

leave, eh? Well then, Palmer. Oh, he is? All day. Well, damn it, who's here? Williams? All right. Ask him to come in and see me. Yes, right now." He turned to Baylor. "Well, we'll set up the other interviews another day, next week if you'd like. We'll schedule them half an hour apart for, say, half a day. I think that would do it. Meanwhile, I'll run young Williams by you. It will give us a better idea of the problem. This chap is a new boy, been around less than a year, but he's bright. Sharp as a tack, clean as a hound's tooth. Name is Bart Williams, spent two or three years in the Peace Corps in Thailand before joining us here. He handles a lot of the liaison with the Armed Services Committee staff and with the BW boys out at Fort Detrick."

"BW?"

"Bacteriological warfare."

A slim, solemn-looking young man with coldly appraising dark eyes entered. He smiled briefly at Chambers. "Good morning, Colonel. I understand that you wish to see me."

"This is Mr. Baylor, Williams. He edits a weekly news sheet about Washington. He wants to do a piece about our relationship with the Congress, particularly the House Armed Services Committee. I think it's a good idea. We want to show Mr. Baylor how well we build our case with the Congress."

Williams turned slowly toward Baylor and wet his lips. "What gave you this idea, Mr. Baylor? We don't think we're very newsworthy here."

"The defense of this country and particularly the state of our military science and research are very important, Mr. Williams. I'm certain many of my readers will be interested in the relationship between the Committee and this office."

Williams sat down on the edge of his chair. "What relationship?"

Colonel Chambers interrupted. "How we sell our program to the Congress, Williams. Christ, just what I've been saying. I just told Mr. Baylor you were one of the

sharp ones. What's the matter? You been out catting all night?"

Williams forced a smile. "No. As a matter of fact last night was the night I met with my Scout troop. It's just that after several months of handling classified material, I can't get used to a newspaper interview."

"That's why I'm here, Williams," Chambers said testily. "I'll speak up if you get onto delicate ground. Fire away, Baylor."

Baylor took out a note book and raised his eyes to Williams. "What are your duties here in the Pentagon, Mr. Williams?"

Williams gave a nervous and depreciating little laugh. "Oh, I'm small fry, Mr. Baylor, a clerk really. I correlate data, organize information for the higher ups, that sort of thing."

"Are you cleared for top secret information?"

Williams fidgeted. "Yes."

Baylor smiled. "Then you aren't so unimportant after all."

"No, I really am. Unimportant, that is. I really don't know what goes on."

"For God's sake, Williams," Colonel Chambers interjected, "we know you aren't Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but we must pay you for something. Don't be so damn modest. Tell Baylor what you do and how you do it. We'll decide if it's unimportant."

"Who are your contacts with the Committee?" Baylor asked.

"The Committee?"

"The House Armed Services Committee."

Williams paled. "No one, not a soul, I . . ." he put a hand to his forehead and got to his feet. "It's no use, Colonel. I must be coming down with the flu, I'm feeling very ill. I apologize. Excuse me." He turned and hurried out of the room.

During the brief silence Colonel Chambers stared after Williams, a discomfited expression on his face. Then

he glanced at Baylor and shook his head as he reit his pipe. "Did you ever see anything like that? The guy must be crackers."

"It's probably the flu, as he says," Baylor said. "Sometimes it affects you that way just before the chills hit. Nervousness and a sluggish mind."

"I suppose so. Well, we've still got a good idea, Baylor, even if Williams wasn't much of a subject for an interview. Let me give you a ring next week. We'll set up interviews in depth with some boys who have their heads screwed on right."

Baylor handed him his card. "There's the name and telephone number, Colonel. I'll look forward to hearing from you."

Chambers took it, gave his quick smile, and held out his hand. "I'll be in touch. All the best. Real people. I like that."

## TEN

BAYLOR walked out into the parking lot and slipped behind the wheel of the Morgan. He sat for a moment gazing through the windshield without seeing, a little smile on his face. Williams had been scared to death. There *was* something there. He had a lead at last. Why was Williams afraid? Why was Raaff afraid? A spatter of cold winter rain hit the windshield, and he turned on the wipers as he started the engine. He waited for the engine to warm up, and then swung out of the parking lot in the direction of the Fourteenth Street Bridge and Washington.

The hallway in the National Press Building smelled of fresh paint. In the distance, two painters in white overalls slowly covered the old sea-sick green walls with a new shade of sea-sick green. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, from nothing comes nothing. He grinned as he remembered old Prudy, his high-school Latin teacher, and his favorite nugget of Roman wisdom. He wondered where he was now. He was still grinning when he opened his office door and flipped on the light. The grin quickly faded. Slowly he shut the door behind him and looked around, flushing angrily. The files

on the floor and the jimmied desk drawers were O.K., war was war, and the play was getting rough. But the bastards had gratuitously smashed his typewriter. He swore under his breath and picked up the telephone.

"So-Secure Lock Company? This is Baylor in the National Press Building. I just want to report that I don't feel so secure. Someone just burgled my office and the doorlock was no good at all. O.K. O.K., we won't go into that, just put on a new lock and give me all of the keys. All right, then, all of the keys except the one you have to give the building superintendent. The J. Edgar Hoover will be fine, though I'd rather have one endorsed by Fingers Fen-ton. I don't know how much Hoover knows about locks. Tomorrow is O.K." He hung up, took off his coat, and began to straighten up his office.

He waited until the rush-hour traffic was over before heading for Georgetown. Jiggs would be cooking a rack of lamb roast using a wonderful French recipe of mustard, bay leaves, and several other things she archly described as "secret ingredients." He pulled into the Mews shortly before seven. The earlier rain had turned into a slush storm, and he turned up his coat collar as he hurried toward his door. Though the lights were on, his gay knock brought no response. He fished in his pocket with numbed hands, fitted the key, and opened the door. The room was ablaze with light, but there were no cooking odors and there was no Jiggs. He shrugged, hung up his coat and hat, and poured himself a drink. The roast, some potatoes, and a package of frozen spinach had been laid out on the kitchen sideboard. The spinach had been there for some time, it was completely thawed. With a little frown, he walked over to the telephone and called her apartment. When her telephone had rung several times, he hung up. He stood in the middle of his living room and finished his drink, then went toward the bathroom door to get a dish towel from the closet to wipe up the water from the spinach. He opened the door and froze. Jiggs lay gagged and bound in the bathtub, her green eyes blazing. He hurriedly bent over her and removed the gag.

"Well, Aunt Jemima, what took you so long?" she asked biting.

"I didn't know you were here, sugarplum, or I would have rushed right in." He lifted her from the tub and carrying her into the living room laid her on the sofa.

"What happened?" he asked, untying the bonds and rubbing her arms and legs to restore the circulation.

"It's obvious what happened," she said shortly, accepting a cigarette. "You're really asking, 'how did it happen?'"

"Yes, teacher."

"I don't know," she said anticlimactically. "I was fondling a package of spinach in that foul little kitchen of yours and 'pow,' 'zunk,' 'bang,' I'd had it. I woke up in that bathtub and I've been there ever since. I don't think I was even raped. It's damn humiliating."

"Now, now." He kissed her.

"It wasn't you, was it?" she asked suspiciously.

"I would have raped you."

She giggled and then looked at him seriously.

"What's it all about, Tony?"

"I wish I could say," he said. He thought of his office. The bastards had spent a busy afternoon. But thank God Jiggs hadn't been hurt.

"Shouldn't we call the police?" she asked.

"Why? It would just ruin a lovely evening. Every-time I report a crime the police act as if I'm disturbing the peace. Let's get dinner. I'm starving."

"People shouldn't do things like that. It isn't nice."

Jiggs was still highly offended.

"I agree, but would you really want to go through life, a member of that hopeless minority in Washington who have never been the victims of a major crime? Now you belong to the 'in' group."

"In, out, what were you drinking?"

"Scotch and soda."

"It makes you very philosophical. You'd better fix me one."

"Coming up."

She watched him fix it from the sofa. "Aren't we at least going to get even?"

He handed her the drink. "Yes, we're going to get even."

She met his hard eyes and touched his set mouth with a tentative forefinger. "I'll fix you a very nice dinner," she purred.

Before going up to his office in the National Press Building the next morning, he stepped into one of the free-standing glass telephone booths placed at intervals along F Street's new tree-lined mall. He nodded happily at a policeman standing about fifty feet away, his breath misty white in the January cold, and taking out his book club membership card dialed the first seven numbers.

"Wee Tots Book Club," a feminine voice answered. Bennington had a sense of humor.

"I'd like to speak to Mr. Bennington, please."

"Are you a member?"

"Yes."

"May I have your membership number?"

Baylor gave the rest of the numbers on the card.

"Mr. Bennington will call you within five minutes. What is your number?"

Baylor gave it to her and hung up.

He stood in the cold telephone booth stamping his feet and occasionally exchanging an encouraging smile with the policeman. The telephone rang at last. He picked it up. "Baylor."

"How are you, boy?"

"I've nearly frozen my balls off waiting for your call back. I'm in one of these urban renewal phone booths on F Street."

Bennington laughed. "It's winter, boy. Those booths were erected for the summer festival time when all of us peasants dance arm in arm in the streets."

"I thought it would be more secure to talk from here."

"Getting security conscious, eh? Good. We don't want to get scooped."

"In the last few days, I've been mugged on the street, my office has been ransacked, and my girl friend knocked out in my apartment. Somebody up there doesn't like me."

Bennington whistled. "You must be on to something."

"I followed the Pentagon suggestion you gave me."

"How did it go?"

"Other than one of the Army information officers, I've only talked to a minor Pentagon clerk, but he got nervous as hell when I mentioned the Armed Services Committee. He pretended to be ill and ran for it."

"Who was it?"

"A fellow named Williams."

"Never heard of him."

"He's small time, but I think he knows something. I think I should check him out."

"There was a silence. "O.K." Bennington said at last. "Check him out, but don't crowd him, if you know what I mean."

"I won't."

"How's the money?"

"I'm all right."

"I'll send you another five hundred."

"You're all heart."

"Tony, you might do one more thing to put a little more pressure on this thing."

"Name it."

"Why don't you place an item in your next news sheet asking why someone connected with the House Armed Services Committee is worried?"

"That's a good idea. You don't mind some of the story leaking in my news sheet?"

"Hell, no. If it builds your circulation, why not?"

"I appreciate it, Frank."

"Anything else?"

"Not now."

"You're doing good work, boy. Keep crowding and this thing will break wide open."

"Will do."

"Good boy."

Baylor stomped by the policeman on his way to a coffee shop. The policeman grinned. "We don't see too many of you snow birds."

"I think I overdid it."

Revived by a cup of black coffee, he slipped into a telephone booth at the rear of the restaurant and called the House Armed Services Committee.

"I'd like to speak with Boyd Raaff."

"One moment."

"Raaff speaking."

"This is Baylor."

"Lay off me, Baylor," Raaff's voice dropped to an urgent, intense whisper.

"What's bugging you, Boyd? You'd better tell papa."

"Listen, you fink, lay off!"

"I can't, Boyd."

"Look. I'll see you in an hour in the rotunda of the Capitol," Raaff whispered. "You'll see me attached to a sightseeing group. Join the group and ignore me. I'll contact you when I think it's safe."

"Safe?"

"Safe, you stupid idiot. What kind of a game do you think this is?" The line went dead.

It was an hour later and a little past ten when Baylor walked into the rotunda of the Capitol. Under the soaring Capitol dome which arched one-hundred-eighty feet above the marble floor, the voices of the scores of tourists in the rotunda echoed and reechoed, like a chorus of ghostly voices murmuring in the vaulted vastness. Baylor looked about. Three groups of tourists were gathered around tour guides. At the outer edge of the group before a huge painting depicting the baptism of Pocahontas, Baylor could

make out the figure of Boyd Raaff. He walked casually toward the group, gazing at the fresco at the top of the dome and at the frieze below it like any carefree visitor. The guide was telling the story of Pocahontas and her romance with John Rolfe in stentorian tones as Baylor quietly joined the outer fringe. In a few minutes as they circled the rotunda, Boyd Raaff had edged beside him.

"Now look, Baylor," he said without greeting or preamble in a voice vibrant with emotion. "My life is in danger. If you keep trying to contact me, I'm going to get it. So leave me alone." His lips trembled as he continued to look toward the guide.

"If the stakes are that high, Raaff, you must know a lot."

"I know something, but it's not what I know. It's what they think I know. You've been warned off. If you learn the story, you'll never live to tell it. Be smart. Forget it. It's too big for the likes of you and me."

"Does it involve the Pentagon?"

Raaff wet his lips. "Leave me alone, God damn you. I've got nothing for you. Nothing." He turned and walked hurriedly off toward Statuary Hall on his way to the House side of the Capitol.

The tour group was standing before the painting depicting the embarkation of the pilgrims and the tireless guide was extolling the virtues of Miles Standish when Baylor edged away and headed for the east portico and the parking space in which he had left the Morgan.

The telephone rang at Glenwood.

"I should like to speak to Mrs. Probar, please." A tense man's voice responded to the slightly accented greeting of the upstairs maid.

"Who shall I say is calling?"

"Mr. Boyd Raaff."

"One moment, please."

"Yes, Boyd?" Mrs. Probar's positive contralto came over the wire.

"I have to see you immediately."

"But, darling, I'm just ready to leave for Elizabeth Arden's."

"Immediately." The voice was insistent.

There was a moment's silence.

"Very well," Mrs. Probar's voice had an edge of annoyance. "I feel rather put out with you, dear. You know one waits a week or more for an appointment. I shan't look my best at the ball tonight."

"It's nearly lunch time. I'll meet you at Foudor's."

"Very well." She hung up with a look of vexation on her face, then shrugged and resumed fastening her earrings.

Raaff was finishing his second martini as she appeared. He gave her a quick, nervous smile and arose politely as the waiter held her chair.

"Madame?"

"A sherry, please. Very dry." She turned to Raaff as she removed her gloves. "Boyd, whatever is the matter? It's not like you to have nerves."

"Darwin, I'm really worried about all of this. There must be some other way to handle it."

She let him light her cigarette and smiled at him archly. "Really, darling? There is only one way I know of."

"I'm in no mood for small talk," he glowered. "Bring me another martini," he said abruptly to the waiter who had just put down the sherry before Mrs. Probar.

"Monsieur."

"You are in a mood."

"Damn it, I'm afraid of being found out. Then where will we be?"

She laughed lightly and confidently. "Is that all, darling? Where is your sense of intrigue?" She sipped her sherry and gazed at him mockingly over the edge of the glass. "That's so much of it, darling. It's no trick for a man and a woman to tumble into bed together. It's the risking all for it that makes it such exciting fun. Danger heightens sexual awareness. Don't you know that?"

Raaff gestured impatiently. "This damn snotty kid,

Baylor, is nosing around the Committee. What if he finds out?"

"He's nearly your age, darling, and how can he find out? Both Phi and I have sized him up. He's a foolish, foppish, neo-Georgetown type. He probably can't find his cuff links in the mornings. He wears little ones of gold wash with single zircons set in them." She laughed maliciously. "His pretenses are so obvious. I wouldn't worry about him."

"I'm not so sure. He's a newspaper type and roughing him up didn't seem to stop him."

She laughed. "Boyd, really! He's no more a newspaperman than I am. Besides," her mouth turned down cruelly, "when the time comes we'll handle him. Meanwhile, he's just a little man dancing on the end of a string."

"If Philus finds out, he'll kill us both."

Her eyes glittered. "He won't find out. That's the point. We have good reason to see one another discreetly. Even if others notice and wonder, Phi thinks he knows why we meet. He would be the last man in the world to hear gossip about us or pay attention to it. He'd warn me first, don't you see? For drawing public attention to our friendship." She laughed at the thought. "It would be so ironic. Poor, brilliant Phi. The first to know and the last to understand."

Raaff finished his martini. "Perhaps we should order."

"That's a good boy. Order oysters and steak. That will make you manly and virile."

He smiled. "I deserved that. You are the damndest woman, Dar. I worry when I'm alone. I'm taking such risks, but when I'm with you, it all seems so reasonable and worthwhile."

"I now what I want. Right now, I want you."

"Right now?" He looked about the restaurant in mock concern.

"After lunch. You've ruined one afternoon for me. Now you can provide me with another." She smiled. "Of

course, after three martinis, you may be somewhat disappointing."

"Have I had three?"

"The color of your school-boy complexion tells me so."

"You have sharp eyes."

"And sharp claws. Instead of worrying about that little Baylor boy or about Phi, why don't you worry about me, darling. I'm much more dangerous."

"A magnificent tigress."

"In or out of bed."

He ordered for them. "Where shall we go, to a hotel?"

"We'll drive out in my car. I know a secluded side-road up the river."

"That's pretty elemental for a Vassar girl who lives on Foxhall Road." He smiled mockingly, but his eyes sparkled.

"I *am* elemental, darling. That's how I get my kicks." She put out a bony, heavily ringed hand. "But I do love you, Boyd. I really do." Her eyes bored into his. "I need a man like you to take risks for my love. Phi doesn't know the meaning of the word."

"Risk?"

"No, love. He runs risks, but not for me, not for us, not even for himself."

"He's dedicated to the cause," Raaff said dryly.

"He's trained and disciplined. That's better than dedication."

"I'm not like that. I think of you and me."

"I know. That's why I love you. You're mine. Phi isn't mine. He's theirs."

"Are you his?"

"He likes to think so, and if that's what he likes to think, who am I to disillusion him?" She made a mock shudder. "He's almost pathological about losing anything he thinks is his."

"Are you mine?"

"At the moment, darling."

"That's enough for me."

"And that's why I love you and come running when you call me, abandoning even my hairdresser."

As they laughed together Boyd Raaff felt the last of his doubts leave him. How could he go wrong with a woman like this?

WHEN Baylor got back to his office, he telephoned a sandwich shop and ordered a pastrami sandwich on rye and a double portion of black coffee. He then dialed a typewriter rental service and arranged for a typewriter to be delivered that afternoon. About four o'clock, he finished work on his news sheet and, putting his feet up on his desk, he lit a cigarette. The smoke curled up toward the ceiling as he sat thinking, a slight frown on his face. He took his wallet out of his pocket and, extracting a card, dialed a number on it. When the Pentagon switchboard answered he asked for an extension number.

"Janice?"

"Yes."

"This is Tony Baylor. You know me as T aylor and as Caylor."

There was a giggle. "Gee, I didn't think you'd call. Sorry about the name. I'm lousy on names."

"I said I would call."

"Well, I know, but so many fellows just promise anything."

"Are you free tonight?"

"I got a date, but I could break it. He's a droop anyway."

"Would you?"

"Sure."

"Where should I pick you up?"

She gave him an address and apartment number in Arlington.

"I'll be by about seven-thirty. O.K.?"

"O.K. See you, hon. Sweet of you to remember."

They had dinner at a steak house in Washington and spent the rest of the evening visiting almost identical night clubs with rock-and-roll music and go-go girls. The girls shuffled and writhed in small elevated cages at the corners of the room to the repetitious and primitive beat of the four musicians. The music, amplified to the limits of audition, together with the pulsating of colored lights, immersed the audience in a surfeit of light and sound that extinguished all other sensations.

Janice gyrated on the tiny dance floor a foot or so away from Baylor with the ecstatic, mesmerized expression of the true believer. Baylor wiped his brow with a handkerchief. He could drop dead and this chick would hardly know the difference. Still, it made an effort at conversation unnecessary and that was a real plus. He winced when he thought of the disconnected banalities they had exchanged earlier across their steaks and baked potatoes in a basic English vocabulary that didn't exceed two hundred and fifty words. Most days this jiggling gamin opposite him probably made do with fifty words and ten slang expressions.

At one o'clock in the morning he drove her back to Arlington. She lay back against the seat like a perspiring athlete after a workout. "Boy! That was marvy! I sure would like to be a go-go girl. Imagine getting paid for frugging! What a ball!"

"Why don't you? You're better looking and a better dancer than those gals up there."

She smiled at him and hugged his arm. "You think



so, hon? You're really sweet. I couldn't do it, though. My mother would kill me. No kidding."

"That's the public's loss."

"Sweet. I really like you, Tony. I really do. You're real groovy."

He took his eyes from the road and met hers. "Lucky me."

"When will I see you again?"

"Soon, I hope. I'm working on a news story. It doesn't leave me much time. I was lucky to get out tonight."

"Is that what you were in to see Colonel Chambers about?"

"Yes."

She hugged his arm again. "Gee, I wish I could help, then you could take me out on the town more often."

He stopped at a stoplight and leaned over and kissed her cheek. "Do you mean that?"

"Sure."

"Well, if you want to do a little checking for me, it would save me some footwork and we'd be able to have a little more time together."

"Like what?"

"Like all you can learn about a clerk in the R and D section by the name of Bart Williams."

She giggled. "Ice-cream pie."

"Ice-cream pie?"

"That's what us girls call him."

"Oh."

"What's he done?"

"Nothing. I just want to know his background as color for the story."

"Why don't you ask him?"

He laughed. "You don't know much about news-paper work. That would give the story away."

"It would? That's as clear as mud. But, I'll take your word for it."

He stopped outside her apartment building. She leaned over and kissed him on the mouth. "O.K., I'll do it."

If you want to know the dirt in the Pentagon, ask us girls." He got out of the Morgan and walked with his arm about her to the apartment entrance. "I'll call you tomorrow afternoon, Janice."

"Can we go dancing?"

"That depends on how much work I do tomorrow and how much help I get from you."

"Oh, boy. I'll turn the joint upside down."

He kissed her once more and drove off to Georgetown.

He overslept the next morning and didn't get to his office until after ten. When he pushed on the door, it gave about ten inches, then hit an obstacle. He pushed harder and the obstacle gave. Forcing his body sideways, he sidled into the office and flicked on the light. To his left against the partially opened door was a body. He knew instinctively that it was dead. Leaning over, he looked into the grey, vacant face and the vacant, staring eyes. It was Frank Bennington.

Baylor quickly closed the door and stood still, breathing in short, shallow gasps. He fought not to be sick. He walked over to a window and raised it, gulping in the cold air through his open mouth. He began to tremble uncontrollably and sat down heavily in his swivel chair. He sat there for some minutes in his coat with the chill wind blowing in the window, his mind numbed with shock. Frank Bennington, dead. He had never seen a dead man before. He got up from his chair and gingerly felt for Bennington's pulse, but the cold stiffness of the wrist repelled him and he quickly dropped it. Sitting down again, he finally lit a cigarette after two unsuccessful efforts. Then he picked up the telephone and called the Homicide Bureau of the Metropolitan Police.

It was nearly half an hour before two detectives appeared. By that time, Baylor had gained a measure of control over himself. At least he had stopped trembling.

The two detectives pushed by the door when Baylor opened it at their knock. The older of the two, a stocky

grey haired man with an open, Irish face, looked down at Bennington impassively. "You know who this was?"

"It was Frank Bennington, a freelance writer."

"Friend of yours?"

"I knew him."

The older man looked Baylor in the face for the first time. "Who are you?"

"I'm Baylor. I'm the one who telephoned."

The detective looked at a notebook. "Right. I'm O'Brien, Sergeant out of Homicide. This is Detective Blount."

Baylor nodded.

O'Brien squatted beside the body and ran a practiced eye over the huddled figure. "What made you think it was homicide? Light blue eyes sought his."

"Well, I don't know. He's dead isn't he? I thought someone killed him."

The blue eyes held his. "Why? Why not a heart attack or a stroke?"

"Well, if he came in here and just died, how did he get in?"

O'Brien put a cigar in his mouth. "He got in here one way or the other, didn't he? Did he have a key?"

"No."

"How well did you know him?"

"Just casually. I knew him for about ten days. We had lunch together once."

"Funny he'd die inside your office and no key to get in."

Baylor nodded.

O'Brien turned to Blount. "Get on the phone and have the Identification Bureau send over a detail—a photographer and a fingerprint man." He turned back to Baylor. "There's no sign of violence, but we'll go through the routine so we can move the body. If we can't find a wound, we may have to order an autopsy." He took a piece of chalk and began outlining the position of the body. "You touch anything?"

"The door, the window, and the telephone."

O'Brien took out his notebook again.

"This your office?"

"Yes."

"Home?"

"The Mews, Georgetown."

"Know where Bennington lives?"

"No."

"Next of kin, other friends?"

"No."

O'Brien snapped his notebook shut and sat on the edge of the desk chewing on an unlit cigar while Blount leaned against a wall until the identification detail arrived. Baylor then stepped out into the hallway to give them room in his small office. A little crowd had gathered. Charley Diggs had walked up the hallway from his office. "What is it, Tony?"

"A fellow named Frank Bennington. He's dead."

Diggs whistled. "Heart attack?"

"Maybe. I don't know."

Flash bulbs exploded behind the closed frosted glass

door.

"For a minute, there, I thought it was you," Diggs

said.

"It could have been."

"Could have been?"

"I mean, when do we know our number is coming up?"

O'Brien, Blount, and the identification detail emerged from the office as two ambulance attendants with a stretcher appeared. "We're removing the body, Mr. Baylor. You can use your office now, if you wish. I appreciate your cooperation. Don't leave town without advising me of your whereabouts. You'll be a material witness when we have the inquest."

Baylor nodded and watched the grim little procession disappear toward the elevators.

Charley Diggs snapped his fingers. "Say, Tony. Here's a story right in the National Press Building and I'm asleep on it. Come on, what's the scoop?"