

THE COLLECTED ADVENTURES OF...

# NICK DANGER

## *Third Eye*

(THE TATTERED CASEBOOK OF NICK DANGER)

BY

J. R. REDDIG



THE COLLECTED  
ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER,  
THIRD EYE

INCLUDING:

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER IN THE INDIAN OCEAN"

AND

"THE TATTERED CASEBOOK OF NICK DANGER"

BY

J. R. REDDIG

"Nick Danger" is dedicated to my shipmates  
onboard USS Midway (CV-41) and my airwing  
buddies (CVW-5), 1978-1980:

"NEVER IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN AFFAIRS  
HAVE SO MANY DONE SO MUCH, SO FAR AWAY  
FROM BARS, WOMEN, AND FAST CARS" -  
and particularly the bland and mellow Vigilantes  
of VF-151.

## PREFACE

THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER BEGAN IN RESPONSE TO THE FALL OF THE Shah of Iran.

It was a humble beginning.

There we were, the USS Midway/CVW-5 Team, motoring aimlessly around our home waters of the South China Sea and playing Team Spirit with 180,000 of our intimate friends in the waters of the Cheju-Do Modlock. It was an idyllic time, and long before the echoes of the collapse of the Peacock Throne were to intrude so rudely on our pastoral existence.

Partly because of the buffoonery displayed by what passed for the National Command Authority of those days, it was determined that a significant response had to be made in the Indian Ocean. This was demanded by the House of Saud, who were understandably perplexed by the abrupt removal of the bulwark between them and the Soviet Union. The Bear appeared to be casing his eyes southward, and nary a Yank was to be seen.

This led to the magnification of an insignificant conflict between two insignificant peoples, who by the accident of geography happened to own rights to the strategic Bab-al-Mendeb Straits. So the Yemens came to occupy an importance utterly unwarranted by their distinctly low-rent existence.



It was said that they would have a hard time getting a loan for additional twigs and sand, which compose the sole source of national resources in the Empty Quarter of Arabia.

Washington did then cry out to the USS Constellation to break their engagements for New Year's Eve in colorful Subic Bay, and to sortie dramatically into the greasy swells of the Indian Ocean. And it was so. She foamed forthrightly to a station in the Gulf of Aden, menacing the insidious Communists of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and bolstering the flagging spirits of the Young Republicans and the Rotarians of North Yemen.

Yet, even ships of steel must rest some time. The USS Ranger, that ship of unsung reputation, was delegated the task of relieving Connie, that she might return her weary crew to the pleasure spas of Southern California.

There is a legend about "being relieved by the Ranger."

It was confirmed in the waters just outside the Straits of Malacca, where the South China Sea passes by the legend of Fortress Singapore and debauches into the endless marching swells of the Indian Ocean. There the Ranger, through an unfortunate accident, bore-sighted an inoffensive Liberian tanker. When I saw her later on, it was as though some strong-jawed individual had taken an enormous bite into the steel. The gap was large enough for two Philippinos to stand atop one another to survey the damage.

Needless to say, Ranger wasn't going anywhere.

When I heard of the accident, driving along Route 16 in a picturesque industrial Yokosuka, I knew that history had jumped up and bit me on the ass. The Midway pulled out on one day's notice. We steamed for over 18,000 miles and covered the Gulf of Aden like a blanket.

I must confess, however, that the loneliest feeling in the entire world is watching another aircraft carrier go hull down, steaming east, and you feel the steel below you begin to shudder with the horsepower pushing you west into the endless horizon - over the edge of the world.

In this spirit, the adventures of Nick Danger began. I had been reading a lot of Raymond Chandler to pass the idle hours at sea. I was infused with the idea of driving around the Los Angeles of the '40's, drinking and driving. I decided to share my literary efforts with my 4700 intimate friends through the good offices of the ship's paper, the Midway Multiplex.

The isolation of a ship at sea is total. Our supply lines were monumental, and the mail delivery sporadic. A few laughs were a precious commodity. In lieu of anything really funny, Nick Danger had to do.

Nick had a little bit for everyone, and he got out of control in a hurry. RADM Kirksey became one of the biggest fans, and he got his copy first. This made Nick a forum for many of the little idiosyncracies of shipboard life. To the Navy's credit, I never got a word of official censorship. Nick was free to bumble his way across the wide oceans, irradiate the sacred mountains of Africa, and generally misbehave however



his little heart desired.

Thus begins the collected Danger, under the snowcone of Fuji, bound for action and excitement under the endless blazing sun of Arabia.

No small debt is owed to the Firesign Theater, without whose inspiration none of this would have been necessary.

J. R. REDDIG  
AT-SEA  
OFF THE COAST OF BORNEO  
10 FEB 1980

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

I PARKED THE PACKARD ON THE PIER, CLOSE TO THE BIG GREY BOAT. The hand brake clicked up into place. I lit up a Lucky Strike and looked over the situation. My sources had told me the Fat Man was aboard this ship. I had to find him if I was to unravel the mystery of the Great Rat of Sumatra. Lives hung in the balance. So did my expense account money. I pitched the cigarette butt out the window and got out of the car.

The wind was blowing in off the steel grey waters of the little harbor. A giant white mountain loomed up the south. Looked like an ice cream cone. The hairs stood up on the back of my neck. I had the uneasy feeling I wasn't in L.A. any more.

I snapped the brim of my hat down low over my baby blues. I checked the Luger in the worn leather holster under my baggy, blue suit coat. I was ready for action . . . or danger . . . or whatever. I was Nick Danger, Third Eye.

I ambled down the pierside and looked at the little workers busy loading boxes onto pallets. Lot of Japanese in this part of Western California. I sidled up to one of them and lit up a smoke.

"I'm looking for the Fat Man," I said, and produced the worn picture from my wallet. "You seen him around here lately?" I gave him my very best leer.

He looked up at me. "Nani?" he said.



"Listen, Bub, don't give me the runaround. I'm a tough fella and I get results."

The little guy didn't seem to see where I was coming from. I pitched my butt away and got ready to rough him up a little. He seemed to look up over my shoulder at something.

I should have known better. Something that felt as big as a crane hit me in the back of the head. I went out like a light.

The Japanese worker looked down at the prone Yankee. Crazy gaijiin. "Gomen asai, bakka gaijiin." He waved to the crane operator. Even the Yankees ought to know better than to stand under the crane arm . . .

TOMORROW: THE EXCITING ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER  
CONTINUE WITH "SAPS AT SEA". STAY TUNED.

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY'S EPISODE: "SAPS AT SEA"

WHEN I AWOKE ON THE PIER, THE SUN WAS DOWN AND A BIG BLACK CROW was looking me in the eye. My head felt like a Russian division had just marched over it and not taken off their boots. There was a lump on the back, just slightly smaller than a billiard ball.

I rolled over and lit up a Lucky Strike. It made my head feel worse. I reached for the long flat flask I carry in the deep pockets of my coat. I took a deep swig. It didn't make me feel any better, but the fourth or fifth pull made me just not care. After a while I managed to get to my feet. I looked back to where I had parked the Packard. I was just in time to see it vanishing around the corner hooked to a pick-up truck.

The situation was starting to smell. It had to be the Fat Man. He was behind every shady deal in Far East L.A. I looked at the long grey boat that towered over me. He had to be there somewhere. I would just have to get on board and track him down.

The crow pecked me on the hand. I drew my Luger, but the bird took off. I pumped off a few round but couldn't connect. Finally, it perched up on top of a huge silver tank. A clear shot. I was just drawing a bead on him when a grey van pulled around the corner with lights flashing. The coppers! The only way out was up a long double



gangway. I took off.

I hit the top with a full head of steam. Some guy in black pants and a white shirt was standing at the top. All I saw was his mouth open in a little "o" of surprise. Then I was past him and in through a big steel door.

I broke left and something hit me hard on the head. It was like a big black wing settled down on me. I was out like a spark up the chimney.

"Idiot ran right into the F-4," said the Chief. "Wonder who the eff he thought he was?"

"Don't know," said the First Class, "but maybe the MAA can figure it out."

DON'T MISS TOMORROW'S THRILL-PACKED EPISODE:

"NICK DANGER, BRIG RAT"

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY'S EPISODE: "NICK DANGER, BRIG RAT"

WHEN I CAME TO, THE GREY STEEL WALLS WERE REELING AROUND LIKE A merry-go-round. I reached for my pocket flask, but it wasn't there. That wasn't all. My clothes were gone, and all I had was a denim shirt and dungaree pants. I reached up to touch my forehead, and my fingers felt a soft mass just slightly smaller than a volleyball. Somebody had K.O.'d me, but good. As I ran my hand back further, I encountered only stiff bristles. Someone had shaved my head! Was there no outrage the Fat Man would not perpetrate on his enemies?

Apparently not. I looked around and the little cubicle spun. My head still felt like a big pre-war Dusenburg had rammed it at full throttle. I grabbed the bottom of the narrow rack and steadied myself. At the front of the room was a wire mesh screen. I was in the slammer. My hands went to my pockets for a smoke. They had even taken my Lucky Strikes!

I knew I was in for the treatment now. I saw a figure go by in the passageway clad in some sort of camouflage outfit. The Fat Man's operation was even bigger than I thought. This was going to take some dramatic action. I crawled over to the wire mesh and pulled myself upright. I heard footsteps coming back. "Got a smoke, buddy?" I asked nonchalantly.



The figure halted and turned my way. I heard a shouted command and feet pounded towards my cell. I clenched my fists. All I had going for me was knuckles and know-how against my captors. I didn't think it was going to be enough, not this time . . . but I had one thing that they didn't - an Expense Account . . .

DON'T MISS TOMORROW'S ACTION-PACKED CHAPTER

OF NICK DANGER: "ESCAPE AT GQ".

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY'S EPISODE: "ESCAPE AT GQ"

THEY WERE MARCHING US THROUGH THE BIG STEEL ROOM WITH AIRPLANES. The guy at the front of the line kept yelling, "Gangway! Gangway!" at the top of his lungs. He said it with a rising inflection that made it a chant. The only thing I knew was that I didn't like it.

I was wearing some baggy shorts, a white T-shirt, and a vacant look. I heard through the prison grapevine that they were going to P.T. the dogsqueeze out of us. Whatever that meant. We were marching past a low-slung jet airplane - one of those modern supersonic jobs. Suddenly the loudspeakers overhead started to blare. "General Quarters! General Quarters!" The line started to move faster. I wasn't a contender in the light middleweight L.A. Golden Gloves of 1944 for nothing. I stepped quickly out of line and hid behind the landing gear of the jet. The line marched away without me, still chanting.

I was free! Now all I had to do was get uptown and find the Fat Man. I stepped out and tried to flag down one of the funny little square yellow taxis that were driving around. No one stopped for me. It looked like I was going to have to walk. I needed some new clothes, too. I saw a guy in khaki pants and shirt strolling by. I walked up to him.

"Say, bub, you got a light?"

The guy looked at me blankly. "On the hangar deck?" he asked.



I clipped him on the jaw and he went down like a felled ox. I stripped him of his khakis and put them on. I put him in my prison shorts. As I walked away, I looked down at my name tag. I was now ENS Frank Dracman, VF-161. Whatever that was.

I walked casually away. I passed a guy in denims and a badge. "You might want to check out that guy in the shorts over there, I mentioned calmly.

"Thanks, Mr. Dracman."

I liked the sound of it. Things were starting to look up.

TOMORROW: "TERROR IN THE OFFICER CORPS".

DON'T MISS IT!

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY'S EPISODE: "TERROR IN THE OFFICER CORPS"

RECAPPING OUR ADVENTURES SO FAR: NICK IS ONBOARD THE BIG GREY BOAT in search of the mysterious and enigmatic Fat Man, the Octopus of Crime in Far East L.A. After drawing long time in the brig, he escapes and assumes the identity of ENS Frank Dracman . . . .

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I felt secure in my new disguise. I wasn't sure who this Dracman character was, but he was obviously a key man in the Organization. It was great. There was quite a line out in front of the newsstand where I bought a carton of Lucky Strikes. The khaki costume got me head-of-the-line privileges. Just cut right in. There was a little grumbling, but I turned around and told them I was an undercover county dick, and that seemed to shut them up. It was also a secret message to the Fat Man to let him know I was on the prowl.

I didn't have any place to put all those Luckies, so I put as many packs as I could in my pockets and dumped the rest in the shit-can. I was a little lumpy, but at least I had smokes again.

I made a strange discovery while I was sleuthing down in the big steel cave. I looked out one of the big picture windows on the right-hand side of the ship - and there was nothing but water out there! I raced across to the other side, and - sure enough - there was water out there,



too. I was surrounded by H<sub>2</sub>O. The Fat Man had taken the whole kit'n' kaboodle to sea!

Later that day, I noticed my stomach was growling like a Rams lineman. I had to get some grub, and pronto. I followed my nose to where the food smells got thickest. I went down a steep set of stairs and saw a line of khaki costumes just like the one I had appropriated. It wasn't the smartest thing I ever did, but I voted for Hoover, too. My gut was doing my thinking for me. All I could do was be as inconspicuous as possible.

I walked up to the front of the line and cut in front of some guy with silver round doo-dads on his collar. "'Scuse me, buddy," I said, and reached for a plate.

TOMORROW: "SAY THAT AGAIN, SAM."

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY'S EPISODE: "SAY THAT AGAIN, SAM"

I HAD SEEN SOME TOUGH COOKIES IN MY YEARS ON THE MEAN STREETS OF L.A. but that fella with the round silver doo-dads just about turned me inside out. Apparently this guy was higher up in the Organization than ENS Drac-man. A pall as thick as death fell over the dining room at his words. I suddenly remembered urgent business elsewhere and grabbed a pork chop and bolted for the door. I had to get somewhere quiet to think this thing out.

I raced down the long, narrow hallway and smashed my knee on a piece of steel somebody had cunningly welded to the floor. As I was getting up, I noticed a little steel tag on the wall that said "Fan Room". I undid the clips and slipped inside. It was as dark as the bottom of Big Tajunga Canyon at midnight. I closed the hatch behind me and collapsed on the floor. I lit up a Lucky Strike from one of the eight packs in my pockets and gnawed on my pork chop. Somewhere in this mess had to be the clue that would take me to the Fat Man.

I knotted up my brain muscles and got down to some serious pondering. Point one: This thing was a whole lot bigger than I had thought. I had seen hundreds and hundreds of men walking around with tools and driving those little yellow taxicabs. Either they were planning a convention or something bigger was afoot. Point two: It seemed like there was an



underlying method in the confusion. Once, while I was watching some fellows working on one of the dozens of airplanes, a guy walked up and told me to put out my smoke. A hard case. Point three: This pork chop was greasy. Wait a minute . . . big organization . . . giant steel boat . . . plenty of airplanes . . . .

It came to me like the wet kiss at the end of a hot fist. The Fat Man was going to hi-jack the L.A. International Airport! It had to be!! All the pieces fit!!!

Just as I was lighting up another Lucky and congratulating myself on another stroke of detecting genius, I heard something move over in the corner. I was not alone. A low voice said, "Hi there, big fella. Want to play?"

I went for the door, hit my head, and I was down for the count.

TOMORROW: "MEETING WITH THE FAT MAN"

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY'S EPISODE: "MEETING WITH THE FAT MAN"

I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I LAY UNCONSCIOUS IN THAT LITTLE CUBICLE.

It was dark all the time. When I came to, my head throbbed like the thumb you just hit with a hammer. It took two Luckies to get my thoughts back together. The front of my cranium was starting to feel like Ted Williams worked it over with a Louisville slugger. It was starting to get me mad - mad at the Fat Man and determined to foil his foul plot to hi-jack the L.A. International Airport. He wasn't trifling with just anyone, y'know. He was trifling with Nick Danger, Third Eye.

I made up my mind to locate the Fat Man, pronto. This was going to take some ace sleuthing. I put my Luckies back in my shirt and worked up my #2 grim expression - the one I save for special occasions. I undid the dogs on the hatch and stepped out into the corridor. It seemed like it might be night. I didn't see any scrubwomen around. They must have finished up this part of the large grey building early and knocked off for coffee.

I followed the corridor for a while, and it started to jink around. All the jinks had steel doors. The Fat Man was leaving nothing to chance. He could shut this building up like Fort Knox if he wanted. I came past some sort of a cafeteria entrance where a lot of denim-clad joes were having food thrown onto steel plates. I sleuthed on by, taking note of

everything. Later there was a long room with a low ceiling and dozens of guys sitting around eating. I strolled through casually. Next to the wall was a steel door in the floor with a red cross painted on it. I sauntered on by and looked down the narrow metal stairs. "'X" marks the spot," I thought.

And I hit the jackpot. There was a crowd of guys down at the bottom, lined up at the heavy-duty scale. Most of them had their shirts off. I gave a low whistle. I had hit Big Casino. There wasn't a single one of them under 240 pounds. Bingo! Now all I had to do was put the pinch on my man and I was home free. I stepped down the ladder and realized how tough it was going to be. I was surrounded by fat men!

I pinched the first one I bumped into. He squealed.

"All right, bub, what's the scam?" I growled.

"What on earth are you talking about?" he said.

"Oh, a wisecracker, eh?" I punched him in the kidney. "Now, out with it. What's the bird's eye lowdown on this caper?"

"Weight control," he moaned - and slid to the floor.

NEXT: "THE QUACK IN THE BACK"



"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY'S EPISODE: "THE QUACK IN THE BACK"

AFTER I DECKED THE GUY AT WEIGHT CONTROL, THERE WAS PANDEMONIUM. Huge bodies were moving everywhere. I had to keep moving just to survive. The scales went over with a crash. I took advantage of the chaos to slip through the door marked "Dr. Ali Fleiglebaum". I flashed immediately on that name. When we broke up the Encino Pederasty Ring, LT Bradshaw kept saying that between the Fat Man and the Spats Mod was a shadowy figure called "The Quack". I had to give it a try. It could be my only decent clue in seven episodes.

I came into the little room quietly. A hooded figure was bent over a desk crowded with chemical retorts and bubbling mixtures. I cleared my throat. The figure looked up, and I stared into dark, dark eyes.

"Well, Danger, I was wondering when you would stick your big nose into the operation," he breathed out with a dry, wheezing sound. He elaborately lit up a long dark Egyptian cigarette and blew the smoke across the desk. "I'm glad I have this opportunity to talk to you before the Fat Man has a chance to finish you off."

I wished I had my gun. The empty space where my shoulder holster used to be felt as big as a football field. I wished I had a drink. Heck, for that matter, I wished I was still back in L.A., having a

decent meal where the scenery didn't go up and down and wasn't blue colored and watery. But you have to go with what you are dealt in the big poker game of life. I went for the busted flush.

"Oh, yeah?" I replied cleverly.

"Yes, Danger." He drew out the syllables of my name so that it sounded like a tea kettle. "We have got to come to an agreement about your interference. Either you lay off, or you will be laid off with extreme prejudice. Do you understand the meaning of my statement?"

"You'd better spell it in capitals, chump," I snarled at him. He reached into an inside pocket and produced a sheaf of currency. He started counting out century notes. When he hit fifty, he stopped.

"'Course I never really had anything against the Fat Man personally." That much cash would keep me in Budweiser for weeks! I leaned across the desk and started counting. I kept at it - counted again. I couldn't make it come out right. I was getting drowsy. I looked up bleary-eyed at the little man. He was peeling off surgical gloves. He smiled.

"That money is coated with a powerful sedative, Mr. Danger." He was starting to go out of focus. I tried to get to my feet. My body weighed as much as the Empire State Building. "Relax, Danger. You will only make it more difficult for yourself." I staggered and crashed into the desk covered with the chemical jars and bottles. I went down like the Lusitania. I heard the tinkling of broken glass. The last thing I

saw was the doctor grabbing the final jar. I guess he had the final  
retort, after all . . . .

TOMORROW: "OUT TO LUNCH"



" THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY: "OUT TO LUNCH"

I HAD BEEN KNOCKED OUT MORE TIMES THAN A FAT PITCH TO THE BAMBINO. It was getting old in a hurry. This time I came around and discovered I could not move. I raised my arms and found they were shackled behind me with chains. I was gagged with some kind of cotton wadding. My feet were tied together with thick manila cordage. A heavy link collar ran from my neck over to the wall. I had a feeling the situation was starting to get serious.

I was in another one of a series of small grey rooms. I never did like grey. I liked it even less now. I desperately wanted a smoke, but the chains kept me from getting to my lighter. I would have had to smoke it through my nose, anyway. I was pondering the ramifications when the door began to swing open. I was out to lunch and I hadn't even had breakfast.

The quack came in first. He was still wearing that crazy white robe with the hood. His dark eyes seemed to twinkle behind his spectacles. "I hope the accommodations have not been too discomforting, Danger," he wheezed. "I assure you any inconvenience will be fleeting." He giggled after the last part, as though he had said something exceedingly witty.

"Mmmmmnghgh," I replied.

"Ah, I'm so glad you still have that famous indomitable spirit. The Fat Man will be most pleased. In fact, he told me he might be stopping by to see you personally."

I struggled at my bonds. If I could only free my hands from the shackles, I could tear the gag out of my mouth, untie my feet, and rip the chain out of the wall and rearrange the little doctor's grillwork. I was still working on the first part when the door opened and a huge hand reached in and turned off the light. I had only a fleeting impression of a paw as big as a grizzly bear and an arm that resembled an obscene kielbasa. The fingers were like little knockwursts. God, I was hungry! I had a sinking feeling in my gut, and it wasn't all because I could have used a rasher of bacon, a five-egg combination omelet, some hashed browns, a side of sauteed mushrooms, a steaming pot of coffee, and a stiff bloody Mary. Not all of it.

In the light from the passageway, I just got a glimpse of a huge form. The door swung shut, and I was covered by complete darkness - black as ink, impenetrable as anthracite coal. But I could feel the presence. And a soft muffled breathing like a steam leak. The giant loudspeaker I had been hearing for days sputtered to life. "The starboard sponson aft is now open for the dumping of trash and garbage," said the booming metallic voice.

An oddly-pitched squeaky voice spoke from the blackest part of the room. "That sounds like an exit line, Danger."

TOMORROW: "THE FAT MAN SPEAKS"

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

"THE FAT MAN SPEAKS"

I LAY THERE IN THE DARKNESS AND LISTENED TO THE FAT MAN SPEAK.

You could almost hear the sounds bubble out of his corpulent carcass. Maybe the vast pressures on his lungs forced the sounds out in that characteristic squeak. The dark made him seem as vast and suffocating as a feather quilt.

"It has been a long chase through these last ten episodes, Danger. Are you glad you finally found me?" I heard the rustle of cloth as he moved. Like the wind moving a circus tent. "No, don't bother to reply. I rather like the one-sided nature of this final conversation you will ever have. My plot to hi-jack L.A. International Airport will succeed. It will do so because I am vastly intelligent and you, Danger, are a stumbling dolt. My minions have labored mightily, and we are very close to my final triumph." I could hear the hysterical cackle of Dr. Ali Fleiglebaum in the background. The situation looked dim, and not just because the lights were out.

I worked the shackles on my hands and felt rust. These chains were old, and corrosion seemed to have pitted the links. I'd bet a fin that the Fat Man had flunked his last corrosion control inspection. That's the problem with these Big Picture characters - they forget the details. I flexed sinews against raw steel and felt something give. I thought I



had broken my bonds, but in actuality I had broken my wrist. This complicated matters slightly.

"Danger, you aroused my wrath when you broke up the Encino Pederasty Ring. The Adventure of the Counterfeit Corn Flakes seriously compromised the Organization. But the last straw was when you revealed the War Bonds Swindle. It was then that we decided you must die. Think about it, Danger. This is the end of the trail for you," he finished with a note of victory as sweet as a rusty hinge. I squirmed around in the blackness and got my legs up against the wall. I strained against the long chain that shackled me. I felt it give - and then suddenly snap. I rolled over and came up on my bound feet.

"He is free!" shouted the Fat Man. "Get that slimy peeper!"

I found that by doing a modified Lindy Hop I could move around and, by giving a boogie twist to my hips, swing the broken chain like a wicked mace. "All right, Fat Man, now we will see who is the dolt around here!"

"Quick, Fleiglebaum, grab him!" It was confusion in there. I felt the chain strike something soft, and someone began to whimper.

"Mmmmpghh!" I shouted. I had forgotten about the gag. I moved in for the kill anyway. Suddenly the room was lit by the explosion of a .45 chopper. The sound was deafening. In the silence that followed, my ears rang like I was imprisoned in a trash can with an army beating on the outside. Someone began to cry - and it could have been me . . . .

TOMORROW: "NO REST FOR THE WICKED"

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

"NO REST FOR THE WICKED"

THE EERY SOBBING IN THE LITTLE BLACK ROOM WENT ON AND ON. It wasn't me; I was still gagged. I took a quick survey of my body. My left wrist hurt like blazes from breaking it on the chain. I suddenly realized my hands were free! That burst of chopper fire must have parted my bonds. I reached up and ripped the gag from my mouth. I spat the sour cotton batting out.

"All right, Fat Man, it's all over now!" I shouted.

"Sit on it, Danger!" squeaked the high-pitched voice. A huge body brushed me. The slight contact sent me tottering to the floor. My nose took the brunt of the fall. The door was ripped open, and light flooded the room. From my vantage point I could see Dr. Ali Fleiglebaum leaning up against a purple pipe, holding his guts like they were something precious. Maybe they were. At least to him. Something seemed to leak over his fingers. The chopper lay on the floor between us. I pulled myself over to it.

The Fat Man had made his exit. I grabbed the chopper. It had the big drum clip on it and plenty of ammo. I looked down at the chains around my feet. There was only one fast way out of them. I closed my eyes and started blasting. I hit myself with only a couple of the big .45 slugs. I kicked the chains off and stood up. The doctor kept up his sobbing.

"Shut up, Fleiglebaum," I said. "You make me nervous, you simpering whimp." He ignored me. He was pressed up against the purple pipe like his life depended on it. I had had enough of his noise. I turned the chopper on him and stitched him a new belly button. A stray bullet or two hit the purple pipe. The world turned bright white, and I left the room through the wall.

I was sitting out in the hallway, looking back at the jagged silhouette of a man with a chopper torn in the wall. Inside the room was a caldron of flame. I must have hit something volatile when I terminated the doctor. Flames started to lick the hallway through the door and the hole. I figured the best place for me was elsewhere, and pronto. I got up and staggered away from the fire.

When I was far enough away, I took stock of myself. A broken wrist, a couple of bullet holes in the legs, slight concussion, possible brain damage. I could have used a drink. I had felt better in my life, but trouble is my business. Right now, my business was in trouble. I made sure the chopper was cocked and ready. I stepped through a steel door and started on the trail of the Fat Man . . . .

TOMORROW: "SHOWDOWN ON STEEL BEACH"



"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY: "SHOWDOWN ON STEEL BEACH"

THE FIRST THING I MET WAS A BUNCH OF GUYS HEADED DOWN THE HALLWAY toward the fire. I was headed the other way and they were in my way. I was on the trail of the Fat Man. The big thompson chopper was heavy in my hands. This bunch of the Fat Man's gang had "Flying Squad" on their T-shirts. There wan't a chance in the world that they were going to stop me. I cut loose with a few dozen rounds and backed them out of my way. I could be only minutes behind the corpulent kingpin of crime. He was going to regret the day he ever crossed Nick Danger, and I knew that because I was him. Nick Danger, I mean.

I stepped over what was left of the Flying Squad and came to a ladder that led upstairs. I gripped the chopper in my teeth and started climbing. A little sign said "Flight Deck". He had to be up there. No escape was possible downstairs, as I had every reason to believe that there was water in the basement. The grey paint turned to black, and I saw the rays of sunlight for the first time in days. I blinked like an owl. There was a sudden roar of jet engines. The Fat Man was trying to escape by air! I took the chopper out of my choppers and stepped boldly into the light.

I scoped the long expanse of black metal. The Fat Man must be hiding somewhere behind one of those sleek stratoliners. I was under

the shadow of a black and grey high-rise building with some penthouse apartments at the top. I walked out into a clear area where I could see better.

That big loudspeaker started rumbling again. I couldn't seem to get away from it. This time a deep voice started out: "Man in the landing zone with the machine gun. Get into a complete flight deck uniform and get out of the landing zone! We have a recovery in two minutes!"

The guy sounded real impatient. If anyone around this place needed a recovery, it was me. I hadn't had a drink - or a Lucky Strike, for that matter - in days. I was hungry and hurt and in no mood to take any guff from a loudspeaker. I put a couple of rounds through the nearest speaker. That didn't seem to discourage the voice, though.

"Man with the machine gun. I'm telling you to get off the flight deck! Now!"

It was too loud for my taste, and I was finished taking orders from these mugs. I turned around and started firing at the penthouse in the high-rise. It got real quiet for a minute. I was starting to think I had a handle on the situation when I heard the roar of a jetliner. I looked toward the blunt end of the boat. What I saw filled me with as much fear and loathing as I have felt since Roosevelt's third term. It was a jet and, what's more, it was coming right at me! I started to run, but it was too late. As I hit the floor, the world turned into a roar

like fifty express trains. The rough surface of the floor bit into my face. There was a noise like Doomsday . . . and then a gigantic thud that I knew spelled the end of Danger . . . .

TOMORROW: "WHERE EAGLES DARE"



"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

"WHERE EAGLES DARE"

SYNOPSIS: IN NICK'S NON-STOP QUEST FOR THE CORPULENT KINGPIN OF crime in Far East L.A., he has been shot at, beaten, drugged, humiliated, blown up, assaulted, and nearly ravished in a fan room. Today's exciting episode finds him on Steel Beach, ready for a final showdown with his arch nemesis . . . .

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The great winged shadow had crashed into the deck inches from my head. There was a rooster tail of sparks as a giant hook reached out to gether me up. It hopped over me and an odd thick wire that stretched over the black surface. The airplane roared on with the sound of a thousand screaming locomotives. The Fat Man had attempted to pluck me from the ship in a last desperate effort to save his lard-laden body. It was the only thing that fit the facts. The plane had been moving too fast to stop. I knew now I had to deal with terror from the air as well as his minions of crime below. Nothing would stop me now, though. He had my dander up. Nothing short of a massive bribe could stop me from exacting my vengeance.

I stood up and cased the situation. The Fat Man was up here hiding somewhere amongst the sleek jetliners. I held the big chopper close to me and started the search. I walked back to the blunt end of the big

steel building, looking under the parked airplanes. I didn't see his fat legs anywhere. While I was standing there, another airplane tried to grapple me. I saw him coming and arced a few rounds in his general direction. I was gratified to see him swoop off in a steep climb. That would teach the birdmen not to trifle with the Kid. I turned and strode boldly toward the pointy end. I sleuthed each conceivable hiding spot. Finally my exacting methods paid off.

Under a big bird with a rounded bulbous nose, I saw a pair of two-toned wedgies with two huge tree-like legs leading into them. The Fat Man had horrible taste in socks. They were electric purple, and the houndstooth checked trousers were pulled as tight as sausage skins. I had my man. The long hard trail had come to an end. "All right, Porky, the jig's up. Trot them fat gams out here and grab sky."

"What?" he squeaked.

"Get out here, Lard Ass!"

I saw the feet move, and slowly he moved his elephantine body into my field of vision. I kept the chopper on his enormous midsection, where the tan and green sports jacket made a feeble attempt to join itself across his huge belly. That gut was a monster. It began where his chins started to leave off, and spread down in an imposing curve to his trunk-like thighs. His chins were all quivering at different tempos, one to a boogie woogie beat, several to the mombo and the cha-cha. Sweat rolled down his plump nose and stained his jacket like he was under a

rain cloud. I had to think fast. I had my quarry - now what was I going to do with him?

I heard running footsteps. I wheeled and loosed a hail of lead. "All right, Fat Man, get in the plane." I moved over to him and poked his belly with the chopper. It sank in about six inches. He yelped in terror.

"You can't mean it, Danger. For God's sake . . . ."

"Shut your yap, Fat Man. I can handle it. I had a ride in a bi-plane one time at the county fair. It can't be any different out here. Move!" I poked him again, and he began to lift himself up the frail little ladder that hung down the side of the jet. It bowed under his weight. I creased his massive buttocks with a bullet, and it looked like two elephants fighting inside his trousers. He hit the top of the ladder and fell into the side-by-side cockpit. I scrambled up after him, past the big number "506" painted on the side. I climbed into the cockpit and lit up a Lucky Strike. The controls were complicated way beyond the little Steerman bi-plane. I was pressed up against the Fat Man's huge bulk. He had fallen in head first and was jammed there with his feet waving out of the cockpit. Men were running toward the airplane. I reached down and pulled out the choke. I located the ashtray. I waggled the gearshift out of "Park" and selected "Fly". I tapped the gas pedal - one of those big chrome barefoot-shaped custom jobs. I reached down and turned the key in the ignition. The engines roared to



life. The men had almost reached the plane. I let out the clutch and  
drove towards them . . . .

TOMORROW: "EVERY WHICH WAY BUT UP"

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY: "EVERY WHICH WAY BUT UP"

THE MEN SCATTERED AS I DROVE TOWARD THEM IN THE JETPLANE. What a sense of power! The Fat Man moaned beside me, his head stuffed down in the foot well. His enormous legs made little arcs in the air. He was completely in my control, and I meant to keep it that way.

"You are finished, Fat Man," I said conversationally as I lit up another Lucky. I tossed the match out of the cockpit casually. "All I have to do is fly this crate back to L.A. and turn you in." I had to chuckle. The reward was going to be substantial, not to mention the book rights on the story. It almost made all the hassles worthwhile. I drove around the deck for a while, chasing the men in the camouflage costumes. It was just like the little bumper cars at the county fair. After I got things cleared off, I stopped the plane and looked around the cockpit, trying to figure out how to get the bird airborne. I laughed again. I would be able to leave this all behind and get into a classy business - like maybe Divorce Investigation. An end to having my head crushed by a bunch of morons. I stubbed out my cigarette on the Fat Man's backside. He yelped. Now, about flying this thing . . . .

The only airplane I had been in before this one was a Steerman bi-plane back at the L. A. County Exposition of 1939. The dashboard was simple: three gauges and a couple of levers to pull, a stick, and a set

of rudder pedals. This baby was really high-speed. The steering wheel was huge, just like in one of the big 18-wheelers. It was padded and it had a jive fake-diamond Brodie knob on the rim. On the dashboard was the ignition, the windshield wipers, and a couple of tachometers. A big flashing red sign said "No Night Flying over Burma". Okie-doke, I thought, I've got that one covered already. Up by where the padded dice were hanging from the rear-view mirror was a lever with a grip that said "Flaps" and one next to it said "Wing Fold". This thing was no sweat at all. It would be child's play to step on the gas pedal and work the two levers so the wings flapped up and down to give me high-speed flight. Next to the leather bucket seat was a wheel that said "Trim". With the Fat Man aboard this thing was anything but. I turned the thing all the way forward. I put in the clutch and moved the gearshift through the "H" pattern from "Fly" to "First". I wet my finger and stuck it up in the air. The wind seemed to be blowing right down the middle of the big flat runway. I couldn't quite remember which way it was supposed to be; seemed like you had to go into the wind or away from it. I tossed a coin and it came up tails. Away from the wind was it. I knew that would give me extra airspeed as I took off. I put the gears in "Drive" again and motored on forward to the very pointiest end of the big steel building and turned around. I noticed the camouflaged guys were back and had formed a line to try to stop me. They were all waving their hands like crazy.



They were too late. All I had to do was take off and head east until I was over L.A. God, the taste of success was sweet! And they called me a jerk in high school. Those chumps would eat their words now! I put my right foot to the floor and revved up the engine. I put the gear shift into "Fly" and started to flap the wings up and down. I revved the engines up till they were whining, dumped the clutch, and started to move out in a cloud of white tire smoke.

The men in front of me jumped for cover. I was flapping the wings to beat the band. I screamed down the runway and hopped over three little wires. I had the gas pedal to the firewall - and suddenly there was no more runway in front of me. The airplane started to settle down and I had a glimpse of blue water beneath me. I barely had time to think of Agnes Lum, light up a Lucky, and keep the wings flapping. I wasn't gaining any altitude. I looked up from my cigarette and saw a grey boat in front of me. I was about on a level with the bridge. I could make out a little sign that said "Property Soviet Union. No Stepski" and some small white faces with mouths like little black Cheerios. If I didn't do something fast, we were going to ram them. I grabbed the Brodie knob and started to turn for all I was worth . . . .

TOMORROW: "INTO THE WESTERN SKY"

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY: "INTO THE WESTERN SKY"

I'LL TELL YOU, WHEN THE AIRPLANE IMPACTED INTO THE RUSSIAN SHIP

I was petrified. Anyone who tells you they don't get scared in the face of Death is a barefaced liar. I was almost unconscious. There I was, turning that steering wheel like a whirling dervish, puffing on my Lucky like crazy because I knew it might be my last.

I was just feet away from the ship. I was moving at supersonic speed, flapping the wings up and down. The last spin of the steering wheel turned me just enough to miss the bridge. I headed in toward a bunch of naked people sitting on top of some long white tubes. In the last second I saw them start to scramble for cover, but it was too late. I hit with a crash like the A-bomb. I was thrown forward into the steering wheel and my head hit the imitation leatherette dashboard. The Brodie knob gouged me in the stomach. The impact forced a tape forward into the stereo tape deck, and there was a sudden blast of loud boogie woogie music from the rear speakers. The gun rack was torn off the back window, hit the Fat Man on the back of his legs, and vanished out of the cockpit.

The impact forced the wings down. I couldn't get them to flap any more and, like a miracle, the plane began to rise! I was still flying. I looked back over my shoulder and saw the ship disappearing

behind me. One of the long white tubes from the front of the ship was missing. I looked down and saw it was jammed onto my landing gear. The Fat Man was blubbering like a beached whale. "Danger, release me. I'll give you anything!" His voice was curiously muffled. Maybe it was because all three hundred and fifty pounds of his belly had folded down over his head.

"Huh?" I replied cleverly.

"We can work out a deal, Danger. Just get me out of here."

It was like talking to a huge inverted laundry bag. I lit up another couple of Luckies and started to do some hard pondering.

"Start talking, Fat Man. And it had better be good."

As the Fat Man began to fill me in on his plan, I let the plane gain altitude. I turned the steering wheel so that the nose was pointed east into the setting sun. It was a beautiful sunset. Soon I would be back in L.A., hanging around, playing up to the newspaper boys. Drinking good hooch. I wondered if the long white tube from the Russian ship was worth anything. A red light came on on the dashboard next to the FM radio. It was the same color as the spectacular sunset ahead of me. I wondered idly what the words "Low Fuel Warning" meant . . . .

TOMORROW: "THINK FAST, DANGER!"



"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

"THINK FAST, DANGER!"

YOU WILL RECALL THAT INTREPID DETECTIVE NICK DANGER HAD ESCAPED the clutches of the Fat Man on the big grey boat and succeeded in turning the tables. He flew off the boat, colliding only slightly with a Russian man-of-war, and was motoring east into the setting sun. He had noticed a surface-to-surface missile impaled on his landing gear. The Fat Man offered the favors of Agnes Lum in an attempt to bribe our hard-as-nails hero. He was nearly persuaded when a red light began to glow on the dashboard that said "Low Fuel Warning".

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When that light came on, the first thing I noticed was how much it resembled the sunset. It was pretty - all orange and red and lighting up the whole sky. My Packard had a little light that went on when I got down to ten or twenty miles left, so I began to look around for a gas station. Up ahead was a low line with palm trees and white sand. I had been flying into the sunset for a long time, so I figured that had to be the California coast ahead. I took my foot off the accelerator, and the plane began to sink down. It wasn't hard to fly these things; all you needed was a good touch. I struck a kitchen match on the Fat Man's backside. He yelped as I lit up a Lucky Strike.

"Tell me again about Agnes Lum, chump," I said. "You were just

starting to make some sweet music."

"I'll get her for you, Danger." His voice was muffled by the rolls of fat that hung down over his head. "I'll do anything if you will just set me free."

It was great to hear him grovel. Between capturing the Fat Man and the missile stuck to the landing gear, I was going to be a very rich man. I could go down to the Brown Derby and get mobbed like the movie stars.

We were just crossing the line of the beach when I saw the boxy grey shape of the big grey boat. They were following me! I spun the big steering wheel and headed for the lights of the city up ahead. Just as I did so, I heard the engines start to sputter. Now I was in a fix. The Fat Man's gang was right behind us, and I was out of gas and ideas at the same time. I looked helplessly around the cockpit. I noticed a big yellow handle sticking out of the floor next to the gearshift. The sign on it said "Danger. Pull Handle for Emergency". Well, someone had left me a note! This was an emergency, all right, and my name is Danger. I grabbed the handle and pulled for all I was worth. The world exploded in white smoke, and I had the strangest sensation of falling . . . falling . . . falling . . . .

TOMORROW: "DANGER IN AFRICA"

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

"DANGER IN AFRICA"

I WAS HANGING AROUND OUTSIDE THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, HOPING TO get a good picture of the man, idly shredding a twenty shilling note, and ogling the pretty Muslim women who walked by. It was a suspicious part of L.A. When I was there last, they didn't have a president in California, much less a palace. Also, it seemed like the population had taken to wearing Afros and colorful printed skirts. It aroused my keen professional instincts. I had every reason to believe something funny was going on.

I lit up a Lucky with what was left of the twenty shilling note. Things had been weird ever since the minute I pulled the yellow handle in the airplane. There had been a giant explosion. Then it was like a kaleidoscope: I saw the Fat Man blast out in another direction, swinging from a parachute by his pudgy legs, still upside down. The airplane motored on, stately, with that Russian missile strapped to the landing gear. It continued to lose altitude in the direction of an old fort on the coast. It was funny. Not for the first time, I had the nagging suspicion that this was a part of L.A. I hadn't seen before. Suddenly I felt a shock and I was swinging from a parachute. Below me I saw some quaint little streets and people looking up. I barely had time to flex my legs and I was sprawled in the middle of a narrow street, surrounded



by a crowd of curious people.

"Taxi?" asked a gentleman from the wheel of his Mercedes.

"Buy a nice carved bowl," said another.

"Hash grass coke?" said a burnt-out beatnik.

I struggled out of my parachute, pulled the brim down on my hat, and lit up a smoke. I needed answers, and the Presidential Palace seemed the logical place to start.

I must have been lost in thought. I looked up and saw some cops running toward me. I dropped the unburned part of the shilling note, winked at a pretty girl in a turban, and took off . . . .

TOMORROW: NICK DANGER IN "NIGHT TRAIN TO NAIROBI"

NICK DANGER

IN

"NIGHT TRAIN TO NAIROBI"

WHEN I GOT TO THE TRAIN STATION, I WAS PUFFING LIKE THE STEAM locomotive that crouched at the far end of the platform. I had been all over this part of L.A., running from the cops. The town had changed since I had been away. This area seemed to be mostly black now, and they had narrowed the streets a lot. I kept running into blind cul-de-sacs. I was just about to run out of wind when I saw the gate to the train platform. "Mombasa Station" read the sign over the gate. It must be out in the Valley. I pulled my hat low over my face and lit a Lucky to be inconspicuous. I slid in through the portal and onto the long platform. The guy at the gate looked up and said, "Hu Jambo." It was suspicious as hell, but I had no choice now.

"Same to you, bub." I walked on quickly.

I heard the roar of jet engines overhead. Could it be the Fat Man mob? I looked up and scanned the horizon. You could have knocked me over with a ten-pound sledge when I saw it was the airplane I had jumped out of just two episodes ago! It cruised low overhead, the missile still attached to the landing gear. I wondered how the thing could still be flying. It was a tough question, and I set out to do some thinking the best way I could. I walked up into a little open-air bar and bellied up to the counter.

"Give me six Budweisers," I said, "and step on it."

"Sorry, Bwana, we have only Tusker beer here." This was really strange. The nagging feeling that something was very wrong returned; the same one that had been tugging on the zoot suit of my memory for the last twenty installments.

"O.k., short stuff, make it eight, then." I grabbed the first two cold ones and poured them down my throat. The beer was rich and cool, and it telegraphed sheer pleasure right down to the two-tone 88's on my feet. I decided to have another one or five. I quenched my thirst like they put out the Chicago fire. When I finally got a solid belch out, I leaned over the counter and grabbed the bartender by the lapels. "All right, buster. What part of L.A. is this anyway?"

The little man looked at me with eyes like saucers. "Missouri, Bwana, Asnate Sana!"

"This ain't Missouri, chump. My name is Danger, and I've been there!" I was getting my dander up. Nobody in this whole story was giving me the straight shake. I was just about to loosen up the bartender with a haymaker when I heard the shrill whistle of the train - and the little chirps of police whistles. Even I could figure that one out. I dropped the bartender and raced for the train. It was going to be a close shave. I almost dropped my last three beers in a final lunge for the last car. My hand missed, but I felt my wrist watch catch on the railing. To my horror, I found myself being dragged down the



cinders, the cops running frantically behind, and me with only three lukewarm beers to save me . . . .

TOMORROW: "DANGER GOES FIRST CLASS"

NICK DANGER

IN

"DANGER GOES FIRST CLASS"

THERE I WAS, BEING DRAGGED ALONG THE TRACKS BY MY WRIST WATCH, the police at my heels, my beers getting warmer by the minute. I had been in tighter situations, but I really couldn't remember when. I had a hefty slurp of beer and thought about the scam. I could drag myself aboard the train. That seemed to be a good starting point. I lit up a Lucky and thought about how I was going to do it. It was hard as hell lighting that cigarette with only one hand, but I am one tough cookie in a jam. I finished one of my beers and tucked the other two in the pockets of my blue suit. I tugged my hat on securely. I removed my tie. It was a nice one I had bought in Tijuana a couple of years back; it had palm trees and a bathing beauty all painted in radium so it glowed in the dark. Some buys don't like flashy clothes, but in my business it pays to be colorful. I could also use it as a flashlight if I had to. I had even taken the time to sew some lead curtain weights into the ends. It made it hang sort of funny, but I could use it as a bolo in a tight squeeze. There was none tighter than this one. I used my free hand to loop a johnny combat all-purpose throwing knot on the end.

Little kids along the sides of the roadbed kept pointing at me.

as I was dragged by. It was like they hadn't seen zoot-suited detectives being dragged along by the Night Train before. We must have reached suburban L.A. I twisted around so that my belt was crashing into the cinders instead of my buns. I took my time and lined up a perfect toss. I swung the weighted tie like a lasso after a charging Brahma bull. The tie snaked out of my hands and into the open window of the last car. It was a thing of beauty, if I do say so myself. The tie snaked around a little cord strung along the wall. I yanked for all I was worth. I wasn't worth much at this point, but it was good enough.

The train jammed on all four hundred air brakes, and we screeched to a halt in a cloud of sparks and white smoke. I impacted on the end of the train, picked myself up and pulled the strap of my wrist watch off the offending hook. I looked at the battered Timex. It was still ticking. John Cameron Swasey was right after all. I brushed off the dust and blood from my trousers and stepped up onto the train. I walked up the corridor past the sleeping cars until I reached the bar car. I walked in boldly and shoved a porter out of the way. "Get me another three or four beers, bub, and make it snappy. I'm one thirsty peeper."

"Missouri, Bwana."

"This ain't damned Missouri, chump." I may be a cheap gumshoe, but stupid, I'm not. I put my Luger up on the table so that people wouldn't bother me. "Let's get this show on the road, " I growled. The train lurched to a start. People moved away from me in the car -



all except two beautiful women and two drunks. They could have been  
fighter pilots . . . .

TOMORROW: NICK DANGER IN "VIGILANTE FORCE"

NICK DANGER

IN

"VIGILANTE FORCE"

THE TWO DRUNKS WHO COULD HAVE BEEN FIGHTER PILOTS GIGGLED and poked each other as we rocked along in the bar car. The two beautiful women crossed and uncrossed their beautiful gams. They wore short European skirts. I could feel the alcohol thundering through my brain like a runaway freight. I had a couple of beers to relax from my harrowing escape. Then I had a couple to celebrate my fortuitous release from certain death. Then I had a few more because I like the taste of beer. I was spinning the Luger on the table around by the pistol grip and sighting down the barrel at the people in the car. A bunch of people in turbans sat at the far end. Must be extras from one of the movie lots in Hollywood. The boy fighter-jocks were easy to figure out. One of them kept talking with his hands, twisting them up and down. He was either Italian or trying to impress the ladies. They seemed to be capable of extreme disinterest. One of the two - a short lady with a lithe little body and long brown hair - kept glancing over at my gun. I knew the type. Some of them think that guns are phallic symbols. I knew better. Phallic symbols are phallic symbols, and mine was starting to ache. I decided to play it cool, and ordered another round for myself.

One person in the room really bothered me. He was wearing a camouflage bush jacket, a long Afro, and a hostile look. I hadn't done anything to piss him off - at least, not yet - so I filed it for later action. I looked out the window of the train. The low bush vegetation rolled by with the rocking rhythm of the train. I must have taken the train to Safari Land. I saw a bunch of lions, a giraffe, and a couple of hundred wildebeasts. Normal for that part of California in the summer, I mused, a lot like the big pink snakes and elephants I see in the mornings sometimes before I take my first pick-me-up. Under the silver moon I saw a big mountain with snow on top. I was actually seeing about two of them by this time. One of the boy fighter pilots leaned over to me and pointed at it.

"Kilimanjaro," he said.

"Kill whoever you want to, amigo, but leave me out of it." I didn't like the look of his carefully groomed hair and the tattooed "Ellen" on his knuckles. I heard the putter of failing jet engines. I leaned out the window and looked. The fighter boys did the same thing. I couldn't believe my eyes. It was the same airplane that I flew back to L.A. in! It must have been very nearly out of fuel. It was on a collision course with the beautiful mountain in the distance. I saw the funny white shape of the Russian missile still stuck to the landing gear.

"That looks like that A-6 that idiot flew off the Midway," said the guy with the pretty hair.



"Yeah," said the other guy. "Boy, is the Navy going to cut him up when they catch him!"

I ordered another beer and chortled into the foam. I watched the airplane fly into the snowcapped peak and the horizon vanished into a brilliant white explosion. A shock wave almost knocked the train off the tracks.

"Jeeze!" said everybody.

"Bar service!" I shouted.

YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS TOMORROW'S EPISODE:

"NIGHT FIGHTERS OF NAIROBI"

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

"NIGHT FIGHTERS OF NAIROBI"

WHEN THE AIRPLANE HIT THE MOUNTAIN AND THE RUSSIAN MISSILE EXPLODED, there was pandemonium in the train. The women cried. The fighter guys were critical of the technique.

"I coulda done better than that with no radar and my RIO asleep," said the one with the neat hair. "Lookit, the guy only took off the first 10,000 feet of Kilimanjaro. Sloppy planning."

The guy in the camouflage jacket produced an AK-47 and began shooting up his dinnerware. I suppose he had been looking right at the blast. I figure he had blown up about five capitalist plates, an imperialist coffee pot, and a neo-colonial serving dish before he ran out of ammunition.

I was personally surprised by the vivid pyrotechnics. It was better than a drugstore opening in Hollywood, and I was getting the feeling that we were no longer very close to that part of L.A. I was even more astonished when a Thompson's gazelle came crashing through the window of the lounge car. It was obviously dazed. It jumped around in panic for a while, and I raised my Luger to put it out of its misery. It was just poor luck on my part that the animal blundered out of the car door and I winged the steward instead. I knew this was going to make the bar service slower than ever. I hoped Thom wouldn't mind

about his gazelle, but I didn't see him around anywhere. I walked back to the serving window and grabbed myself a beer or four. Never know when it might be time to stock up. I broke the top off one of them and lit up a Lucky. I sucked down the cool Tusker ale and watched the women trying to compose themselves. I sauntered over to them and sat down. I propped my two-tone 88 shoes up on a table, pulled an ash tray over so it was handy, finished my beer and toosed the empty out through the broken window where the gazelle came through. The molten stump of the mountain matched the fire red of the short one's lipstick. Here eyes were the color of a puddle with an irridescent oil slick over the top. She was a knockout. I belched and made my play.

"My name is Danger. How do you like me so far?"

"Oh, monsieur," she cried, "we are zo terrified of ze big, big boom. What does eet all mean?"

"Offhand, I 'd say somebody up there didn't pay their electric bill - but I could be wrong. Say, what's a dreamboat like you doing in this part of L.A.?"

"What?" she asked with a blank look.

"Oh, not you, too, sister. I've had it with the runaround." I made a move to stand up. It was a good thing she stopped me with a delicate arm, because the last thirty or so beers were starting to affect me a little.



"Oh, don't go. You see, we are going to rescue my poor brother from ze Night Fighters of Nairobi. He was keednapped from our humble home in Paris eighteen years ago'zees Friday."

It sounded fishy, but her beautiful gams had me paralyzed. At that very moment, the gazelle charged back into the room, knocked over my fresh beer, and I began shooting . . . .

TOMORROW: "NO GNUS IS GOOD GNUS"

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY'S EPISODE: "NO GNUS IS GOOD GNUS"

WE ROCKED ON THROUGH THE FAR EAST L.A. NIGHT. The glowing stump of the mountain gradually faded over the horizon behind us. I kept drinking steadily and listened to the European girl pouring out her tale of woe. Outside the bar car, I saw vast herds of elephants stampeding across the wide, grassy plains. I figured we must be approaching Bakersfield. No other animals jumped through the gaping hole in the window. That was good, because I was running low on ammunition. After I had shot the wild gazelle, several of the employees had lost their composure. One of them was weeping about the sacred mountain. You'd have thought somebody had bombed Disneyland. I plugged him to shut him up. It got a lot quieter after that, but the service was horrible. I had to stagger back to the bar myself to replenish my glass. After the last trip, I began to notice how helpless my new friend looked with her skirt bunched up around her waist. I was getting the feeling that she liked me. Her friend was knitting a bullet-proof vest out of a wad of steel wool she had produced from her industrial sized purse. She was the quiet type. Big lady, I thought, and really needed a shave. It should have alerted me, but I had too much on my mind. When you have been shooting gazelles, drinking Tusker lager, and blowing up sacred mountains all day, you get sloppy. But

that was my business. I had another drink or three and tried to pick up the thread of the lady's story. It went something like this:

"My name, eet is Michelle. Ours was but a poor family, but eet has a long and, 'ow you say, homerable history. My father was ze Duke of Montcreef, and we are direct descendants of the False Pope of Armentiers. My poor leetle brother was to be ze next French Legume. Eet was there that all our problems began . . . ."

"Yeah, babe," I said, "but doesn't 'legume' mean 'vegetable'?"

"Oh, mais oui, but my brother was never very smart after ze accident."

"O.K., get on with it, you luscious tomato." I cased those beautiful gams again, and they ran all the way up to her thighs. "I'm a sap for a dame in distress."

"Zat is what we 'eard, Meester Danger."

It should have sounded alarm bells in my finely honed professional brain, but I felt my head grow heavier and heavier. The next thing I knew it was daylight, and a porter was running up and down the car over the assorted corpses and broken glass, yelling, "Nairobi, Nairobi, ladies and gentlemen!"

I awoke with a start. The gorgeous girl had pulled down her skirt. My head felt as big as a dirigible, and my mouth was like the bottom of a birdcage. I must really have been out of it. I hadn't even realized we had crossed the Mexican border.

TOMORROW: "KENYATTA'S REVENGE"



"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

"KENYATTA'S REVENGE"

THE STEAM LOCOMOTIVE EXPIRED LIKE A STABBED DRAGON. Clouds of white smoke drifted past the window of the bar car and cast weird, pale shadows on the wreckage. I staggered to my feet and rubbed my chin. I needed a shave - and a shower. I needed a decent retirement plan, and a house in the country. What I had was a beautiful European girl, her frumpish friend, a carful of corpses, and the overwhelming need to move my bowels. I raced for the restroom at the end of the corridor, tipping my hat to the ladies as I flew. I made it just in time. As I sat on the throne, I was amazed by how quickly I had responded to being in Mexico. Nairobi! I had been to Nogales before, to attend the donkey and virgin festival, but I must have slept through Nairobi. After my lower intestines stopped cramping, I stood up and nearly fell against the door. I hadn't gotten more than a foot into the corridor when I heard the whistle of the blackjack through the air. I didn't even have time to get a Lucky out of my pocket. Sixteen ounces of lead smacked wetly into my head, and I went down like the Hindenburg. I only noticed that the tall lady needed a shave more than I did . . . and her wig was on funny . . . .

I came to in darkness. I was strapped to some sort of table, spreadeagled, and trussed like a pig for slaughter. Between my hangover

and the lump from where the sap hit me, was the little voice that said, "Danger, you really got yourself into it this time." I was trying to think around the white ball of pain when the lights came on. I was dazzled and couldn't see. I had a suspicion that this situation meant trouble. When I heard the rich, bubbling laughter, I was virtually certain. I was again in the clutches of the Fat Man!

I twisted my head around and sucked in my breath. He was fatter than ever. This time he had added about a Volkswagen in tonnage. He had also transformed his complexion into a rich ebony that glistened under the artificial light. His clothing knocked me out. He was wearing a British style field marshal's uniform, with a big badge that said "Conquerer of the British Empire". Under that was a thicket of multi-colored medals and a seal that said "President for Life of Uganda". He carried a little riding crop, and he flicked it across my face.

"Hey!" I said.

"You object to your treatment, Danger?" His fat face creased into several smiles from each of his chins. "We have only just begun." He danced a little jig and sang the last line. Then he wheeled and leaned down over me. "You will talk, no?"

"That's right, blimpo. No."

"Ah, the classic tough guy. I do like your kind, but only after they have been suitably tenderized." He looked back over my head and shouted to someone I couldn't see. "Get the coals ready . . . and the

barbecue spit . . . and lots of potato salad and dip."

"At least I was going to get dinner," I thought . . . .

TOMORROW: "FINGER LICKIN' GOOD"



"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

"FINGER LICKIN' GOOD"

I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO THE BARBECUE. I really like cookouts back home, and I thought it was real kind of the Fat Man to invite me to this one. The funny thing was that the cute little trick I had met on the train came in and cut off my clothes. She used huge trimming shears and gave me a little grin when she left my nice \$2.95 zoot peg-leg trousers in ribbons.

"Listen, angel, you gotta get me outta here. I can't go to the barbecue like this," I whispered.

She responded in a voice that was as French as the continental side of the Bronx. "The only way you are going to the picnic is on a spit, Danger. You really are the prize chump of a lifetime, and I've seen my share."

"What?" I replied cleverly.

"Nick, you are such a tool. Let me draw you a picture." She rested the shears on my chest and looked contemplatively into my eyes. "The Fat Man is President for Life of Uganda. That is the cover he uses here in Africa. He is going to get rid of you once and for all, and he is going to do so at the Big People's Sacrifice Patrice Lamumba Memorial Cookout. You are going to be the main course. Some of the tribes still believe that you attain the strength and cunning of your

enemies if you partake of their flesh. In your case, however, I think everyone is going to lower his I.Q."

I had to think that one over for a minute. "You mean we aren't in Los Angeles?"

"Danger, you are really a gem. I don't believe I have ever met such a complete boob." She took a large mop and dipped it into a pail of golden oily liquid. She started spreading the oil all over my spreadeagled body. It was warm, and it tickled.

"What are you doing?" I giggled.

She sighed. "I'm basting you, dimbulb." She got a good coat over me and put down the mop. She bent over and laughed at me. "I always wanted to laugh in the face of Danger," she said.

You can never accuse me of not thinking ahead. My mind raced. "How 'bout a quickie, tomato?"

"You take the cake, sucker." She stuck a couple of fingers in her mouth and gave a whistle. "O.K., boys, he's ready to go."

A couple of big strapping guys in loincloths came in with two long poles. They unbound me and tied me to one of them and stacked me in the corner. Then they grabbed my erstwhile tormentor, ripped off her smart clothing, and did the same number on her. They rested her pole next to mine, dumped the rest of the butter on her, and walked out, laughing like idiots.

"Hey," she said, "what do you dung-beetles think you're doing?"

"Idi says he's hungry, honky Bwana-lady. Ha ha."

I looked over at her - so helpless and vulnerable. "I suppose a blow job is out of the question?" I said.

She was still screaming when they came to get us . . . .

TOMORROW: "I'LL TAKE THE SPECIAL SAUCE"



"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

"I'LL TAKE THE SPECIAL SAUCE"

I DECIDED I WAS GOING TO CALL HER MEEMIE. It was only fair, because she was giving me a severe case of the screaming meemies. She couldn't seem to grasp the fact that she had been doublecrossed by the Fat Man, or "Idi", as that Slob of Subterfuge was calling himself now. I suppose it gets easier when you have been duped, conned, bamboozled, and swindled as much as I have. It reminded me of a Navy recruiter I had known one time. But that's another story.

"Don't worry about this," I whispered to her as they carried us toward the fire. "I always get out of these things. I'm too tough to die."

"Or stupid," she sobbed. "Don't you see what a jam you have gotten us into?"

I love the ladies. Ten minutes ago she was basting me for the fire and now it was me that got her into the situation. I looked around with some interest from where I was hanging under the long stick. Looked like quite a party. There were a couple hundred people doing a weird jitterbug. Dozens were clustered around big kegs of beer, swilling it down and having a great time. I could have used several beers at the moment, but no one looked like he was going to help me out. At length

they brought us before a huge chair made out of animal bones, old car fenders, and capped by a big green and yellow flag. In the middle, sat the Fat Man. They dumped us down unceremoniously in front of him and our husky bearers retreated, bowing furiously. Two delightful ladies were fanning the Obese Omicron of Crime. He needed it - he was wearing a cute little beret of green wool with jump wings on it, his toy soldier jacket, and a leopard skin cape. Several poor cats must have sacrificed their lives to provide enough fur for that monstrous body. The hat made his bowling-ball shaped head look like the Girl Scout Cookie Monster. I managed a heroic gesture in the face of impending doom.

"Hiya, Fatso. How's it hanging?"

"Ah, Danger, it is so good to see you again in these pleasant circumstances. I am hopeful that you suffer the agonies of a thousand flea bites before you expire. It will be a great show for my people."

"Speaking of expiring," I said with a lightning flash of inspiration, "the meter is running on my Packard. You don't mind if I sorta hike back and take care of it, do ya?"

"Oh, Danger," he laughed, "you are such a transparent dolt. It is a pity that the world will be deprived of such a continuing source of amusement."

I had a feeling my scheme wasn't going to work. I flexed my muscles against the bonds. Time for Plan Two. I could feel the people crowding in around us to watch. It was now or never, and our lives

depended on my next move. It would be a supreme effort - the culmination of a lifetime.

"Look!" I shouted. "It's Haley's Comet!"

TOMORROW: "DANGER CHEWS THE FAT"



"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

"DANGER CHEWS THE FAT"

MY PLAN WORKED LIKE A CHARM. When I yelled "Haley's Comet!" they all turned around and began to scan the sky. It was a simple matter to snap the weak manila cords that bound me to the cooking spit. I stood out and stretched. The crowd was starting to murmur that "der wan't no funky comet." I knew I had to work fast. I couldn't leave Meemie to the tender mercy of that bunch. Well, maybe I could. In fact, it seemed like a downright good idea. What had she ever done for me except show me some great gams, a fantastic body, and a perfectly horrid personality? I bent over and untied her wrists.

"Come on, Meemie. We have to get out of here before they suspect something is wrong," I whispered into her pert little ear.

"Danger, for a near mongoloid idiot, you are one swell hunk of man," she said, leaping to her feet. We embraced passionately.

Around us, the crowd was turning ugly. Well, some of them were just born ugly - like the Fat Man. He was turning his massive, moonlike silhouette toward us.

"Babe, we gotta break the clinch. I think they are starting to get wise to us."

"Get them!" shouted the corpulent world leader. "He is a false prophet, a defiler of the currency, a revisionist running dog of the

Imperial Colonialists!"

A gentleman next to me leaned over to ask me what the hell he was talking about. He was careless enough to let his AK-47 near my eager hands. I made a lightning grab for it, and I was armed again! Stark naked, I'll grant you, but a dangerous man, just the same.

"Everyone freeze!" I yelled. "We have you surrounded. Lay down your weapons and come out peacefully!"

It seemed to confuse the man I had just taken the machine gun from. He leaned over and asked me what the hell I was talking about. I shot him in the foot.

"You are all under arrest!" I began to edge backwards through the crowd. "I am a member of the East L.A. Chamber of Commerce, and by the power vested in me, I order you to line up and take your medicine!"

Meemie looked at me with huge eyes.

"Keep going, sister," I whispered.

In only a few steps, we would be at the presidential limousine. The crowd was just starting to line up. "By height, you idiots," I screamed. I was almost sure we had it made when the Fat Man made his play.

"I'll guarantee the ears and the tail to whoever gets them first!" he shouted, and came up with a 105 mm recoilless rifle from his extra husky tunic. I fired a burst at the mob that had suddenly turned on us.

I shoved Meemie ahead of me toward the car, but I had a suspicion that this had all gone too smoothly. Suppose the Fat Man had watched all those commercials and had taken his keys with him?

TOMORROW: "LEAVE THE DRIVING TO US"



"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY'S EPISODE: "LEAVE THE DRIVING TO US"

MEEMIE SCRAMBLED INTO THE MERCEDES AS I CONTINUED TO FIRE OVER the heads of the crowd. I wasn't shooting high for humanitarian grounds. I was hoping to hit the Fat Man as he worked the mechanism of his recoilless rifle. Things were happening too fast. In the middle of all the confusion, we had a total eclipse of the sun, which is considered good luck back in L.A. I was thinking maybe we could slip away under the cloak of darkness. The simple, superstitious people were panicked. Look," said one, "it appears to be a complete eclipse of the solar disk."

"Quite right, old chap," said another.

"How interesting," said an obviously terrified young woman.

They simply went to pieces. I was confident we could elude them when I heard Meemie start the car.

"Good thinking, dollface," I shouted over my shoulder. Let's get a move on!" I noticed she was already putting the car in gear, and I wasn't anywhere near being inside it. I turned and made a frantic leap for the door. No chance. She was already throwing gravel out from under the rear tires. The best I could do was grab one of the handles for the security positioned over the rear bumper. The car fishtailed wildly, gaining traction, and off we flew. Poor kid. She must have

been so scared that she hit the gas instead of the brake. She never would have left me to the howling mob. I looked in through the rear window and caught her eye in the rear view mirror. She looked surprised. She pursed her mouth and the car began to really shake as she twisted the wheel back and forth. It was almost like she was trying to throw me off. As it turned out, it was a good thing she did it. A 105 mm shell screamed by and turned a peaceable giraffe, munching on a tree next to the road, into 2300 pounds of mystery ground chuck. It could have been us. Meemie really got her foot into it, and the car seemed to be airborne as much as it was on the ground. At last, the picnic area disappeared behind a dusty curve. It was funny that she didn't slow down. I would have enjoyed the sight of her hair blowing around over her naked shoulder a lot more if naked parts of me weren't banging into the trunk of the Mercedes.

"Ungh!" I said. It was all I could do to just hang on to my AK-47 and the hand grip. I could barely appreciate the marvelous scenery and many colorful animals we ran down as the huge car honked wildly through little villages. At length, we came to a paved section of road, and I ceased to bang into the rear of the car so much as hang straight out in the wind. That little lady could really fly when she set her mind to it. It therefore came as no surprise to me when we flashed by a sign that said "Jambo. Welcome to the Nairobi International Airport and Game Preserve". We rammed a guard shack, leaped a median and headed

for the terminal. I began to get what she had in mind when I saw the jet parked out on the taxiway. It was the only way to get away from the Fat Man . . . far away. They would never notice two naked people in the large crowd. It was ingenious. I was congratulating our good fortune when she hit the brakes and I entered the car by way of the rear window.

TOMORROW: "DANGER ON THE JAMBO-JET"



"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

"DANGER ON THE JAMBO-JET"

IT TOOK ME A MOMENT TO PICK THE SHATTERED WINDOW GLASS FROM MY teeth. The impact had given me a rude headache as I passed through the rear window, bounced off the rear leather seat, and wound up in a ball next to the steering wheel. I looked up at her statuesque naked body. I spit a chunk of glass from my mouth. "That was swell driving, Meemie," I said. That actually looked like a tooth I had just spat out. I explored the inside of my mouth with my tongue.

"Thanks, Danger. I was surprised you made it." She reached over and grabbed my AK-47 and opened the door. "And thanks for getting me out of that jam back at the campfire." She stepped out of the long Mercedes and carefully closed the door. "See ya 'round, chump." Her little pale buttocks swayed as she walked away from the car.

"Wait a minute!" I shouted. "You can't take my gun. I'm the detective around here!"

It didn't seem to faze her in the slightest. She nodded to a gentleman in a blue police uniform and strolled into the terminal. I squirmed around in the seat until the world was right side up again. The blow had dazed me considerably. I opened the door and nearly fell on my face. I staggered upright and held on to the side of the car.

What chance did I - a naked private dick from L.A. - have to escape the situation? I noticed a large brimmed hat on the rear seat. I grabbed it and jammed it low over my eyes. I wished I had a Lucky. All I could do was throw back my wiry shoulders and try to bluff it out. I walked resolutely toward the terminal, weaving only slightly.

I approached the policeman. He was a tall, dark gentleman, with a thin mouth and no smile at all. "'Scuse me, buddy," I said, "but did you happen to see a naked tomato walk by here with a machine gun?"

"We grow many vegetables here in Kenya, but none of them to my knowledge carry assault rifles." He looked me up and down. I had a feeling he didn't like me. I ran my hand around the brim of my hat and walked away.

"Sir, you might wish to purchase a pair of trousers as a souvenir of our country."

I could feel a wisecrack bubbling to my lips. "Oh, yeah?" I replied cleverly. I kept walking. I went through the double glass doors and into the building. I saw a cocktail lounge and a beautiful derriere going around the corner to the boarding area. I was torn between duty and pleasure. I looked up at the schedule. There was a flight leaving for Angeles City, R.P., in five minutes. I knew where Meemie was headed. As I raced for the gate, I wondered at a place so primitive that they couldn't even spell Los Angeles correctly.

TOMORROW: "HOMEWARD BOUND"

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

"HOMEWARD BOUND"

IN SPITE OF THE NEAR OVERWHELMING DESIRE TO STOP FOR A FEW cocktails, I managed to keep my mind on business. In this case, it wasn't that hard. I was following those beautiful buttocks down the long passage to the loading gates. I had to admit Meemie was a cool customer. In spite of her naked state, she walked like a queen with the AK-47 slung casually over her shoulder. She jiggled in a delightful way. For all the embarrassment she showed, she could have been strolling down Vine Street waiting to be discovered by a Hollywood talent scout.

I kept my hat brim low over my eyes, so that I would be inconspicuous. I still wasn't comfortable without my trousers. Or my gun. I realized it when I stopped at the little cigar stand to get some smokes. "Luckies," I said, "and make it snappy, buster." I reached for my pocket to get some change, but I realized I didn't have any. Pockets or change, that is. I was embarrassed for a moment, but I saved the situation by reaching over the counter and threatening the clerk's life. He seemed to get real cooperative. I tipped my fedora and walked down to the gate. Meemie was just going through the metal detector.

"Anything to declare?" asked the bored guard.



"Just this machine gun," she said sweetly. "Isn't it just a darling model? I really am traveling light this trip."

The guard waved her by with a casual motion.

I got at the back of the line, smoking a Lucky and scoping the situation. I was in a tough spot - no money, no ticket, no clothing. I was going to have to think fast. I came up to the tall hoop of the metal detector. The guard looked at me suspiciously.

"Anything to declare?" he growled.

"Just this hat," I said sweetly. "Isn't it a darling model? I really am traveling light this trip." His eyes narrowed in suspicion.

"Let me see your ticket," he growled.

"I told you I was traveling light, dimwit!" And with that, I jammed his hat down over his eyes. I vaulted the counter and raced for the waiting jet. I could see the last of Meemie swaying provocatively up the boarding ladder. I took it two steps at a time. I reached her right at the airplane's hatch.

"Give me that chopper, babe," I shouted. I pointed it into the cockpit and said, "I'm taking this crate to Los Angeles!"

"Right, then," said the captain in a cultured British voice.

"Angeles City it is, just like it says on the tickets."

"Oh, O.K.," I said. "Do you mind if I sit first class?"

"Not at all, old chap. All our hi-jackers get first cabin treatment."

"Awfully decent of you."

"Not at all. Would you mind if we got on about our business?"

"We do have an airline to run, y'know."

"Terribly sorry," I said, and pushed Meemie back into the first class section. "Babe, I get the feeling you are trying to ditch me."

"Who, me?" she said. "Try to ditch a moron like you? Why, any girl would be happy to have a naked, incompetent shamus like you around."

"That's a relief," I said. "Say, where do you get bar service in this joint?" I must have gotten preoccupied with the drinks, because I swear I never saw the stout figure in the white suit and broad hat come up the aft ladder. He had the debonair look of five sacks of potatoes. It would have raised the hairs on the back of my neck if I hadn't found the gin and tonic locker. The engines began to whine and the jet lurched into movement. "Well, lookit this. I think I'll have a triple!"

"Danger, you are such a chump," said Meemie.

"Thanks, babe. Here's lookin' at you, kid."

TOMORROW: "EASTWARD, HO!"

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

TODAY: "EASTWARD, HO!"

I RESTED THE AK-47 ACROSS MY KNEE AND SETTLED BACK TO ENJOY THE flight. The gin and tonics were superb. The first was just to test the mixings. The next four were for pure enjoyment. I had been through a lot in the last twenty episodes: I had been shot at, pummeled, chased, prodded, and humiliated. But I could feel things go over the hump. I had a machine gun on my knee, a beautiful naked lady at my side, and an aircraft to command to any destination I pleased. I lit up two Luckies and ordered another drink. I thought I'd go naked more often. No underwear to ride up during frantic chase scenes, no shining shoes - just comfort. Meemie was fixing her makeup from a purse she grabbed from some older tourist. She looked swell. I was starting to get some ideas about what to do about it when the captain came up on the intercom and announced in his smooth British voice that if we looked to our right we could see what was left of Mount Kilimanjaro. I eyeballed the situation. Sure enough, there was a large stub of a hill there. Not that impressive, really. I felt a quiet pride in being part of the effort to redecorate the terrain. If we leveled more mountains, there would be plenty of free parking. I was feeling expansive. Meemie raked my thigh with her ruby red nails, and I had to put my hat in my lap. I ordered another couple of rounds to hide my embarrassment.



"Babe, you shouldn't do that in public," I said.

"Oh," she murmured, "the old fashioned type. Not only are you dumb, you're a fuddy duddy. Danger, how have you stayed alive this long?"

I was about to tell her about my reputation as the back-seat king of Hollywood High School, when the captain broke in. "If you will kindly notice, ladies, gentlemen, and that idiot with the machine gun, we are passing now over the coast of Kenya. Our flight time across the Indian Ocean will be twelve hours to Angeles City, Republic of the Philippines."

"Doesn't that clown know where Los Angeles is?" I growled.

Meemie was smiling and about to say something, when the captain continued: "Below us you will see the American Aircraft Carrier Midway steaming from the Gulf of Aden. This powerful warship apparently was responsible for loosing a lunatic upon the nation, who shot up the night train to Nairobi, humiliated the President for Life of Uganda, destroyed the sacred mountain of Kilimanjaro, and is wanted for indecent exposure, reckless driving, and the attempted hi-jacking of a Kenya Airways Jambo-Jet."

"That guy sounds like trouble," I said. "I hope we don't run into anybody like him on the way back to L.A."

"Only if we see a full length mirror, shamus," she murmured.

"What's that?" I had a feeling she was driving at something. I wasn't sure what, but I felt it had something to do with me.

"THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

"TOUCH AND GO"

IT WAS AN INSIGNIFICANT BOLT, REALLY, THE KIND YOU CAN BUY FOR A few hundred dollars down at the local jet supply shop. It rapidly came to be an important feature as it slowly wiggled out of the pylon mounting that held the engine pod to the aft end of the sleek DC-10 that was taking me to Angeles City. I was minding my own business, working on my tenth cocktail of the flight and admiring the naked upholstery of the woman next to me. I was in hog heaven. I knew there was something wrong when a familiar squeaky voice came from the back of the first class cabin:

"At last, Danger. You have escaped my clutches once too often. Meet your fate, you bumbling peeper!" It was the Fat Man!. How he got aboard I didn't know, but I did know that the recoilless rifle in his hands boded me no good. I turned to gaze on his furious dumpling face. Sometimes you just have to grab the bull by the tail and face the situation.

"You talking to me, you tub of lard?" I inquired sweetly.

"Don't piss him off, Danger," whispered Meemie. "I think he means business."

"You don't frighten me, you impotent hog. Your mother wears army boots." It was the most violent epithet in my extensive vocabulary. I

was playing a risky game, but it was the only chance I had.

The Fat Man turned a remarkable series of colors, starting with red and transitioning to purple. He answered with a blast from his portable cannon that ripped a huge chunk out of the cabin wall. We were lucky. The decompression sucked two elderly ladies out of their seats behind us, plunging them 30,000 feet to their doom.

"Oh, dear!" said one.

The other vanished without a sound, although I noticed she didn't have bad legs for an old dame.

The Fat Man was working the breech frantically to pump in another shell. I was just swinging up the AK-47 when the recalcitrant bolt made up its mind to part company with the flying circus. There was a sudden violent lurch and everything not strapped down was hurled to the ceiling. This included various cannons, fat individuals, cocktails, and complimentary sandwiches. I still had my seat belt fastened, and it was the result of a lifetime of training that I saved my gin and tonic. I lost sight of Meemie. The Fat Man was screaming with rage. Moans and the sounds of grown men crying filled the air. I slapped myself across the face, and the crying faded. I heard the calm voice of the captain on the loudspeaker over the commotion.

"Ladies, gentlemen, and thugs, we seem to be experiencing a bit of trouble here. I shouldn't be too concerned, though, if I were you. It is a lucky stroke that I am a veteran of the Royal Navy, and have landed



dozens of times on aircraft carriers. It should be no problem to set this craft down on the powerful warship you will note just outside the cabin windows. I trust you will buckle up for safety, what? Well, here goes!"

I felt powerless. My fate was utterly in the hands of the crazy Brit up forward. I was scared, and I was running out of gin. I heard the sound of landing gear going down - and the disturbing sound of a man weeping.

TOMORROW: "WELCOME ABOARD, MR. DANGER"

"NICK DANGER"

IN "WELCOME ABOARD, DANGER"

THE SOUND OF WEEPING FILLED THE AIR. I knew the crazy Brit pilot was going to try to bring us in on the powerful grey warship that was steaming purposefully below us. I knew I had to stop weeping; the tears were getting into my gin and tonic and giving it a salty taste. I looked up at Meemie, pinned to the ceiling. She had a look of stark terror on her face. I rotated my head and looked for the Fat Man. Sure enough, he, too, was spreadeagled on the overhead. He didn't have his pocket artillery with him, so he was no immediate threat. I concentrated on the bowel-loosening terror.

If I had been on the large grey ship, up in the tower, I might have heard a calm and resolute conversation. It might have gone something like:

"Hey, boss, we've got a DC-10 in the pattern!"

"Are you sure it's not one of those Russians again?"

"No, boss. It is an airliner, and it has a huge hole in it and an engine missing."

"Hmmm. Wonder what he wants out here?"

"Sir, he's coming into the break!"

"That's interesting. Why don't we give him a call and see what's up? After all, we have a cookout going on on the flight deck."

"I was meaning to have a talk with you about that, sir."

"Just get on with it."

"Yessir."

Then the radio would have crackled to life: "Uh, DC-10 in the pattern, say intentions and fuel state."

A British voice would have come back: "Hello, wot? Right, we have a bit of a problem up here, and we thought we might drop down for a bit of an arrested landing. Fuel state would be about 80,000 pounds, give or take a few."

"Say, boss, I think they want to come aboard."

"But that is ridiculous. We don't have a barricade that big."

"Boss, you'd better tell him. He's at a half mile."

"Well, in that case, tell him to call the ball. And you might want to have the MARDET report to the flight deck."

TOMORROW: "THE FINAL CHAPTER"



## "THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE"

### "THE FINAL CHAPTER"

OH, FAITHFUL READER, DISAPPOINTED THROUGH THESE LAST DAYS OF THE eastward transit, fear not! Nick remains hanging from his seat belt as the monster DC-10 wings in toward the mighty Midway. Meemie, his untrustworthy but buxom companion, is pinned to the roof, as is the indefatigable Fat Man. The Mad Brit is determined to bring them in, while the crew of CV-41 picnics unaware on the flight deck. Can this be the final chapter? Only the author knows, and he isn't really sure. He is fairly confident about Olongapo, but that is another matter altogether. The only answer is to return to the stricken aircraft, to that fateful moment in time, somewhere in the Bay of Bengal, when the world held its breath and strong men began to weep . . . .

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Well, there I was, folks - my drink nearly empty, tears coursing down my manly countenance, headed for certain death. I longed to touch Meemie in those last moments, but the wild gyrations of the big airplane made that out of the question. I heard a British voice calling out for someone to drop the bloody hook. I reached out to wave for a stewardess to get a refill, but my glass caught on the seatbelt buckle and I was thrown forward. I crashed through the door into the cockpit and wound up straddling the throttles. Beside me, the pilot was flying like crazy. He was turning the steering wheel, shifting gears, honking

the horn. His face was an iron mask of concentration. I asked him for a match for my Lucky. He gestured toward the lighter on the dashboard. I lit up and looked out through the windshield. Down below, I could see hundreds of men running. We would touch down in seconds. Sorta looked like a short runway, but I didn't want to bother the Brit. He honked the horn a last time, and I knew we were going to hit.

The shock of the impact drove me forward. It also cleared out all of the assorted people on the roof of the cabin behind me. Meemie came flying in, followed shortly by a recoilless rifle, the Fat Man, three stewardesses, and the bar cart. The pilot hit the brakes. I heard the screech of tires and smelled smoking metal. I saw the right wing hit a tall metal structure and shear off clean. When we finally stopped, the nose of the big airplane stuck out over the water. It had been a close thing. I reached for the bar cart and began to mix a pick-me-up.

The Fat Man was rolled up in the corner like dirty laundry. He began to stir, so I picked up the recoilless rifle. "I've got you covered, Fat Man. It's all over now . . . all thirty episodes . . . the heartbreak . . . the close calls. You are my prisoner, Fat Man, and this time there is no escape." It was a long speech for me, so I finished my drink and made another.

I felt Meemie's soft hands on my shoulders. "Gentle, baby," I said. "This has been a tough series."

"Oh, Nick," she cried, "do you really think it's done? I'll never set you up to be eaten by Idi Amin again. You big lug." She started a brisk back rub. It felt great after what the people had been hitting me with for the last couple of months. "Suppose the Fat Man escapes and it starts all over again?"

"Don't worry, baby. What are they going to do? Send us back here again? This case is one for the books. Closed - kaput - finis."

I felt great. Once again it had been Nick Danger versus the entire Indian Ocean pretending to be Los Angeles. I had figured that one out in only a month and a half. I lit another two cigarettes and reached for the bottle of gin.

THIS FALL:

WATCH FOR THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER, THIRD EYE!