

Chapter 32: Ciao Montenegro Day 16

Ulcinj, Montenegro Day 16

With a knock on the Lionel's suite door at 0400 hours Randy announces that it is time to move-out to Tivat. They join sleepy eyed Anna and the linguist heading downstairs to the van. Ron is waiting at the main door with breakfast in-a-box for each of the early morning travelers. The travelers arrive at Tivat and go their separate ways.

At exactly 0430 hour in Ulcinj, the Daisy's sequentially receive a remote command from the ether. Instantaneously, the selected Daisy experiences activation and a brief period of array fuses blowing or 'electronic lobotomies'. Then the controller moves to the next Daisy on today's 'poison pill' rooster. Daisies 2, 9, 10, and 6 fail to respond. But they are already presumed to have been fried by their on-board watch-dog timer count down to 'poison pill' time.

Only Daisy 3 (Ramesh's Desk) and Daisy 4 (Main Conference Room) remain available as listening post.

The Sunfish crew arrives for work to find all of the computers but one are unlocked and functioning normally.

Northern New Jersey The Next Day, Later on Day 16

Just after most of the early breakfast crowd drifted away at a mom and pop bagel shop in Edison, New Jersey, not too far from Newark Liberty International Airport two gentlemen meet.

"Thank you for agreeing to this unscheduled meeting," opens the Second Gentleman, Herb Burkett.

"You were the one who had to fly-in this AM," downplays the First Gentleman, Wayne Duffy.

After being so admonished the Second Gentleman reports "We have been forced to release \$3.5 million US to ransom Spinnaker-Sunfish.

"But we have an easy path to recover that sum with my two mutually exclusive buyers that we have attracted. Selling licenses to them for Spinnaker-Sunfish is even more imperative now than when we last sat down to discuss it."

“Damn it,” exclaims the First Gentleman, Herb Burkett looking around to see if anyone noticed his raised voice. “You were not to float that canoe any further downstream. You were not approved to pursue your three segment America dream.”

“But it sounds like you have at least ‘patched’ the leaky operation hit by ransom-ware.

“Anything more?”

“No,” responds the Second Gentleman.

“Then have your limousine driver take you back to the Newark Shuttle now,” commands the First Gentleman. “We have no more business today.”

Shortly after dismissal of the Second Gentleman a heavily encrypted conversation originates from the Edison, New Jersey bagel shop.

“I recommend moving ahead with the cutout plan immediately,” suggests the First Gentleman. “Misplaced strategic concepts continue. A recent tactical failure has been a costly \$3.5 million US error.”

“Do it,” commands the Top Predator. “Are we ready to scale-up our project?”

“Yes. It will go forward per the agreed upon schedule. As you will recall I am scheduled to go into semi-retirement in a couple days. But as a result of our difficulties I will be available to consult and assist as needed. I am relocating close to the job site, however, to ensure that all goes well.”

“Yes, yes. Somewhere beyond the the horizon, if I recall correctly. Enjoy, you earned it.”

“Yes. Good-bye.”

Before reaching the Newark Airport, the Second Gentleman alters course.

“Driver, I have the limousine and your services for the day correct.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Then Saddle River, New Jersey. You can drop me at 1456 East Saddle River Road. I will need to be picked up at that address and driven to Newark Airport at 3 PM.”

Handing two Benjamin Franklins through the partition glass chute the Second Gentleman says, “Here is something to help you to remember the pickup time.”

Closing the chute he has his air travel plans altered so that he departs Newark on the 5:45 PM shuttle to Baltimore International Airport.

A few hours later the Second Gentleman is awaiting arrival of the Baltimore Shuttle due for departure at 5:45PM from Gate B15. Needing to catch-up from his short respite he begins a series of business calls. He locates a quiet spot on the edge of border with Gate B17 which appears to be mostly empty at the time.

At 4:30PM a Boeing 767 from Milan sets down and rolls to the Gate B32, the stewardess, “Everyone needs to remain seated until the Captain turns-off the ‘Fasten Seatbelt’ sign.” As she finishes the the announcement she approaches the First Class seats A3.

“Mr. Jones?” she queries.

“”Yes,” responds Jones.

“The Captain has been advised that someone from the US Government will meet you at the Ramp. I will signal you and your wife when I want you to rise and exit. You both will be expedited off the aircraft and met by a representative at the gantry door. You will be escorted to the US Government representative and expedited through customs. I hope you enjoyed the flight.”

Once the aircraft halts, the gantry is attached, and just as about as the cabin door opened, the stewardess signals to Sandy and Lionel. They rise and start forward as the mass of passengers begin to move. Just outside the cabin door they are met, welcomed, and whisked up the gantry to the arrival gate where Agent Marcus and Agent Howe.

“The band is back together again,” say Lionel to Sandi as he sees the two agents.

“Welcome back to the States,” announces Agent Marcus. We are here to speed you through customs and accompany you back to Raleigh. Your bags will meet us at the Customs’ office.

“Let’s go.”

The foursome briskly walks through the arrival corridors to the Customs screen facility. There they are met by a Customs Officer who directs them to an office where their bags are waiting. A brief Custom screen completes quickly. The foursome and the bags are load on a electric cart and driven to Gate B17. At Gate B17 they find that a Boeing 737 has already begun loading passenger bound for Raleigh. Agent Marcus instructs Agent Howe to escort Sandi and Lionel over towards the edge of the border between Gate B17 and Gate B15. They watch as Agent Marcus instructs the cart driver to edge the cart up toward the Departure Agent’s Desk.

Jones rises from his seat and wanders toward the windows looking out on the boarding area. He pulls his cell phone and begins the Bluetooth pairing with his VA provided Phonak hearing aids. As he does this he inadvertently slides the volume control from mute past normal to high.

As he does this, he recognizes the terms , “Spinnaker”, “Sunfish”, “Ulcinj”, “Ransom”, and “Circolare”.

Casually, he begins to stroll along the window wall with his phone to his ear taking a video of a gentleman speaking from a seat nearby. Making an about face he switches ears and continues the video. Then he stops at about where he started walking, peers out at the aircraft. He looks for the reflection of the gentleman in the window. Switching to photo he begins capturing snapshots of the reflection as he waits for a 'good' view of the gentleman. Patience pays as the gentleman starts to turn in his seat. With the flash off, Jones turns and takes a quick series of pictures without bring the cell phone to his face.

Drifting back to the Gate B17 lounge area he walks up to Agent Marcus with a set of interesting videos, photos, and a report of an audio exchange between a gentleman and an unknown person.

Agent Marcus takes an immediate interest in the revelations. He waves Agent Howe over to the Departure Agent's Desk for Gate B17. He instructs her to escort Sandi and Lionel without him. Agent Marcus commandeers Lionel Android phone and password to it. He provides Jones with a loaner just encase they need to communicate.

Agent Marcus rapidly alerts the local Federal assets of a need to identify the gentleman who was the subject of Jones 'observation. The gentleman is identified as Mr. Herb Burkett bound for the Baltimore International Airport on the next shuttle in an aisle seat in First Class. Agent Marcus and a team of four Air Marshals bump a few passengers from the flight and board when boarding starts. One Air Marshal sits next to Duffy. Agent Marcus sits across the aisle and one row back. One Air Marshall sits directly across the aisle from Burkett.

A corresponding reception of FBI agents await Burkett's arrival. The three FBI teams are awaiting to tail his departure from the airport. They will monitor his activities for an undetermined amount of time.

Both the Raleigh bound and Baltimore bound flights are modestly delayed.

Arrivals in Raleigh and Baltimore are close to on-time. Agent Marcus is routed to Raleigh on the first flight in the morning headed that away.

A rolling tail follows Burkett to his estate in Maryland along the Potomac River. Burkett seems to be home for the evening. Lights turn-off shortly after arrival.

Sandi and Lionel return home to find a note about having snacks in the refrigerator courtesy of Rose. After Lionel explains who the Roses are all is well. They call it a night shortly.