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WHY THE CIA WILL WIN; WHY THE REST OF US WILL LOSE;

ARTICLE BY
ANDREW
ST. GEORGE

HOW AND WHY FRANK CHURCH BLEW THE INVESTIGATION

“RESOLVED: TO ESTABLISH A SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE TO INVESTIGATE AND STUDY GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS WITH RESPECT TO INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES AND TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH ILLEGAL, IMPROPER OR UNETHICAL ACTIVITIES WERE ENGAGED IN BY AN AGENCY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OR BY ANY PERSONS ACTING INDIVIDUALLY OR IN COMBINATION WITH OTHERS WITH RESPECT TO AN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. . .” If, spite of such sweeping, historically unprecedented powers conferred on it by Senate Resolution 21, the Congressional committee headed by Sen. Frank Church has failed in its task to curb the national-security bureaucracy’s abuses, that may be because, lost in polite colloquies with one bureaucratic witness after another—ambassadors following generals following senior administrators on the witness stand—it never roused itself to listen to first-hand testimony such as this:

“Oh, Mr. Chairman, the *killing*—you never seen nothing like that killing . . . They fly us down from Miami, even the *avion*, the airplane, it was black—no numbers, no windows, black paint all over. It was like the *funeraria*, how you say it . . .”

“The funeral hearse?”

“Yes, the funeral. When we land, they take us in cars to a villa, maybe one mile from the city and they give us police identification cards. Like this one—see? They ask: Everybody have his own automatic? We said yes. Then Colonel Barrios, who was the chief, said: Write the number of the gun on your police card. So then we were just like police—we had identification cards and we had guns. Colonel Barrios said: Remember, your job here is not to ask questions or anything like that. Just finish them off. And we did. We gave them no chance—we finish them off quick, quick. Then we put them in bags, you know, big bags. . . .”

“You mean sacks?”

“Yes, I mean sacks, like you know, sugar sacks? We put the bodies in sacks. But I mean bags also, because when too much blood came through the sacks, we put the sack into a bag, a big *plastic* bag. A black bag. They call it. . . .”

“A body bag?”

“Ah, yes. Body bags. That’s what they call it; a body bag. Sometimes in two, maybe three days, we have fifteen-twenty bags like that in the garage where we put the bodies. Then we go out over the sea in an airplane, you know, an Air Force plane—a DC-3? And we throw all the bags and sacks in the sea. *Finito!* We gave those people no chance, no chance at all.”

The Committee *could* have had and *should* have had this kind of testimony.

It has been quite a while since I’ve had a long, trusting, confidential conversation with Arturito the assassin, but his words are as vivid in my mind as if I’d seen him this morning. That may be in part because some of the things Arturito confided in me proved impossible to forget; in part it may be because I’ve been thinking a great deal in recent months about that wiry, ambitious, troubled C.I.A. triggerman.

Many a day I turned on the evening news hoping to hear the hoarse, effortful diction among the smooth, well-modulated bureaucratic voices which testified before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence headed by Frank Church all through the

Joel F. Napier 1975

The American journalist was driven to a secluded ditch of the sort commonly used for political murders, and told to "Kneel, pray, say your last say, because you know what is about to happen—you are going to die."

droning, humid late summer and early fall of 1975.

The polished Ivy League voices of the senior functionaries recounted some of the minor misdeeds of our mastodontine intelligence establishment—a subdued admission here and there about illegal wiretapping and dossier-building, about experiments with poison pills and peeks at people's mail—but none of these voices was ever heard rising in anguish or dropping in contrition to confess anything truly evil. What the Church Committee needed to get a glimpse of reality—of, say, a real C.I.A. "covert action" with real corpses being dumped into the Caribbean Sea in real U.S.-made body bags—was to subpoena, somewhere between Ambassador Helms and Lt. Gen. Allen, a field operative like Arturito.

Arturito is very much a real-life person, a U.S. citizen of Cuban birth, who lives among us, drives his wife and children to the supermarket on weekends, pays taxes, sees his dentist twice a year. He is not a journalistic composite or a shadowy "knowledgeable source" but the man we do not want to confront, not even now, not even after a year of thunderous investigations into the intelligence establishment's abuses: he is the assassin on our public payroll.

His real name does not happen to be "Arturito"—we do not want him to cease being a real, live person just all of a sudden, do we?—but there has been no reason why the Church Committee should have failed to find him and interview him: we did. And the point is, of course, that it did not involve any great feats of Woodward-Bernsteinesque sleuthing. As a former C.I.A. "disposal man," Arturito is sadly far from unique; he is merely representative. His identity can be established—if necessary, through this reporter—by any serious and reputable investigator.

In fact, what Arturito did is not really secret any more, it just has not been "authoritatively acknowledged." Arturito began his career as a C.I.A. clandestine operative by going to Guatemala several times in the early Sixties, going there always as part of a team assembled by C.I.A. clandestine Services officers in Miami, going in inconspicuous prop planes camouflaged with black paint which took off and landed in the darkness, the planes flown by U.S. pilots, Arturito and his teammates

sitting silently in the rear section, each man carrying not a passport or a visa, only his personal automatic pistol. When they got to Guatemala, Arturito and his teammates were assigned to assist local secret police and para-police units. The local agents identified and led the way to all sorts of troublesome suspects and political undesirables—agitators, guerrilla sympathizers, restless students, and so forth—and once the suspects were located, Arturito and his teammates killed them.

It was, of course, not as simple as it sounds. There was the question of torture, which was lavishly and indiscriminately applied to male and female suspects. ("That part was really 'orrible,'" Arturito recalled.) And there were other problems—occasional friction with the local *soldatesca*, or some ungrateful and nationalistic Guatemalan politician who raised a protest about the unending "disappearances." But on the whole the C.I.A.'s Guatemalan assassination pilot project proved a success.

In the United States the press was largely indifferent to these extraordinary atrocities. Soon similar projects were set in motion by C.I.A. officers at a number of trouble spots around the world: Southeast Asia, the Congo, Brazil, Greece, Indonesia, Uruguay, Gabon, Santo Domingo, and a number of other developing countries all received, along with Food-for-Peace and other U.S. technical assistance, their own C.I.A.-sponsored political "disposal" programs.

The Church Committee would not have had to take Arturito's word for any of this. The point is precisely that going beyond the bureaucratic circuit and interviewing witnesses "from the field" always results in self-confirming details and new leads. A serious talk with Arturito would have led the Senate investigators to take sworn depositions from other witnesses whom they seem to have ignored. It would have led to former President Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes of Guatemala who now lives in this country, ousted by his own officers on orders of the C.I.A. for opposing its clandestine "disposal program" in Guatemala; to experienced U.S. foreign correspondents such as Bob Rosenhouse who covers Central America for TIME Magazine.

It is true that Rosenhouse, a prestigious journalist of long experience, was dragged from his bed one dawn in

Guatemala City by a "disposal team," driven to a secluded ditch of the sort commonly used for political murders, and told to "Kneel, pray, say your last say, because you knew what is about to happen—you are going to die." Rosenhouse was spared in the end, to be sure only because he is a U.S. journalist, but he was told what would happen to him if he continued filing stories which the right-wing terrorists disliked.

It would have been good if the Church Committee had attempted to find out whether such incidents really occur—whether U.S. journalists ever find themselves facing the gun barrels of C.I.A.-sponsored terror squads. If they do happen, how is it possible that the American public is never told of these outrages? Is it because foreign correspondents who must travel for a living—travel in countries where the C.I.A.'s long arm is ominously powerful—prefer not to jeopardize their livelihood and their lives by blowing the whistle on terror operations conducted under the aegis of the U.S. intelligence establishment?

Had the Church Committee ventured outside the bureaucratic routine of its witness list even this far, had it followed through and taken a no-holds-barred sworn deposition from Bob Rosenhouse, it might have found the crucial lead to another TIME correspondent with the makings of an important assassination witness: Sam Halper.

In 1960 the portly, tireless Halper, a veteran correspondent who retired this fall after 27 years of journalism, was assigned to cover the C.I.A.'s abortive Bay of Pigs venture. Halper did what investigative reporters used to do before "bureaucratic journalism" came into vogue—he went out into the field and talked to the "field people," the exile Cuban commandos and paratroopers, to the U.S. frogmen and bomber pilots who were also part of the landing team, and in the process he discovered something extremely curious: Halper found that at the heart of the feverish Cuban invasion preparations there lurked a C.I.A. assassination plot which was concealed even from President Kennedy—in point of fact, especially from President Kennedy, since the targets to be assassinated by special C.I.A. disposal teams were several of *President Kennedy's own men.*

continued

"The C.I.A. and those people who work with it persecute more priests and nuns than the communists, we are right now the greatest anti-Christian power in the whole world!"

Since in recent months there have been excited behind-the-scenes rumors in Washington about this extraordinary conspiracy but as yet no detailed public accounting, let us pause for a moment to review the facts as Sam Halper reported them to TIME:

In November, 1960, the C.I.A.'s clandestine operators woke up to a rude shock—the election of John F. Kennedy over Richard M. Nixon. Mr. Nixon had long been an intimate ally of the national-security establishment, and in 1960 he played a singularly crucial role: he was the "action officer" for the germinating Bay of Pigs invasion project in the White House—a residence which he soon expected to occupy as President. Kennedy's unexpected victory demanded, among other things, that the Cuban invasion project be "sold" to the new Chief Executive and his staff of young, liberal advisers, collectively known as the New Frontier.

Just how the C.I.A. went about seducing President Kennedy to approve the invasion of Cuba will be presently discussed here; for the moment, let us note only the fact that JFK did so, under certain specifically stipulated conditions. One of these conditions was that once the invasion forces had managed to oust the "Castro-communist" regime from Havana, it should not be replaced by an old-style military dictatorship so dear to the hearts of the C.I.A.'s political officers. A team of Kennedy staff advisers—John Planck, A.A. Berle, Prof. Arthur Schlesinger, Richard Goodwin—drew up a list of liberal, reformist Cuban exile leaders and the C.I.A. was ordered to include these "do-gooders" in its plans for furnishing Cuba with a new government after Castro.

The C.I.A. hated every one of Kennedy's proteges. E. Howard Hunt grew so livid about having to deal with such "Marxist . . . leftist" subversives, that he quit as one of the invasion's political officers. Ultimately, the C.I.A. high command decided to handle the problem its own way. To obtain the White House "go-code" for the Bay of Pigs landings, it pretended to accept the exile leaders sponsored by the Kennedy staff. Behind the scenes, it laid plans to assassinate most of them during the turmoil of the anti-Castro campaign which was expected to follow the first landings.

To carry out these special killings, a

secret team was set up within the invasion force. It was code-named Operation Forty and placed under the command of a little-known C.I.A. agent, Joquin Sanieguis. Several trusted U.S. operatives were assigned to Operation Forty, among them at least one man who has since become a national celebrity—Watergate Burglar Frank Sturgis.

At this point, the Church Committee would have found itself facing some really interesting questions. Is it possible that the Bay of Pigs project leaders really planned these crimes? If so, then for the first time we are confronted with hard evidence that the C.I.A. considered, not necessarily the assassination of President Kennedy himself, but very definitely the *murder of some of the President's men*. For although most of the "targeted" victims of Operation Forty were Cuban exile leaders, individually and collectively they represented a decisively drawn White House policy line.

Another interesting mystery the Church Committee should have tackled is the question of what happened to Sam Halper's report. It was never published in TIME, or for that matter, anywhere else. Why not? Who suppressed it? Is it possible that a major story carefully assembled by a veteran newsman is simply allowed to vanish into some sort of Orwellian "memory hole"? Who has the power to arrange such an historic act of censorship?

And, having moved this far beyond the bureaucratic circuit, the Church Committee would have found itself drawn into even more significant mysteries.

We know President Kennedy approved the C.I.A.'s Cuban invasion plans, but we have never been told why he did so. To be sure, the President was committed to aiding the anti-Castro exiles, to "doing something" about the Cuban problem—but suppose he would have had time to wait a few months, mull it over, devise a better plan? It was precisely this crucial option that was denied to the New Frontier by the C.I.A.'s urgent lobbying on behalf of the embryonic Bay of Pigs project.

Is it possible that the C.I.A. conned President Kennedy—and other Presidents, too? In the course of the Church Committee hearings we have heard endless arglebargle about the importance of "secret intelligence" to the

nation's survival. The one question not heard is the crucial one: suppose that the C.I.A. was covertly doctoring the secret intelligence it furnished to the White House and to other national leaders? What if the Agency has been salting its mines all along—planting the intelligence information it then claimed to have discovered in order to dominate U.S. foreign policy?

Staying for the moment with the background to the "Cuban problem," we find that on a couple of occasions the C.I.A. did just that. In 1962 it claimed to have received an important defector: Don Jaime de la Torriente, the Cuban Consul General in Buenos Aires, announced that he was quitting his post and joining the anti-Castro forces. To prove the Castro government's perfidy, the consul emptied his office safe and brought along stacks of documents proving that Fidel Castro and his cohorts were "exporting revolution" trying to subvert the Argentinian government. The trouble was that, as it developed, the documents which Consul Torriente claimed to have removed from the office safe turned out to be fakes cooked up in a C.I.A. Technical Services "trick shop" in Washington, and given to the defecting diplomat covertly, with instructions that he display them to the press as genuine.

Even more importantly, the C.I.A. appears to have pulled off a similar caper in the fall of 1960, shortly after Kennedy's election. Cuban exiles in the Agency's pay burglarized the Cuban Embassy safe in Lima, Peru, and purloined a stack of seemingly most incriminating official papers. These documents suggested that it was essential to move against Fidel Castro; the Cuban revolutionaries were plotting to inflame the entire South American subcontinent. It is known that within a day of their "acquisition," C.I.A. Director Allen Dulles briefed President-Elect Kennedy on the "captured" documents and gravely emphasized the urgency of the warning they contained.

However, although ignored by reviewers, there is an immensely significant passage concerning these documents in the expose published by former C.I.A. Clandestine Services Officer Philip Agee (*Inside the Company*) early this year. Agee writes: "The Lima (C.I.A.) Station inserted among the authentic documents several that had been forged by the TSD . . ." i.e. the

continued on page 85

WHY THE CIA WILL WIN; WHY THE REST OF US WILL LOSE;

continued from page 22

C.I.A.'s Technical Services Division. These forged documents were, of course, the crucial ones—papers which appeared to prove Castro's all-out subversive drive against other Latin governments. Although we cannot be wholly certain, we now have a strong basis to conjecture that it was precisely these C.I.A.-forged documents which impelled President Kennedy to go ahead with the Cuban invasion plans.

If this is true—and thus far not a single one of Philip Agee's revelations has been refuted or disproven—then the Church Committee has utterly missed the fundamental question it was intended to explore. The question is simply this: Who has been in charge of America's national policies for the past twenty years? For if the C.I.A. has, by systematically doctoring, altering and cooking the vital national-security intelligence it submitted to the White House and the National Security Council, dared to manipulate the key policy decisions of America's governmental leaders, then the C.I.A. has been, behind the scenes, in effective control of our government during all these years.

The C.I.A. is very good at taking evasive action under fire; if its strategy runs true to form, we shall soon be hearing arguments from such nationally read obscurantists as Evans and Novak that the sinister duplicity and fakery we have discussed here represent, at worst, one-time transgressions—exceptional blunders, not established practices. In truth, unhappily, the intelligence establishment's sinister con games indicate something even worse than habitual malfeasance; they signal the outlines of what is unmistakably a coup d'etat from within against the American constitutional system. Our investigation has turned up hard evidence that the intelligence services have made use of forged documents, doctored intelligence and rigged estimates to delude and manipulate every President since Ike Eisenhower.

Should America allow herself to become militarily involved in Southeast Asia? This was the most pressing and fateful question confronting the White House during the second half of 1954. The C.I.A. Director in office at the time, Allen Dulles, was all for U.S. intervention, but he, too, faced a dilemma—a staff of semi-independent scholars and analysts within the C.I.A. known as the Board of National Estimates (now, of course, long abolished) had come up with a cautious National Intelligence Estimate suggesting that the anti-Communist position in Vietnam was "frail" and that "Even

with American support it is unlikely that the French or the Vietnamese would be able to establish a strong government, and the situation will probably continue to deteriorate."

National Intelligence Estimates were difficult to fudge or even to conceal from the White House—we are, *nota bene*, talking about the comparatively honest, halcyon days of the early Fifties—but shortly after this sober analysis was submitted, Director Dulles paid President Eisenhower the first of several personal visits to discuss the Vietnam crisis. The President surely won't be disheartened by the academic pessimism of the bookworm estimators, will he? Why, the C.I.A. already had a powerful secret team in Vietnam, Dulles revealed; it was headed by Brig. Gen. Edward Lansdale, the legendary C.I.A. agent who had stamped out Communist insurgency in the Philippines—a *marvelously* successful operation. Lansdale was very optimistic about doing the same for beset little South Vietnam; in fact, Lansdale's reports positively *glowed* with confidence for an early victory over the Communists.

What Dulles did not tell President Eisenhower was that Lansdale's messages were, to begin with, not intelligence reports at all in the proper sense, for they came up through the informal channels of the "Directorate of Plans" (which was, in those days, the official name for the Department of Dirty Tricks) without passing through the essential analysis and evaluation process. Moreover, this gave Dulles a chance to falsify the meaning of the informal message traffic from Gen. Lansdale who was, in reality, much less optimistic about the chances for victory in Vietnam than Dulles. In the event, Ike succumbed to the famous Dulles conmanship—as did many other policymakers who, in their heart of hearts, knew better—and the U.S. resolutely dipped its toes into the Vietnam quagmire. The long, hopeless, pitiless war was on.

Vietnam opened the sluice gates. Murder and torture became established instruments of U.S. policy; the national-security establishment fell prey to charlatans, rainmakers, illusionists and flim-flam men. To deceive and "spin" the President became com-



"Face it, Ellen, it's a dog-eat-dog world."

Vietnam opened the sluice gates. Murder and torture became established instruments of U.S. policy; the national-security establishment fell prey to charlatans, rainmakers, illusionists and flim-flam men.

mon, tacit practice among the intelligence agencies. Insolently faked intelligence was produced . . . even on minor occasions. When a difference arose between the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the C.I.A. Directorate on the one hand, and the White House on the other, rigged intelligence reports were methodically pumped into the White House tubes until the President saw the light and concurred in the recommendations of his national-security managers.

In 1966, the Joint Chiefs decided that

an airborne para-commando raid deep behind North Vietnamese lines—say on the P.O.W. compound at Son Tay where a number of American pilots were thought to be imprisoned—would make a brilliant, promotable operation. To coax President Lyndon Johnson into approving the mission, the White House intelligence briefers prepared a Summary packed with false documentation—with outdated interrogation reports and mislabeled aerial photographs—which, presented by persuasive briefing officers (the glib

“dog and pony show barkers”) induced President Johnson to issue the “go-code” for the sortie.

The raid went off all right—a spectacular airborne commando assault—but the raiders had to be chopper-lifted back to the U.S. lines empty-handed. Months before the daring raid, the North Vietnamese had evacuated and shut down all the prisoner-of-war compounds in the Son Tay area.

Moreover, once it became tacitly acceptable in the “intelligence community” to deceive the nation’s policy-making civilian leaders in the field of foreign intelligence, similar sleight-of-hand techniques came into use to manipulate the President’s decisions on domestic matters—say, on the all-important issue of budgets and appropriations for the intelligence community. A Chief Executive who attempted to cut back or cancel a national-security project—as President Nixon decided to scratch “Project Dogwood,” a useless operation to intercept and record unintelligible Soviet-bloc telecommunications in the distant hope that someday someone will find a way to decode them, a ludicrous exercise that ate up a hundred million dollars or so of tax money annually—found that the budget figures presented to him were shuffled and doctored to conceal the real costs of the project. Instead of cancelling “Project Dogwood,” as Nixon had ordered, the C.I.A. and the N.S.A. rewrote the budget proposal. A few weeks later, the White House was told that “Project Dogwood” would require only eight million dollars and was surely worth such a paltry sum; the real cost of “Dogwood” was broken down and concealed under various “cover items.” In a civilian court, this sort of thing has a simple name: *fraud*.

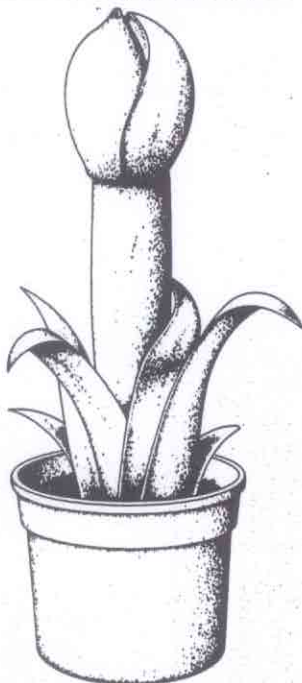
But in the eerie cosmology of national-security affairs, such Machiavellian methods gained immense power over far-flung global jurisdictions for Washington’s intelligence services. Moreover, by deluding, distracting and bamboozling Senator Frank Church and his Select Committee on Intelligence, the C.I.A. has, in the opinion of some distressed experts, scored a decisive victory.

Washington intelligence people, many of them deeply concerned over the drift of events (“I’ve worked for the State Department for eleven years,” says a distraught girl, “But I’ve been a Catholic even longer than that, and do you know something, the other day it struck me, the C.I.A. and those people who work with it persecute more priests and nuns than the Communists, we are right now the greatest anti-Christian power in the whole world!”) watched the Church hearings more intently than any other audience. Many of them say they gave up hope the day



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C.I.A. Director William Colby produced that famous electric dart gun—an assassination weapon if used to fire poison darts. "That goddamn dart gun has been around since World War II" says a former C.I.A. case officer who now works for the Library of Congress, "It has been exhibited at least a dozen times. Always as a showpiece, a distraction, a bit of light entertainment between two dramatic acts."

"The Senate investigation is bogged down in bureaucratic responsoria," says one of Washington's most experienced national-security reporters. "Church is a good man, but the spooks found his Achilles heel quick enough—Church wants to be President, he doesn't want to rattle any really scary skeletons, he doesn't want to dig up any buried horrors, he doesn't want people to see him as a bad-news type. And he does want the support of the Democratic leadership, where the C.I.A. has loads of friends. These hearings will fail to get to the bottom of things, just as the Rockefeller Commission did and for the same reasons. Between them these two abortive investigations will produce exactly the opposite of our expectations: they will end with the intelligence setup stronger than ever, and with all their

rotten tricks legitimated. Once the Church Committee disbands next February—oh, there'll be reports and speeches, but no real change—the spooks will have things as they want them. The news media will be tired of chastising them; the public will be bored with hearing about them; no one will want to fool with them. Then you'll see them pull some *really* rough stuff."

"It's possible" says Father Andreas Oltuski, a refugee Catholic priest from Santiago de Chile, who was arrested and tortured before the military government allowed him—one of the fortunate few—to leave the country. "Today there are dozens of countries—Brazil, Korea, the Congo, my poor Chile, many others—where the C.I.A. and the local police together hold the real power. In these countries, when the C.I.A. raises its hand—so—thousands of innocent people are tortured and murdered by the secret police; the day the C.I.A. lowers its hand, the torturing and the murders will stop. They have all the force; when you are in their grip, there is nothing anybody can do. But you know, that was what the Germans thought, too, until History lowered its arm over their heads."



DON'T LOOK BACK

continued from page 34

What does this mean? Every person is born into and/or raised in a particular social environment. Ghetto. Farm. Urban. Suburban. Something. This *milieu*, along with the parents who remain in it, exerts tremendous unrecognized influence on us. By the time we are adults building our own unique lives, we find that against all our youthful beliefs we end up building our lives in a social environment very much like that we left. Or if we *do* change environments completely, what we changed to ends up exerting this dominant influence.

Thus, if our past and present is suburban, we follow a life pattern which is identifiable, and which goes far beyond catching the 8:27 into the city Monday through Friday. We shop at supermarkets for our food; see our movies at local suburban theatres; buy our clothes at shopping center Macy's, Emporiums, or Ransohoffs. This is a rhythm of life a skilled observer can clock.

If you disappear, this skilled observer knows where to look. Another suburban area in the general vicinity to which other data suggests you have fled. He haunts shopping centers. He meets trains or buses from the city. He looks for your new friends among su-

burbanite bowlers and drinkers and gardeners.

But if you do not change your life pattern he is not your greatest direct danger. No. Your danger is old friends. Because if you continue to move through the same social stratum from which you left, sooner or later, by chance, you will meet someone from your *old life*. True, genuine coincidence. Yet ineluctably predetermined by the fact that you still swim the same waters.

So junk it. Junk it all. And I'm betting that you can't do it. That you can't succeed in creating a totally new person. I'm betting that one or two or five years from now, you're going to make the mistake that will nail you.

And one day you will happen to look back before making the left turn into the parking lot by the Little League field where the new son of your new wife in your new life is playing, and—because you used to pick up your son in your *old life* from Little League—there will be a beat up old Fairlane making the turn behind you. And driving it will be a grey-haired heavyset guy who...

Yeah. That's right. Me.

So take a piece of advice. Don't look back. Let it be a surprise when it happens. Because baby, it's just a matter of time.

