

Deception

By [Peter Burns]

ONE

'I am fluent in over seven languages' Adrian Smith, Foreign Office Minister said, 'but I prefer to speak in my own native tongue.'

'I do not mind' replied the French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, 'I am always happy to speak your language.'

Smith gave the French Minister Jean-Marie Claude his best smile. Despite this, his eyes could not hide his hatred for his French counterpart.

Smith pulled out his blackberry, raising it to his face and then quickly slotted it back into the inside of his suit.

'Excellent' he replied.

He paused for a brief second trying to capture control

'Then we can get this meeting out of the way, can't we?' he said in a dismissive manner.

Smith had known Jean-Marie for the later part of his political life. What he learned about Jean-Marie during his career in politics was that Jean-Marie was ruthless.

He was born in La Tronche in Rhône-Alpes region, in France. The son of a waiter from the Hotel Grenoble, he came from humble beginnings. A very gifted student of politics and maths he advanced through school succeeding to enter the French business school ESCP Europe in 1980. Upon graduating, he started to work as a member of the staff of the Gaullist ministers in the late 1980s. He made a name for himself during the Gaullist period. Elected to the French National Assembly at 27 he quick rose through the ranks to become a deputy for the Savoie département. By the late eighties, under the banner of the Neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic he served in this function until 1998.

Disillusioned with French politics Jean joined the Union for a Popular Movement and rapidly rose to be a driving force within the European People's Party gaining a reputation for delivering on his promises both to the people and to the bureaucrats of France and Europe. With his reputation secure, he launched his European career gaining a post as the European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services.

It was here that Smith first met Jean-Marie. Smith was trying to get a series of European loans to get a large supermarket to move into his parliamentary constituency of Ladywood, Birmingham. Jean-Marie personally rejected the loan application. A series of meetings followed but Smith failed to get the loans issued or agreed. This almost caused him to be defeated in the following election and certainly put his political career back some 10 years as a result.

Jean-Marie went onto a series of successes in European politics. Promoted to Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries his career continued to develop while Smith remained a backbencher.

Further success followed in which Jean-Marie joined the French cabinet after the large victory of his party in the 2009 legislative elections. He was rewarded with the post of Minister of the Environment a short time later. Three years later, after the election of a new President of France, he became Secretary of State for French and European Affairs.

After seeing Jean-Marie again in the flesh, memories of his career almost destroyed came back to him. With his dark black hair, cut short in an almost military manner, Jean-Marie certainly looked younger than Smith did. He also had an entirely different life from Smith. Jean-Marie had a wife that was almost young enough to be his daughter and he certainly looked like a man of action. Smith meanwhile had a wife that looked like a horse and acted more like his housekeeper than a lover.

As Smith met his foe, he could see beneath the line of his shirt and tie and the movement of his muscles as now and again they stretched his shirt stretched while walking towards him to shake his hand.

Smith meanwhile had been piling on the fat. When naked he could not help think how he looked like a fat whale as opposed Jean-Marie who looked like the perfect aging politician. Smith realised he would have to keep himself in check if he was to get through this meeting and not let his guard down.

For Jean-Marie, Smith was a big danger. He possessed a stillness that upset him somewhat. The English they never showed their feelings or emotions. This made them very hard to work out. Jean could not help think that Smith looked more like a picture than the real thing. His rounded nose only served to intensify Smith's peculiarity to Jean-Marie. It was if no one was at home and all that remained was a man that was impassive and focused only on the facts, or the 'net benefit' as Smith used to call it. His eyes were like the smog that drifted across the London skyline, filthy grey and soulless. He thought that if he never saw this miserable excuse for a man again that would be too soon.

Despite this Jean-Marie, knew he needed to get agreement today if he was to be successful. Smith had hinted that he was able to deliver what Jean-Marie was desperate to get. What Jean-Marie could not understand was what Smith wanted in return. There was always a quid-pro in these deals and both men knew that they would have to help each other out if they were to get what they wanted. They both knew what both sides offered would not be pain-free. One of them would have to give more than the other if they were to agree a deal.

Smith meanwhile hoped that the deal would provide him with the political capital that he needed to restore his prestige and maximise his powerbase within Whitehall and No. 10.

'Smith, you appear distracted', Jean-Marie said.

'Nothing could be further, from the truth. It is good to see you again my old friend'.

'You have my full attention'.

Smith went onto outline the advantages of such a deal. They would benefit France and the United Kingdom he went onto explain. To Jean-Marie it was just words. What he was interested in was getting something permanent, something that was sustainable.

Smith noticed Jean-Marie look at his watch. He realised that he was not selling the idea well.

'Jean you are aware of some of the ideas that China's diplomats are trying to float around the UN and the Middle East?'

With the mention of China, Jean-Marie's face-hardened. He felt like someone had thrown dog shit all over him.

'My point Jean, is that we will stop the President and the Chinese if we need to, but we need your unofficial support otherwise our friends are not going to support some of your ideas to get us out of this depression.'

Smith did not want to waste time asking Jean-Marie's view of the Chinese President or the Chinese nation, there had been enough French opposition to make it abundantly clear to the blind, deaf and dumb that French political and diplomatic moves would not change the Chinese Presidents views or policies of the west.

China's breakneck progress as an economic superpower and the rise of the current President of China had attracted the attention of the French government and its secret services over the last few years.

China's rise to the most powerful and richest nation in the world had been breath taking. Its expanding economic influence had placed China steadfast in destroying the economic and political

status quo of the west by using its economic powerbase as opposed its military arsenal and economic dominance.

This threatened to destroy the important position France had established herself as the economic and military leader of the European Union backed by a diplomatic alliance with the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Smith and Jean Marie would find it hard not to argue that the rise of China was not good for the global economy. New wealth for China's 1.3 billion people meant that 1.3 billion more people who could buy goods and services from the rest of the world, maintaining and creating new jobs across Europe and North America.

Yet Jean Marie and the French Government did not see China that way. Jean Marie and the French Government focused on the jobs China has "stolen" as opposed the jobs it had created. The French agonised that the world economy was too dependent on China for its growth. They worried that China would use its economic advantage to put economic pressure on Europe and the United States to dictate the pace of change within the Middle East. This pace of change would be dictated by China and not by the west and the international community.

In other words, China challenged not just today's economic orthodoxy and order, but the world's political and military framework as well. This forced France to look at innovative plans to undermine China and destroy its dominance of the Middle East and its valuable oil and gas resources.

Jean Marie continued the conversation

'OK so let's say you do make him change his mind, what do you want in return?'

At this point for the first time since Jean-Marie had known Smith, he saw a twinkle in his eye. It was almost as though the devil had just winked at him.

'I know that look Jean, you are expecting the worse. Well if we get rid of the Chinese problem then we would like you to get rid of Abdulla Megahit from Clairvaux Prison.

'Of course you want rid of him, the man is an Islamic radical as well as a menace to your country. He orchestrated the bombings in London and Glasgow'.

'Attempting to terminate him in a French prison would be political suicide.'

'Of course no-one in MI5 has been able to find a scrap of evidence that ties him to these acts of war'.

'Of course I do not doubt you, and I am sure that your best people and the American torture machine in Guantanamo Bay detention camp have not been able to pull out any legal evidence'.

A sudden smile came over Jean-Marie's face. An envelope appeared. In it was a series of bank statements, e-mails and strategy papers sent by Megahit to contacts in Bradford, Glasgow and London.

'Then you will find this quite helpful.' Said Jean-Marie as he mischievously passed it to Smith.

'Five days ago, we completed the final phase of a drug bust in Marseille. This was one we had been working on for just over six months because a Russian mafia cell had been operating out of Marseille distributing Afghan Opium.

We were entirely successful in this operation and in the final analysis of the evidence; we found one of the dead drug lords had an unencrypted laptop. Most of it contained porn and other things. However, we also found something else.

The information you are now reading came straight from his hard drive'

Smith could not believe what he was reading. This would allow the United Kingdom to extradite Megahit and bring him before a British judge.

Smith could not believe his luck. He thought they would have to get the French to kill him in Prison, this way all would look fair and bring about Megahit's fall.

'This money trail was financed by the Society of Muslim Brothers for which Megahit is the leader. Money from this went on to buy the very vehicle involved in the Glasgow bombings and even the train tickets used by the London Bombers.

'Megahit is also due to end his prison sentence in June' He is free to go then so if you were to present this evidence to our government then we would be left with no option but to extradite him to your country.'

'Ok' said Jean-Marie, 'However we want you to stage some form of terrorist attack on the Chinese President to bring down his government.

'We do not care how you do it we just want you to weaken the Chinese. We want you to force the Chinese Government to turn away from controlling the peace process within the Middle East. If can turn their attention away that will allow France, the United States and you British to continue to dominate the region and its useful oil and gas resource and in return we will give you Megahit.'

Smith paused for a second or two, then gave his answer

'Agreed'

The two men then leaned over the table and concluded the meeting with a firm and concrete grip.

TWO

The ring tone of Norman Brook smart phone woke him up. It is dark and very early in the morning.

For a second or two Norman wondered where he was. As he came around, he started to rub his eyes. His palms were hot and sweaty. A fog hung over his mind. One that hung over you between being asleep and being awake.

He heard the next verse of the song coming out of his smart phone. The ring tone got louder and louder. Waves of music bellowed across his bedroom forcing him to awake.

His ring tone went onto to its final verse as it continued to welcome the start of the day for him. It was still in the small hours of the day. Despite this, the ring tone continued to drone away.

God that song is annoying, he thought.

Switching the device off, He sat upright and looked at his watch.

'Four am! You must be joking!' he cried aloud.

He rubbed his eyes again and began to search the room for where the noise was coming from. Finding his smart phone, he immediately turned it off with a great force as though he was swatting an annoying wasp.

Happy that there was silence he contemplated turning over and going back to sleep.

However, curiosity won and he decided to see what the message was on his smart phone.

Reading the content of the subject matter and seeing whom it had come from he quickly realised an important message had come through and he had better read it fully. He double clicked the message with his left thumb opening up the note immediately and began to read it.

It said, 'GO TO PARIS IMMEDIATELY. MAKE SURE NO ONE FOLLOWS YOU. I WILL BE IN TOUCH AT THE USUAL PLACE. MESSAGE ENDS..... Please delete now.'

Norman groaned, and then grumbled to himself. He started to think about why he had chosen this life. The strange life, the crazy people he had to work for. Most seemed to be more concerned about their status than making a difference. Still there were many good things about his life. One of those would now include a trip to Paris.

He started to think about Paris and the Parisian culture. Things were not that bad really. Paris would be great to go to during the spring, French food was inordinate and so was the wine. With this thought in mind, he got out of his bed and started to walk towards his bathroom humming the French national anthem to himself and making a flippant impression of Napoleon as he walked past a wall mirror.

Memories of when he was at school learning French came rushing back to him. He remembered his French teacher. Half the class had a crush on her and he suspected half the teachers too. What was her name? That was it Miss Loreto. She was a native French tutor. He remembered how demanding she was. He remembered that when he walked in the room she insisted that everyone speak French and no English.

Norman entered his bathroom. He turned on his shower and stepped into the shower cubical. He started to wash his dreams away and his thoughts of Miss Loreto were washed away with that night's dream.

He started to daydream as he showered. His thoughts went back to last Christmas and how a 20-year-old Secretary had taken her dog out for a walk and never returned. M.I.6 were quick to realise the importance of losing one of their diplomatic staff in Zurich. The resulting firestorm quickly involved Norman and his then partner Nicole Hodgkin. Norman and Nicole concluded that

she had been kidnapped or run away. However, those theories shattered when Nicole found and then broke into her personal blog. They reveal a girl troubled by a mysterious relationship with an older man from Russia.

As the two agents raced against time to find her alive, Nicole's inner demons and external enemies were brought to the front. Finally, in an act of betrayal Nicole was killed. She died in botched up attempt to rescue the secretary. This left Norman to pick up the pieces. The girl and the unknown Russian were never found again.

He dropped his soap bar that landed on his big toe.

'Ouch'

This quickly ended his thoughts.

He picked the soap bar up from the white enamel surface. Smelling its lemon sent he continued to scrub himself for a few more minutes. Cleaned, his thoughts drifted back to his work.

He switched off the shower and stepped out of the shower cubicle onto the wooden floor. He picked up a towel from the back of the bathroom door and began drying himself off with his Egyptian towel. Once dried he began to get dressed. He selected his tailored fit navy suit with a white shirt and purple tie from his cupboard and began to get dressed

Norman lived in a one bedroom terraced house in Daisies Road, London. The bedroom had a large mirrored wardrobe. The walls were white, with a picture of a beach scene in the centre.

Once dressed and ready for the day he left his house. He headed off towards Waterloo Station. To most people this would seem strange but to Norman this was how he lived his life. Ok it was lonely but it let you focus on they what really mattered in life.

As he closed his door, he carefully and deliberately checked he was not being followed or watched by anyone. Norman walked towards a local cafe by the underground tube station with its

all too familiar red and blue sign. Norman started to think about how his life had led him into this secret world.

Educated at Rugby School and Queen's College, Oxford, Norman obtained a commission in the Royal Corps of Signals in 1996. He became an Intelligence officer in the Middle East before joining the Secret Intelligence Service in 2007.

Later he became involved in Operation Boot, a plan to overthrow the Pakistan leader which failed despite US and Indian support. He was later shifted to the Balkan Office operating out of Belgrade. He was moved back to London following the disaster of a mission in Zurich. However, he had followed the book and had done nothing wrong unlike Nicole. Then when the post of joint liaison officer with the China desk came up a few weeks ago he took it.

Crossing the Road, he soon arrived at Cafe Lyon that was just nearby his home. This was the very convenient place where he met his handler for off the record conversations. Arriving a little after 6.30, he was met by Tony Eden the senior desk head for the China station.

Having ordered a bacon roll and a mug of coffee, he headed to the toilet.

'Morning Gordon, I see you got my message' said Tony

'Yes I was up anyway' he lied.

At the toilet as always, he met his handler Tony.

He turned on the tap at the sink to drown out any surveillance of their conversation. This automatic action had been drummed into him since he joined the service in 2007.

They talked for about ten minutes during which Tony ordered Norman to travel to Paris. There he was to meet with contacts from the French Secret Service. During the discussion, Tony kept on reiterating to Norman the damage that the Chinese President's peace moves had inflicted on the United Kingdom and the west. Norman already knew that his handler was worried about

Chinese moves to disarm the major powers. Tony told him without going into any details that the UK and America shared the French Government's view that China was threatening the international communities rule and its military operations within the Middle East and it might be required to take actions against the President of China.

'That man, who does he think he is dictating to us how we should run our lives here in England? Really!'

Norman could not help think of the hypocrisy there. The British and the west had been doing that to China for the last few hundred years.

'It is time we in the west did something about this Chinese Junta. Something needs to be done and we are the team that will do it' he continued.

Soon Tony got into the details of his plan.

Tony started to tell Norman in his monotone upper class crisp voice of his that 'the government of France and the United States have considered public warnings but we all feel that this would only encourage the Chinese President even more'

'The Chinese seem hell bent on this path to destroy the military arms industries of all three countries and destroy some of the great work the 'International Community' has been doing over the last few decades'.

'Now Norman when you meet with the French and our American cousins I want you to state that although the plans have been discussed between the United Kingdom, United States and France it was essential to make absolutely sure before final decisions are taken that none of the governments could be held accountable for such an action'.

Tony was desperate to ensure that the media did not get their hands on any linkages to the British Government. He remembered how the Foreign Office Minister had called him over to one of

the lifts after a visit to one of those parties at Canary Wharf to have a word. On the way down the minister outlined what was expected. A clean death and the blame placed upon some Islamic group and no official links to MI6 or the UK government.

It was quite clear to Tony that this would be highly illegal but he felt it was one of those 'for the greater good missions' so the moral and constitutional side of things was not an issue. He was also sure that Norman would go along with it, as some of the liberals in the service had not yet seduced him.

Norman felt yet again that Tony was going to go off on one of his long-winded lectures. He was such an old fart. He belonged to the era of Glasnost and the Cold War not one of the iPod and 4G technology. The people of the UK did not care if we attacked China today or tomorrow as long as they were able to watch X Factor or Britain's Got Talent, or their latest application was available.

'This meeting is going to take place later today; someone will meet you in Paris and take you to where you need to go to. You will be meeting the CIA, MI6 and Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure so this is a good opportunity for you to shine.'

Norman of course jumped at the chance to prove himself to Tony and the wider MI6 establishment. Tony had felt that the failings of Operation Boot had damaged Norman's career somewhat. This was a real chance to make a name for himself and build on what had happened in Zurich. It would allow him to attract some of the glory he was desperate for. All that work, late hours and dedication were going to pay off in one single move.

'Norman make sure that the British attitude and intentions are made and understood clearly. Very Clearly. I want you to obtain their acceptance. If they do not accept them then Norman I want you to make it absolutely clear that the United Kingdom will not accept its side of the bargain, no matter what the minister has or is alleged to have said to the French.'

'This visit is to remain secret because it involved something that the liberal press might possibly feel is an illegal murder'

'Norman it's imperative that you use only private transport too.'

With the conversation finished both men left the toilet. Norman returned to the table where his food and drink lay. He finished off his semi-warm bacon roll and took a few gulps of his coffee before he left for Waterloo Station and the train to Paris.

On his way to the underground tube station, he brought a small rucksack and a change of clothes from a 24 hours supermarket. He then crossing over the road and entered another supermarket where he brought a toothbrush, toothpaste and a comb. He then went down to the underground station and got a tube straight to Waterloo Station.

At Waterloo Station, he brought some coffee and a sandwich from one of those east coast American coffee shops.

The Coffee tasted like shit, but it was better than nothing and at least it kept him awake and alert.

Once in the station, he looked up at the massive clock that guarded the main entrance and began to read the engraved sign, which said 'Dedicated to the employees who fell in the war'

Must have been the First World War he thought, before he took another swig of his coffee. It is strange how something as central as an engraved stone can stand out and yet remain invisible to the vast majority of people.

As he walked through the train station Norman started to think about his last trip to New York a few weeks ago. One of his friends had sent him a Tweet urging him to come visit to join him and his new friends for a cup of coffee while in New York. Of course, he did not want to miss the

chance to see Toby who had managed to get a job as a finance officer for the Sierra Leone UN office in New York.

He met a few hours later and after talking at length about his new job and how he missed the UK, they went to a Kenyan coffee house. There he took a sip of the coffee Toby gave him and exclaimed, "Wow! This is really, really good." His voice emphasising the word really.

'What is this called'?

The coffee was so good; he practically scoffed at their reply. Today, you are sipping Kenyan AA Green Coffee.

He wished the coffee he was forcing down was half as good now.

Gathering his bearings, before going towards the ticket booth for Eurostar he checked he had his passport and some cash on him. Once at the office he booked the next train to Paris using the money and ID that he had collected from a hidden shelf in the Café Toilet. Paying by cash, he booked his ticket across the counter. The woman that served him sounded depressed and bad tempered. She looked very unwell and in some pain. He told her he was travelling to Paris for a job interview, but she seemed uninterested and it was pretty clear to Norman that this woman did not enjoy her job at all.

Arriving at the check-in barrier, he quickly inserted his ticket into the machine smiling at the young barrier controller before walking down the platform towards his modern looking express train. The train was yellow and grey and looked like a rocket perched on its side. It looked like something that would be at home in a space museum not a train station.

Checking in at Waterloo was very slick and he was not kept waiting too long. He grabbed a small bottle of mineral water from one of the over-expensive sandwich stalls before he boarded the train.

To his surprise, on his seat was a travel goodie bag that contained a blue blanket, earplugs, sleep mask and socks that he stuffed into his rucksack in case he needed them.

The section he sat in was filled to capacity, the narrow seats made more uncomfortable by the constant shaking of the train as it started to glide off out of Waterloo Station. In the background, a baby cried as it lay in its mother's arms. Other children grumbled. They were quickly silenced with the zealous handing out of DSI's and Tablet computers. Most of the passengers were silent. Some drinking their drinks a bit more quickly than usual. A few of the passengers looked scared as the train approached the Channel tunnel. Norman could see that many were fearful that soon several million tons of water would be above their head. Many feared what would happen if the tunnel burst open from above and what they would do in those last few seconds before they were washed away and crushed by the downward plunging waters of the English Channel.

Nevertheless, none of this bothered Norman. He knew he would be asleep soon. Norman prided himself on being able to sleep almost anywhere and quickly fell asleep.

In his sleep, he started to dream about a beautiful and successful singer-songwriter. He dreamt he was her biggest fan. He dreamt that she replied to one of his fan letters with 'XO'. He is convinced she loved him, and that a song has been written for him. Nothing persuades him otherwise. Then the singer started to get an anonymous phone call that Norman started to play down the phone.

When Norman awoke, he was at the outskirts of Paris and the tune he was playing down the phone was being played across the in train music system.

He rubbed his eyes and then stretched out almost touching the roof of the train.

He started to look around; he noticed a man sat opposite him. He had a tanned face reflecting a quiet essence of maturity and confidence. His brown eyes were akin to a very rich

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

