

# THE SUMMER OF 66

Dan Wheatcroft

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# NOTES

**Bill:** Old Bill – nickname for the British Police

**Bobby:** British Police Officer – nickname

**DG:** Director-General

**Fitty:** British for 'an attractive woman'

**GCHQ:** Government Communications Headquarters

**Governor:** Met Police speak for Boss

**Browning 9 milly:** 9mm pistol

**KGB:** Soviet Secret Police

**Kip:** Sleep

**Met:** Metropolitan Police (London)

**Naafi:** Shops for British military

**Nick:** Police Station

**NKVD:** Forerunner of the KGB

**Obs:** Observations or surveillance

**OCD:** Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

**Plod:** Nickname for uniformed Police

**P&SS:** Police and Security Services

**RV:** Rendezvous – a meeting

**Skipper:** Met Police speak for Sergeant

**SOE:** Special Operations Executive

**Sunray:** Radio speak 'Commander/Leader'

**Two bob:** Two shilling piece

**Two and six:** Two shillings and sixpence

**Wellies:** Wellington boots (rubber waterproof boots)

“Do you understand what I have not said  
and what you have not heard  
in this room that does not exist?”

Yongsoo Park, from the book *Boy Genius*

# Chapter 1

1966

The green door across the street bore only the number seven. Gallagher stared at it then glanced down at the piece of paper in his hand that proclaimed '7b'.

Each end of the black painted sign above the adjacent shop declared it was number five, between which he learned from the gold script that JD was a gunsmith. He crossed over the cobblestoned roadway to the side entrance of Harrington's Hardware. No number displayed. Behind him? The windowless brick wall of Farralland painters, decorators, light removals and short term storage with its accompanying barb-wired wall and sturdy metal gates.

He was beginning to think he'd been set up. "You're taking the piss, aren't you?" he'd told his boss when given the news. With a straight face, the man assured him it wasn't a joke. Six months with a Home Office statistical unit. "Here's the address," he'd said, handing him the bit of paper, torn from a notebook.

At the green door, a closer examination revealed the dim, dirt outline of a lower case b, now plain to see on the finely cracked paint. He checked the ground, no sign of the missing letter. He took one last look at the note in his hand, crushed it and returned it to his pocket then pushed the buzzer. The door clacked and yielded a small gap. He pushed it open and a voice called, "Make sure you push it shut so it clicks then come on up."

He climbed the steep, bare wood, creaking stairs that carried the compact hallway upwards, the memory of a former central carpet plain to see. At the top, a slim chap greeted him, light ginger short wavy hair, pale complexion with a hint of redness in the cheeks, suit trousers, a tie, shiny black shoes and his shirt sleeves rolled up tight. He introduced himself as ‘Sandy’.

“Are you a jock, Sandy, only I’m not picking up the accent,” Gallagher idly asked, as he followed him down the narrow corridor.

Sandy stopped and turned. “What makes you think I’m Scottish?”

Gallagher felt he’d made a faux pas and replied, “Nothing, I just wondered, that’s all.”

They entered a room to their right, several large desks, each with a phone, wire basket paper trays and a chair. Dark green filing cabinets filled any available space apart from a small Formica topped kitchen table that supported a kettle, various mugs, several teaspoons, a sugar bowl and a bottle of sterilised milk. A dubious-looking tea towel hung from a suction cup on the wall. “Chaps, this is Gallagher.” Three faces stared back at him from beneath fluorescent lighting.

“What’s your first name?” the fat guy asked him, adding, “My name’s Winston. I don’t like it being shortened.”

Gallagher: “John, but I prefer to be called ‘Gally’.” They shook hands and the others joined in. “Clive,” the little fella with the receding hairline told him. “Ralph,” the fifty-year-old bearded pipe smoker offered, blowing a cloud of mildly aromatic smoke into the air.

He was shown his desk, next to a window which provided him with a view of the works yard opposite. He pointed at the nodding dachshund that guarded his phone but Sandy cut him short.

“It belonged to Alf. It was a sort of lucky charm for him.”

Gally released an understanding half-smile, tapped the dog’s head and watched it nod and wobble to and fro. “Retirement?”

“No, he had a heart attack, in that very chair actually. Follow me. I’ll introduce you to Reg.” Sandy was off again, into the corridor and two doors up. A quick knock and they found its occupant poring over a file at a table next to the window; an ancient, green slimed drainpipe outside added much sought after colour to a bleak, damp stained brick wall.

“Reg is our researcher,” Sandy smiled. “Reg, this is Gallagher, the new boy. I’ll leave you to it. When you’ve finished, bring him back to me. I’ve got some things to issue him before he meets the ‘Old Man’.”

Reg nodded and removed his glasses. “Cup of tea? I’ve only tea bags I’m afraid. I can’t be arsed to mess about with a tea strainer anymore.”

“Not a problem, I prefer them myself.” He took a seat at the table. “Why didn’t Sandy ask me for some identification? I know it’s only a stats unit but still, it’s Home Office and I would have thought ...”

“He’ll have watched you on the CCTV. You didn’t see it? The monitor’s behind the door in the office, on the cabinets.” Reg dragged two tea bags out of a Tetley box, dropped them in the mugs then covered them with boiling water. “So, glad to be here?”

“Not really. I don’t know bugger all about stats.”

Reg laughed. “They didn’t tell you? It's probably your boss’s sense of humour, Hansen’s always been a bit dry. Good bloke, mind.”

He was intrigued. “You know my governor?”

Reg stirred both mugs then dumped the teabags in the bin at his feet. “Milk? Sugar?” Gally nodded then shook his head in turn.

Reg smiled. “Yes, of course I do. I've known him for years. He speaks quite highly of you.”

Gally was becoming confused. “You *are* talking about Superintendent Hansen from Special Branch?”

“Who else?” Reg put a coaster down on the plastic table cover followed by the mug. “Let me ask you a question? You got yourself in a bit of shit didn’t you and thought this was a punishment posting?” Not waiting for a reply he continued, “Bert Hansen did you a favour. You’ll be out of the way of those that don’t wish you well.” He sipped his tea, “Biscuit?” Gally shook his head. Reg carried on. “We’re not just a stats unit. Winston and Ralph take care of most of that stuff but the rest? We do whatever comes along, field work mainly, apart from me, I get all the intel. We’re slightly beyond MI5, or Box as we prefer to call them.” He quickly reflected. “Having said that, perhaps more to the side if I’m truthful. Anyway, it matters not from their point of view because there's very few of them know what we're actually about and those that do are ours anyway.”



“So, what you’re telling me is there’s only me, Sandy and Clive operational?”

“Correct. What more do you need? It’s more than sufficient for the everyday stuff and if needed we can always call on the Farralland chaps.”

“The crew across the road? Painters and decorators?”

Reg smiled sagely. “Highly professional painters and decorators, all from the military and handpicked.”

“So, you’re telling me this gets dangerous occasionally?”

“Well, Sandy will arrange for you to have a gun *and* if you're a good lad you might even get some bullets to go with it.” He sipped his tea then opened one of the filing cabinets, slid out a file and sat down with it at the table.

"Now, Gally. You don't mind me calling you Gally, do you? Bert said you preferred it." Another sip. "This file is the reason why you're here. I can give you a brief overview but the detail has to wait until you've seen the Old Man."

## Chapter 2

Sandy beamed at him. "Right! Here's your identification card." He handed him a small buff coloured business card upon which was written 'Farralland Contractor'. Beneath, it bore the name, 'Andrew Hunter'. A telephone number occupied the reverse. Gally was less than impressed. He'd been expecting to get one with his photo on it. He'd combed his hair specially.

"What name were *you* given, Sandy?"

"Alex Hunter and Clive's says Adam. Oh, and don't phone the number unless you really need to. You'll get the engaged tone for forty seconds then they'll answer and ask for the 'word of the day' which you'll find posted on the notice board daily, in the main office, top right-hand corner."

"What is it today?"

"Take a look and you'll find out. Follow me!"

They climbed the stairs and entered a storeroom next door to the toilets where Sandy showed him the locker in which he was instructed to keep a suitable travel bag in readiness for any overnight stays they might have to conduct. "We call them our 'ready kit'," Sandy informed him, straight-faced.

"Ingenious title," Gally dryly observed as they turned and left.

Passing the main office, they took the internal security door, descended steep steps and emerged directly into a workshop. A man in his sixties raised his glasses and called from the far side, "Hello, Sandy. Grab a pew. I'll be over in a tick." Gally occupied himself by

staring at the dishevelled sofa that looked as if the springs could do with some urgent refreshment.

"Right, young man!" JD of gunsmith fame said, standing close behind Gallagher and startling him. For a man in his sixties, he was remarkably quick and silent on his feet. "Follow me, and I'll get you sorted out." He slid behind a short counter and produced a ledger. "Just sign there." He pointed at an entry.

"Do I know what I'm signing for?" Gally asked him.

"I don't know. I assumed you could read." JD replied.

"But shouldn't I actually be given what I'm signing for first?"

JD huffed as he reached up to remove an item from a shelf. "I don't know where you get them from, Sandy. I thought Clive was bad enough. Listen, son. You're in my store now so you work by my rules. Sign that or you get bugger all."

Sandy shifted awkwardly from foot to foot.

Gally did as he was told. He'd met his sort before when he'd done his national service. The Quartermaster's Stores were always a fun-filled day. He recalled them giving him a mug once that had a grey mark on it, under the enamel. When he'd mentioned it they said nothing could be done and he had to take it. His squad Corporal thought differently and kept giving him punishment duties. As he said, "That's gopping that is. You could give people diseases with that." He'd tried covering the mark with toothpaste but the Corporal wasn't fooled, more diseases apparently. He took it back to the stores where they said there was nothing wrong with it. He'd pointed out the mark and was told, "Nope, you signed for it as being in good

order. Not our problem now.” In the end, he’d resorted to swiping one from the unguarded locker of a soldier from another squad. Someone else could now stand to attention for an hour outside a windswept guardroom in the rain.

“Revolver, 2 inch, Smith and Wesson,” JD said as he placed the weapon on the counter.

“Haven’t you got a little semi-automatic with more rounds and a couple of magazines? Gally asked.

Looking him up and down, JD replied, “Who do you think you are, son? James Bond?” He wandered over to a cabinet, unlocked it and returned with a box of rounds. He counted out 18, reached down then produced two speedloaders.

“Thirty-eight special, hollow points. It should be more than enough for you, Wyatt Earp. They’re for self-defence purposes only, you know.”

Gally checked the weapon and inspected the rounds. As satisfied as he could be in the circumstances, he looked up just as JD threw him a pancake holster. “Use your own belt, son,” he said with a smile before inspecting the ledger. Happy, he closed it and placed it back under the counter. “Nothing else I can think of. Oh! Here's a little cleaning kit for you, on the house.” He handed over a small opened tin; little wire brush, bit of cloth and a greasy bottle which Gally knew would contain gun oil. “Any questions?”

Gallagher looked thoughtful then waved the speedloaders. “Do I get anything to put these in?”

JD grinned. “Yeah, your pockets. Anything else?”

“There is something I’m just curious about. Who’s minding the shop?”

The gunsmith took a grey hanky from his pocket, blew his nose then yanked his pants up. “No one, my lad. Appointments only.”

“Come on,” Sandy interrupted. “We’ll stow this stuff upstairs before we nip across to the yard for your transport.” Gally gave his ginger colleague a wan smile and followed but couldn’t help wondering what the transport would be and if he’d need to buy himself a set of bike clips.

In the yard, he surveyed the grey Austin A55 Cambridge he’d been allocated. It could have been worse.

“I take it you don’t have anything a bit more sporty then?” he asked Sandy with a straight face.

“No, it’s all about keeping a low profile, Gally. I’d have thought you knew that?”

“I’m just winding you up, Ginge. You take it all very seriously, don’t you?”

Sandy forced out a little smile. “Yes, I do and you could do with making the effort to look as if you do as well, Gally. The Old Man isn’t one to suffer fools.” He glanced back at the car then said, “And the name is Sandy.”

Gallagher gave him a frown. “I’m sorry, but it has to be Ginge between you and me, mate. I’m not taking you for a pint and introducing you as ‘And this is my friend, Sandy’.”

Ginge scowled back at him, perplexed but then let out a little laugh. “Oh, I see, that programme, Round the Horne.”

Gally nodded, shielding his eyes as he peered into the car. "Well, at least it's got a radio. Let's get the keys, eh, and see what she sounds like?"

After playing around with the gear stick, handbrake and anything else he could think of he turned on the radio and tuned into the Home Service then the Light Programme. "That'll do me," he declared, gunning the engine. "Sounds a bit sedate but it's dryer than a bike."

Stood outside the Old Man's office, Gallagher brushed his hair with a hand and straightened his tie. A glance at his shoes led him to quickly buff them against the back of his dark grey suit trousers. He tapped the door and stepped in.

"Close the door, Gallagher, and sit down." The desk was vacant, a black coat, white scarf and a trilby gave the coat stand something to do. The figure that came out from behind the door was reading a file, unlit pipe gripped between his teeth. He waved Gally to the hard-backed chair positioned at a slight angle. The most startling thing about him was he wasn't old at all. Not a hint of grey that Gallagher could see and, in his estimation, he didn't look that much older than himself, but that's where any similarity ended.

He was probably Oxbridge educated, ex-Guards Officer, wealthy family, old in the head. He could've gone on but his thoughts were interrupted

"I know what you're thinking, Gallagher, the pipe doesn't fit but I'm trying to give up smoking and sucking on this thing seems to help. Relax, man. I won't bite unless you fuck up."

He flicked through the file, chewing the pipe, and then looked up. "Your superior thinks highly of you, Gallagher. He claims you have an analytical mind but mentions you have a tendency to be flippant that can vary from mildly amusing to tedious and annoying. Personally, I think he's given you too much leeway at times. It may have led to your cockiness and your current predicament. You did well to make it to Special Branch despite your lack of academic qualifications but I think some native cunning made up for it, although your morals are somewhat questionable. I suppose you're going to try and tell me you didn't know she was your Inspector's wife?"

An almost imperceptible smile flitted across Gallagher's lips. "Oh, I knew who she was alright but he's a right nasty little shit, if you don't mind me saying so, Sir. Anyway, she was very persistent and in the end, I succumbed. I'm only human after all."

The Old Man gave him a hard stare. "Well, I won't tolerate such behaviour here, Gallagher."

"I don't think it'll ever be likely, Sir."

"And by that you mean, what exactly?"

"I'm just sure that no one here is unlucky enough to have such a saucy little mare on their hands, Sir." He produced a benevolent half-smile.

The figure opposite him paused then seemed to think better of it, glancing down at the file once more. "I made some further enquiries regarding your national service and your claim when you joined the police that you worked in signals intelligence."

Gally felt an interruption was in order. "I didn't tell any lies, Sir."

The Old Man took the pipe from his mouth. "No, I'll give you that but you weren't exactly forthcoming with the truth. It seems the impression you gave was you were more Int than Sigs."

Gally was straight-faced, not a tremor or hint of a facial tick. "I don't know where they got that from, Sir. I never said I was in the Intelligence Corps. I distinctly remember putting the emphasis on the Signals part of the title, Sir."

The Old Man glanced at the file. "It says here you held rank in your unit."

"I did, Sir. Lance corporal."

"Yes, for three weeks then they took it back off you because you were late on parade. Twice."

"They never asked me about that, Sir. It's not my fault if people make assumptions."

He closed the file. "Essentially, Gallagher, you spent the entire time making the tea and enjoying the adoration of any woman in the locality who was foolish enough to leave the house whilst you weren't fully employed, which appears to have been quite often. However, you have, I'm told, skills that should be of benefit to this department and, dare I say, the country as a whole. Don't let that comment swell your head."

He pointed the pipe at him. "From here on in, *you* are a deniable resource. If you bring this department to the unwanted attention of anyone, your feet won't touch the ground. If you get yourself into an embarrassing situation, we don't know you, the Government won't



know you and I don't think the Police will want to either. Now, be very aware, if you think at any time that spilling the beans will save you I must tell you it won't, the exact opposite in fact. To be quite frank, we have some very motivated people working just across the road who wouldn't bat an eyelid if we asked them to make you disappear." The pipe went back in the mouth. "Don't think I won't make it so, even if you grow on me. Now, go and get yourself a brew, get acquainted with your desk, then pop along and Reg will bring you up to speed. It's an important case, serious implications, but there's never been a better time to crack it. With all the attention on the World Cup, it gives us some much-needed leeway." He attempted an affable smile but for Gally it just made him look sinister.

"Can I ask you a question, Sir?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Is it too late for me to go back to SB?"

"I'm afraid so, Gallagher. You're in way too deep already. Close the door behind you."

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