street door or this door. The small keys look like the ones they use on filing cabinets and the bronze one is probably for a safe. There are no filing cabinets here, and if there is a safe, it's uncommonly well hidden.'

'Anything else?' said Harry.

'If he lives here, why buy a return ticket when he left Bringle Sands yesterday morning? And if he lives here, where are his shirts, his underclothes and his suits?'

'He left them at Bringle Sands.'

'And he intended to go to bed here, and then get up and use the same shirt and underclothes, you mean? Look at the body, Harry. This was a man very fussy about his clean linen.'

'You don't think he lived here?'

'I don't think *anyone* lived here. This place was just used as somewhere to meet.'

'Business you mean – or lovers?'

'You're forgetting what Resistance people call "safe houses", Harry. It might have been a place where they met, hid or stored