

The Summer of 75

Dan Wheatcroft

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NOTES

BMH – British Military Hospital

CD – Corps Diplomatique

Century House – HQ of SIS (MI6) - 1964 to 1994

DG – Director-General.

Clocking – noticing

DDR – *Deutsche Demokratische Republik*.

Frikadelle – Flat, pan-fried meatballs of minced meat.

FO – Foreign Office

HVA - *Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung. DDR foreign intelligence*

Mit mayo- with mayonnaise.

Pommes – pommes frites (chipped potatoes).

Sangar - small protected structure used for observing or firing from.

Schaschlik – Skewered grilled cubes of meat.

Schupo – Schutzpolizei – Uniformed general patrol police.

Security Service – MI5

Silber – Silver.

SIS – Secret Intelligence Service (MI6).

Stasi – *Staatssicherheitsdienst (State Security Service)*.

Streng geheim – Top secret.

Toff – British for a ‘posh’ person.

Chapter 1

Cornflakes eaten, he put the bowl in the sink and headed for the shower; an appointment with soap on a rope. Towel, hairdryer and a dab of Pierre Cardin then he brushed his unruly mop of hair back into some semblance of order that wouldn't irritate the Old Man and selected the day's apparel: bootcut casual pants with a nondescript blue shirt topped off with his new black, mid-thigh, Italian leather jacket; double-breasted in a pea coat style. Clare had thought it looked good so he'd bought another in a sort of dark tan colour. A much-loved pair of elastic-sided brown ankle boots finished it off.

Outside, he settled himself into the recently assigned vehicle. When they'd told him they were replacing the Austin Cambridge, he'd been hopeful of receiving a Ford Capri but the Old Man thought it too racy, attracting unwanted attention, so they gave him the Hillman Hunter. Even the colour was deliberately unexciting; a sort of pale grey-green that otherwise defied description. On the good side, it was solid,

reliable and came with a decent radio but it was never a 'bird puller' so it was just as well he was with Clare now.

He climbed the stairs to the door marked 'Statistics Office', greeted Ralph and Winston, signed in, made himself a cup of tea and sat at his desk. The now almost threadbare nodding dachshund bid him welcome in response to the tap on its head.

"Morning, Gally." It was Clive with a sheaf of papers which he dropped on a desk.

Gallagher returned the salutation, then, "You still doing that site visit?"

Clive nodded, "Yes, why do you ask?"

"Well, I thought you'd be looking more casual than that. Are you sure platform shoes are appropriate?"

Clive glanced down. "They're comfortable and they're not my best pair. Why don't you try some out, Gally? I'm sure you'd like them. They're all the rage these days."

Gally smiled. "Two reasons, Clive old boy. I don't need the extra height like you do and I'm a martyr to

vertigo. I inherited it from my dad. It's what killed him."

Clive feigned a shocked face. "Liar! You told me a big crate fell on him."

Gally sipped his tea. "A big crate fell on him, Clive, because if it hadn't been for his vertigo he'd have been in the back of the truck unloading it onto someone else."

Winston answered the phone, a few mumbled words and he replaced the handset catching Gallagher's eye and nodding in the direction of the doorway.

"You wanted to see me, Sir?"

"Yes, Come in and take a seat, Gallagher. Where have you parked your motorcycle?"

"Motorcycle, Sir? I haven't got a ... Oh, I see what you've done. It's my jacket, isn't it? Only, I told Clive I'd go with him on a site visit and this seems more appropriate than a suit."

"Very good of you to volunteer yourself but you're going somewhere else today."

Gally took a seat.

His companion glared at him. "Well, close the door, man!"

“Sorry, Sir. I didn’t realise it was going to be one of those conversations.”

The Old Man looked back down at the file on his desk. Gally returned and sat silently expecting something to happen soon. It didn’t. Eventually, he felt the need to make conversation, more to remind the other person in the room that he was still there than anything else.

“I’m sorry Ralph’s leaving us, Sir. He’s a good sort.”

The Old Man glanced up. “Yes, the Treasury.”

“Has he always had aspirations in that direction, Sir? He never mentioned anything before.”

Still reading: “It was a matter of need, Gallagher. Thankfully, he took up the challenge. He’s always had a wonderful ability to obfuscate.”

He looked up before continuing. “Don’t get me wrong, Winston’s no slouch in that area but it needs an older man in order to seamlessly fit in. Our current chap there is due to retire. We’re keeping him on a retainer as a consultant so you might encounter him from time to time.” He closed the file and leaned back in his chair.

“Our life here is really quite simple yet somewhat complicated. It’s best illustrated by my saying that all in the world of intelligence is compartmentalised. If people don’t need to know then they don’t know. Even some people who should need to know don’t get to know because it’s expedient that they don’t know. Our little department takes advantage of that, Gallagher. But ... sometimes it’s not always an obvious advantage.”

Gally felt he was supposed to understand where this was leading so rearranged his facial features in an attempt to convey a comprehension he didn’t possess.

“I’m sending you on an important ‘errand’.” Before he could finish, Gally had offered, “Your dry cleaning again, Sir?”

The Old Man sighed. “Shut up, Gallagher, and listen! I’m sending you on an important errand and I think I should tell you the two things that have brought this about. Our funding is being cut. The Treasury have taken it upon themselves to do a bit of cost-cutting and have decided that we don’t need the budget we were given to produce our statistics.” He took off his glasses and waved them about.

“Thankfully, our extra activities are covered by the quiet harvesting of several incidental expenses in the Treasury’s vast accounting system; the beverage and biscuit fund to name but one. Quite a considerable amount of money is seemingly spent each year on these simple delights but the unions are hugely defensive about their members’ perks and disaster looms for he or she that delves too deep into that one. However, we have to lose Ralph as a result. The good news is that we’ve been able to slot him in to replace our man at the Treasury. A little trick we learned from the CIA many years ago, placing our own people in select positions.” He saw Gally’s enquiring look.

“We simply diminish any opposition’s credibility or qualifications and enhance our own candidate’s. Simple process, people have so many predilections and vices these days and what they don’t have we invent. But I digress. Ralph’s task is to maintain the status quo for us. The added problem is that the outgoing Director of the Security Service hasn’t told the new incumbent about us, personal animosity apparently, so the cuts haven’t been challenged which brings me to the other matter. We

need to pull off a coup, an accomplishment, so to speak; something to make him aware of our true value. Fortuitously, a very recent situation has presented us with such an opportunity. It concerns an old 'friend' of ours. Herr Radler."

"Harald? Has he somehow managed to come back, Sir?"

"No, Gallagher, but in a reference to a close friend of his he indicated, we believe, that he wants to, permanently. That's where you come in. You had a rapport with him. I'm sending you to West Berlin."

Gally nodded real understanding. "Will Miss Johnson be coming with me, Sir?"

The Old Man smiled. "I'm afraid not." He checked his watch. "At this moment in time, she and Sandy should be taking off on a flight to Barbados. An issue has arisen out there that requires some 'fact finding' before we can decide whether or not we'll have to send in some of the Farralland chaps to resolve it."

"She never said anything."

"Evidently not." He took another file from his wire tray and passed it across the desk. "Read this. You'll be

working alone without any close backup. There are a few contacts mentioned, commit them to memory then shred the file. If we can pull this off I think the future of the department will be secure.” He stood up and gazed out of the window.

“My concern is that we’ve been sucked into this sort of thing before. By we, I mean SIS and it cost them two agents. The architect of that scheme we believe was Radler. Is he now genuine or is he trying to lure us in again? The person he made the reference to just happens to be an SIS asset and that person’s case officer is one of ours.” He turned around. “Now, whilst we’ve been forewarned it won’t be too long before the facts come out and then...” He paused. “We have at the very best, if luck is with us, a two-day head start then the beans have to be spilt, well, some of them at least, so we need to get our skates on.” Gally sat passively.

The Old Man continued, “By speaking to his friend, Radler let them know he knew their connections. They in turn feel that Radler is the owner of that information and, at present, only he is privy to it. The problem is whether or not it will stay that way. Is it a ruse? Do his

own people suspect him? If compromised, will he keep that information to himself or dig his way out by using it to his advantage?”

Glancing through the file as he listened, Gally looked up. “Is Radler really worth it, Sir?”

“I’m afraid so. We strongly believe he’ll be keen to supply us with Stasi and Soviet agents with the West German security services and perhaps even within our own. If SIS has been compromised in this manner then we can’t guarantee that whoever turns up out there on their behalf will be friendly. It could just be a ‘cover the tracks’ exercise by someone. Whether or not, don’t expect co-operation. The successful conclusion of this matter would be a major gain for anyone and a large feather in the cap of whoever pulled it off.”

“Will I have a personal protection weapon?”

“It’ll be sent over in the diplomatic bag. Pick it up at the consulate. Your contact is in the file, over the page.”

“What’s my cover story?”

“Haulage. You and some well-qualified associates are in the process of putting together a company for international road transport. Early days but you’re trying

to make relevant contacts. To make it look more realistic you'll be flying out to Stockholm first with a couple of informal meetings which are already booked. In the meantime, get yourself across the road to the Farralland offices and speak to Cyril. He'll give you enough background to at least appear competent. Reg has your tickets, you leave this afternoon. Use the dedicated phone in the main office for communications; it'll be manned twenty-four hours for the duration." He put his glasses back on and opened another file. "Leave the door open on your way out."

Gallagher rose then hesitated. "Is there anything else you might think I should know, Sir?"

The Old Man looked back at him, steadily. "Be aware that the CIA may be sniffing around out there. They obviously have assets within SIS but no one seems to know who."

Gally smiled. "It's probably a tea lady, Sir. As I've said before, they're almost invisible."

The Old Man replied, "Happily, we don't have that problem," before adding, "Are you interested in amateur dramatics, Gallagher?"

“No, Sir.” He looked confused. “Why do you ask?”

A slight smile wandered across the chief’s lips. “You look as if you’re auditioning for a part in ‘Springtime for Hitler’. Don’t take that coat and avoid wearing a brown shirt.”

Gally nodded, a look of seriousness on his face. “I’ll take a short skirt and a nice blouse instead.”

“You always have to say something, don’t you Gallagher?” Gally gave him a shrug and a smile in return.

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