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THE FACELESS ONES

The companion of spring went out with Mata Hari. Such is the nature of the game today that a lowly government code clerk or a technician who punches computer cards at a missile site may be a more important intelligence source—and far more difficult to detect—than the disgruntled general or the discreet diplomat. Last week, in a case that has still undetermined links in Britain, the FBI arrested a characteristically obscure technician on charges of conspiring with the Russians. Held on $50,000 bail was a crew-cut Air Force communications operator and repairman, Staff Sergeant Herbert Boecken- haupt, 23, who had worked for some 17 months in the Air Force's Pentagon communications center, and was dis- tinguished only by his unhappy childhood in Nazi Germany.

The Government, not wanting to prejudice its case in court, would give only sketchy details of the alleged con- spiracy, but the pattern was as com- monplace as the personalities. Boecken- haupt had top-secret clearance and access to many high-level communica- tions, including those on the Moscow-Washington hot line. His contact, said the FBI, was Aleksey Malinin, a low- ranking clerk in the commercial section of the Soviet embassy. In June 1965, at the first of at least two meetings in Washington's Virginia suburbs, according to the FBI, the Russian merely ques- tioned Boeckenhaupt about his duties in the Pentagon. At the second, in a bowling alley parking lot last April, Malinin gave him a 35-mm. slide listing the location of future rendezvous and drop areas where, presumably, information could be left for later pickup.

One of the Many. The FBI said it had pieced together the slide, as well as papers used for secret messages and notes taken at the second meeting, in Boeckenhaupt's apartment in Riverside, Calif., near March Air Force Base, where he was stationed at the time he was arrested. At March, he had access to information going through the cryp- tographic machines. Shortly after his arrest last week, Scotland Yard picked up Cecill Mulvena, 47, a quiet Southend- on-Sea businessman, on charges of violat- ing Britain's Official Secrets Act, and English newspapers hinted that further arrests were planned.

Of the three, Malinin, described by one observer as "just one of the faceless many" in the Russian embassy, clearly had the brightest future, suffering only the embarrassment of being expelled from the U.S. If convicted, Boecken- haupt, on the other hand, could receive the death penalty; Mulvena, 14 years in one of Britain's sometimes insecure jails. Whether or not Boeckenhaupt possessed an important information or, indeed, any information at all, he had every opportunity to glean intelligence of interest to the Russians. The Penta-
Oddly enough, a majority of the incidents reported in the Ramparts article never heard of the magazine or its "team." Thus it is not so odd that the Ramparts-Jones non-history is riddled with factual errors and perverse conclusions. Items:

► Earlene Roberts, 60, the fuzzy-minded housekeeper who ran the Dallas rooming house where Lee Harvey Oswald lived—and proved a helpful witness before the Warren Commission—died last January. Ramparts says that she had been subjected to "intensive police harassment," adds with sinister implication of foul play that "no autopsy was performed." In fact, Mrs. Roberts had severe heart disease, throat ulcers and cataracts.

► The cause of death, "acute myocardial infarction," was determined after an autopsy by a doctor at Parkland Hospital.

► William Whaley, 51, the cab driver who picked up Oswald after he fled the book depository building, was killed in a head-on car crash in December 1965. Ramparts views his death with suspicion because Whaley had never had an accident before and was the first Dallas cab driver to die on duty since 1937. In fact, Whaley was killed because an 83-year-old man (who also died) was driving north in a southbound lane.

► Eddy Benavides, 29, identified as the look-alike brother of Domingo Benavides, a witness in Oswald's slaying of Patrolman J. D. Tippit, was shot to death in a Dallas tavern in February 1965. Ramparts reports that Dallas police classed it as death by "pistol shot," wrote up a cursory report and marked the case "unsolved." The magazine also suggests that "Domingo was the intended victim." In fact, there is a full police report on the shooting (it was a shotgun, not a pistol). Moreover, one Radford Lee Hill, 41, confessed that he had been strangled, not "karate chopped," and police suggested that homosexuality may have been a motive. Hunter was shot accidentally by an exhibitionistic detective he had known closely for years while the cop was clowning foolishly with a revolver in the station pressroom. As for Tom Howard, according to others who were there, he was not even at Ruby's apartment that night.

► Hearst Gossip Columnist Dorothy Kilgallen died in her Manhattan house in November 1965. Because she was the only journalist ever allowed a private interview with Jack Ruby after his arrest, Penn Jones naturally decided that hers could not swallow that one, conceded that "no serious person really believes" Kilgallen's death—from alcohol and barbiturates—was part of the plot.

► The area's power companies have belatedly mounted a massive effort to overhaul, augment and modernize equipment and procedures. At the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission's Sir Adam Beck Plant No. 2, where the region-wide short circuit originated in an overloaded relay fuse, more relays have been added to increase the system's safety margin. To prevent the area's vast, interlocking power grid from being pulled down again, newly designed switches have been installed in northwestern New York State so that the southern part of the system can automatically cut itself off from the pool.

Generators & Computers. Throughout the area, electric companies have bought oil-fueled "black start" generators to help reactivate giant turbines more quickly. Some companies are making plans to install computers programmed to monitor loads and correct "cascading" frequencies of the kind touched off by the Beck blowout. New York's Kennedy International Airport, whose runway lights vanished before the eyes of bewildered jet captains, has put in eight diesel generators that can kick on within twelve seconds. Many Manhattan skyscrapers are now equipped with emergency power for elevators, in which thousands of New Yorkers were trapped, and auxiliary lighting for the stairs down which many more thousands had to escape.

MUCH still remains to be done. The New York City subway system, in which 800,000 passengers were stranded last fall, has yet to set up its own emergency power system or even a lighting plant. On the basis of the lessons learned from the blackout, both the Federal Power Commission and the Interior Department's Bureau of Reclamation strongly endorsed a bill in Congress this year that would have given the FPC greater control over power-grid planning. The measure died, largely because the utilities lobby opposed it. And though—until 1965—utility companies had for years denied that a major blackout could happen, they now concede that a repeat is by no means impossible.