

**The Snake Ranch  
Papers**

**A 14-month One Year Tour  
Korea, 1980**

THE SNAKE RANCH  
EAST IS RED AVE  
SEOUL  
1 AUG 1980

Dear Folks,

Well, here I am again, slipped inside an innocuous little white envelope. It is a magnificent sunny day outside. The winds from the Mongolian highlands are dominating the weather, and have temporarily driven the moist and humid rains down south. It is dry and cool and altogether beautiful.

So here I am in the back room at the plush BOQ, taking my big Morning Off to catch up on correspondence before going down to the Bunker to work on some extracurricular projects. I think I would rather be at the pool.

It was a rare treat to talk- or shout, rather, at Mother on the phone. It was a difficult feat. The process is somewhat convoluted, so let me outline how this miracle of modern microwave communication was achieved. Picture, if you will, your khaki-clad lohi-ban son behind the Sports Desk in the maximum security Bunker. His hand snakes out to the green console, boldly grabs the receiver and a sausage-like index finger boldly punches in the button that says JOSS (or Joint Overseas System or something). He waits, surrounded by top-secret messages and the ticking of the ZULU clock. Finally a Korean voice deigns to answer. "AUTOVON Opelatot Numba Twelve."

"Yes, this is the Command Bunker, and I would like a routine line to CONUS (Continental United States.)"

"Solly. Busy now you try later." Foiled! Back to work. Screening the traffic, answering phone calls ("Hello. Is this the hall phone at the BOQ?"), constantly safeguarding the security of the peninsula against sneak attack. An hour later he tries again. "Solly busy now you try later."

No less than five such attempts pass. Rage mounting at the thoughtless boors who are tying up the lines with official business, he makes a bold move and Goes Priority. "This is the Command Bunker. I would like a Priority Line to the States."

"Solly, busy now you try later." Curses! Everyone else in Korea must be in the darkened off-duty offices attempting to talk to lovers, detailers ("You gotta get me outta here!"), and families. Two more attempts and suddenly the operator responds with the magic phrase: "What number you want?" He smoothes the wrinkled paper that has a seven digit number scrawled across it; the only military line in all of Western Michigan. He recites the numbers slowly, and the operator punches them into the system. Because the call originates from the Bunker, he doesn't need a Controll Number specially authorized by the Command. After all, this might actually be Official Business. After all, it is a Priority Call. (He had briefly considered Flash Override Preseidence, but discarded the idea with some regret. Levenworth is so humid this time of the year.) The circuits click, and suddenly the electrical impulses leap from the AUTOVON CENTER to the ancient land lines that run part way down the

Penninsula. Then, leaping into the Microwave towers, the digits fly unimpeded by the Korean War corroded copper. A Soviet AGI floating in the Tsushima Straits routinely processes the microwave transmission. It arrives a heartbeat later in Japan, passes to the satellite relay and bounces up into the icy darkness, triangulating the vast span of blue water surging endlessly, passing from the Korean Night into the West Coast Morning. Down again, and in Conus, the excited electrons pass once more through the Downlink net, another Soviet floating off San Diego, and once more into the towers that march majestically across the mountains and the searing heat of the desert. The withered corn slows it not: onward it travels, fast as thought, suddenly arriving in the rich green Temperate Zone of the Michigan Afternoon. A faceless federal building on the Plaza. A tiny white light is illuminated on the panel of a telephone. A bored secretary glances at the clock, adjusts the frames on her harlequin framed glasses, and punches the button.

"Defense Procurement Agency. May I help you?"

"Yes. This is the J2 Duty Officer, U.S. Forces Korea. I need an outside line please." Static howls on the line and someone is demanding another cup of tea. In Russian.

"Korea?"

"Yes, this is Korea. Could I have an outside line, please."

"Oh, why sure! What is it?"

"Niner four niner, zero six, zero six." She punches it in and he hears the musical chimes as the electrons are patched from the Military system to the commercial lines of Ma Bell. Finally the transmission excites the switchboard that connects to a beige California-style house overlooking a small pond and a hill with a crooked telephone pole on top. Buzz-Buzz-Buzz-Buzz. "I'm sorry, the line is busy. Can you try later?"

In Korea, the maximum security area is pierced by the sound "SHIT!" as the receiver hits the hook, and relays drop off all along the circuitous route. They click in again as someone else makes a try.

\*\*\*\*\*

So although we have demonstrated that voice communication is indeed possible, there are several factors which operate against it as a reliable mode of passing the news. The Autovon Office in G.R. is only open during business hours, Monday through Friday. Within these gates, there are only a few hours a day when it is possible to get an overseas line, and these come in the deepest depths of the midnight shift. Even getting through, one is always liable to be pre-empted by someone bold enough to use a higher priority, or at the whim of the operator. So within these confines, I will try to keep you updated. But I think that letters are still more efficient on the whole.

Also: in the realm of Miracles, or at least Divine Interventions, the Package arrived! Obviously a foul-up by the Ace Postal Commandos. My thanks for the effort!

In other events, you have doubtless heard of the Midway accident. From pouring over the accounts of it, I can only judge that the Panamanian

was at fault. Due to the two Typhoons that passed over the P.I. in the last two weeks, virtually all the shipping in the South China Sea was forced down south of the shoul water of the Spratley Islands and into the confined waters of the Palawan Channel. It must have been as crowded as the Freeway at rush hour; the It's A Big Ocean Theory would have gone by the boards as the scopes lit up with hundreds of contacts.

I am sorry about the two that died, and sorry about the careers of the Big People. Capt Carmichael is a fine gentleman and an outstanding Skipper. The Navigator had performed flawlessly through all the hard steaming we had done. But the Navy Department will have it's scapegoats, deserved or not, and we shall see what comes of the investigation. The Captain of the America was still promoted after the Belknap disaster, so maybe things will work out after all. But it certainly does point up how thing the line is, when a single accident leaves us without a carrier in WestPac for the first time since the War.

Well, this has droned on long enough. Give my love to everyone! I am indeed sorry about "Blit-Blat" but maybe I absorbed too many micro-waves on the boat. Glad the kid got back, and give my best to Spike when you see him.

Love,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
RUE DE LA CHON  
SEOUL  
2 AUG 1980

Dear T.R.,

It was dark that night: dark enough for me to be almost fully passed out, listening groggily to some tape turned up full on the cheap panasonic that serves as my link to the hidden electronic world. The phone rang, echoing weirdly in the linoleum and fluorescent hallway. It is never for me, as I have few friends in the Green Machine, and don't, on principle, give out my number. Usually the calls are for the M.P.s; you know the type. "Racial Riot in progress via Itaewon. You want us to stop it, Mr. Humphry?" or "Yeah. Right at the bottom of the excavation. No, Sir, he ain't going anywhere and he really don't mind."

But not this one. Glen rapped on the door and shouted it was for me. I stumbled to the door and went into the hall. I saw the baggy white jockey shorts disappear back into luxury suite one. I picked up the phone with some small amount of trepidation. When you are in my business (and remember, my business is trouble) you don't get late night calls about safety programs or evals the J.O.s gaffed off weeks ago. Tech Sergeant McCarron was on the line. You could hear the little click as he depressed the security buttons on the handset in the impregnable Command Bunker. "Say, Lt Reddig, we just got something across the back channels about the Midway. Apparently she was in a crash or something."

"Oh wow" I responded cleverly. "Fuckin' A." I tried to think for a minute and all the Ranger Stories flashed through my mind: fuel oil fumes spreading throughout the ship, DIW, the towers of Singapore glinting in the darkness ahead, as inaccessible as they had been for the last years. So close, but sacrosanct and inviolable to the OVW-5 foot. "Any information on casualties?"

"No Sir, that's all we got."

"Is it classified?"

"Not as far as we know."

"O.K., thanks Sarg. I appreciate the call." I wandered back to the bedroom and flipped the tape over. I was just about unconscious again when the phone rang once more. I raced toward the door, colliding with only one of the upright barriers I am allowed to call walls instead of bulkheads. Reeling, I got to the phone and lifted the receiver.

"Hey, Lt, this is McCarron. That information I just passed to you?"

"Yeah. I remember."

"Well, we checked and it is Secret."

"Good. So know only us, the ROKS, the Russians, and the North Koreans are in on it, right?"

"Well, er, yeah, that's right. Sorry to bother you."

"No, No, entirely my pleasure." I dropped the phone back on the cradle. I knew I would be walking the floor all night, or at least that portion of it that was left before my wake-up to the shrill buzzing of the clockradio at 0330, so I went to the reefer and removed an icy cold beer. I popped the top and looked out into the darkness.

An Engineering Company spray truck grinded up the hill and continued the defoliation program against the mosquito population. The chemical cloud agent orange'd up against the open window and the beer tasted sour. I went back to bed with the fan propped up against the window to exhaust the fumes.

Some people will do anything to avoid the Indian Ocean, I suppose.

\*\*\*\*\*

Once I had gotten to work, and examined the scanty information, I wasn't as concerned as before. From preliminary data, it appeared that the impact had occurred around the port elevator, and it probably wasn't our fault. The dawning horror of the possibility that it had removed a large portion of the One Hundred and Fifty-First Medium Pursuit Air Force at a single swell fop began to haunt me. I could barely answer the sophisticated telephone system. "J-2 Indications Center, This is a non-secure line, Lt Reddig."

"Yeah, this is LCDR Blank over at ONE-K. Anything new on the Midway?"

"Just the press reports from Manuel Remudo Segundo in the P.I." I reached for the yellow file copy and pulled it across the desk. "The first one has the Nuclear Carrier Midway limping back to Subic from the Palawan Channel," while the second one (shuffling the large shief of xerox copies, maps, flimsies and messages) "Ah here it is, The second slug says Midway Steams back to Subic." I liked that one a lot better. "They have revised the aircraft totals to eight damaged. Still the same casualty figures. You can count on Mr. Secundo for unbiased reporting. They couldn't prove he was the HUK press secretary after all."

"Say, thanks a lot. I was on the Ranger, and I know how you must feel."

The impact of the phone going onto the hook chipped part of the ultra-modern console, which flew off and injured a light colonel reading the message traffic on the other side of the desk. They were applying a tournecet to his neck as I lit up a health cigarette and reflectively blew a cloud of smoke at the NK Order of Battle across the room. After a time I ground out the cigarette and said "Shit. This is going to kill Nick Danger sales."

\*\*\*\*\*

In reaction to a general spiritual malaise, I was forced to go on a foray to the Ville. I scraped hundred won peices out of the desk drawer. It was quite a bundle; perhaps five or six OBs worth. I was headed out the door when Dave, the MP Lt., offered me a ride up the hill. That suited me just fine, because the sooner I was sitting in Sam's Club the sooner I would be unconscious and singing along with Merle. We walked down the steps to the battered yellow Torino. The roof was partly caved in, the fenders would have made fine washboards for mama-san. Someone

had gone over the interior with a razor blade.

It was a fine automobile. Dave turned the key and four hundred-odd cubic inches thundered into cab-frightening life. We lurched out Gate Eight with a negligent wave to the guard. Dave cut off two kimochi cabs, sideswiped a motorcyclist, and we moved with stately grace up the slope.

With masterfull ease, Dave piloted the Torino through a gas station and into the curb across from the steps to the theater. We walked up past the 007 Club (now seeing dark days) and up an alleyway to the back door to Sam's Club, modestly billed as "Best In Korea." I don't know about the first part, but it certainly is in Korea. We went in and smelled the delicious Asian smell. It made me homesick for the Philippines: part urine, part dry rot, part black-market Lysol, and stale beer. I drank five beers and listened to the perilous life story of the former Army Narcotics OIC for Central and South America.

Yuck.

Later, after listening to another life story, this one heart-rendingly described by a diminutive bar girl, we left the club. The Ville has been plagued by violence of late, violence of a particularly virulent and racial caste. Being pleasantly lit up, Dave wanted to see how his Military Patrol was doing. I looked downslope and saw a large crowd of Blacks and Koreans glaring at each other. "Descretion is the better part of...." I started to say, but Dave was already moving into decisive action. I shrugged and followed him, little knowing that I was about to play a bit part as

\*\*\*\*\* J.R. REDDIG, JUNIOR M.P.!\*\*\*\*\*

I know, I know, this self aggrandizement has got to have a limit somewhere. I mean, it is sort of like the McCarthy show trials when the Army Secretary deflated the whole Witch Hunt by calmly asking "Have you no decency?"

Well no. But like I was saying, there I was, walking down the rude paving through a crowd of actual Negroes, angry ones. This one seemed to be breaking up into component groups, centering on two pathetic MPs, one black and one white. They appeared to be about to 'apprehend' a 'suspect' for smashing some windows, acting up, and generally D&D. He was black, of course, and the clubs on that part of the hill have become a miniature ghetto. Because of funding and undermanning, the MPs can't patrol the Ville like they used to, and consequently the people are doing their hanging out on the street. As appears to be the case all over this summer, anytime a cop hassles a minority (justified or not) it is an incident in the making. We breezed through the one crowd and got to where they were bracing the 'suspect' up against the wall. Two bars were spilling out into the street to watch the obvious brutality. I noticed I was one of the only three white faces in evidence and the famous line "What do you mean Us, kimosabe?" occurred to me. A fight broke out upslope, and one of the MPs had to run off. Dave moved towards the 'suspect' with handcuffs and told me to race forthwith to the police box and call in the riot squad.

This was definitive tasking, and what's more, it involved using my feet. Ideal. I raced off downhill through three or four surly looking individuals.

I made the Police Box in near record time. I rushed in waving my I.D. card, looking debonaire in my hawaiian print shirt and faded jeans. In less time than it takes to type these misspellings we had summoned reinforcements, and were rushing out to jump in the squad-car.

If I had not already been drunk, I'm sure the rational option would have occurred to me; to wit, squadcar north, me south. But the excitement of the moment carried me away and I leaped into the back seat with a heavily armed Korean, and off we sped, lights flashing, cattle prods drawn, itching for Danger and Brutal enforcement.

We screeched to a halt outside the UN Club of song and story. The doors flew open and our little task force raced uphill. The 'suspect' was strglling with his cuffs. Dave was trying to order some Blacks back into the club. Another fight was going on. The reinforcements had turned on the siren, and were getting closer. I viewed with alarm, and a certain adreniline inspired truculence.

There was, I am embarrassed to say, one prisoner.

I don't know what is going on, what with Miami and Orlando and Chatenooga and the rest, but having grown up in Detroit, I am familiar with the symptoms. I think maybe Thailand would be safer.

Say, I have to go to work now, so take care. What did you mean by that crack about Kamiseya in your letter? I felt the cold wind of the term "Area Specialist" on the back of my neck.....

Thumbs up & Bums away!

HONORARY RESERVE MILITARY JUNIOR PATROLLER



THE SNAKE RANCH  
RUE DE LA CHON  
SEOUL  
3 AUG 80

Jane,

.....and later that same day we found our hero slumped over the still smoking Smith Corona. The situation had apparently become too much for him; the events had piled up and left him no recourse. They all agreed that the past few weeks had been hectic, what with the nice weather rolling down out of Manchuria. Oh, sure it was Communist weather, if one was to be a strict constructionalist about things, but the sunburns on the young lieutenant were approaching third degree. "No Sweat!" he had shouted in exuberance at the Officer's Club pool. "I had a great tan just last year! More drinks!"

That and the Midway Collision. The people walking softly around the Sports Desk, talking in low whispers. "He used to be on that scow. Just like the Ranger, you know." Sounds of breaking plastic as the telephone crashes down onto the hook, shrapnel flying and injuring a light Colonel, innocently reading the traffic on the other side of the ultra-modern console.

Everyone agreed that the adventure of the Junior Military Police was what had set him off in earnest. The mounting racial problems in the Ville had culminated one evening in a small incident; small that is, if you were not in the middle of it. Walking briskly out of Sam's Country Western Club, Best In Korea, he had suddenly found himself in a crowd of angry black troopers harrassing the pigs, and worse, found himself by virtue of an ill-chosen companion, one of them. First Liberty City, then Chattenoga and Orlando, and finally the Battle of Itaewon Hill. He had mumbled things like "I remember 1967! I was right there in the suburbs and once saw a National Guardsman!"

But in the final analysis, it was probably the Mass Gangster Round-up that tore it wide open. The Martial Law Command had conducted the mass arrest with unusual precision. Over 8600 perverts, degenerates, and newsmen had been plucked from their neighborhoods on the evening of the 31st. It was the President Park Power Consolidation all over again, just like way back in '62. Why was the past coming back so strong? It was eerie, looking through the old files and seeing tomorrow's news before it happened, but without the miscues. Just like clockwork. The Bunker agreed that General Ohn would be seated in the Blue House by next year. No bout about it.

The summer had risen to the big August Break. The Perverts and Newsmen were safely in the re-education camps. Memory being what it was, it seemed that Labor Day was out there someplace, bearing down like a locomotive. Time to get ready for Fall, and then the chilly winds. Time to change the anti-freeze in the typewriter, pack on some added insulation so that the keys wouldn't freeze solid. And get ready for new tricks from our old friends to the North.

The ambulance screeched to halt outside the quaint cinderblock hooch. It looked like they were going to take him to work anyway.

Take care,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
RUE DE LA CHON  
SEOUL  
10 AUG 1980

Dear Meat,

As an Intel Officer, you are aware that I am privy to many sources not available to mere mortals. I was utilizing one of them the other day; having read the Sports Section (only fair, after all I man the Sports Desk in the Command Bunker) I turned to the front page and read the twadry Billygate stories, the boring it's-another-hurricane/typhoon-leader with colorful picture, and turned to the second page, where the stories of real import are usually located in our TS/Codeword edition of the Stars 'N Stripes.

On the upper right hand corner was a small block which was headed by the bold typeface: "Third Phantom Lost; Skipper Sacked; Intrepid RIO Saves Day."

I had to muse on this peice of data for a moment. Was it possible that A) Martin Baker had been chosen for a special Fleet Utility Test Cycle in our own outfit, unbeknownest to the stalwert JOs? B) That the entire Eye Five Eye air force was now OBE? (Late statistics from the famous Collision Caper not having arrived at the Bunker.) C) That an unscheduled change-of-command ceremony might occur right there in Subic Bay?

I just didn't know.

What was better, though, was the happy news that Meat (soon again to be the distinguished Alan Clever, short 'e', thankyou,) had endured the ordeal, and joined the once elite (although rapidly expanding) ranks of the ejectors (or is that ejectees?) So anyway, disjointed as this is, I want to convey my happiness that it all came out OK.

I suppose this means the Rocks got the Battle 'E' nomination?

I don't have the access to Navy Traffic where I work; these people seem to believe that the world begins at the Tsushima Straits, and terminates fifty clicks south of Vladivostock. So if you get a chance, I would be interested in hearing what the story was, within the confines of the investigation and all that happy bullshit. It is all secondary to the fact that you are OK.

My little life is cruising on apace. Nothing much happining except some semi-wierd activity by our friends to the north. I am hoping that they will use this year as a training cyobb for the Big One, which will commence sometime minutes after my MAC flight departs Osan and heads East. Due to the precipitous nature of the situation, I am coming to the view that I might take another tour just to get out of here on time, vice lingering as the Nav plods along, eking the last drop of blodd from the turnip. Once more, I am virtually confounded by events.

To put the seal on many of the opinions I have been formulating here at the Peninsula Club South, I had an opportunity to journey to the cultural Centers of Uijambu and Tam Dae Chon the other day. They are north of here; which is to say, not far, but within artillery range

of certain fanatical gooks. The other fanatical gooks, I mean.

We were honored by the touring of many high security areas, temporarily established in quonset huts because the Combined Field Army Command had the misfortune to burn down the underground bunker last month.

I know, I know.

Anyhow, it was an stirring adventure into Never Never land: Yanks working for Roks, the Roks busy establishing a new dictatorship (they have arrested over 22,000 in the last week. The figures are broken out for our benefit, so that there could be no confusion as to this being a political purge. There are 18,799 Hooligans in custody, 2,412 Swindlers and Extortionists in the hoosegow, and 789 Vice Offenders.) The Roks are an astonishing people when it comes to efficiency. Much better than the Germans; I could see immediately from the figures that not one political figure was detained. It is amazing. I was just as impressed during the Kwangju troubles that despite the fact that about 500 'looters, rioters, and communists' were inadvertently scragged, not a single civilian was hurt.

And in the new concept, we work for them. Super idea. I just wish I could meet the high-level staffers who made it all possible. The Head of the new Combined Intel Section is a ROK O-6. His first directive was that he was unavailable on week-ends, or after Duty Hours.

Strict Professionalism is, of course, the order of the Day.

The trip to the Second Infantry Division, even further North, was a positive breath of fresh air. The famous American Suicide Division was all American, for one thing. For another, the deputy Intel weinie was a phenomenal-looking female Captain. There were many buses and tanks, trucks and artillery, everyone in camouflage, very Tactical. Almost real. And no ROKs running around. They honored us by the invitation to go up to Guardpost Collier in the DMZ, with actual steel helmets, flack jackets, and weapons to clasp in hot sweaty hands. It should prove to be quite an adventure, and worthy of many preparatory cocktails. Perhaps I can bag my first Communist without actually going to South Africa. Or perhaps they will bag me. Yuck, Yuck.

Well, listen, I have a Day Off Today, which means that I only have to work about five hours. I have to toddle off to the Bunker, and I am hoping this does not find you at sea, bound for that area of greasy swells which is etched permanently in my grey matter.

Thumbs up and Bums away! Hello to Jambeaux. Where is he going?

THE SNAKE RANCH  
RUE DE LA CHON  
SEOUL  
12 AUGUST 1980

Dear Terry,

The summer is fleeing and I thought I would pass along a quick update on the scene here; there have been a few changes since the last letter.

The first is the emergence of Gen Chon, described very nicely in the enclosed press clipping from the Pacific Stars N' Stripes. Chon was a LTGEN when I arrived here on the Peninsula, and that is not what you would call eons ago. He was a MGEN on the night of December 12, 1979. (That is the famous 12/12 incident when President Pak took a hike to join his esteemed ancestors.)

The quotes from Gen Wickham which appear in the press may indicate a change to our chain of command here; at least, that is the rumor. The source is A-1 on that.

One other thing should be mentioned. The lucrative language lesson business is now OBE. One of the problems with the coming of the Chon group has been the overt disapproval of the U.S. Government. In direct consequence, the Martial Law Command has directed that all language classes must be conducted at regular Universities, and by accredited personnel. Naturally the target of this is not a little language, but the very wide contacts between Korean Students and U.S. military people. Our newmagazines, radio, and TV are not subject to censorship by the MLC (in fact, you could get \$10 for a stateside Newsweek during the Kwangju Affair) and so it would appear that for the sake of good order, Gen Chon would like to restrict contact between us and them as much as possible.

I am in no way suggesting that an adversary role is emerging between us and the host nationals; however, the road to the Blue House for Chon is being traveled in a most expeditious manner.

\*\*\*\*\*

In other events, the summer training cycle is beginning up North as the Monsoon season tapers off, and things are getting back to the normal active level. The working atmosphere remains fascinating, and I think the Navy Problem should prove most interesting for you.

Hopefully you have recieved the information package by now, and it may provide the grist for some other questions. If so, please don't hesitate to give a shout. The Sports Desk is manned 24 hours a day, so we are only as far away as a call to AUTOVON 262-1101.

As soon as the Navy Department fills you in on your future, please let me know so I can get the wheels in motion at this end. Take care,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
RUE DE LA CHON  
SEOUL  
12 AUG 1980

Dear Sunny,

Nice to hear from you & glad the summer is going along well. Things are about the same here, save that I have slipped into the rut a bit further, and can barely see over the edges. As with all the other places in the military, we are slightly undermanned, and hence I am finishing my only three day break for this two and a half month period. Granted it is not on the DMZ, but it is still debilitating in the extreme.

I had intended to achieve many things during this break; catch up on some projects, worry about the next book, and generally be productive. Not a chance. I wound up drunk, fucked up, and generally wasted.

Alcoholism is the curse of our overseas possessions, and after being so good, I am ashamed to say that I have fallen from grace once more. Yesterday I was forced to swear off demon rum for the 23rd time since I arrived in the yellow tinged climes.

The cause of it all was a party thrown by an Enlisted Swine of my acquaintance, one who was finally leaving Korea after about four years. Naturally, he had a full likker cabinet which customs will not allow him to ship. Hence, all us trusty co-workers were invited to empty the aforementioned peive of furniture. Oh my. I think it was sometime after the Jaimeson's had disappeared, certainly well down the bottle of Spanish Brandy and possibly into the rum, when I found myself in a shouting match with a known killer. He was stressing the fact that A) the Navy had done nothing of consequence recently, at least not on a par with killing for a pack of cigarettes as he had, B) that my prose style was verbose, and in desperate need of paring down, C) that I did have some limited potential as a Leader of men, and should immediately volunteer for the SEALs, or acknowledge publicly my lack of cajones.

I am not sure which of the above really torqued me off the worst, but I think it was the shot about my prose. I slipped into my green zoot jacket and clapped my wide-brimmed Panama on my sweat beaded forehead. Glancing at my \$800 dollar Rolex GMT Master, I knew I was going out into the curfew-plagued Korean Night. Millions of Korean were huddled inside their cinderblock compounds. Roving military patrols armed with sophisticated plastic-stocked assault rifles enforced the will of the ruling Standing Committee For State Security (which would sound fantastic in German). I was too filled with righteous indignation, and cheap brandy to think straight.

Or walk straight for that matter. I proceeded down the ill-lit alley, lurching periodically against the convenient walls. I came to the teeshaped junction and the ominously quiet alley that lead down to the main streets of the Ville. I have sat out the hours till dawn in the Phillipines, when the magic gates would swing open, and the crisp Marines would allow traffic once more to pass into little America. This was different. This curfew even appeared to clear the cats away. I straightened the green L.L. Bean Maine Hunting Shoe tie and lurched ahead.

Heart Attack Hill was a breeze going down, but down there were the patrols. Peering around the corner, I could see headlights coming up Itaewon. Was it a special truck, liscened to be out in the forbidden hours? Or was it a jeep loaded with sadistic Military Police?

I just didn't know. Putting my military career on the line, I cunningly fell flat, sprawling on the uneven cobblestones. A produce truck! I picked myself up and began the long journey back to the Yard.

Doorway to doorway I slunk, with all the native skill of a fox with the delirium tremens. I made it safely to the very edges of the Ville. Now I was confronted by the wide concrete intersection above the garrison. I used the skills the Navy had taught in Evasion and Escape. The First Thing they mentioned was the cardinal rule: Don't Fall down and Bump Your Head. I noticed I had somehow lost my hatband. Don't walk along Ridgelines, I recalled fuzzily, and moved down below the crest of the rise. I waited till a suspicious flood of light passed by and broke for the other side.

I made it, panting with the exertion. I reached the other side and leaned against the wall. There was a long way to go, and I was in the open. No Hope for concealment now; it was going to be a question of pãain dumb luck. I paused and fumbled for a Lucky Strike. No! out of cigarettes! I stumbled on in the face of this latest adversity, staying in the shadows when I could, and boldy staggering in the light when I had to.

At length I reached the Only Open Gate, squared my shoulders, and walked up to the Korean Guard. I produced something that I hoped was my Military Identification Card, and watched in horror as the Korean began filling out a form. To have passed through the fire, and to be nailed at the gates to safety!

Eventually we finished that peice of unpleasantry, and I was allowed to proceed. It was only a routine form, I mused, and could conceivably be explained by a late night matter of important Intelligence work on the other side of the Garrison. In any event, it was too drunk out to worry about that now. I made it to the hooch and put some Steely Dan on the portable tape deck. I manged to wake up all my roomates.

It served them right.

\*\*\*\*\*

So that is how things are going on the Peninsula. The General is moving closer to the Blue House. The American Commander is going to be relieved, it appears, and they are attempting to jam all the HQ functions into joint staffs, or rather Combined Staffs, which allows us to work in the same rooms where the ROKs are sleeping. The Intel center had a ROK colonel in charge, whose first directive was that he was unavailible on week-ends and after duty hours. Yuck.

I am personally torn by what to do next. If I had any brains, I would already have submitted my resignation, to be effective less than a year from now. However, as Dave can testify, the Korean Experience has a certain halucinatory effect on one. I would be prepared to do virtually anything to get out of here on time, which is to say next May. My resignation will have the immediate effect of extending myself an additional four or five months. It sounds like a pittance,† particoularky in light of an additional

†BUT IN POINT OF FACT, AN ETERNITY.

commitment to the United Snakes. So we shall see. I actually sorta enjoy life overseas, but in this lifestyle it seems once you get comfortable, they either slap you upside the head or drop something on you. In mitigation, though, once they have you so mad you could spit they will do something nice which is not possible on the outside.

Well, it is all still up in the air, and no decisions have to be made for a couple months. Summer is flying, and we will be into the nice Fall weather soon. Then will come the Fear and Loathing of the winter, with a new set of whines and complainings from this outpost. Stay tuned for more of the tragi-comedy of my battle with adulthood.

When are you going to join the suburban crowd over in Ma Camus? When is Dale going to get his hackles up and offer to sell you the house for a low, low, one-time-only price of \$220,000? Keep me posted in your next update. Glad the season is going well, and particularly pleased about your victory over the Dead Goat.

When you see Porky, tell him to eat me. I am holding the tie hostage. Best to everybody & Keep On Suckin'!

THE SNAKE RANCH  
RUE DE LA CHON  
13 AUGUST 1980  
seoul

T.R.,

I must say that I was staggered by the influx of traffic from the Brown Family. Knowing that it takes a lot of your important comradin' time, and accident board time, I am singularly honored by the recievng of your letters.

I hasten to add that should events pile up, feel under no obligation to respond to each of these newsgrams. It is more along the line of 'Augmented Indian Ocean Support.' Updates are apreciated, of course.

I have finally rallied today from the effects of a hangover more pervasive in scope even than the one which followed me to sea after Perth. You may have had a chance encounter with the feeling; "Oh my God, my God, what have I done? Where is Bill? What sort of shambling beast am I that walks in this guise of mortal man?"

Naturally, this was not my fault. I was the victim of a severe case of Brain Swelling.

It began at the posh Eighth Army Officer's Club Pool. They have a marvelous diving board there, when it is not obstructed with urchans and dependant brats. I was lounging in fine style, building up to a series of Leaps. I have found that my best forward moves come somewhere after my second beer, while the leg musoles are still working generally for the same central control. The high point arrives about 1/3rd to 1/2 the way through beer three, when I am infused with a certain rackish courage and elan, which permits forward flips. The timing is critical. After some considerable study, I have determined that the center of gravity, or CG, actually moves down the longitudinal axis with increased consumption. Due to the constrictions of the sport, the wearing of lead caps or conterbalances simply is not practical to resolve this difference.

Hence, a series of fine manuvrs was conducted at the crucial period, and much valuble training was achieved. Unfortunately, and this is the critical factor in the accident, I continued to enjoy cocktails there at poolside. I perhaps can blame the quinine buildup in my inner ear for the poor head wrrk which contributed to the mishap. In any event, sober witnesses have testified that the center of gravity, or CG, continued to move down the trim belly, passing eventually to a line equidistant from the pelvic girdle, or PG.

Some observors, not qualified, have attempted to foist of the incident off on the popular bugaboo of Diver's Error, or DE. I was there, and I think I know what happened. I rose after a few more beers (the log books are uncertain at this point, and new procedures have been initiated to correct this discerpancy) and took a good line toward the Diving Launching Platform, or DLP. All safety procedres were fully complied with: I kicked an urchan out of my way, and carefully examined the oily pool for possible obstructions. The final checkpoints for



Launch Sequence ticked off. I moved toward the vital End of the Board (or EOB) and got good altitude for maximum thrust. My tanned, athletic feet impacted the take-off point (or TOP), and frankly although the ratio was most favorable in terms of mass impacting TOP at EOB, something began to go very wrong.

Looking back on it, as I paused there in mid-air, I seemed to have eons of frozen time to contemplate the horror of the situation. There was an unnaturalness to the trajectory. My head was clobbered in heavily nose-down, yet the buttock area had stabilized. Looking over the photo sequence, I can see that the momentum had carried the leap far over the meager area of intended impact (or AII) and into the far edge of the safety envelope. I reached for my waterproof crisis action list (or CAL) but there just wasn't enough time. I had to ride it in. I cursed the fact that the Army hadn't got around to zero-zero diving boards and hit the surface.

It was an awkward entry at best. The last of the useful photos shows the legs skimbo, the vast bulk of the trunk and upper extremities disappearing into a giant cloud of vapor. I recall attempting to jettison the trunk-coverings, and somehow plane out of catastrophe. It just wasn't in the cards. The slope of the water-containment pond (or WCP) was going in the wrong direction. I saw the meter marking flashing by and there was a great crash. I looked around, and saw that I had run out of momentum and ideas at exactly the same time. Something wet was running in my eyes, and I suspected it was water.

Moments later I bobbed to the surface. I inspected the impact area of the upper cranial empanage. It felt a bit mushy, but the protective follicle covering seemed to cover the worst of the damage. Already I was filling out mental paper-work. Was there a chance I could get away with an incident instead of an accident? I dog-paddled over to the ladder to await the helo. I was a bit dizzy and double vision increased the number of breasts on the nurses. It was an improvement.

I got the wreckage over into a lawn chair for inspection. Granted the miscue was inconvenient, but would it affect the rest of the day's schedule? There was still valuable training to be achieved. I ordered a drink to think the thing out. I had a party to go to, and some paper-work over in the Bunker that demanded my immediate attention. Recalling the principles of effective management, I ordered the priorities. Work was about a '3', I thought, while more drinks was a '1'. Work, then, was shit-canned out of hand. There remained the spectre of Brain Swelling. An impact of the magnitude I had just suffered had proven fatal on occasion.

Worse, the symptoms of Brain Swelling were identical to those of simple drunkenness. How would I be able to distinguish a life-threatening situation from a common night on the town? Was there in fact a difference? Cold fluids reduce swelling, I reasoned, and ordered extra drinks. It was just like the accident (or incident.) I had to ride this one out.

As a trained Emergency Rescue Worker I knew there were certain precautions to be taken just in case the worst happened. I wandered home and changed my underware in case I wound up at the hospital. I donned a slightly wrinkled suit so that the attendants would realize they were dealing with a man of quality on the table. I gingerly placed a wide Panama hat atop the damaged area to restrict the flow of electrons from the KOIA brain-wave monitoring site on the Hill. Then, placing a lopsided grin on my battered visage, I walked gently from the luxurious hooch.

The Korean afternoon swirled around me as I labored up the heights of Heart Attack Hill. The rich cultural swells penetrated my nostrils, and I rejoiced at the pungent fumes. Brain Swelling had not yet obstructed the sensitive nerves, dooming me to a life of smelling only the odor of burned cheese sandwiches, like Späsh. At length I found myself at the entrance the last alley. It ran down to the stone wall and Korean compound house lined both sides. I hammered on the steel door with a ham-like fist.

I should have known I was walking into danger. This was a POS-drink-up-the-booze party. Perhaps the last thing I needed at this juncture was to ingest entire bottles of dangerous substances, but that was the way it was. The pretty trays of hors d'ovres could not conceal the air of menace that hung over the proceedings. I felt it in my bones, right up to when the last of the Jaimeson disappeared, and suddenly a bottle of Spanish Brandy appeared in front of me. It had to be something physiological, I thought, because I had never in my life sat down to drink a bottle of brandy, much less Spanish Brandy, in some Korean House high above the ominous presence of an entire U.S. Army.

It was early into a bottle of rum that I discovered myself in a shouting match with a known killer. I listened in astonishment as the jungle-fighter delineated the following key points in increasingly more violent terms: that A) the Navy was a fucking peice of cake which hadn't done anything lately anyway, which is to say killed for a pack of cigarettes, that further, B) that if I was not to publicly acknowlege my lack of manhood, I should immediately volunteer for the SEALs and find out where it was at, and C) that my prose style was overly convoluted and verbose, and in desperate need of the surgeon's knife.

Obviously there were fighting words in there someplace, and I sorted frantically to discern which of the wild assertions I should deal with first. A glance at my \$800 dollar Rolex GMT Master told me that the dread Witching hour had come to pass. The deserted streets were now the domain of the fierce military patrols, armed with actual plastic-stocked assault rifles and grim frowns. It was either bloodshed here, or bloodshed there. A wicked edged weapon was plunged into a defenseless lime. I recalled an appointment elsewhere, and edging slowly towards the door, made a bid for the dubious safety of the night.

I caroomed off protective walls and attempted to marshall my thoughts. No longer was I dealing with a mere killer-drunk, I was dealing with the full might of the Special Committee for State Security. I tried to remember what it would have sounded like in German. 'SonderKommittee fur Reichsicernhet?' I just didn't know. I came to a tee-shaped juncture and the long grade that lead down to Etaewon Street. I could have sat out the hours until dawn, when the city would awake. But there was no time for that now. I straightened the green tie with the L.L. Beane Maine Hunting Shoe pattern. I was going for broke. I plunged down the street, gathering speed as I went.

To my horror, I saw the glow of headlights on the asphalt below. What could it be? An M-48A1 tank, or a harmless produce truck filled with garlic for the breakfast meals? Putting my military career on the line, I cunningly peered around a corner, trapped, and sprawled headlong across the uneven cobblestones. A produce truck!

Picking myself up, I commenced the dangerous transit back to the Base.

Doorway to Doorway I slunk, dodging the beams of light. Cunning as a fox with the D.T.s. I walked when I could, ran when I was able. When at last I reached the edge of the Ville I peered out across the great reach of concrete that flanked the floodlights of the Garrison. I wracked my swollen brains for the key which would get me across. I ran down all the bricks and wiles the Navy had taught me:

1. Don't ever go someplace where they starve you and beat you and put you in a box.
2. Don't fall down and bump your head.
3. When in an Evasion Situation, don't take the first set of orders the Detailer tries to give you.
4. Don't walk the Ridgeline.
5. Save water, use your mirror, and travel at night when you can't see where you are going.
6. Evasion on land is always easier than evasion at sea, even if the Skipper never goes up to the O-8 level.

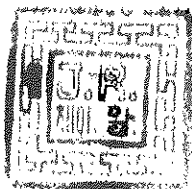
I picked number four. I hunched down, and did the modified crab walk below the ridgeline. I was panting when I reached the other side. I fumbled in my pocket for a Lucky Strike, a firearm, mirror, or flask of water. Nothing! I had lost my seatpan somewhere. I squared my shoulders, and marched on towards the only Open Gate. It was a tough march, and there was virtually no cover. With none available, I tilted my hat so that I could walk in the shadow.

At length, I reached the Gate. I produced something I hoped was my military I.D. "I come Bunker, Na!" waving at the general direction of Main Post. "War come chop-chop; Bali-bali, I have important bizness. Many Helicopters n' things. Bad North." The Korean Gate Guard studied this important intelligence with some perplexity. Finally, after making a notation in his log book that a Navy Sublietenant had apparently declaired War at 0245, he allowed me to pass into the sanctity of Festung Yongsan.

When I arrived at the hooch, I put some Steely Dan on the Tape Deck at top volume. I was a sick man, and I needed my rest.

Nothing much else going on except the CINC is going to get shit-canned, and General Ohn is going to be president Bali-Bali-, Chop-chop.

Take care,



THE SNAKE RANCH  
RUE DE LA CHON  
SEOUL  
19 AUGUST 1980

Dear Jane,

And so it is time to hit the road again, eh? Good time for it. I had very strange feelings about being back in the Town again (was it only this year?) It was grey and ghostly as I drove from your White House down to my old stomping grounds south of Eight Mile. I don't think I could hold out as long as you have. So bon voyage, Grabbingham, and let the tropic winds blow where they may.

I was hoping that I could include a copy of Nick Danger with this, but things have not quite gelled. We were supposed to receive the first thousand copies this week, but the last update from my partner in the Phillipines has come and gone. It is so complicated trying to do things in three countries, surrounded by slaverigg communists.

So what I have to have, as soon as you get one, is a mailing address. That will also provide a targeting device, should I ever get back to the United Snakes. So there that is. I miss you so badly sometimes it feels like an internal sprain.

Quickly updating the status here at the Ministry of Cement:

President Choi resigned Saturday. This is in reaction to increased pressure from the Standing Committee for State Security, headed by Gen Ohn. Ohn's clique of officer's has consolidated their hold on the key ~~the~~ Corps Commands, and the guns say that Ohn will be President without benefit of election by next week. Bloodless coup? Don't know about that. I do know that the latest figures passed over from the Ministry claim over 30,000 have been rounded up in the Purification Drive.

It is nothing short of astonishing. Of that total, over two thirds were Hooligans, while the rest were Extortionis, Swindlers, and Vice Offenders. Not a single Political Opponent of the regime was touched.

HO HO HO.

As you can imagine, there has been some Command Interest in this fascinating process. Our CINC (or Commander in Chief) GEN Wickham, has made some ill-advised comments. One of the best was last week, and was widely quoted in the lap-dog press (the first target of the last round-up.) Our good general said if Ohn could demonstrate that he had "broad based support among the Korean people, the U.S. would have no choice but to support him." In spite of the official State Department disavowal, the damage was already done. The good GEN was 'called back for consultations' and remains in Hawaii, like Achilles in his tent, waiting to see what the upshot will be. It is even money at least that he will get the sack for trifling with the perview of the limp-dicks and short-hitters in Washington.

The North is being very quiet about all this; and quite wisely. All those 30,000 people have families. Pyongyang can afford to take the long view (I hope) and let the ROK fall apart all on it's own. I am definitely hoping it takes longes

it will take longer than a year.

I awoke the other morning very early. I lay there in the 0100 darkness and listened to the whop-whop-whop of a helicopter. I wondered if it was a Medivac for a sick trooper, or the start of another wave of arrests. I wandered into work at about 430 to take the duty. I was scribbling the day's Intell Summary when the Alert Desk at one of the Faceless Agencies called up on the Secure Line.

"Hallo?" I said cleverly after the watch NCO's face went slack and handed the instrument off to me.

"Yes" hissed the connection that went around the world. "Say, we just got a quesry from the White House Situation Room about a Japanese Press Report that says GEN Ohon is under arrest."

"A Japanese Press Report? Hey, you know those guys are still writing the screenplays for the Godzilla versus Mothra Movies."

"Yeah, yeah." He waited for a moment to make sure that the time delay would pass. "But like I say, somehow the White House got ahold of it and they are flapping."

"Well, I didn't see any troops when I came to work this morning, and I walked right past the Ministry. The papers had a big spread on Mrs. Ohon, saying what a swell lady she was yesterday. It doesn't seem like he would get that kind of propaganda one day and be in the hoosegow the next."

"Well, I know it is farfetched, but could you check with the Spooks and see what they got?"

"Sure, no sweat, but I don't think they are awake yet. I'll give them a call and get back to you immediate precedence."

"Roger that. Remember, White House Interest and all that."

I put the phone down and looked up to see a two star general walk in. The room had been filling up and everyone stood to attention. Shit, I thought, now I gotta tell the Man, and he is going to blab it to the three-star, and the one-star doesn't know yet. Damn. Can't make the Boas look bad or it is going to be a long day. I walked up to him and started the spiel. It was all bullshit, and it was still the Story of the Minute. No way to ask the pet ROKs next door; they would go ballistic, and besides, they were the last to know anything anyway. The Colonels and Commanders nodded as I went through the story, hemming and hawing, downgrading the importance, casting doubt and aspersion on the Jap media. Finally the two-star nodded and walked briskly from the Bunker. It would take hours to clean this one up. Ah well, just another day underground, laboring at the Ministry of Disinformation.

and Cement.

I'll pass along more as it happens. In the meantime, I have found an excellent new source for turn of the century diving helmets and marine chronometers. I don't know exactly what I would do with them, but jeeze, at these savings, who can afford to think?

Enclosed is part of my on-going Reading Support Program for the Boys Back on the Ship. They should be back in the Indian Ocean now, moving in to invade Iran or whatever it is Jack Anderson says we are going to there, and I want to clear up a few cryptic references:

- A. T.R. is the second of my friends to be driving an F-4 when it went sour and had to be thrown away. His incident happened off the catapult in the Gulf, and the flight lasted 10 secs. What prompted this most recent parody of my minor case of Brain Swelling was the fact that he got back from leave in Singapore to discover that he was heading up the Accident Board investigating the third crash in the Squadron in two years. Accident Boards are interesting things, and use many abbreviations and acronyms to summarize and conceal the bottom line, which is usually one of two things. It is either:
1. The thing broke and I had to throw it away.
  2. or, Jeeze, I sorta fucked that one up, and I had to throw it away. Sorry!

It is considered bad form in the aviation community to even acknowledge the possibility of the second, except in particularly stunning examples of idiocy, like the A-6 pilot who punched out of his airplane when the cat-shot "didn't feel right" and the airplane motored on quite happily, driverless, until a wind current put it in the water. Well, what is twenty million between friends?

- B. I don't think, upon consideration, that there is a point B.

Well, I am going to leave it at that for now. How 'bout a note when you clear the area so I can minimize traffic to 484, or route it through another secure drop.

Oh, wait a minute, I remember point B now. The speculation is that maybe someone in the squadron isn't real keen on the officer corps and maybe that is why we have lost three airplanes and gone thru 19 J-79 engines. A favorite trick is to pitch a quarter down the intakes and let the silver and copper amalgam chew through a couple dozen rows of turbine blades. So far all the ejection seats have worked, thank god. That fits in nicely with the plot of my Aircraft Carrier book, which I will try to write this year. We shall see about that.

Best of luck on the trip. I love you,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
RUE DE LA CHON  
SEOUL  
17 AUG 1980

Dear Bawdens,

I am sipping on a Tanqueray and Tonic and listening to the monotonous pounding of the mosoon rains upon the tile roof. The rain drenched evening is mirky and impenetrable. I have been awake for nearly three hours now, and don't have to be at work for at least eight more.

It was a treat to get your latest missive: I am absolutely delighted that things have worked out for you, and that your home (an interesting concept; I may have to try it sometime) is everything you wanted it to be. For all the strange activities of the last decade, I have to say that your lives are a baseline for quality.

Let's see: nothing much new around here, except that the President was forced to resign on Saturday at 1000 by the Martial Law Clique; that a National Military Alert went into effect at the same time to guard against any repetitions of the Kwang-ju unpleasantness; that further, Gen Chon (whose meteoric rise has included promotions from Major General to Lieutenant General to Full General ~~maxx~~ in fewerx months than it took words to describe) will assume the Presidency without benefit of election without unseemly haste, which is to say either tomorrow or the day after; that the U.S. Military Commander in Chief will probably be sacked for a few inopportune remarks which may have provoked the situation, and that I appear to be drinking heavily to forget, but have forgotten why.

Aside from that, I must say that Military Dictatorships are pretty swell places to live. Actually, what is transpiring is a return to the same old shit, but done in a manner so cold and calculating as to make any good cocktail party revolutionary's blood run cold. Over 30,500 people have taken involuntary vacations to re-education centers. Which brings out a facet of the efficiency of the new government: Of that entire total, I have been informed that 26,000 were Hooligans, 4,200 were Blackmailers or extortionists, and that the remainder were common vice offenders. Miraculously, not a single political opponent was arrested, according to the list I have from the Martial Law Command. It is nothing short of astonishing. It brings to mind the quelling of the Kwang-ju riot, in which some 548 people were killed, oops, I'm sorry, 548 Rioters, Communists, and Non-Mainstreamers perished, but nary a single Civilian was injured.

One is reduced to saying that the present evil is still far better than the regime in the North, but still, the Yushin Remnant Constitution is not what you call a superb motivation factor for a simple urban boy from the Greater Detroit Area.

So things are interesting.

\*\*\*\*\*

I have returned after a day's break; a better and more sober man. With any luck the typos will be fewer.

So where was I? Just outside the menacing Ministry of Cement, holding an awful framed Dragon, it's horns curling up through a series of asian doo-dads. Confused, out hero glanced about. He had just recieved a call from the Alert Desk at the Defense Intelligence Area Agency. The White House Sitroom was in an uproar: a Japanese Press Report had just leaked, claiming that LTGEN No had assumed control of the Defense Security Agency, and that he had arrested GEN Ohn. "No," he had said. "Haven't heard a thing about that, but I did hear Helicopters last night if that means anything." The time-lag on the call dragged out for a few seconds as both sides of the world waited to see if anyone would say anything.

"Well, we'd appreciate it if you would contact the local CIA and see if they have anything."

"Sure, but I don't think they are awake yet."

"Say, would ya just tell the White House that we think it is cool? Nothing to get uptight about yet. We'll be the first to let you know."

The DIA desk said that was just fine, but to remember that there was White House Interest. Our hero said he would get right on it.

So that was yesterday. All the above was true, however, I sort of ran three incidents together, for reasons of National Security.

I found The Store up in the Ville. The guy specializes in brass ship-fittings; mostly turn of the century nautical clocks, lanterns, brass ship's sirens, sextants, and huge diving helmets. I went up there and hallucinated for a while yesterday afternoon. I don't have the faintest idea what I would do with a five hundred pound solid brass binnacle, but it would be better than the cheap sneakers and the tiresome Adidas bags everyone else takes out of here. Souvenire hounding in Asia.

Sorry to hear about Gary's temporary set-backs. I can't help thinking that he will land on his feet again though. There would be something wrong with the world if he did not. The reports on your golf game are most encouraging. I am working on a Korean Variant of the Sport; this one using a highly modified M-70 grenade launcher. Scores are improving as I perfect the means to blast out regulation holes to shoot the ball into. It is a rich man's game though, having to 'soften up' the course prior to the vertical envelopment.

When you hear from the Addobran branch of the family say howdy for me. I am in the throes of trying to figure out what to do next. I think the Nav is in the process of trying to send me to Japan again, this time at a land facility. My trump for them is that I can put in my resignation in a three month window, starting next month. So the Nav could get me to stick around with a dream tour someplace. I asked for Thailand, and the chance to wear camo fatigues and lean against the bar in Bangkok, imagining the sound of actual small arms, but it doesn't appear that we will do anything serious there. I would hate to give up these swell benefits, like living in Military Dictatorships. (seems the 'r' is a bit sticky. sorry!)

Love to ya both,

(The hongul characters mean 'JAK ALL', the closest they can get to my name.....)



THE SNAKE RANCH  
RUE DE LA CHON  
SEOUL  
19 AUG 1980

Dear Folks,

Hope the trip out West was fun. The last update was from Oshoosh, and things are moving so fast that I suppose this won't catch up to you untill Mom is making preparations to start the School Cycle again, and Dad is back at the shop dealing with Unit Scheules and the grim economics of this year. On the whole, though, it would seem to have been memorable. You have decided to stay at Woodcliff, and the House that Ted Built has grown another wing. I am looking forward to seeing it.

Let's see: there are two fronts to report on, the personal and the International. International First, I suppose, just like on the news.

Gen Ohon has forced the ousture of President Choi, and we are a few days away from a formal military takeover. Actually, it has been in effect since the creation of the Standing Committee for State Security two months ago, but this is going to lock it in cement. So far the timetable has paralleled the rise of the late President Park Chung Hee, only without the more disasterous flaws. One of the guys over at the 501st M.I. Group said it was eery, looking through the old files and seeing tomorrow's news. In any event, that is what is going down.

The trial of the chief opponent of the regime, Mr. Kim Tae Jung has already commenced. He is being tried under Martial Law (we are still under Emergency Martial Law, remember) and the five officers in charge are empowered to give out anything up to the Death Penalty. Partly to defuse any opposition to the trial, a round of 'Hooligans' commenced a couple weeks ago. An August sweep is not unusual, but this one is of particular magnitude. The last figures released indicate that over 30,500 people are already in custody- these are government figures, mind you, and there are more to come. They are claiming that two thirds of the detainees are 'Hooligans', while the remaining number is composed of roughly equal proportions of Extortionists, Swindlers, and Vice Offenders. Thankfully, the Americans have noted that not a single political prisoner has been taken, and so no one's rights have been violated.

Or something.

The CINC (one of ours) may have triggered all this with a few ill-advised comments, indicating that the U.S. would have not choice but to support Ohon if he demonstrated that he had "broad support" among the Korean People. The State Department was naturally intrigued by the fact that the senior Military official had apparently gone into the Diplomatic field, and GEN Wickham was 'recalled for consultations.' As of this writing, he remains in his tant like Achilles in Hawaii waiting for the dust to settle.

The North is being most low-profile at the moment, pretending moderation, and hoping to avoid any incident which will give Ohon the spectre of the outside threat. So actually things are quiet on the surface despite the fantastic aspects of the situation. Ponderous forces are in motion.

For example, Dad, what would your reaction be if the Feds walked in and told you they were going to levying a 'special' 10% tax to aid in the fomining of a new political party? That is what is going on here. All the corporations are being forced to kick in that amount to set up an alternative party for Ohon, so as to avoid the stigma attached to the old Yushin System of Prez Park.

It is most interesting, and I do believe that it is going to work for a while. The nagging thought is that all those thirty thousand people have relatives, as did the 500 dead at Kwang-ju, and that there is a backlash building somewhere. No one is predicting any overt anti-american activity for now, but GEN Wigham was widely quoted in the mass media, or rather, those lap-dog outlets which have survived the last purge and serve to publicize the Government, and we are percieved to be behind the Military authorities.  
So there that is.

As to myself, I'm coming up to the time of decision for another tour. In order to get out, one has to submit a resignation between 9 and 6 months prior to end of obligated service. I have the feeling that the logical choice, from the Detailers viewpoint, would be to shuffle me back to FOSIF Kamiseya in Japan. I believe that would be a three year tour. I find myself not minding the East that much, but I am not sure that seven years out here is just what the doctor ordered. We shall see what the upshot is when I start my negotiations with Washington; I never will have as good a bargaining position as I have now. "Give me London or I'm getting out" was howmy predecessor on the Midway put it; I'm not sure that is the proper tone, but the idea is similar. I will let you know how it goes. The disturbing thing is that another tour is going to come close to locking me in to this thing for a while. My marketability is going to suffer if the things I am particularky good at are the ones I can't talk about. This local political analysis is purely secondary.

Mostly, I think I would like to live in a house again, without roomates (or perhaps just the one of my choice, vice what the billeting office is sweeping out that day.)

So there that is, too. I have to go into the Bunker today to continue training the new LT, a nice enough lady, but who asked me where the Tsushima Straights were yesterday. She has been in training for a month now, and didn't even know what the southern border of the country was. Oh well. What is a day off, anyway?

No word on Nick Danger's fate in the publishers yet. I hope to have month soon for you.

Gotta run. Love to all,

M.A.D. LOVE

~~MEMO~~

MISSION I'M TALKING MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION, PAL, and as a former nuclear planner I know what I am talking about. I could run off a bunch of the gruesome details of <sup>the objective of</sup> hostage peoples: the lack of a comprehensive missile defense plan, the coming catastrophe, the Great White Lights.

F. But I ain't going to. I'm talking about cultural taboos. The sanctity of the marriage bond. Bottomless blue eyes, an Irish lilt, and a bosom that proudly juts out like Lover's Leap. What I'm getting at is Zelda and Scott, running amok, ~~practically~~ asking the physician for the ~~warrant~~ <sup>CERTIFICATE</sup>.

Now I am what ya call yer cold fish. I ~~look~~ look on the human parade with a certain amount of cold distain. What makes all those fools act the way they do? I read the paper in the morning and get my laughs. "Lookit this one!" I shout. "Two hundred and eighty-five dead because some dung farmer on the way to Mecca wants to light his gas stove on the L-1011 TriStar! Jeeze!"

LIGHT And ~~there was~~ <sup>then I was</sup>, kindling my own blaze, turning up the gas, ~~turning my~~ <sup>STRIKING A</sup> tuba, and starting to fall into step with all the other lemmings.

Shit.

So there I was, like the fighter drivers say, flat on my ass at the Pool. I was drinking heavily, of course. Now, it has been my contention that I am mostly a situational drinker. The Government sends me to these god-awful places, isolates me from the Motherland, surrounds me with Fascists or Gooks or Communists, or permutations of all the above. So I have a few drinks, right? Or like a few dozen. I can handle it. Except that the last three times I had a day off I awoke with the sensation of impending Doom, because I hadn't blacked out, but rather remembered. Oh, I haven't been arrested here yet. No sweati-da, as they say. I don't do dangerous drugs, right?

Ha!

From what I hear of the World, they are doing a thing called Free Base these days. Coke wasn't a big enough kick for the high-rollers. Instead, they ~~sell~~ <sup>sell</sup> themselves cooking that gorgeous powder down with ether, going for it, burling cash like it was a Cricket lighter, good for a thousand of 'em. Ole Richard Pryor turned himself into a human torch for it. Good rush, if what my sources say can be believed. Naturally beyond my means as a dedicated Naval Officer.

Or so I thought. Little did I know, when I saw that mane of blonde hair draped over the back of the chair at poolside. Little did I realize how my own personal pharmaceutical plant was going to start pumping out those testosteronees. Little did I care for the tab the Piper was running. And what's more, the second I saw those gigantic upturned breasts, I was thikking on pure gonad power. Direct circuit, crank to vocal cords.

Ms Free Base was her name, or rather, Mrs. Free Base. Jesus!

Of course, I have been around the block a couple times. Still good tread-life, but I am starting to get concerned about the brakes. The isolation

of the past few years has returned me to bumpkin-hood in re the subject of the round-eye ladies. The sole underlying principle was the Taboo; which is to say that you can look all you want, but if they are here, it means that they are already taken. Maybe the most depressing thing on Earth is watching a pack of half-erect half-wits falling all over themselves to get next to a buck-toothed Army Nurse, particularly when you find yourself edging into the outer circles.

But Free was something else altogether. I mean, she was a knock-out: First round, flat on the canvas, looking up and wondering what hit you. She would make you drive your Mercedes 450 SL off Rodeo Drive and into a plush boutique right there in LA. ~~And~~<sup>But</sup> externals were just that. She had a beautiful heart-shaped mouth, and when she spoke, it was an Irish lilt!

Ah, shit. I was done, finished, kaput, exeunt stage left.

Suave as always, I began drinking <sup>EVEN HEAVIER</sup> heavily.

One of my specialties is glib patter. I have a delightful caustic wit, a broad-ranging, if somewhat limited, intellect, and the capability to form learned opinions on subjects I never heard of. One of my patented raps is Ireland. Me Muther's name is Eiley, doncha know, and she came from Galway Bay....

Within certain broad parameters, it is actually true.

So I commenced one of my dazzling verbal journeys. I must say that in comparison with the competition, I was looking pretty good. It doesn't take a whole lot to outclass drooling Infantry officers. From what Free told me later, when we were both embarked in the vehicle of prickly heat, I had won her heart then and there.

So far, I have been (dare I say it?) glib and self-centered about this thing. Free was under pressure, and not all of it was of her making. What was the Wive's Club to say when a deeply tanned, D-cupped, tawny blonde with dynamic blue eyes walked into the room? Cat fur stood straight on end and the claws came out. The thing ~~is~~<sup>was</sup>, she could walk around in a caftan and still cause riots on Post. It would be enough to fuck anybody up. Free was a registered Nurse; a sharp cookie, and a professional from a family of Doctors. The only reaction she was getting here at the Penninsul a Club South was a thousand testicals shouting "Me! Take Me!"

Her husband was going nuts. Here he is, starting a new job in a high visibility position, and the only thing the senior people are really reacting to is his wife's tits. What we have here, gentlemen, is the stuff of madness. Free described herself as a Mills bomb waiting to go off. I walked into the Pool area and pulled the pin, released the handle, ~~placed the~~ ~~pin~~, and ordered more drinks.

Of the many roles in my repitoire, I must confess the one which has gotten the most practise recently is the 'Understanding, Non-threatening, Friend.' Again, within certain parameters it is entirely true. " 'Tis sure no pleasure to be shot," as Mr. Houseman said, and if you cant's have the loaf, the crust at least serves to keep alive memory. I was fully prepared to live the lie again. I do have a sense of honor, if a bit rudimentary in development. Unfortunately, and this a key point, I tend towards Oscar Wilde's theorem that "I can resist anything but tempation."   
AND THIS WAS TEMPTATION, IN SPADES.

I could go further into the tawdry details of the afternoon; how a single round turned into doubles, and finally into quads, progressing geometricly into an orgy of mutual admiration. It was very much, I should think, like sitting in the wagon-circle and watching the Indians circle closer. They weren't after my scalp, though. It was Fate, or at least a good imitation thereof.

The even tawdrier details of staggering from the Pool shall remain the perview of memory. Technicly, I remained blameless. Free's husband wore no horns on my account, yet if intention were measureable, it would have been a memorable rack of antlers.

The crux of the matter was that I passed him on the way to the Club, Free being minutes in trail. I shudder even here behind the Smith-Corona at the minute breáth of our escape.

The peices of that disasterous day remain to be picked up. Being already up to my neck in the bag, it remained only to duck my head under and pull tight the noose. She had burned into my mind like the aftermath of an electric flash. I wound up in some Country Western Club out in the Ville. I won \$600 bucks on a sucker bet with a comrade. I actually had it in my hands before I sold it back to him for a slim-jim. Somehow, it didn't seem to matter.

\*\*\*\*\*

I awakoe the next morning about five. I lay there, wrapped in my afgan, and felt the damp air rushing over me from the fan. I knew that if I moved it would hurt. So I hunched down into a safe fetal position and thought sluggish thoughts. What had transpired while I roamed the land, upright but unconscious? The impending Doom was there like another blanket, and so was a faint but insistant stirring from the vidintiy of my groin. Oh God.

Eventually I rose, drank the obligatory coffee and <sup>DIA</sup>the hated sit-ups. Now how was I to resolve this one? There was only one way to treat it; play the Rational for a moment, acknowlege the thrill of the moment, and do the grown-up thing. Bow gracefully in the direction of the fire escape. I managed to string things out until about ten-thirty. I tossed down my tenth cup of coffe and went ~~xxxxxx~~ out the front door, around the back of the hooch, across the benjo and up to the transit billet. The door was open. I walked up and rapped on the screen.

My heart was racing, for Christ fucking sake. This had passed the realm of reality. We were into the absurd. Free got up from the couch and came to the door. She asked me to come in, and gestured me to ~~xxxxxxx~~ sit down. "I'm glad you came" she said in her soft voice. "You haven't any idea what happened last night."

I didn't, and it would probaly been better if I hadn't got the rest of the story. The Mills bomb had detonated and sent shrapnel through her five year marriage, through the hooch walks, and injured two innocent Army drunks on the other side. Free had done some fast talking and put off the immediate problem when her husband came in. He had blown out, looking for something to eat. She raced after him, <sup>AFTER</sup> allowing tåme to clear up the more incriminating evidence. The major problem was the fact that she was dressed to kill. He said something like "You fucking whore."

She looked down into her lap and wrung her hands. She couldn't find him,  
SHE SAID.

She had stopped at the O Club to drink coffee and try to sober up. She tried to call me, her erstwhile flame, but of course I was out on the patio of the Navy Club drinking myself into oblivion. She walked back to the transit hooch, and right next door were the two Army drunks. They were barbequeing and drinking, ~~one~~ of the Korean National Sports.

<sup>BOTH</sup>  
They asked her over for a drink. Well, she said, maybe just one. Later, much later, injured husband returned to speak to flamboyant wife. What he got was gales of laughter emanating from the hooch room on the other side of the wall. That about tore things good and proper. Free said the drunks didn't have any mix, and the martinis got worse and worse. Surrounded by stiff mixed drinks, estranged from her helpmate, and abandoned by hers truly, she blacked out.

This was my kind of woman, all right. Waking dynamite, an ongoing public disturbance, unable to handle her booze. She looked gorgeous there on the sofa. The upshot was a four page letter from Husband, telling her to get the fuck out of the country, The checkbook was laid on top of it. There was apparently a not-altogether veiled threat, too.

Sometimes I think I've got problems. But I never had the world fall in on me in less than 24 hrs. At the moment, it seemed like part of ~~a~~ collapsing wall had brushed me. <sup>THE</sup>

I don't know what she did yesterday. I hope she worked it out with Husband, as I recommended. Preferably from a safe distance over at the Crown Hotel. That would be the smart thing. And within the confines of this little island of America, nod politely on the street and walk our ways. It would be adult. And here I am at the goddam typewriter trying to figure this maelstrom out. This shit never happens to me. I am in control, and I can handle my booze and my drugs.

And I'm hoping she calls.

THE SNAKE RANCH  
BOULEVARD DE LA PRESIDENT CHON  
3 SEPT 1980  
SEOUL

DEAR T.R.,

Oh sure, it is easy for you to sit there and talk about night ops.

All you have to do is live them. Listen, Pal, I have been surviving a series of Night Ops that staggers the imagination. I'm talking a series that has left me a pitiful shadow of the man I was just weeks ago, when lean, tanned fingertips impacted these self-same keys. I'm talking things that make driving a twin-engine light plane onto a vast steel surface in the dead of night seem pleasurable by comparison. Snakes, man. Big fucking snakes.

Anyhow, I know that you could possibly take the above in the wrong light, and so I should explain just the precise circumstances that has reduced me to a quivering wreck, with a black and white spotted cat lying on my rack, staring quizzically.

Maybe I ought to start at the beginning, or at least back there suffering from an advanced case of brain swelling. Well, there I was: near unto despair from damage to the grey swells, concerned about my Working Problem. I had read the tract from the Alcohol Foundation, which outlined the symptoms of Workaholism. I was commencing to answer more than one in the affirmative. I got down to the bottom of the list and toted up the answers in the Danger Column:

1. Is Work Starting to Interfere with Your Drinking?
2. Do you find yourself leaving drinking parties to go to Work?
3. Have you found yourself unconscious at Work?
4. Has Work ever gotten you into Trouble?
5. Did your Father or Mother ever Work?
6. Do you find yourself hiding some Work around the House, planning to "just catch up on some Papers?"

There was a bottom line to this somewhere. I turned the tract upside down and read the answers. My blood began to run cold. I had answered nearly all of them correctly. I was in the primary Zone. I threw down the stack of TS codeword messages and went to the Ville. I drank heavily, but there was no doubt about it: I was going to Work the next day, whether I liked it or not.

I was a former Fighter in Trouble. There was only one cure for it. I had to meet a beautiful blonde girl, one with a beautiful Irish accent and .44 magnum breasts, and commit adultery. That would square me away for sure.

Oddly enough, I met madam X the very next day. I couldn't believe my good fortune; I mean, I had been out after Curfew, my liver was swollen, and I was coming down from my hangovers only intermittently to discover myself briefing Two-Stars things like: "Well, so there it is, General. How the little buggers dragged the enormous phalluses up to the top of that hill is anybody's guess. Could mean virtually anything. We just don't know

what the little gooks are up to. They are big fucking dildos, though, maybe one-fifty millimeters."

I was pounding down gin-and-tonics at poolside. I wasn't drinking to forget, mind you. I was drinking to remember, and I couldn't recall why. I looked up and suddenly it all came rushing back to me like the wet kiss at the end of the hot fist.

It was Tits. That's all there was to it. The God and Hot Dogs and the rest just sort of faded into the background with the apple pie and the limp piece of old cheddar cheese on the top. Giant bosoms, firm ones, gathered into heaping mounds by a flimsy bit of chiffon. Golden brown breads, basted with Hawaii tanning lotion, and smelling like coconuts. That was what had kept me going in Asia, and I had nearly forgotten. The last time I had just bent down a gone B\_R\_R\_R up! with my lips had been greuling months before, under the blazing overcast Michigan skies.

Suddenly, I found myself gazing slack-jawed at the most gigantic set of Major League Yavocs I had ever seen! I'm talking Bohemoths. They weren't on some obnoxious fat sweat hog Army Nurse, either. They were attached to a pert little blonde girl whose hair flowed in a lionine mane down her tanned back. The sweet curve of her thighs ran like coco-butter up to the triangle of Venus. The gentle dome of her stomach was muscled nicely. I suspected she jogged, but I didn't hold it against her. There was something else that I was thinking about holding against her, but it wasn't some loathsome piece of Kalifornia Kulture. It was a loathsome part of yours truly.

I saw immediately that she was impressed by the way I dribbled my drinks down my lean, athletic chest. I looked up and introduced myself. "Hi there. I'm a sort of supportive, modern kind of guy, a devout Femanist from way back, who is really non-threatening in sort of an action-packed way. How are you?"

She couldn't help herself. She immediately fell headlong into the pool.  
\*\*\*\*\*

Oh, yeah, I could go on. I could talk some more about tits and drinking, being out on my feet for days of a time, taking a marvelous shower and gently soaping those pendulous mamaries, hearing her squeel in extasy. But I'm not going to. That would be cruel and inhumane to a guy actually out there, defending his country, while us rear-area pogues are concerned with moral issues, like what do you say to the husband when you pass him in the parking lot, and your hair is still damp, or whether or not you have really got a full-blown case of Workaholism. More than that, it would be pointless.

Beuase I woke up a few mornings ago with a feeling of impending Doom. I'm not describing the Willies, or the Shakes, or even giant Snakes of multi-color hue. I'm talking the grey waight of the enitriety of Judeo-Christian Heritage hovering there over me as I was curled in my striped Afghan. What was I doing? I asked myself. I was mixed up with a Married Women, violating the most sacred tenants of my strict moral ubringing. Jesus! I was not only walking the moral Ridgeline, I was actually in danger of getting caught, the single greatest crime in Middle America.

Thankfully, I am paid up as a member of the Judeo League. The conspiracy to



the two conspirators together was so complex, so ridden with cliché, that it disintegrated of its own weight. Her honor was technically unsullied (at least by me) and so, after a few desperate days, the feeling of doom passed. Poor Madam X, though, she causes riots on base whenever she goes to the Exchange.

So the last few weeks have passed. The swellings in my glands and brain have diminished, even as my waistline has expanded. The story of the black and white cat, which punishes me for going to work by shitting on the floor, is too sordid to go into. Suffice it to say that in spite of the feline's generally low level of intellectual attainment, it still is capable of outdebating my Army roommates.

And Ohon Tu Hwan is President. I mean, you should view my little personal foibles against the Big Canvas: The night I get my Brain Swelled, the former President takes a hike. Ohon is promoted to his fourth star about the same time I saw those enormous valkyrie bosoms; I am unconscious in some gutter or another the very evening that he resigns from the Army, and have the shakes for his inauguration as the new President. There are fireworks in the sky, and curfew is off for one magic night of self abuse.

How are the people taking things, you ask? I wouldn't know. I have surveyed the barmaids, and they are of the opinion that, all other things being equal, they would like to eat some of the french fries and shrimp I bought at the stand down the road and maybe bring me 'nother couple beers, pretty good. The students are generally filled with a special brand of Fear and Loathing, at least the ones who were released after the Hooligan Round-up free trip to the Re-Education Center. (they wound up detaining over thirty thousand for that little exercise.) The merchants want stability above all else; but oddly enough, the Corporate people are still sitting on the fence. Ohon has a streak of Southern Baptist in him; his first acts as Prez included not only the obligatory amnesty for the small fry, but the admonition that the women should not wear make-up, or disco dance, and that the men should refrain from driving black market Mercedes. I am gunshy about legislated morality (witness my quandary in the realm of Honor and Duty and Testosterone) and I suspect that it will not go down well in a land where corruption is not only a way of life, but a national tradition.

Down south in Chilla Province, they have attempted to burn American offices. The people of Kwang-ju are not going to forget. What troubles me is the fact that we are so closely aligned with the Ohon group in the ROK propoganda machine. Gen Wickham's ill-advised maunderings were the impetus for Pres Choi's resignation. It was far ahead of Ohon's schedule, but he had the chance, and he went for it. The situation is out of control by our side, and whoever my successors are in this vale of tears are going to have to pay the Piper.

Which brings me to other matters of weighty substance. I am delighted by your prospects in Merry Olde. I have in my dreams a triumphant return to London; but I fear that is what they shall remain. More of that anon. But of Empire Test Pilot School: where is it located, how long, what are you going to be flying, etc, etc. The intelligent side of the family maintains fairly good relations with Air Ministry types, which could provide me with a means to get there on semi-official bizness. (My best contacts here have been with the Ministry of Cement, where I work.) On the other hand, I don't know what I would say to Battle of Britain types, except maybe "I understand Sir Watson-Watt is still Dead?"

My prospects are coming down to the wire. I recieved a Letter From Washington the other day in response to my "War or the Door" memorandum. They explained that there simply weren't any jobs in Thailand, and that I was too junior to go back to sea at the moment. (I am debating the widom of sending a classified letter outlining exactly what jobs actually are available there, but who likes a smart ass J.O. anyway?) He also regretted that they couldn't, in point of fact, send me 'where the action was,' but reminded me that a Navy Command in CONUS/Hawaii was certainly 'where the action is from a Naval Intelligence standpoint.'

Eech.

So my resignation window is rushing down on me. I plan on speaking to the CIA and State Department Spooks in town to see what they make of things, but would actually just like to make the hop to Europe. CINCS-NAVEUR or FOSIF Rota would be acceptable to polish off some key travels, but on the other hand, I sorta wonder about all of this. I understand that Tom Mitchell, the noted Fighter Pup, apparently took a VF-sized chip on his shoulder with him when he went to London, and got shit-canned.

If I may say, I just don't know. I sorta like the Costumed services routine, but in retrospect, I suppose I should have taken a shot at VT-10 so I could have wound up right back on the Midway, terrified, and thrown myself over the side.

So that is the Northeast Asian Report for this week. Can our hero maintain his sanity in the face of a Joint Command? Can his glands withstand the pressures? Will John Leave Nellie when he discovers the Disco is a cover for a ring of Tang Smugglers? This, and other questions will be covered by our panel of experts as we return next week for another edition of "one Man's Military Dictatorship."

Film at Eleven..... Got Bill's Tee-shirt in the Mail yesterday, and have already recieved my first reprimand. My attitude is that they CJKMA, doncha know!

Safety of Flight is Paramount; remember: Drink. Then Drive.

Take care,

FROM: SNAKE RANCH  
TO: MR. BILL AND MR. SLUGGO  
SUBJ: I CAN'T WRITE ANYMORE KOREAN/ITALIAN RIGHT NOW  
DTG: 6 SPET 1980 1305I

\*\*\*\*\*U N O L A S S I F I E D\*\*\*\*\*  
N O F O R N

BT

BOY, SURE LIKE THE SHIRT. REALLY TACKY. SUMS THINGS UP TO A TEE. FALL COMING HERE. NEED MANY SHIRTS. DAMN, THERE I GO AGAIN. GOTTA KNOCK THAT SHIT OFF.

I HAVE A CAT RIGHT KNOW. WHAT IS THE WORLD COMING TO? DRINKING PROBLEM COMING ALONG JUST FINE, THANKS.

HOPE THAT THIS ONE IS EVEN MORE ACTION PACKED THAN THE LAST ONE. YAWN. WASHINGTON HAS RESPONDED TO MY FAMOUS WAR OR THE DOOR MEMORANDUM. THEY SAY WAT? REPEAT WHAT?

THEY WANT TO SEND ME TO HAWAII OR WASHINGTON.

I CANNOT BEGIN TO DESCRIBE MY HOSTILITY TO THIS ENTIRE SITUATION. EVEN THE TYPEWRITER IS ACTING UP. KOREAN WAR VINTAGE. I'LL TELL YOU WHAT, YOU MOVE FROM A WW II AIRCRAFT CARRIER TO A KOREAN WAR COMMAND CENTER, I THOUGHT I HAD THAILAND SEWED UP. FIGHT VIETNAM ALL OVER AGAIN. WELL, JUST ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL, EH WOT?

I HOPE YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE YOUR OWN COPY OF THE LEGENDARY NICK DANGER. IF YOU DO NOT, ROG AND I ARE GOING TO EAT A BUNCH OF COPIES. COULD YOU COORDINATE PICKING OUT A "KEY PERSON" FOR THE COMBINED NICK DANGER CAMPAIGN? I WOULD XCOME MYSELF, BUT YOU KNOW HOW LOUD NOISES AFFECT ME.

THERE IS MORE GOOFY SHIT GOING ON AROUND HERE THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A STICK AT. A LOT OUT OF THE USUAL FROM OUR COUNTRY COUSINS UP THE ROAD. I AM HOPING TO HAVE A NICE LITTLE CRISIS GOING FOR YOU WHEN YOU DEBOUCHE FROM THE STRAITS OF MALACCA AGAIN. I KNOW YOU MEN OF ACTION AND EXCITEMENT NEED THE STIMULOUS ONLY AUTHENTIC DRIVING IN CIRCLES CAN GIVE YOU.

I AM LAYING ON A DELUX 747 FOR A TOUR OF COLORFUL JAPAN SOMETIME AFTER THE SHIP GETS IN. IT WILL, SO TO SPEAK, BE MY LAST TANGO IN NIPLAND. I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING IT FOR THE LAST TIME, BUT NOT AS MUCH AS I WANT TO GET OUT OF THIS SHITHOLE. SPEAKING METAPHORICALLY, OF COURSE.

AS I MENTION IN THE MAIN BODY OF THE TEXT, THE O CLUB POOL IS CLOSED AND I HAVE TO DRINK INDOORS NOW. IT IS VERY DEPRESSING. I MAY DRINK SOME WHISKEY LATER AND TRY TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS ONE.

THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN HAS EVERYONE VERY EXCITED HERE. I CAN'T MAKE UP MY MIND WHETHER TO VOTE FOR CHON TU HWAN OR BONZO. I THINK BONZO WOULD BE GOOD FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE AND HE LIKES BANANNAS. CHON, ON THE OTHER HAND, WOULD SHOOT SOME OF MY ENEMIES. WHO SAYS THERE IS JUST A CHOICE BETWEEN TWO SICK HUMAN BEINGS WHO ARE FIT ONLY TO EMPTY MY CAT'S LITTER BOX. MY CAT IS NAMED GENERAL WICKHAM. HELLO?

BT

FRAME 46-48  
FROM: SNAKE RANCH  
TO: BONDS, MY MAN  
SUBJ: ADDENDUM TO CHEAP XEROX LETTER  
DTG: 1405109 SEPT 1980  
REF: SNAKE RANCH LTR 6 SEPT 1980

\*\*\*\*\*U N C L A S S I F I E D \*\*\*\*\*

BT

BONDS, THIS IS PRETTY MUCH THE WAY THE NAVY COMMUNICATES ONLY NOT QUITE SO MANY TYPOS YET. WE WILL WORK ON THAT. THE GRAMMAR IS FUDIMENTRY AND THE LANGUAGE STIELTED STOP I AM DELIGHTED TO HEAR ABOUT THE GATHERING OF THE CLAN AND YOUR WANDERS THROUGH THE MARATIME PROVENCES OF CANADA, WHERE- EVER THAT IS STOP WHAT ON EARTH ARE THE BOYS UP TO NOW QUESTION MARK ONE HEARS SO MANY WEIRD STORIES OUT IN THIS NECK OF THE WORLD COMMA BUT I DON" T BELIEVE A WORD OF THE ONE ABOUT MALU AND THE GOAT HONEST EXOLAIMATION POINT LOT OF WEIRD SHIT HAPPENING HERE ON THE PENNINSULA STOP THE OTHER LETTER IS PRETTY MUCH ABOUT THAT IF YOU CAN FOLLOW MY KOREAN ENGLISH DIALECT WHICH IS AS NEAR TO THE WAY YOU GET AROUND AS I CAN MANAGE CONSIDERING HOW THE ALCOLHOL INDUCED FOG COMES AND GOES STOP I SENT FORREST & DENBY A COPY OF THE ADVENTURES OF NICK DANGER COMMA PROBABLY THE MOST SIGNIFIGANT BOOK PUBLISHED BY ME THIS YEAR IN ALL WESTERN LITERATURE STOP IT IS SORTA STUPID BUT GET IT AWAY FROM HIM WHEN YOU GET A CHANCE STOP I MAY B<sup>E</sup> ABLE TO GET MORE COPIES BUT I THINK THE OTHER NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTY ARE OUT IN THE GULF OF OMAN WHERE THE SAILORS HAVE PLENTY OF MONEY AND NOTHING TO SPEND IT ON EXCEPT STUPID DETECTIVE STORIES SORTS ABOUT AIRCRAFT CARRIERS AND DRINKING IN EXOTIC PLACES STOP I SURE HOPE WE MAKE BACK THE MONEY WE SPENT ON IT BUT WHAT THE FUCK QUESTION MARK MAYBE WE WILL MAKE THE THREE THOUSAND APEICE MY PARTNER AND I FORCAST WHEN WE WENT TO PRESS PERENTHESIS IT DON" T SEEM POSSIBLE PERENTHESIS NOW THAT YOU HAVE A CHANC E TO SEE HOW THE MILITARY TALKS TO ITSELF I HOPE THINGS BECOME A LITTLE BIT MORE CLEAR AS TO WHY HOSTAGE RAIDS FAIL AND EVERYONE IS GETTING OUT STOP NOBODY CAN UNDERSTAND a WORD ANYBODY ELSE IS SAYING STOP IF YOU GET A CHANCE WHY DON" T YOU PASS ALONG SOME ADDRESSES FOR BEAR AND THE BOYS STOP HOW IS THE JOB AND BECKY HOLDING OUT THERE IN MID NEW ENGLAND QUESTION MARK I HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT WHERE I WANT TO GO NEXT EITHER OUT OR IN OF THE NAVY COMMA THE NAVY WANTS TO SEND ME TO HAWAII OR WASHINGTON STOP I JUST DON" T KNOW STOP SOME PEOPLE HAVE SKILLS AND OTHER PEOPLE ARE JUST ITINERANT INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS STOP THERE IS A LADY I WANT TO SEE BACK IN DETROIT AND FLORIDA DEPENDING ON WHAT TIME OF THE YEAR IT IS SIGH OH WELL MAYBE NEXT YEAR STOP I THINK I AM GOING BACK TOK JAPAN FOR A WEEK OR SO TO HAVE SOME LAUGHS AND DRINK SAKI AND EAT RAW FISH AND BUY ANOTHER STEREO SINCE THE KOREANS STOLE THE OTHER TWO THAT I OWNED THE SHITHEELS STOP IT IWLL BE A RELIEF TO BE OUTTA HERE FOR A LITTLE WHILE PERENS SEE OTHER LETTER FOR MORE DETAILED REASONS ON THAT SCORE PERENS WHEW STOP I CAN" T QUITE FIGURE OUT WHO TO VOTE FOR IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION STOP I WAS THINKING ABOUT VOTING FOR BONZO BECAUSE HE WOULD BE FOR A STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE AND ALSO LIKES BANANNES COMMA BUT ON THE OTHER HAND GENERAL OHON MIGHT BE THE THINKING MAN" S VOTE BECAUSE HE COULD SHOOT ALL OUR ENEMIES IF HE GOT ELECTED STOP I AM GLAD THAT CARTER AND REAGAN ARE DEFINITELY OUT OF THE RUNNING NOW STOP NEITHER ONE IS QUALIFIED TO EMPTY OUT THE CAT" S LETTER BOX STOP AND I SUSPECT THAT ANDERSON IS A HOMOSEXUAL STOP LOOK AT THAT HAIR AND THOSE GLASSES STOP WHEN STOP ANYHOW I HOPE THIS ADVENTURE IN MIL- ITARY COMMUNICATIONS HAS BEEN AS MUCH FUN FOR YOU AS IT HAS FOR THOSE OF US HERE AT THE MINISTRY OF CEMENT WE WISH MANY PORTLANDS FINE NUMBA ONE KOREAN CEMENT TO ALL THERE WOODIE TOO AND BEAUTIFULL LADY STOP OH MY GOD IT" S OUT OF CONTROL STOP AHHHG STOP

BT

THE SNAKE RANCH  
VENUE DE LA PRESIDENT OHON  
6 SEPT 1980  
SEOUL

Esteemed Sir,

I am receiving message, pretty good. Many nice things to do here Korea with much booming Economy and few slackers. Most Hooligans now in re-education camps for refreshing course. Much democracy here, you bet. President Ohon makes Social Democratic welfare state O.K. No Yushin Remnants in here only chickens, like American Joke. Now, we level non-mainstreamers ball-bali, chop chop. Kim Dae Jung bad man, many Communist Sympathies which will be ruthlessly purged from body, likewise New Democratic party. We form new party with much contributions from fine Corporations and not send to Camps for same. Corruption and Communists and Disco Music not so good for Korean People. We have much democracy, but on Asian model you not understanding so well. General Wickham fine man; we here at Ministry of Cement like real good after he say it O.K. to resigning remnant President Choi. Now we have real leadership from Korean Military Academy Class 11 like we should all along have had and not got into troubling waters like Kwang Ju, where minimal force used to crush looters and Communists but no citizens with Cobra Gunships which we also like very good. Very Fine Non-mainstreaming Control tool, not like rubber bullet. What the point that? Very Sorry Gen Wickham in such deep Kimchi with State Department. Maybe U.S. use new leadership, too, pretty good West Point same same?

Like very much news from Philippine Republic. Midway Men have much fun there, feel breasts? Ministry would like to see many Portlands of number One Korean Cement sell there maybe expence account we visit. Eye Goo! Maybe make boat patch to correct list on boat we see Busan pretty well, we no fools, Ha Ha! We hearing story from First Lieutenant Reddig, he nice fellow not know phone tapped for strategic Details Cement Production but many fine stories. Number one source for KOIA, he not even knowing. He say following on transcript we keep secure:

".....Whattdaya mean the ship collided with a merchant? What the fuck are you doing calling me up at this hour to tell me that for? If you got it over the circuit you cant't pass that on the goddam black phone! Jesus! Do you think I would call you up to tell you your old house trailer got broken into by Chicanos, even though you don't live there anymore? I'll tell you what, it is a damn good thing I was up drinking whiskey and not asleep or I'd come over to that bunker and kick your ass. Let me tell you something: my friends don't live in no berthing compartments. They live upstairs in the luxury areas!....."

These much more like that. Have plenty; he drink and make threatening call with much time remaining in Land of Moring Calm and improving traffic management through more cement in highways. Yesterday we get good one, you maybe like O.K.:

".....I told you not to call me here. Suppose somebody is listening. Yeah, yeah, I love you too. But we gotta cool it. If he finds out

he'll go batshit. I can't handle gunfire. You know that babe. Now don't start crying. Jesus, just cool off for a minute. You gotta stop drinking all day and calling me up at work. The cat is fine, I tell you. Get some backbone, for god's sake we aren't in the goddam Gulf of Oman. All right, All right, I'll call you when I get out of here. Keep it together. I have to go now....."

Meguoks have very interesting lives I glad I have a chance listen in and share with them. Since Disco Music and too much make-up for womens is National Advancement Way now, and Mercedes cars, we find much amusement in secret wiretappings. Oke-san mine was jogging with new Womens jogging club; they have good uniforms say much good in President Ohn's new policy for Advancement run six miles. Oke-san too tired for pillow frolics now she says headache, but I thinking maybe political fatigues. I go South Gate Dog Market to buy pooch for Kay-gogi get much energy drink many gin-sings. I dispair for Ministry of Cement (although produce many fine Port-Lands) not good cover for KOIA. I hoping maybe get to Ticket Desk at KAL-surveil many Communist Sympathies attempt to leave National advancement Program without adequate papers maybe pay me several won. Eye Goo!

First Lieutenant Reddig he say many funny things other day I not understanding so good; he maybe want leave National Advancement, too, but not needing papers. He talk to Detailer. I not knowing same, maybe travel agent some kind. I typing for to read you real fine:

".....thanks a lot! You said this would be easy and what is it? Crappola, buddy. They closed the goddam Officer's club pool just when the weather was getting good and now where can a man have a decent cocktail? Nowhere! You Washington orreps don't understand what hell is like. I'll tell you what, I have a valid passport and for three hundred bucks I can get lost so far you will never find me! I got powerful friends out here and I'm pretty sure the OAG would back me up for a limited strike on MILPERGEN 11- whatever the fuck you call it. I am only asking ~~me~~ for what is coming to me rightfully. What? I have not been drinking! Only whiskey! Hello? Hello?"

We think he pretty funny guy. He get tee-shirt from P.I. in mail other day we know in package check. It in code. It say "EAT ME" on front with nice yellow hands pointing to manhood and "YOJKMA" on the back. We have many analysis done on code before we give him O.K. We think maybe anti-National Advancement Program or None-mainstreaming maybe same-same. We faced with confusion loss of face. Should Ministry mix him with many Port-lands for shipment to Bangladesh, or run down with Kimchi cab? We miss many funny threatening calls, ha has not so very numerous here now I Ruvx Ruoy not on Armed Forces Network with Desi Arnez two-tone funny moustache.

Many numerous times here at typescriptor with English dictionary. We hope you write here at Ministry Cement be pen palk, we give low-grade secrets to you, you send back letter we analyze, get ship's location from amount water in stickee flap. We no fools, although many other things. Also reading postmark, secret code, we know from where letter came. You call too, maybe, ask for Mr. Kim, they know who. I close with last low-grade secret, O.K. release to Meguoks:

"..and I just wanted you to know, Sir, that I have turned in both of the handguns, and I can assure you nothing like this unfortunate incident will happen again, I hope...."

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT OHON  
SEOUL  
SEPT 9, 1(\*)

Dear Uncle Jim,

This is just a quick response to your letter from the hectic days after the Oshkosh Festival. I haven't heard from the Folks in a couple weeks, due to a week-long interruption in the pipeline when they went river running with brother Spike. Hence, my 'state-of-the-art' is back a ways. Never the less, there has been enough of interest going on that I should be able to fill in a few pages.

I am tickled by your description of the Festival of AVGAS and Castor Oil and plain, unadulterated American history. I am saddened by the people that died, of course, but there is one thing about Aviation that took a while to sink in: the things want to fly, and it usually takes some bone headed stunt to make them do otherwise. Which is not to deny that things do go wrong on occasion (I am reminded of the passage in Tom Wolf's fascinating book The Right Stuff, in which the jock driving one of the AF high-altitude high-speed airframes of the late fifties shouting into the microphone as the thing pitchpoled into oblivion, not paralyzed with fear, but asking "What can I try now?") Anyhow, my hat is off to the EAA and the people that have made it all happen.

Re: the Carrier crunch. Just a word of defense for some very professional people who were involved in the unfortunate incident. You are well aware of the 'Big Sky' theory, which holds that the vastness of the troposphere will, on any given encounter, guarantee that one airplane will not strike, intercept, or successfully re-fuel from another airplane (a corollary is the principle that on any given launch the chances of having a good AWG-10A radar is inverse to the necessity of it's performance.) The same principle is used on the broad world ocean. Unfortunately, due to the presence of two typhoons in the south China Sea, all the commerce of Straights of Malacca was directed into the Palawan Channel. I have watched the surface radar presentation going through the Malacca passage, and there are thousands of contacts. Normally the Old Man gets a call anytime a contact gets within 6,000 yards. In this dense environment, though, you can have dozens of contacts within the magic circle, some closing, compounding the fact that a Carrier's profusion of lights precludes the other (and some times dubiously qualified) skippers from realizing which way the big boat is moving. Strange but true. Also, embarrassing to be placed in the same category as U.S.S. Ranger, which once had the waggish admonition "Re-usable Container: Do Not Destroy" spray painted on the side. But that is another story altogether.

The local politics are an education. I think I lit into the Command Structure here last time, and so will let that dog lie for the nonce. It is a no win situation, and I'm afraid the vacuum in which the National-level decisions are made will be the death of many. But ROK watching has been most rewarding. As you are aware, we have a new President here. Briefly, allow me to recap the bidding:

Way back in the dim days of the post Korean War period, the Korean Military Academy was set up to maintain an aggressive and professional army. A young former Intell Officer named Park (or PAK) is rising in the administration of Singmun Ree. Classes graduate from the Academy each year, filled with an infusion of resentment to the reserve and untrained officers at the top. Class 11 comes along with a young man named Ohn tu Hwan. He is bright, religious, and much admired by his fellows. He rises in the peacetime Army, the boring garrison duties, and the moments of terror on the very active 'Demilitarized Zone.' The U.S. becomes involved in Vietnam, and requests a token presence from it's Allies. The ROKs chip in what is to become the most feared (and sometimes brutal) unit in the field. This becomes the vehicle from which the young officers can get combat experience, and it is a ticket that must be punched.

Ohn and his comrades from Class 11 are just achieving their Colonelcy, and they are the leaders of the Tiger Division. (I knew a guy who was based down the road from some ROKs. The Yanks sat behind yards of concertina wire, protected by constant patrols and dogs. The Yank supply dump was used as a VC commissary at night. The ROKs had a single strand of wire, just enough to point out the demarkation of their camp. The ROKs never lost a thing.) As they rotate in and out of the Vietnam War, a very close bond is formed between the young officers. Strings are pulled. One of Ohn's first post-combat tours was as the General Officer Detailer. I don't need to tell you who began to get the most enviable jobs; a fiduciary relationship is formed quite apart from simple chain-of-command.

President Park views the young Colonel as a comer. He gets his star, and command of one of the southern commands prior to coming back to the Capitol for the political in-fighting that will determine how much further he will go. Ability is no longer the criteria by which the aspirants are judged; at least, not the sole one. There are many ahead of Ohn on the promotion lists, but old debts from the Detailer are called in. Soon it is MGEN Ohn.....

Which brings us down to the Assassination of President Park. The security surrounding the Leader is always tight, and virtually air-tight since the North Korean assault on the Blue House in the late sixties. The motives which pushed the head of the KOIA (the largest intelligence organization in the world, following the Superpowers) to his bloody dinner party are hidden from a Meguck of my lowly standing. Suffice it to say (and I wish I knew more) there is a sudden vacuum at the top. The old Prime Minister Choi takes over the reigns. He is a civilian, and some of the more radical democratic solutions are offered to combat the recession which has followed the boom years of the early seventies; free elections, a new Constitution to follow the old autocratic 'Yushin' system which maintained Park. The military is jumpy; the seniors are lap-dogs of a dad man. It is time for a young major general to call in more of the debts, this time from associates who are vital Corps Commanders. The Class 11 circle is tight, and anyone who can sniff the wind knows who will soon be calling the tune.

We come nearly to my period at the Peninsula Club South. It is December 12, 1979. The 12/12 incident of memory; the Night of the Generals. The Indications Center is jammed with the Great and the Near Great from the American Side. No one knows what is going on. The rattle of small arms is heard from the Ministry of National Defense down the road. A cabinet minister and a high-ranking ROK of another Class are hiding out with us. They receive constant calls from the MND: "Come on over, fellas, no problems.



We just want to talk to you for a while."

General Wickham, the OINQ, offers his car and driver. Surely they would not dare to trifle with the personal auto of the Commander in Chief, the Senior Partner?

They put about thirty rounds at the car, and succeeded only in shooting off the aerial.

Ah well. Once the dust settled, there was no question about who held the real power. The tanks and troops were in the streets throughout the country: many of them taken from the command of the Americans without consultation. The tiresome legalities still had to be settled. It was only a matter of time.

May, and the Kwang-ju riots. Ah, not strictly Kwang-ju. The students were in the streets in Seoul and Pusan and Taegu. Very similar to the scenario in which Park seized power. They recited the familiar litany: End the draft Power to the People, Free elections, New Constitution. Strikingly similar in rhetoric to the chants of our own kids a decade ago. And similarly, the North was using them the same way Uncle Ho and the Bear used us. Destabilize, win the war in their country without a shot. Add a substantial amount of inter-provincial hatred between the southern provinces and the Big City types in Seoul. The Capitol was secured rapidly: the Universities closed, the radicals rounded up.

Kwang-ju, meanwhile was in flames. The armories were in ~~the~~ the hands of the mobs; the U.S. Air Facility (and co-incidentally the Joint Munitions Magazine) was an attractive target. The rebels are infiltrated by die-hards who will accept no compromise with the government. Emergency Marshall LAW is in effect. (At the time, I turned to someone and asked just how EML differed from the ordinary kind which had been in effect since the assassination? This one, I was told, included the tranquil island of Cheju in the Tsushima Straits.) General Chon....I'm sorry, LTGEN Chon, now heads the standing Committee for State Security, which has assumed all functions of the civilian government. He crushed Kwang-Ju. The death tallies are conflicting; a median figure is about five hundred. Mass funerals are held quickly, and the incident is considered closed. Here, anyway.

Remarkably enough, the Standing Committee (I wonder how that would sound in German?) announces that not a single civilian was injured in the storming of the city. A few hundred Looters and Communists, yes, but none of the honest people.

The North begins a particularly virulent propaganda campaign. The poor old U.S doesn't quite know what to make of it. It is the only time I ever heard of a Cobra Gunship described as a "riot controll instrument." We do know that we don't like things. State condemns the events of the aftermath, which are a litany:

"The Gangster Round-Up": Thirty thousand are arrested in this campaign; again, they are not citizens. They are Extortionists, Swindlers and Vice Offenders. I could give you the totals, but the surreal has its limits, even in this letter.

The dismantling of all the opposition parties. The head of the New Democratic Party resigns. The party collapses. The old head, Kim tae Jung, has already been kidnapped from Japan, and is standing trial

for his life. Treason the charge. He was responsible for Kwang-ju. The blame must be apportioned. Face must be saved.

A North Korean Agent Boat is presented in the Press as an incident which nearly escalates into Peninsula-wide war. LTGEN Ohn single-handedly saves the situation. (I was there. Not true.)

Young men are rounded up for mandatory haircuts. Thousands of them. I get the feeling that I have been here before.....

At which point Gen Wickham, the supreme commander enters the story. He grants an interview to the AP. It is off the record, sub-rosa, not for attribution. In it he lambasts Ohn, deplores the situation, but in a most practical way, acknowledges that if Ohn demonstrates "Broad Based Support" among the Korean People, the U.S. would have no choice but to get behind him. The poor CINO. The free press of the ROK has disappeared and it is utterly under the aegis of the Standing Committee. He is already smarting from the North's propaganda that he had authorized the use of the troops at Kwang-ju. The best Propaganda is the truth. As you recall from my maunderings a page or so ago, the ROKs did not request the use of troops for the Night of the Generals. They just took them. The General had the option of refusing, and having the troops pulled out anyway, or simply acquiescing to a situation that was set in cement. As a formality the ROKs had requested the U.S. commanded troops, and nothing more.

Anyway, you can imagine what the ROK Press had the day after the "not for attribution" interview. Yep. "Wickham announces Support for Gen Ohn."

It was all over for the civilian government. Ohn had his ducks all in a row; he was presented with his fourth Star, and made preparations for his retirement party all the same day. Not bad for rising from two stars to four in less than a year. Our four-star was in the doghouse with Washington because of the quotes. President Choi, his usefulness to Ohn concludes, announced his resignation. A week later, much ahead of Schedule, GEN Ohn tu Hwan, ROKA (ret) addressed a small crowd at Seoul Stadium and took over a six-year lease on the Blue House.

\*\*\*\*\*

So there that is. A practical course in Asian Politics, all in less than six months. The one thing that is ~~not~~ to be concluded from my polemic is the fact that the real bad guys still live north of the 38th parallel. It just gets hard to tell sometimes.

Personally, things have also been happening. My first book was just published after a marathon journey. Written in the Indian Ocean, typed in the United States, printed in Korea, and distributed through Japan and the Philippines back to the ship in the Indian Ocean. Although not what you would call great literature, it was a most educational experience. We contracted for 1,000 copies, of which (with luck, and barring crashes) 950 will get out to the ship for sale. We are into it for about \$3,000. My fingers are crossed that we will eventually see some profits, perhaps going for another printing if the demand is there or a word-processing system for me if there is not. Of course, I could wind up with a few hundred copies to line my walls with. We shall see. I sent a couple copies to Woodcliff (a clear loss, coming out of our limited "complimentary copy budget") so perhaps Dad will forward one along. The subject matter defies description, save that it is sort of a Detective/Aviation/Travel/Satire

sea-story, with plenty of gratuitous sex and violence. A real Seventh Fleet Fighter Squadron kind of story.

Hmmmmmm.

Great to hear about the Family. Please give my best to the Littleton Clan, and inform Alan that I will make an inspection tour of the Landmark Home next time I get back to the states. I hope the recent bad weather on the Gulf did not hit the Councilwoman's Estate too hard. Having living a whopping fifty feet above sea level for the last two years, I have always been amazed at the optimism in building on an island forty percent lower!

This variant of the Asian Experience is scheduled to end in May of 1981. I have communicated with Washington, and they tell me I cannot A. Go back to Sea with an Airwing. (too junior) B. Can't go to Thailand ("We don't envision an American presence in SE Asia in the near future even if there is a war.") C. Can't go to Europe (No money to ship you.) What they are talking about is a shore tour in Hawaii or the U.S. (read Macalappa Crater or the District of Columbia.) Don't know yet what to do. My current boss is well-meaning but somewhat incompetent. The Augmentation Board is meeting now to consider who will be offered Regular Navy Commissions, and the selection Board will determine if I can put on Lieutenant in January. I should be a lead-pipe cinch for both, unless my Boss has succeeded in sewing up my paperwork.

Which is a very good chance indeed. So we shall see what happens.

The Navy claims that they are sending me a check for \$1750 bucks, which will not quite cover my losses but is much better than a sharp stick in the eye, any way you look at it. I will believe it, though, when I have the cash in hand. I will get the raise and restoration to full pay at the same time on OOT 15 (when my advance pay is finally paid back in full) so financially, things look good for the near term.

I have droned on here quite long enough. Please give my regards to all; and as always, my greatest admiration to yourself!

FROM: SNAKE RANCH  
TO: DOCTOR MARKIN'S FEEL-GOOD CLINIC  
SUBJ: ADDENDUM TO INTERRUPTED LETTER  
DTG: 1305I 09 SPET 1980  
REF: SNAKE RANCH 6 SEPT 1980

\*\*\*\*\*U N C L A S S I F I E D\*\*\*\*\*  
N O F O R N

BT

I THINK MY PHONE IS TAPPED. I JUST DON'T KNOW. I GET THIS HOLLOW SOUND ON THE LINE AND SOME GUY ASKING ME TO START AGAIN BECAUSE HE DIDN'T HAVE THE TAPE MACHINE ON. I'LL TELL YOU, I AM TIRED OF HAVING THESE GUYS FROM THE MINISTRY OF CEMENT HANGING AROUND ALL THE TIME.

MORE WIERD SHIT HERE THAN I CAN DEAL WITH. CAN'T TELL WHAT THE LITTLE FUCKERS ARE UP TO, EITHER OUR PET ROKS OR THE NASTY ONES. OH SURE, WE AREN'T DOING ANY NIGHT OPS HERE, AT LEAST IN THE CONVENTIONAL SENSE, BUT THAT JUST MEANS YOU HAVE TO DRINK HARDER TO STAY IN THE BALLGAME. MAYBE HAVING A LITTLE FUN, BUT YOU NEVER CAN TELL.

my heart goes out to you thes IN THE GULF AND I AM DAMN GLAD THAT IS ALL BECAUSE YOU KNOW WHAT LOUD NOISES DO TO ME. I AM GOING TO BE TICKLED PINK TO VISIT IN LOUISVILLE BECAUSE THEN I WON'T BE HERE AT ALL. THE NAVY DEPARTMENT IS PLOTTING AGAINST ME. THEY WANT TO SEND ME TO HAWAII OR WASHINGTON WHICH IS A LOGICAL CHOICE, I SUPPOSE THEY BOTH BEING TROPICAL ISLANDS. I KNOW I SURE COULDN'T GIVE UP ALL THESE SWELL MILITARY BENEFITS LIKE BEING STUCK IN BIZARRE LITTLE ASIAN DICTATORSHIPS WHERE THE HOST NATIONALS ARE ALL DOING SOME SORT OF HALLUCINAGENIC DRUG. IN THIS CASE IT APPEARS TO BE DISINTEGRATED CABBAGE OF SOME SORT. WAIT TILL THE HIPPIES FIND OUT BACK HOME, THIS IS GOING TO BE BIGGER THAN BANANNAS MARK MY WORDS.

WE ARE ALL FOLLOWING THE POLITICAL BATTLES BACK HOME WITH A LOT OF INTEREST. I CAN'T MAKE UP MY MIND WETHER TO VOTE FOR BONZO OR GENERAL CHON. BONZO WOULD BE GOOD BECAUSE HE IS FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE AND BANANNAS, BUT GENERAL CHON SAYS HE WILL SHOOT ALL MY ENEMIES WHEN HE COMES TO POWER IN AMERICAN TOO WITH REV MOON. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS WE HAVE HAD A REAL CHOICE BETWEEN CHOCOLATE AND VANILLA. I AM SORRY THEY SHOT REAGAN AND CARTER, BUT THEN I KNOW YOU GUYS HEARD ALL ABOUT THAT IN THE UP TO DATE FEN NEWSTAPES THEY SEND OUT. JESUS, IT WASN'T LIKE YOU WERE STUCK IN THE GULF OF OMAN OR SOMETHING.

MY COHERANCE IS SUFFERING FROM A PROLONGED BOUT OF THE KOREAN PROBLEM MICROBE. IT BEGINS WITH THE SUSPICION THAT YOU MIGHT BE WORKING TOO MUCH. THEN, YOU DISCOVER TO YOUR HORROR THAT YOU ARE HIDING SOME WORK AROUND THE HOST TO DO WHEN NOBODY IS LOOKING. YOU FIND YOURSELF LEAVING DRINKING PARTIES TO GO TO WORK. THE REALIZATION STRIKES YOU THAT BOTH YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER BOTH WORKED MOST OF THEIR LIVES. FINALLY, WORK IS INTERFERING WITH YOUR DRINKING. I HAVE GOT TO GET A HOLD OF MYSELF.

IN SO DOING, I HAVE GOT THIS CAT. HE IS NAMED GEN WICKHAM. I THINK HE IS A REAL CAT UNLESS THIS IS A MORE DETAILED HALLUCINATION THAN I NORMALLY ENCOUNTER. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT I GET THIS IN THE MAIL SO I CAN GO BACK TO HAVING MORE FUN HERE AT THE PENNINSULA CLUB SOUTH. TAKE CARE. MORE FOLLOWS

BT

THE SNAKE RANOH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT CHON  
16 SEPT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear Teens,

I am wearing the shirt, listening to Tim Buckley, and getting sentimental over not being on the far north Shore. You have really got something there...and as much as I like Asia, I confess that it really doesn't hold a candle to drinking and driving on the byways of the good ole United Snakes.

Let me casually outline some of the idiocy to which I have subjected myself over the last month or so. But before doing that I want to express my admiration for the Boat. Impressive achievement, but that has been the hallmark of your projects thus far right along the line. When I heard of Abbey's surrender from the wilds of Wellesley Island I was lost in a reverie of some minutes duration. If I had to go underground that would be a superb spot. Perhaps like the notorious Buddy Slocum spending nickles at the Anchor Lounge...or the lost pleasures of Ina Island...or a fugitive from Fascist Justice, persecuting unjustly for the trifling offense of selling a mere three pounds of coke to some pig nazi.

Well. I confess I have been thinking a lot about Beantown recently. About the spectacular autumn of (was it really that short a time ago?) 1975, sunning through the golden fall right into december, chipping paint on that magnificent hulk, drinking Labatt's at my own pace, each day a golden haze after the ritual of the Boston Globe and some red-tinged illegal smoke. I would like to come back, maybe own a small peice of it up the coast near or north of the Hampshire border.

Naturally, that is why I performed an act of lunacy over the weekend, which may preclude my getting to the states for the next three years. Allow me to illucidate.

Well, there I was. I started srieking heavily about a month ago. It was that kind of month. The swimming pool was the only place on base you could buy a cocktail during the day. I started hanging around with the pool crowd, sunning in the post-monsoon blazing sun, plunging into the cool water, and having some drinks. Due to the unusual schedule I keep, there was always some time to pound down a couple. Things began to get out of control. You may know the feeling. Each time a little more berserk than the last. One guys change-of-station clean out the likker cabinet party turns nasty. Nearly winds up in violence with a character who never succeeded in getting totally of the Cambodian border zone. Dodging the MPs out in town after curfew...certainly enough to scotch a promising young Intel type (who, if not expected to be totally exemplary, is at least expected to be discreet to keep the TS Codeword clearance for the job.) Near brain damage on another occasion; thankfully no prisoners were taken. A near fatal run-in with Adultery: she was so good-looking, her accent so Dublin, her breasts so enormous.....a near constant hang-over, or working one off on the mid-shift, coming to sobriety somewhere around two-thirty in the morning.

It was like being on Liberty the entire time. Whew. It was getting ir-

rational out. I was possessed of the desire to go to Thailand and fight the Viets....from a distance, albiet, but still well outside the norms. Filled with dispondancy over the distance between myself and Jane, which had never been completely resolved in itself, and the prospect that in order to get out of Korea, I had either to take a job back in Japan for years, or get out of the Navy altogether, meaning an involuntary extension right here in that stupid bunker under that odious Military dictatorship (so symetrical: serving in a military dictatorship within a military dictatorship...) for months and months.

So the kid partied harder, having some fun with a vengance unprecedented since my early days on the aircraft carrier.

Ready to go back to sea by way of contrast. It is enough to make a strong man weep. I brushed the tears from my cheeks and ordred another round.

Thankfully, things came finally to a head. My finances had been in shambles since I took some advance pay to make the down-payment on those lots I bought up at Martin Lake. The payments were steep for unimproved land, the price of a short term note. Paying off the dead horse made a cruel joke of my paychecks, but the light was drawing nearer at the end of the tunnel. On Oct 15th I would not only go back to the lordly sum of my full check, but my friends in Washington were going to kick in an additional 11.5%, which would bring me all the way up to the median poverty level. The Navy had finally got around to adjudicating my claim against the theives we employ here in Korea, and had informed me to stand by for nearly 1800 smackeroos straight from the treasury. The Book had finally seen the lght of day. Oh sure, the typos are horrendous, but what can you expect from a publisher who doesn't speak English? I began to quake with the thought of having more than one solitary twenty-spot to rub together in my jeans.

Thankfully, again, just as solvency was staring me in the face, I got a call from bro Spike. I had mentioned in one of these recurring fantasies, that I might actually be in possession of some venture capital by the end of the year. I thought a couple lots out near Salmon on the middle fork of the river might be just what the doctor ordered; part of my three corner program to have some real estate in the areas of the country I like best. Spike had taken me at my word. "Dear J.E." went the letter "If you act now, for a limited time, you too can be a part of the great American Dream. For as little as \$1500 dollars a month down and pennies and nickles a month, you can buy fifty percent of a place you have never seen, which will enable me, Spike Reddig, to live virtually rent free for all the time I want, throwing wild parties and breaking windows."

How could I pass it up? I examined the shakey finances. If I tipped everything up on one side, and all the loose change ran down to the corners, it was just barely conceivable that I could come up with the 1.5K. I shook my head. This was going to restrict me to under a single bottle of Jameson's Irish whiskey every five days, with no trips up town to Sam's Country Bar. With white bread and bean sandwiches to live on. I wrote the check, knowing that Spike had actually stumbled onto a great Coke deal that he needed front money for, and thss would get him the in he needed for the Big Score. I mailed it anyway.

I took another bite of the white bread and bean sandwich. I wondered how

I was going to support all this frivolity. Would I be forced to work for a living, or was there a way to pay off at least one of the properties before hitting the silk and relying on the vagaries of the civilian world? And perhaps sike out a good time?

What I need was a trip to the beaches. A deep tropical tan. Somewhere where English was at least the official language. Would the Navy actually send me to Hawaii for my twilight tour? A job offer suddenly materialized. My ex-boss called from CINOPACFLEET and said he needed a few good men to hang around on the beach and drink Primo Lager. I could be just the boy for the job.

Anyhow, I have now got a period of enforced moderation coming up, which should be good for long-range decision making. You raise some very good points about the military life, but I confess there are times when being in the costumed services aren't all that bad. But maybe that is just because I have been out here so long. Anyhow, let me know what the job market is like around beantown and I'll continue to update the situation on the very ramparts of what passes for democracy in this neck of the woods. I could always use my generous GI bennies and go back to school, loose my land, and be flat broke. After all, that is where I am now.

I took the liberty of posting a copy of Danger to Bud and Eleanor, as El once had the courage to ask for a copy of my first book. I hope she has recovered.

Wish I could have seen Bonds in his Unisuit, casually checking out the bottom life.....and Wheel's astonishing! Haven't seen him since we helped his folks move out of the old house in Gross Pointe. Give my best to Bob and tell the Callahans that I will be angling to keep a place open on the Big Island if things ever calm down enough for Edgar to move on to his next fantasy.

Thumbs up & bums away,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT CHON  
14 SEPT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear Spike,

I have several misgivings about this endeavor; none of them insurmountable, but all rather troubling.

None-the-less, here is fifteen hundred dollars. The checks are dated for Sept 29th; the paperwork should be well clear by then. Be advised that the washing of them involves us in a Contract, whether we like it or not. Consequently, I have included a quick and dirty limited partnership agreement. What I have to have is evidence that I am recorded somewhere as joint owner. If you get blown up, I would be faced with a mountain of trouble trying to get things squared away. (Since residency still is 9/10s of the law, my untimely decease should pose fewer problems.)

One thing I don't want is to get into a Sunset Street-style house that gets abused, used as a crash pad by hundreds, has joints stubbed out on the floor and carpets, and is regularly soaked in inches of beer. At least when I am not there.

The main problem is that you are going to be there, and I am going to be out here someplace, and it only going to be human nature that you are going to wind up considering the place yours vice ours. It is the way things work. I expect a houseplan when you get a chance, and your ideas on where we can add another bedroom. I am not going to come to our house and sleep on the couch; at least, not if I go to the trouble of meeting my end of the obligations.

I know you are good with your hands, and I know there are things which will cry out to be done: like removing the fenders, and burning regular gas in the fireplace.

Re: default. If for some reason you find that you cannot keep up your end of things, we can work something out. I have good credit and would rather eat white bread and beans than endanger it.

We need a porch to sit on and drink.

If the deal falls through, mail the checks back so I can unscramble my affairs. I do not go back to full pay until 15 Oct; my \$1700 checks from the Navy for my household goods is still illusionary, and frankly, I am going to be eating white bread and beans for the next month. This is literally everything I have. Ground zero, buddy. I do have Expectations, but I have learned the hard way to Not Touch the Principle, and I just smashed mine to smithereens.

This, in conjunction with the Martin Lake Property, is going to keep me in the Navy for another three years. I have a nice job offer in Hawaii, and I think a couple years on the beach is just what the Kid aka has earned. I couldn't afford things there anyway as far as land goes, so this is as good an addition to my tax shelter program as any.

I will close, as I want to get this in the mail early tomorrow. Keep me posted, because you have the family jewels. This is my trip to Bali or



Peking, and the equivalent of a fat bag of Maui Wowie for more months than I ever thought possible.

So take care, and don't do anything I wouldn't. Be cautious with the deal, and keep me informed. Remember I still have the G.I. bennies coming, and there are other angles to be exploited.

The tour in Hawaii will bring me down to about two grand owed up North, I hope, and I will have a fat capital asset to my credit. Perhaps we can pay this hog off faster.

Well, misgivings and all, here it is. I hope it works out. To bless the luck from this end, I am going to take my last \$2,000 and go enjoy four beers uptown. Thumbs up, brother, I love ya.

I think this could be just what we need. Or a bigger pain in the ass. We shall see.....

Love,

FROM: LTJG J.R. REDDIG, HQ, USFK/EUSA, J2 APO S.F. CA 96301  
TO: NAVY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION, WASHINGTON D.C. 20391  
DTG: 14 SEPT 1349I 1980

SUBJECT: TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM ACCT #607269-08 to #0607269-701

BT

SIRS, this letter is to notify you of my desire to transfer the sum of \$1,000 (one thousand dollars) from my Savings Share Account to my Sharecheck Account. My figures indicate my balance in account #607269-08 to be approximately \$1148.98, while my balance in the Sharecheck Account 0607269-701 to be \$10.15.

The above tranfer will be to cover check #112, drawn on ACCT 0607269-701 payable to MICHAEL STEVEN REDDIG on 29 SEPT 1980.

Replenishment funds for ACCT 607269-08 will be forthcoming later this month, and I have no plans to alter my current monthly allotment to Navy Federal Credit Union.

Thankyou for your attention in this regard.

LTJG J.R. REDDIG, 369-50-7129  
HQ, USFK/ EUSA, J2  
APO SAN FRAN CA 96301  
ACCT # 607269-08

BT

THE SNAKE RANCH  
HQ, USFK/EUSA, J2  
APO SAN FRAN CA 96301

Dear Beth,

Situation normal here....which is to say, LTGEN Chon promoted himself to full GEN since last I wrote, resigned from the Army the next week, and now we have a civilian government under 'MR.' Chon. Life is interesting; the North has stepped up it's usual virulent brand of propaganda, the people seem comatose, and perhaps the Republic will continue business as usual. On the other hand, I found an informative leaflet on the Garrison the other day, one which blames the U.S. for the Kwang-ju riots and massacre.....it is distinctly North Korean in tenor, but could presage rocky times ahead.

In more relevant matters, Mom forwarded a xerox copy of the payment schedule last month, and in totting things up I came upon a discrepancy for month 9-1 80, payed on 7-21 80. According to my figures, \$131.89 paid on principle of 9611.46 would come out to \$9479.57, instead of \$\$9523.35. That would make the balance up to 11-1 80 around \$9212.98, give or take a penny.

Please let me know how you resolve this, so I can keep my transcontinental records straight. I understand that the Navy wants to send me to Hawaii next, so I may have to keep up this long-distance investment for a while longer.

Resting comfortably in North East Asia, and thanking you for your attention in this regard, I remain,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT OHON  
16 SEPT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear Folks,

As an old Publisher's representative, you cannot imagine my chagrin when I received Dad's order for two dozen Nick Dangers. Can't fill it. Let me outline how things are right now...skipping over the international developments like GEN Ohn Tu Hwan, ROKA (Ret) taking over the lease on the Blue House, giving us our first civilian government in weeks. Course, he had only been retired for about three days, but that is just a technicality.

About Danger: First, I should begin at the beginning. I am broke. I mean, white bread and beans for dinner broke. I was hurting before, drawing \$220 dollars every two weeks. Paying out \$220 once a month for the land up North; but still managing to save a token fifty from the precious first payday. I left my allotment to the credit union on the books, so in spite of my temporary paucity of hard cash, I still had the odd thousand and some change just in case of catastrophe. I was looking at a classic case of feast or famine: my pay was being docked \$394 a month to pay back the 'dead horse' advance pay; I would revert to full pay on Oct 15, naturally, that is the same day we get our munificent 11.4% raise. Also, coincidentally, the same day that the Navy starts a new fiscal year, and they can get around to releasing the \$1750 bucks they owe me for the household goods that were ripped off six months ago. So I am starving until that magic day, but still maintained a solid cash reserve.

I use that broken past tense in there, as I received a Flash Override Priority message from the Reicher in Salmon. "Big deal in the Works! You too can be a householder in colorful Salmon! This limited offer good only through the 30th of Sept! Act now to own another peice of the American Dream and help the kid get a out-~~date~~ place to live while reducing my payments!"

Oh no, I said to myself. This is easily the most foolish thing I have done since raising my right hand and saying "Yeah, O.K., I swear to uphold the goofy orders of the Commander in Chief in whatever horrible place you choose to send me for guaranteed low pay and the scorn and derision of my fellow Americans." I got out the check books and examined the scrawled balances. Let's see: \$10.26 in the Navy Federal Account. \$63.97 in the Amex Account here at the Yongsan Korean Training Facility and Trust. HmMMMM.

I always believed Kate Hepburn in that old movie (was it Philidelphia Story?) when she said "Don't touch the Principle!" I not only touched mine but smashed it to smithereens. I mailed off a check to Spike yesterday for \$1500 to split the downpayment. My carefully hoarded savings have now gone the way of the buffalo, and some bogus paper is floating across the Pacific untill later today when I play Attila the Hun with my savings account on Main Post.

So theoretically, I will be a half owner of a house in Salmon that I will likely never see. To cover my many real estate manipulations, I have managed to back myself into a corner that will keep me in the Navy for another tour. More of that anon.

I will pass on the wisdom of advancing that much of my personal fortune sight unseen to the Middle Fork Reddig Outpost. I will say that Mike appears to be as happy as I have ever known, and a power in his own right. Anything I can do to help out, and get him a peive of that world, can only be positive. Demonstration of sibling solidarity and all that. We shall see how it turns out. I caveated the cash with the admonition that I didn't want the fenders removed from the house and only leaded gasoline would be burned in the fireplace.

So the lean times will go on here for the next 30 days. I can handle it for that much longer. This is a gamble, but so is living in Korea.

Which brings me to the Navy and me. I recieved a return missive from the Great Father in Washington, referencing my "War or the Door" memorandum to the Detailer. He indicated that they couldn't send me to SE Asia, as there are no jobs there. (That is not, strictly speaking, the truth, but I would have to embark on a series of classified messages to correct the situation and I don't have the clout at the moment to be anything but a nuisance. And we know what happens to nuisances.) He also regretted that they couldn't send me back to sea as an Airwing AI, as I was too junior. (Although I have more time at sea than most spooks two grades senior.) What he did hold out was a job "where the action is from a Naval Intelligence standpoint" either in Conus or Hawaii. (conus being the acronym for Continental United States.) So it began to look like Washington or Macalapa Crater. I had a chance to talk to my former alter-ego Dean Whetstine who was out here for exercise Ulohi Focus Lens. (Don't ask, no one here knows what it means, either) He indicated that our old Boss on the Skidway was looking for a few good men to work at the Fleet Ocean Surveillance Information Center in Hawaii where he is the Ops Officer.

"Well," I said "I could hack a couple years on the Beach, building my tan and writing my stupid stories. Particularly in light of my rash and ill-advised speculations." So I send on my Officer's Preference Card with the notation that I would go to Hawaii. Larry Jensens has agreed to use his influence to get me the job in question; my secondary choices are the wildly improbable assignments to London and Spain. Another two or three year tour will put me pretty much over the top on the Martin Lake property, and if Spike stays solvent, the payments on the Salmon deal will amount to slightly less than my current Educational Allotment, which will be paid in full next year. So there that is.

Back to Danger. I hope you have recieved your two copies by now. The deal with distribution and prospective sales is as follows: my partner, LCDR Roger Hull, put up the bulk of the money to go to press down in Teagu. In toto, this approaches \$3500 dollars, and accounts for the many typos in the finished product. The typesetter probably does not speak English. But due to the amount of the investment, which like everything I am doing at the moment is rash and senseless, and further, due to the fact that we are a multi-national corporation (written in the Indian Ocean, typed in the U.S., published in Korea, and smuggled through the Japanese and Philip-pines in a dummy A-7 drop tank to the carrier out in the I.O. again) we had to go with the prospect that would give us maximum guaranteed sales. The press run was 1,000 copies; the maximum that could be toted in the drop tank. Our break even point in sales at \$6.00 the copy is 550 copies.....and we gave away a few copies for kumshaw purposes. So we went for the sales. I latched onto one bundle of the books, paying

the full market price to keep the books straight until we hit break-even. I gave away about half for ego purposes, and sold the rest to my many admirers here on the Korean Peninsula. I will initiate a request to Rog to save some copies, but the delay is liable to be a couple months.

(Note the optimism of the above. I have cold chills when I think that he may have to 'save' 800-900 of the turkeys after the market is saturated. Still, the Supply Officer mentioned that he might consider stocking them in the Ship's Store....perhaps an on-going scam? Dare I think of a second edition with the typos corrected? Dream on....)

By now I hope you have had an opportunity to peruse the actual product. It is crude, there is no doubt of it. Yet when I read the thing (for the first time, I might add, as when I wrote it it was out-of-the-typewriter-and-down-to-the-print-shop before I could correct some of the more glaring mistakes. No time.) I discovered that parts of it were rather O.K. It is jam-packed with inside jokes; anything that doesn't seem correct is probably an actual incident, dolled up in fantasy. One episode has Nick Flying in the DC-10 onto the carrier, emergency net erected. It was written just hours before two of my squadron buddies had to take a shot at the barrier; there was pandemonium in the Intell Spaces. "Stop the Presses! If they get killed this is liable to be the most tasteless thing ever published!" Or the night that Mo Vasquez saw a UFO from his A-7....well, the list is endless, and a prime reason why Nick will never have a market on the outside.

There are another couple projects in the works, and for some reason, Rog thinks it is worth continuing the partnership. Maybe we will have second thoughts when this is all over.

I don't know why I have the nagging suspicion that I am duplicating the Mark Twain story all over again...every investment he ever made came up a cropper. And I have enough savvy to know not to invest with the Family as you can never get your emotions straight from the bottom line. Yet, here we go. I just know that he is going to have wild parties and break windows and show me where the couch is when I finally show up for an inspection tour.....

Enough for now. I wrote a long letter to Uncle Jim the other day on the political situation here. I hope I didn't get too incoherent... Take care. Glad to hear the house is going along so well. Maybe your sons will provide a place to put some of the stuff in the garage. I'll keep my fingers crossed.

All my love,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT CHON  
17 SEPT 1980  
Seoul

Mr. Brown,

I was biting into a delicious white bread and bean sandwich, wondering how I had managed to get myself into this one. I was weeks behind on the special reading program for the Ship. I was going to work in a matter of hours, no getting around that one, and suddenly I found myself broker than I had been at any given time since I woke one particularly cold morning in a sleeping bag next to the Pennsylvania turnpike.

What's more, at that unpleasant juncture, I was 4,276 miles closer to home.

I suppose I should go ahead and recount the grim details, perhaps hoping my tale will prove illustrative and educational on the foibles of a young immigrant boy.

Well, there I was. I stopped by the Bunker one night to pick up the mail. I should have learned already that mail just upsets you. My friend George has never had a listed phone number, or for that matter, a phone. He tries to keep no permanent address or forwarding drop. George's philosophy is that what he doesn't know can't possibly hurt him, unless it is ss-20s arching across the Pole, and he probably wouldn't get out of bed for that anyway. I should have taken a page from the Metcalf Primer of Practice Avoidance. What could come of it? The alternatives are finite, and generally fall into the following categories: A. Send money immediately. B. We are sorry, but we have already confiscated your money. C. Please report to Traffic Court at 0800 on the 18th. D. Honey, I don't care anymore. E. Honey, I can't live without you.

I submit that all of the above, with the exception of Echo, are notifications I could easily live without. In the case of the last, had you not received Delta, you probably would have just gone on in a haze of dumb ignorance. Happy in a quiet way, soaping down in the shower, realizing there wasn't going to be any water to rinse off with anyway. So it was my fault for picking up the mail. It was an unspectacular drop; four routine requests for money, one notification of confiscation, and a Summons. I rifled through the stack and came to one pre-franked envelope with a childish scrawl in blue ink. It was marked 'Salmon Idaho.' I had a feeling it was from brother Spike. I tossed the rest into the classified trash and took the family letter on home to read in the sanctity of my own little cubicle.

I arrived at the hooch and artfully sidestepped the resident Military Police who were camped out in the living room talking smallunit tactics and throwing beer cans at the television. I poured three fingers of Jameson's Patent Irish Whiskey into my Midway Coffee mug and lit up a couple of smokes. I wondered what Spike was going to say this time. A party of Celebrities he had guided down the Middle Fork of the Salmon River? A road test on the custom modification to his AMC Spacer? I wondered whether he had ever put the fenders back on the thing. There was only one way to

\* You will note that I have not mentioned the telephone. As you are aware, the vast expense involved in trans-pacific calls have screened them to an absolute minimum. It must be work. I don't answer.

find out. I lit up a couple cigarettes and sliced open the envelope with my P2A1 Heckler and Hook Flare Pistol. The crisp typing on the folded page contrasted with the scrawl on the outside. I unfolded the page and began to read. My eyes widened in horror.

"Dear J.R." the letter began, "Esteemed Older Brother, Decorated Peacetime War Hero, If you act now, you could be the first one in your hooch to own a part of The American Dream! For as little as \$1500 down and dozens of dollars a month you can be a part of historic Salmon, Idaho! This offer is good for a limited time, so act now. Don't think. Just watch my watch as it moves slowly back and forth, to and fro, swinging gently, just watch the watch, become part of the watch, swinging slowly....Now, reach into your desk drawer and take out your check books and begin to write...."

Well, as a writer of some aspiration I already knew that Hemmingway had known and loved Idaho. He had loved it so much that he had left the top two inches of his head splattered across the ceiling of his house. Any place that could affect you that much was obviously for me. I took out my checkbooks and began to write.

Suddenly I came too with a start. There wasn't anything in my checkbook. Oh, I'll grant you there were a few Australian dollars tucked in the back but the Bank didn't know anything about those. I had to think fast. If I could borrow a car-jack and crank my finances up on one side, and if all the loose change rolled down into one corner, it was entirely possible that I could come up with the requisit amount. I had about ten bucks in Kenyan Shillings alone. One thing began to bother me. If I indeed sent Spike the 1500 smakerops, I would be completely, utterly, and totally flat broke. A month left before the dreaded dead horse was paid back. At least a month before the treasury of the United States was going to cough up the cash for my helpless stereos which had disappeared into the Market Noir.

It was going to be bean sandwiches on white bread with no imported from Ireland Likker. No trips to the Ville for Blow Jobs and Oscar-on-ice. It was going to be hell on earth, or at least in Korea, whichever came first. But there was always the whopping raise that was going to take me all the way back up to the mediam poverty level...what did I need with cheap thrills anyway, a Midway man, accustomed to literal years of deprivation? I gulped down the whiskey and picked up both pens in my rights hands. I began to write, and the tears spattered the paper. "Don't touch the Principle!" I sobbed. The whiskey drops blended in rather nicely.

I am nothing if not symetrical. I work for a military dictatorship which labors within another military dictatorship. I have ten dollars in the Credit Union, in my Sharecheck account, in the American Express Savings Account (Yongsan Div) and my Amex Ceckbook. That comes to almost forty bucks, so who am I to complain? That is 10% over the annual income of most of the third world. More symetry. It is a wonderful world we live in; plenty of cheap military feedings, and the Eagle producing that astonishing green thing with such regularity.

Interestingly enough, this crisis may have provided the impetus to make me sign on for another couple of years of Adventure. I walked boldly into the new, semi-automated Navy Personnel Office and threw down my Officer's Preference Card. At the top of the list was the Great Lakes Steak Co. in East Grand Rapids, Mich. Failing any billets there for stifcocktails



and 16oz. sirloins, I added Empire Air Intelligence Test School, co-located with colorful England. Following my primary choices, I added Grand Cayman Island, Liason & Omlete Control at Bali (NAV LOOBAL), and Lager Flow Officer at Macalapa Crater.

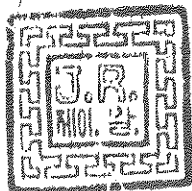
The ball is in their court now. If they are of a mind to retain a career-motivated officer with red flags just bristling they are going to have to move quickly. I have many real estate speculations to protect. Some of them probably fronts for Big Deals by hallucinating Second Sons, found unfit for the Clergy.

Well, that is all very nice, I'm sure. The Falk weather here is delightful. The Monsoon has moved back south to Japan where it belongs and we are blessed with crisp golden days. The temperatures are just right for good snoozing. The cat, a large black and white spotted creature named Gen Wickham, has learned to sleep at the foot of the bed vice my pillow. The Military Government has just sentenced Kim Tae Jung to death. He used to be head of the opposition party untill he contracted communist humours and personally instigated the Kwang-ju riots. The only remedy, according to Dr. Ohon's compendium of Korean Folk Medicine, is to ventilate the evil humours with high-velocity lead pellets. This will allow them to flow out naturally.

Alas, it is time for me to don my Khaki Krusader Uniform, swirl my cape, and disappear into the ground to monitor the reaction to the Death Sentence. It is an important job. Just last week I had to answer a wrong number on the KY-3 from the White House. Not wishing to violate classified regulations, I won't ask when the ship is coming back. Instead, I will just ask what a 'good time' might be to schedule myself into Dai Nippon.

Please pass along my very best regards to the good Mr. Bates, the esteemed Mr. Beel, et al. How is Jambo?

Thumbs up & Bums Away, I remain (without much choice)



THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESDDENT CHON  
25 SEPT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear Forrests,

This is just a quicky to respond to the kind note from Eleanor on the subject of my humble (and ill-type set) effort at things literary.

You have my permission to do anything with it that you think might work. It has been a fascinating project from start to finish; it was usually written under the gun between the third and fourth launch (or 'Event' as the Navy calls them) briefing, which I gave replete with gestures, human interest, Secret Information, and the odd bizarre fact. Sort of the Paul Harvey of Tactical Aviation. I collected the episodes from the trash heap in the Ship's Public Affairs Office after they appeared in the Midway Multiplex, and kept them in rough order. When at last we left the Gulf for the last time (for me, anyway) I put them together in a loose-leaf binder for future reference.

Which was about as far as I was going to go with the project. Being cursed with the Artist syndrome (hate to get involved in the mundane details of following the project through) Nick would have languished in my files. Enter Roger Hull, the gentleman who was kind enough to write the preface (a flattering peice with little relation to anyone I know). Rog is, among other things, a tremendous Carrier Aviator. He flies A-7E attack airplanes for something to do. He is a combat vet, erudite, and a born leader. He is a World Champân Free-fall Parachutist in his spare time, and a bundle of energy unparalled in my experience.

I could reel off Rog Hull stories for a few pages, but suffice it to say that he had once been on the lecture circuit in England, telling enthusiasts the intricicies of team jumping. It was a matter of distinct shock to him when he found his lecture notes turned into a textbook, entirely uncredited, by an unscrupulous hack. He decided that he needed to know more about the ways of publishing, and copyright protection. Nick happened to come along at the same time. In order to familiarize himself with business he opened a very successful Copying business a few years ago. An achiever.

He talked me out of the manuscript (no small feat) and he took the ball and ran with it. The last act I had in the thing was signing the copyright application and paying the ten dollar fee in yen. From there the epic proceeded; Nick went to the states where Rog had him translated into English, corrected the many misspellings, and had three fair-copies typed up. Then there was the small matter of finding a publisher. Nick is very funny (and personal) to anyone who was around for the cruises of the starship Midway. It has a certain amount of low grade humor for others, but seemed on the face of it to be limited in market potential. The Naval Institue did not appear interested, histoical though it was, and Rog decided a vanity house might be the way to go. Dollars were the issue. He looked at a variety of of means. I was sceptical; as a former Publisher's Rep I already knew the project was patent nonsense.

The thing was time-sensitive, too. We knew we could sell at least a thousand of the things, if we could get them to the ship while enough of the old crew was there. We asked around in the States, but the initial cost was staggering. We tried the Philippines, but they didn't have the equipment. We wound up at Taegu, in the Republic of Korea.

I won't bore you with the economics of the thing, but at the moment Rog is in the hole for about \$3700. I can only hope that the dummy fuel tank which departed the Republic with 950 copies eventually made it to the Ship. I only held on to about thirty, and they have all been scattered to the winds now. So it seems a bit like a dream; written in the Indian Ocean, typed up in the States, brought through the Philippines and Japan to Korea where all the typos and bizarre punctuation were added by the Korean typesetter, smuggled by A-7E to Japan and Okinawa to the Philippines again, and finally onto the ship, flying down the 1-to-3 glideslope, crashing into the black steel deck as the tailhook engages the arresting gear under the blazing Arabian sun.

Rog and I are nothing if not international.

So there is the rest of the tattered casebook of Nick Danger; the misadventures of Rog and me and our 4700 intimate friends on three continents.

I am just delighted about the Ace project. When I staggered into Beantown earlier this year to see Jim and Jeanette, it was already looking good. Now that it is in the water, and acclaimed by the masses, I swell up with pride on how well they have done. There are things of beauty in this world, but the smooth swell of a well-built hull ranks right at the top. The ultimate of form and function. There are ugly boats and airplanes around, but darn few of them. Jim and Jen added to the very top of the line.

I can't wait to get back.

I won't bore you with a description of the superb Fall weather here, monsoon gone back south where it belongs, the air crisp and cold out of Mongolia somewhere. Nor my little life over in the Command Bunker, or the fascinating case-study in Military Dictatorships which is going on even as we speak. I don't know what the future holds. I am tempted by a job offer at CINCPACFLT in Hawaii, and my real-estate speculations seem to demand a certain cash-flow which I am loath to give up. The cruel hoax perpetrated by the Navy Paymaster every two weeks just makes it hard to get far enough ahead to do anything else. So things are up in the air. Life certainly is interesting. When you have the time to do what you want (Edgar offered to sell me the Neath when I was living on it) it seems like the money isn't there. When you have the money it seems like you don't have the time. I have at least two more books I want to write; one about Aircraft Carriers and loud noises, and one about Korea. When I can get my materials together a bit more I'll pass them along for review

In the meantime, take care. My best to the family, and hello to the Kids in Boston!

Best,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT OHON  
25 SEPT 1980  
SEOUL

Mr. Bear, Suh,

I beg leave for this intermittable void in communications. That's English for not writing.

I can plead only the following in my defense: never, in my wildest dreams (and I may say I have had a couple in the last eight third-world countries) would I have expected you to wind up in Salisbury, North Carolina.

Why would they name a town after a steak? Steak lives in Grand Rapids, with Eggs. Like God meant it.

Anyhow, here it is. I know you are a heavy gauge business type, no common punk anymore. Selling and drinking, drinking and driving. Lumber? you bet! makes the world go around by the carload. Basic commodity. Precious; like oil, only oil don't grow on trees.

As you may have guessed by now, I am drinking and typing. A liter bottle of Jameson's Irish whiskey is staring me in the face. Just below, and slightly to the right is a man-sized tumbler with four cubes and two fingers of amber liquid in it. I am keyed up for a couple of reasons. I will go on and enumerate them here to the easy-listening sounds of the Armed Forces Korea Network:

- A. Bonds sent me another one of those letters telling me to get out of the Nav for my own good, and nothing would please me better right at the moment.
- B. I just got back from a movie about Phantom jets, with authentic assholes and douchebags at the controls.

Wait a minute. I have to get up and put a fucking tape on the machine. Easy listening is not what I am in the mood for. Maybe Tim Buckley, poor fucker. They never did get the killer. I'm still pissed about that, but a listing of those things would take all night.

Ah! much better. Roxie Music singing "both ends Burning." Let me turn it up just a bit and see if I can wake up my Army roommates, like I did the other night when my illegal 9mm Browning "went off" out the window after we had watched Deep Throat.....

But wait a minute, again. You weren't there for that one. Maybe I ought to begin at the beginning. As I recall there were Seven Days, and the Admiral decided we would work all seven, and then have a Flight Deck Cookout. No, hold on. It goes back further than that, further than the second time in Africa when Zim-Bob fell in love with the tribal maiden. Further than Australia and pulling over the Vauxhall to look at the dead Kangaroo in the ditch. All the way past the last eight trips to the Wild West Phillipines and the broad Pacific, past the grain fields and the mountains, all the way to the Valley that time should have forgot, Pork City.

"did they give you that flight jacket free?" Asked Bill Doolittle.

"Sure" said J.R., calmly slurping a cocktail down the front of the sleek brown leather. "The Navy is really swell."

"Is this the last time I am going to see you for another decade or so?" asked the Bear. He was having a hard time enunciating because Papa Kool kept putting a ham-sized fist over his face.

"I'm afraid so" said the first born of the Reddig Clam of el Rapido Grande. "See, Bonds is going to go through some changes and wind up in Mass while I go to Iran twice and see it once. I am going to climb into the gun-metal colored Delta 88 which is going up on blocks for the next three years after I drive back to Denver and then go to the POW camp in San Diego, which will be strange but not nearly so strange as flying out to the Ship for the first time, crashing down onto the deck at 110 kts to meet all my new friends, and write a book about it which will be published in Taegu Korea, where I will be living in the year of our lord 1980-81."

"Yeah?" said Bear, reaching out for the bottle of Schnapps that Hart was done pouring over Sunny's head. "Well, take care. I'm going to be very busy myself, you know?"

"I'm hip. But see, you won't write, and I won't know about all that. I'll have to concentrate on taking my last flight off the Skidway in an F-4, accelerating from zero to 130 in 1.6 seconds, scared out of my gourd, and doing a loop at 5.3 gees sustained, flying back to my home in Japan."

"Well, you can march around if you want. I'll tell you what I think about that. I think I'll have another drink."

"Let me join you in an unprecedented eighteenth cocktail."

"Do you think there will be any room?" The snow gently fell outside as George and John tried to figure out which cars which one was going to drive to catastrophe later.

"Besides, you won't write either. And when you finally do, it will be some drunken late-night exercise so cryptic that I will hardly be able to figure it out."

"Ain't life a bitch. It will be because I won't have an address, or a handle on what's going on. You know how people are getting married and shit these days. I even got a letter from a very nice lady that I think about once in a while and she said more people had died. Can you imagine?"

"Fuck you."

"Right!" Something made of glass shattered with the impact of heavy bodies bear-dancing around. It could have been a door or a window. "It can't stay Christmas of 1977 forever, you know. It will be almost Christmas of '80 when you get this."

Bear's eyes grew round under the frizzy haircut he was still wearing back in those days before he changed companies. "Wait a sec. Let me get this straight. I'm going to be in the letter that I am going to be reading in three years? With round eyes and frizzy hair? You gotta be shitting me."

"It's easy. All you have to do is be an itinerant Intelligence Officer with a magic Smith-Corona time machine in Seoul Korea, under a brand new martial law government."

"Well, I still think you are goofy. You have me in three places at once: Seoul, Pork City, and Salisbury Steak, North Carolina, a perfectly fine city you have no right to defame 'cause you ain't even been there."

"I imagine it is all that time in Asia I am going to be spending. Or the war in Iraq."

"What war? what are you talking about?"

"Well, it won't be happening for a while yet. And I won't be there for it, I'll be rotting in fucking Korea. It would be fun to re-plan some of those strikes on Iran that we did and then let the fuckers have it."

"What did the Shah ever do to us anyway?"

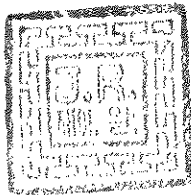
"This is getting too hard. Why don't I just sign the letter and we can get on with the next few years in relative peace. Then, you will get this in the mail and worry about it in October of 1980."

"It sounds as reasonable as the rest of it." Bear tipped up the bottle of schnapps and drained a large swallow. "Say, am I going to remember any of this, or is it like that Star Trek episode where everybody forgets except for the used rubber on the bridge?"

"Yep. Except for this."

"Fuck you!"

And, could you possibly, just eat me?



THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT CHON  
26 SEPT 1980  
SEOUL

Bonds,

I don't think I said four more years....I think it was four more beers. You are absolutely correct in your assesment of the situation. There are graphic illustrations to support that view. One occurred just a few night s ago.

I am eating Bean sandwiches and white bread at the moment, due to ill-advised land speculations with the young Spike out in Idaho. My poverty is purely transitory, as I will vault back to the mediam poverty level in a few weeks. Suffice it to say, though, I have had to trim expenses to the very bone. That fact of life, combined with the general mid-tour depressio n brought me very nearly to disaster.

After finishing a six-day duty string, I was minutes away from beginning a three day break. It was early afternoon: I had time to go back to the Ranch and catch a quick nap before doing personal combat with a bottle of Irish Mist that Anne had bequethed to me for taking care of Gen. Wickham the Cat. Getting out of the Bunker was going to be great. Suddenly I took a severe shot across the knees. Due to a scheduling fuck-up by our earst-while Boss (a career incompetant) I was going to have to work the next day shift. It was pandemonium in the Indications and Warnings center. Trick fucked. Damn the luck!

I was forced to go home in the crisp Fall waather with Fear and Loathing etched deep in my shriveled heart. I dropped off into an uneasy sleep with grim thoughts. I awoke many hours later, the sun having sunk into China someplace and the stars bright and cold in the Korean sky. What I needed was coffee, hot piping Java to wake up and shrug off the debilitating effects of the constant shift changes. My nerves were ragged from working around the twenty-four hour clock once a week, every week. I filled up the coffee pot and got out the egg-beater to whip up some cream for Irish Coffee. What I need was a wide awake drunk.

I should mention that the full harvest moon was hanging in the sky and it was Chu-Sak time in South Korea. It is a festival that loosely correlates to our Thanksgiving, only with much less Football. Everyone dresses up in traditional Korean clothing. They all eat traditional loathsome Korean delicacies, such as sliced sea slug. Much fun is had by all, if you like sea slug.

I was drinking my first Irish Coffee when the phone suddenly rang. It was my associate Capt. X, who had just hailed a cab and was going to venture uptown with his roommate, Capt. Y. Would I be interested in going along to see the traditional Korean Hookers in their traditional Korean Dresses?

Well, I responded carefully, I am dead-beat right at the moment, but I will trade you post-curfew Irish Coffees for a few beers up in the Ville. It was a deal. The cab drove up minutes later, honking wildly, and we were enroute to colorful Itaewon-dong.

We emerged from the black PX cab at the foot of the hill. There was only

one place to commence a Chu-Sak evening, and that was at a real traditional Korean Club. We walked up the broken asphalt hill to the most tradition-packed establishment in the entire Ville: Sam's Country Western Bar- 'Best in Korea.' Had to be. Said so right on the door.

Imagine our consternation when we found that all the waitresses had abandoned their usual short red skirts for huge flowing gowns of bizarre color and texture. Hair was carefully pinned up and quaint coin purses hung from the high-bodiced dresses. It was staggering. It was so staggering that we had about four beers to get over our plain amazement. The floor show of the evening included traditional Korean Folk Dancing by the costumed ladies. They danced to the native music of Dolly Parton, a popular local singer.

Time was short, and we had to pound 'em down. Curfew was rushing down like an avalanche. There was just time for a 'few beers' at the silver wave rock and roll club. Eye Goo! You gotta see this place to believe it. You fall down some stairs and there you are. The album cover from Meat Loaf's Bat Outta Hell is done in tasteful phosphorescent paint on the wall. The Biggest Speakers In All Korea are parked down at the end of the floor, which vibrates seismically. We listened to the traditional sounds of Bob Seger for a while. The tunes died down and we knew it was time to play Beat The Reaper with the Military Authorities. We staggered out of the Ville and rolled back to the Garrison. Now it was my turn to play the host. We entered the hooch quietly to avoid waking my Army Roomates, who slept the sleep of the innocent.

I whipped up the cream, heated the coffee, and poured generous dollops of the Irish Mist into cups. I turned on the VTR and played Deep Throat quietly. The bottle of Mist disappeared, and somehow we were back in my room at the end of the hall. I was playing some music loud- a good thing, as it turns out. Because I got into the show-and-tell mode. We were discussing which personal side-arms we would prefer to have when the Unconventional Warfare troops dropped out of the night sky to slaughter everyone in the compound, starting with the Very Bunker Where We Work. Naturally, being infused with the Pride of Ownership, I produced the locked briefcase which holds my illegal and unregistered weapons supply. I was demonstrating the smooth action of the 9mm Browning.

"You got any ammunition?" asked Capt Y innocently.

"Wouldn't be any damned good if I didn't" I said forthrightly. "Here, let me show you." I keep a couple clips loaded up on the cupboard, on the assumption that if I ever need a gun here, the place I don't want to be is in line at the Armory trying to fill out the paperwork to get it in my hot little hands. I slid the empty clip out of the Browning and slid the full one in. The round won't chamber unless you pull the slide back, and I wouldn't do anything that dumb, not drunk on my ass.

I figure the thing must have chambered itself. I have to write the Fabric Nationale people in Belgium and tell them about it. Anyhow, I removed the loaded clip and put it back on the shelf. Knowing the weapon was unloaded, I pointed it out the window and pulled the trigger.

The only thing I really like about myself is the realization that I never point guns at anyone, loaded or not. Because the one round nestled snug in the breech exploded, the slide shot back, flame belched from the muzzle, and a certain look of amazement came over the faces of everyone in the room.



"You know, I think maybe we oughta get out of here" I said calmly. The echo of the gunshot hung in the air.

"Wow" said Capt X. "Why don't we go over to our place and have a few drinks and sort this thing out."

"Capitol idea" said Capt Y. "But we should try to be quiet."

"Sure" I responded. "Except if anybody slept through that they might have a health problem we should investigate."

But the magic feet were already moving to the door. We staggered up past the JUSMAG Mess and into the other hooch over the hill. We tip-toed down the hall and turned on the stereo to listen to some quiet traditional music. Like old Rolling Stones. Capt X poured some generous whiskey cocktails. "Did what just happened really happen?" he asked.

"Nah. It musta been our imaginations."

"I coulda sworn there were North Koreans outside."

"Put the Fear of God into the Fuckers" said Capt Y. "Here, let me help you into a drink."

Sometime later I rolled down the little grassy knoll outside the door. I got up and brushed off my corduroys. I moved out, and arrived home just in time to put somemore music on the tape player and clean the alleged weapon. Or both of them, rather, which I held in both left hands as I pushed the cleaning rods through the muzzels.

\*\*\*\*\*

The next morning was not a pleasant time. I awoke late, and stumbled to my desk to look out through the bullet hole in my screen, I looked into the side of a massive green hill. Thank God. But you can't say that they don't know how to celebrate a real, down-home Chu-Sak in Korea.

I haven't been to Japan yet, so I will keep a lookout for AM-1 Bulk Loading Cassettes. If I'm not under arrest by then. I continue to astonish myself by the limits of abuse to which I seem to be heading. But I am really not sure of the article you are talking about. If I have to go out on the Economy and deal with the Japs, a picture might help if you have one. Otherwise, no sweat. I'll total up the damages at a favorable conversion rate and send the bill along. I am shooting for somewhere around out Thanksgiving for my Last Tango in Nipland. Take the Blue Train down to Pusan, the Ferry across the Tsushima Straits, train to Kyoto, then the Bullet to Tokyo and Yokohama to see my friends before they all get orders to England or the States. So about a month and a half is about the time frame. Part number for said articles would be of assistance.

Wrote Bear last night. The only thing I could use from Amerika-jima is a girl named Jane. Haven't heard how the book is selling, but I am hopeful I may make the extra grand out of it. Sold all the ones I had in my grubby paws here. Thumbs up & Bums away. Hello to Woody and Becky...

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT OHON  
26 SEPT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear T.R.,

I arose the morning after Chu-Sak feeling not at all well. There was a caged beast lurking behind my tanned, athletic brow. It was thundering about and wanted out in the worst way. I had a suspicion that was the way it would eventually emerge, but that was a matter for the future. Minutes away. I cast my bleary eyes about, over the garish Dragon on the wall, past the framed picture of the Midway, past the bullet hole in my window....

What! I quickly ran down the bidding again. Dragon. Boat. Bullet Hole. Damn, I was afraid it had really happened. The crisp Fall sun slanted down the green hill. I sighted through the hole. Nothing but dirt in the line of fire. Whew. No dead Koreans to explain away at a troublesome General Courts Marshall. I got a cup of coffee and my stomach turned over. I tried to reconstruct the events as they had occurred. It hurt.

I reached through the bottom of the window and pushed the frayed ends of the wire back over the neat round hole. Let's see: Chu-Sak is the big Harvest Festival, right? Everyone dresses up in wierd Korean costumes that makes them look like the little bags that the jewelry comes in. The moon is at it's fullest of the year. A giant orb of silver that hangs over the Ville and makes otherwise meek Sub-Lieutenants do things they are going to regret later. What was I doing with a loaded gun in my hands in the dead of night in the privacy of the Hooch? And why wasn't I in jail?

The situation called for some heavy cogitation. How could I possibly rationalize this one? I mean, it couldn't be my fault. If it had been, I would be forced to take corrective action, like maybe cooling my jets for a while.

Wait a minute. It was the Bosses fault! He was the one who couldn't plan his way out of a bag of used Kitty Litter. He was the one who had assigned me another watch after a six-day string to cover up his incompetence. Doing that to a man only minutes before he was scheduled to take his Break...why, it was like putting a loaded gun in the hands of a drunk!

And What About the People that bought me drinks while we watched the colorful Koreans dancing to the traditional tunes in their quaint colorful costumes, not looking at all like common hookers. They should be ashamed of themselves. Forcing me to a posture of obligation, where I would be honor bound to mix up batch after batch of Irish Coffees after ourfew to repay them. The swine.

And what about the Irish distillery? They didn't have to make that shit so strong, so insidious in effect. There should be some sort of law.

Capt X should never have started that discussion of the perfect self-defense weapons system for the Korean Peninsula. It was his fault for forcing me to admit that I always kept a couple illegal horse pistols around the house just in case the North Koreans dropped Ranger Commandos into the Garrison to slit our throats in our sleep and unify the nation under that scum-sucking asshole KIM IL SUNG!

I don't even have to justify the fact that the Communists were the ones ultimately responsible for the incident. The bastards. If it wasn't for them, I could be planning some Iraqi strikes and having some fun. Goddamn it.

And the fuckers at the Fabrique Nationale Plant in Belgium have to pick up a part of the blame. I've always been amazed at the irresponsible way they just turn out quality handguns and sell them to people. The thing also must have gone ahead and chambered a round while I wasn't looking, because when I removed the full magazine, for instructional purposes only, there must have been one of those little 9mm buggers caught up by accident right in the breech. There ought to be a neon warning light or something. I'll have to give them a call about that.

I must have been following standard procedures when I pointed the weapon out the window and pulled the trigger. That's another thing. The trigger pull is too light. I'll tell you, when that little thing went off there couldn't have been three more surprised people in the world than those of us drinking Irish coffees therein the Hooch. "BAAANG" said the little pistol. The only ones who might have a claim at more astonishment might have been my roommates, who were deliberately asleep at the time. If they hadn't been asleep at the time I wouldn't have woken them up. Imagine the gall of those Army pukes being asleep right in the middle of Chu-Sak!

They were peering out of their doors at us as we exited the quarters.

"Sorry!" I shouted. "Chu-Sak fireworks! Old loathsome Korean Custom! Same-Same Fourth of July! You go back to sleep now Chop-Chop!"

"Hey, did what happened just happened?" asked Capt X perceptively.

"Nah, just your imagination."

"Don't you think you oughta put the gun back?"

"Shit!" I cleverly hid the offending weapon in my desk. "We need more drink chop-chop. I don't even want to think about this for a while."

"Quick. Let's get over to the Air Force Hooch and drink some old Grandad. They will never find us unless they listen for the loud music and the irate room mates."

"Do you have any weapons?"

"Please shut up! Hurry!"

"What's going on" asked Capt Y, rising from his stupor. "Is it the 4th of July again?"

"Quick, drink this. Don't think right now. Very dangerous."

"Didn't you like the way the hooks danced to Dolly Parton in their traditional gowns?"

"Quiet! That was hours ago. There are many weird things that have happened since then."

"Were did J.R. go?"

"He just fell down the hill. Get back up here!" shouted Capt X.  
"As your Intelligence Officer I advise you to drink this!"

"Awk."

Oh, I'll tell you it was hell the next day. Walking around again, wondering if the MPs had got wind of the incident and maybe got the wrong idea about things. Things have been very stragge out for the last couple of months. Must be the mid-tour blues of something. I'm taking firm action to get this thing under control again. Even though it wasn't my fault. I am going to restrict my Liberty untill I get more money, and I am not going to get stinking drunk tonight unless something better comes along. There is always Happy Hour this evening to get past. And those people are not to be trusted.

In the meantime, I hope that being at sea is more fun than this constant sacrifice and tribulation. The funny thing is that the holiday season for Megucks has yet to begin. Good God.

I remain with my finger on the trigger of the sensitive Korean Situation,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT OHON  
26 SEPT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear Folks,

Not much to report in this one. Not a single change of government, not a single Serious Incident. Boring.

What we do have is delightful Fall weather that makes me feel homesick for the upper midwest. This is the first crisp weather I have seen since Japan two years ago. The leaves are still green and only beginning to drop off the trees. I can wear a sweater and walk around without perspiration rolling down my back. The humidity is way down, and frankly it is just delightful.

It looks like I will be able to get away for a week or so in Nov. and take a jaunt down to Japan. I'm looking forward to taking the Blue Train down to Pusan, and embarking on the ferry across the Tsushima Straits. A stop at Kyoto before a train ride- rapid- on the Bullet up to Tokyo. Hopefully nothing will come up to spoil the arraignments.

Lean times should finally be coming to an end this month (since you won't get this untill OCT) and at last I can start piling it away again. I have not heard from Mike re the house deal, and probably won't for a while, but I would appreciate your updates as the information becomes available.

The Koreans just celebrated Chu-Sak, which is their version of Thanksgiving, only without so much football. Everyone dresses up in traditional clothing. Very picturesque. Particularly when you go up to the Ville and see the traditional Hookers in their traditional Dress. The moon was as full as it is ever going to be, and the air was clear and invigorating. A bizarre mix of the Asian and the Garrison culture.

Caught parts of the Notre Dame game on the live-satellite downlink of the OSU-Minn game. Naturally, the coverage cut off with a few minutes to go and Michigan ahead. I had to stay awake and call the Radio station every few minutes to get the bad news. Damn. I remember last year I heard the thing live up in Misawa. It wasn't any better. Well, at least it was exciting.

The war in Iran has been fascinating. I wish I was out there to help when they decide we will keep the Straits open whether the pissant Iranians like it or not. I hope the Iraqis sock it to the Ayatollahs. Hard for them to drum up any sympathy from the other Gulf States after the attempts to overthrow everyone else in the Islamic Revolution. Slight problem if the Soviets go for it. Is it Armageddon? We shall see how Japan and Europe like things when the tankers stop moving. I'm glad we have two carriers in the neighborhood.....

Gotta get over to the tailors and pick up some new winter uniforms. I'll write again as soon as something interesting happens. Usually not very long around here....Love to everyone!

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA OHON  
26 SEPT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear Grandma,

It is a beautiful Fall day today. The temperatures are no longer the ones that make you feel like a damp towel by noon: they are crisp in the day with plenty of sun, and nice and cool for good sleeping at night. Quite an improvement from a few months ago. Anyway, it is nice and the Asian weather reminded me of Home (for a change) and I thought I would drop you an overdue note.

Many things have changed here since I last wrote. There has been a low-key military takeover, I have become a published author, and I may have bought some property in Idaho with Brother Michael. I'll elaborate on those in a moment. But since I was talking about the weather a moment ago, I'll add that it is the Harvest Moon here in Korea, big and fat, and hence the time of their Thanksgiving. It is similar to ours; they dress up in their finest and visit their families. They don't seem to watch as much Football, which is to be expected, I suppose. So our own holiday season can't be very far away.

The Governmental situation is very shaky here. The civilian President was forced to resign about a month ago by then-General Ohn tu-Hwan (whose name I have applied to the street in front of the Junior Officer's Quarters here on the Garrison.) He promptly resigned from the military and was inaugurated a few days later, without benefit of the three ring circus we enjoy back home when we select a president. There does not appear to be any wide-spread resentment to this process, at least not like the Kwang-Ju riots of the Spring where 500 people died. Still, I feel uneasy about things in the long run. Perhaps the Koreans are not ready for Democracy like ours (as President Ohn is fond of saying) but perhaps they should be given a chance.

I am now a Published Author, as my book "The Adventures of Nick Danger" was published in a first run of 1,000 copies. It cost my friend and business manager over \$3,500 to get things rolling, and I am on tenterhooks waiting to see if they all sell. I kept about thirty copies, which I peddled right here in Korea, and the remainder went out to the Midway. If the project succeeds, we stand to make a few thousand over the initial cost. We shall keep our fingers crossed and see what happens.

I do hope I make some extra money on "Nick", because I just sent brother Mike a hefty check to help him bid on a house in Salmon, Idaho. He is just nuts about the town, and I thought that since I wasn't doing anything with the money, I might as well invest in some property. Naturally, the mail takes the better part of three weeks to make a round trip, and I am anxiously awaiting word on that score, too.

When any of the answers come in, I'll let you know how they come out. Otherwise, I'm in good health, my time here is almost half over, and besides being home, I can't ask for much more.

Just wanted to let you know I was thinking about you, with love,

Your Grandson,

THE SNAKE RANOH  
AVENUE DE LA OHON  
26 SEPT 1980  
SEOUL

DR.,

I just wanted to pass along a particularly outre dream of last night.

Sleeping conditions were optimum for the occurrence: cool, two-blanket weather had returned to the great metropolis. I had dined on fried rice and several stirrup-cups of Jameson's Irish whiskey after viewing the Great Santini. I estimate that the effects of the alcohol had passed by approximately 0430, when the period of REM sleep commenced in earnest.

I don't know what you think about Republicans, and as a decorated war hero and Naval Aviator, I in no way connect the strange activities of the tableau with reality. However, having delineated the physiological state of the subject at the time, I am free to recount the dream as it occurred:

For some reason, not readily apparent, I was a member of a group of people encamped at a large manse. It had once been a single family dwelling, but now all the floor space was taken up by Republicans. Numerals were scrawled over the doors of the first floor rooms. A woman who very closely reiterates the physiognomy of Nancy Reagan was organizing activities. I didn't know what they were, but I did know that I wanted no part of it.

I turned to Ed Markin and nodded that we should get out of the center of action. Later, over a coffee can of illegal substance, a fat cigarette was passed back and forth. That is where the SR-71 pilot comes in.

He held the rank of Colonel, and in fact was the individual who heads up the Intelligence Production Unit at USFK. Being a man not only of substantial presence, but a certain authority as well, I hastened to stuff the contents of the coffee can back into the container. It was of no avail. I was forced to cram some into my mouth. The taste was particularly rich and earthy. The Colonel presented a grim visage behind his absurd little black moustache. Markin grinned impishly and continued to smoke the incriminating cigarette. The Colonel reached out and accepted the glowing roach and drew the smoke deeply into his barrel chest. By this time the circle had expanded dramatically, and included many noted Republicans and pilots. I appeared to be the only Intelligence Officer, and I was dribbling marijuana down my chin.

It seemed to take a long time for the smoke to get around the circle.

In retrospect, I suppose it wasn't the greatest dream I have ever had. It is one of the few I have retained all the way through the Stars n' Stripes and four cups of coffee. Wish I was there for the War. Take care,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA CHON  
1 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

DO NOT WRITE  
ON THIS DOCUMENT AT THE SOURCE  
0001 00(01

Doctor,

I noted the singed edges of your most recent communique with some alarm. I called the Base Fire Department immediately and gave them a rough geographic posit for the o-two level. They said they get on it ball-bali.

So I hope that things came out O.K. I am most intrigued by the revelations of the Dectective Carl LaFong. This could cripple Nick Danger sales, and seriously jepordise my plans to go into perpetual syndication. But all personal greed aside, I am of course delighted that you had an opportunity to go Tribal again, with what is left of America's Fine Friends Overseas. I often yearn for Mombasa, much the same way I find myself pining for Des Moines, Ioway.

I am emerging from a bout of severe moral collapse. I have been overcome by financial loathing and outright physical collapse, with vile fluids emanating from many orafices. I got a request from Brother Spike that he had to have all may carefully husbanded savings, immediately, so he could purchase a modest Ranch in the suburban Salmon, Idaho Area. Thankfully the Big Deal appears to have fallen through; alas, and we have discussed the foibles of entrusting hard cash to one's in or outlaws, I believe the lad has taken an extended vacation. I'm confident that he has purchased only the finest in mood-elevators, and I may hear about them should he be out of Jail by the time I get home.

I was reclining the other evening in some anonymous house of ill-fame watching the energetic efforts of a Korean Girl working on the Bad Dog with existential detachment. My head was whirling slowly to the ancient and dignified tempo of Bacchus. It was hours before I had to report to work.

Several thoughts presented themselves in the stately turning of the room. One was the fact that I do have some leave coming, and that the Philip-pines might be just what the Doctor ordered, so to speak. The problem would be what sort of time-frame we are talking about here; naturally I am in constant touch with geo-refs and such, but when one is talking about scheduling actual weeks in advance the system commences to break down. Being afflicted with the traditional Command Tunnel Vision (the one that precludes the inclusion of so trifling a facility as Vladivostock on our situation maps, it being 'out-of-area' nearly thirty miles away from the North) I must have better data. I stand by for updates as they occur.

The room revolves. The girl's head bobs up and down, piston-like. It is a fascinating contrast. The Bad Dog, alcohol benumbed, is challenging the considerable skills of the oral masseuse. He appears to be enjoying himself. I consider for a moment the irrational goings on around here. The bullet hole in my screen window. The prostitutes in the traditional gowns on Chu-Sak, looking exactly like giant specimens of the little striped jewelry bags. What madness had possessed me to demonstrate the capacity of



my anti-unconventional warfare locker to the innocent Air Force Captains? What chance had caused the glass pane to be swung out just enough so that the fine mm slug had missed shattering it, and instead had passed harmlessly out to imbed itself in the hill?

Why was I not sitting somewhere sweating out an article 15, stripped of my sacred Clearance, and facing actual charges?

Perhaps the Bon Dieu actually does have a soft spot in his infinite bosom for Drunks, Fools, and the Deployed. It was time to get a rein on this dangerous situation. Somehow I had to restore balance to this zany world. I adjusted the angle of attack of the girl's head. Much better. Not so many teeth raked the engorged Dog. She was breathing heavily from minutes of solid effort. It was much better.

This naturally presented the philosophic aspects of this conundrum. Was this ritual blow-job actually a representation of neo-colonialism? And if so, how could it better be expressed? That was a poser, and beyond the parameters of the moment. A sigh escaped my lips. It appeared the Bad Dog was about to do something rash. This focused my thoughts on the trauma of Garrison Life: the bizarre actions of the current Chief of Staff, a dangerous lunatic who should be confined. The blatant black marketing of our Korean Housemaids. The longing for my gun-metal Delta 88, dusty from long years on the blocks, which would never run really right again.

Another sigh escaped my lips, but from concern for the situation (the E-2s airborne and constantly manitering the actual War) or from what passed for ecstasy in this neck of the woods I could not discern. What I did know, and I held this as a torch against the madness that surrounded me, was that a few million potential novelists, desk-bound warriors, and welfare cripples were going to spatter against the tonsils of this particular microcosm of the Korean Problem.

And though it couldn't make things any better, it certainly wasn't going to make them any worse.

This concludes my presentation, Gentlemen. Are there any Questions?

With my deepest Fear and Loathing, I remain

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT CHON  
3 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

PROCESSED BY THE  
COMMUNICATIONS CENTER  
OCT 1980 (01)

Doctor,

This missive is to acknowledge receipt of currency in the amount of \$10 US. It somehow escaped the usual sharp scrutiny of the Ace Postal Commando Detachment. You cannot imagine how welcome it was, for at the time I was utterly Strapped, and thus enabled to drink lunch.

Truley an example of the Starving Artist Syndrome, of which I'm sure there is a plethora of case studies right there in actual Boston. I, however, am in picturesque NE Asia. Due to a convoluted series of events, I have passed through the darkest vale of poverty over the last six months. I held my lamp high, though, and as of the 15th of this month will vault one more to the ranks of the lower middle class.

I am delighted to hear of your activities in Beantown. I was pining for the Bay State a few weeks ago; for the North Shore particularly. Some of my renegade acquaintances live up in Amesbury now, after living the yachting life down in Marblehead and Beverly for some years. Should you ever find yourself in need of Marine Underwater Contracting, or custom classic speedboat construction, I pass along the following information: J.T. Forrest, 9 Merrill St, Amesbury, 1-617-388-3891. I fully realize that your time is hardly your own, but if you could spare a call to Jim & Jeanette, I would be much obliged. They are also a fine conduit for Maine's Tasty Crustaceans, which run around on the sea-bottom where Jim has his office. Tell them there has not been a single change of government this week.

I realize that this will put me further in your debt, to the tune of nearly three dollars. I am thus obligated to go ahead with my novel "Grey Boats and Big Noises" and the further exploits of an ordinary American kid on the Peninsula, tentitively entitled "morning calm." You will naturally have option rights.

Unfortunately, work on the two above projects has not been proceeding with the speed I would like to see. I have been too busy chronicling the personal misadventures of a young intell officer in Seoul. It has certainly had it's moments, but is somewhat restricted in mass market appeal. No one would ever believe this shit anyway.

The panorama of the experience up here is unparalleled. Painted against the titanic backdrop of a Military Coup, Kwang-Ju in flames, and actual communists, we have the touching and poignant story of a young man trashing the fag-end of his third decade on the planet. Faced with the temptations not only of alcohol and adultery (with the single largest set of tits this side of Samoa) our hero defies the odds and keeps a cat in the BOQ. Gunshots punctuate the narrative: not the work of Communist agents, alas, but the work of a particularly drunken Chu-Sak eve. The screeen was shot out, giving rise to some interesting speculation the next morning. The cat disappears. Have the barbarous Korean Maids eaten it? Sub-plots abound. A case of Brain Swelling results in a brandished knife, a veteran jungle killer, and Itaewon roulette with the Martial Law troops in the deserted post-curfew streets. Drunken high-speed cab rides to unknown and forgotten compounds, lost in the urban confusion, hopelessly whirling in the company of a Black Marketeer, a known Air Force Major, and an alcoholic ex-Marine

DoD schoolteacher with an emerald necklace and a craving for wild thrills. Tanks and APCs whizzing through the streets with ram-rod troopers behind M-60 machine guns. Cobra Gunships called in a sothern town for 'Riot Control.'

And, of course, complimentary cocktails at poolside.

Although undeniably colorful, this requires more endurance than this burned out former fighter can muster at times. Particularly with the Fleet Mystique to uphold.

Ah well, this little junket is about 50% history now, the Fall weather has come to Seoul, and hopefully the Cafir will subside long enough to get some work done. I am looking forward to getting back to your neck of the woods sometime in the next year. As you may or may not have heard, T.R. got picked up for Empire Test Pilot School. He and Paula will pull cheeks for Merry Olde in the next few weeks, and I have made reservations at the Brown Hotel for next Spring. That is if I am not under arrest or something before then. Still, plans call for a jaunt around the long way to get home, and that puts Beantown on the way to el Rapido Grande in picturesque Michigan. Be warned.

Glad to hear of the meeting with the Great Santini. I had hoped to see the Blues while he was at the helm, but I suppose it is not to be. I can't tell you how much I miss the stupid Airdales....the Ministry of Cement (or J2 section) is all politics, little intell, and no tactical thrills. Interesting, albiet, but not exactly aileron rolls. I finally did get my 'hop' off the boat, and it was dynamite. Low fuel warning light, flap malfunction, 5.3 gees sustained, the whole shot. Neatest experience of a lifetime.

Well, it is time for a few early cootails, as I am on break at the moment. The Golden Day cries out to be violated. Keep me posted on your status; all plans are flexible, and the world is yet young (though teetering on the Brink.)

Take care, I remain

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT CHON  
5 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear Jane,

The cold rain dripping under the grey skies has put a finis to the beautiful Fall. There will be nice days after this, naturally, but this Sunday has the echo of finality about it. The leaves are falling down, golden cascades, to pile up sodden in the benjo ditches. Now we commence the slow progression to the Winter, my first in three years. It is a fine day for introspection, coffee, and recovery.

Yesterday was the Last Day of Fall. It was clear and warm and denied the reality of the leaves. I was not working, but wounded from an encounter at the Officers Club with several Gin and Tonics, and the subsequent screening of The Empire Strikes Back. Our pleasures are simple out here on the ramparts; alcohol and VTRs. We had so much fun watching the film that I am not sure if I remember it.

I arose early to the gentle toxin of George the Warrent Officer ringing his ship's bell at about six thirty. My head hurt. Of my life on board ship, I am blessed by the ability to sleep through the roaring of jet engines, and the tumult of the catapult shots. Unfortunately, this blessing is limited. The clanging of the bell signifies Collision At Sea, and is one of those little things that gets you up and running on the steel decks through hatches and into bulkheads. George the Warrent doesn't understand any of that. He is just ecstatic about leaving on the Tuesday Plane for points east, to the World. He has turned over his job to his releaf, and in point of fact, has been told to stay away from Work so that the New Guy can go about his affairs untroubled by the cutting voice of experience (or VOE.)

So George was up and ringing his bell, and unwilling, I joined him. He had already had a busy morning, soiling dishes and scattering the papers around. He was playing some bizarre variant of country music at high volume. I subjugated my rage by cleaning up the beer cans and cigarette butts someone had crushed out on the floor where I had been sitting. I washed the dishes, embarking on the futile attempt to keep up with George. I have often wondered at his home life. He claims to be married. What could it be like, wandering just a step behind someone elses dirty dishes for a lifetime? Would it be possible to stay sane? All I know is that I have the possibility to live in an environment at least ~~xxxx~~ somewhat under my control for a change. So I wash George's dishes.

Having swept the place out, I was free to go get The Other Paper. For the first time in Asia there is an alternative to the officially sponsored rag known as the Stars and Stripes. Oh, it is a nice enough paper and better infinitely than nothing. Unfortunately, it combines the keen analysis of the Weekly Reader with the paleolithic politics of the National Rifle Association Newsletter. By the miracle of satellite, however, the Paris Edition of the New York Herald Trib is now available. A miracle. A real paper, with ads, aimed not at the Pfc level! Astonishing! You can't imagine the contrast between the Trib and a captive, regulated organ like the pitiful Seoul Herald. It is almost like being somewhere with your morning coffee.

I trooped back up the hill and across the bustling street that divides Main Post from South, producing my I.D. card for both sets of grey-clad Korean Guards. The coffee percolator had disappeared into someone's home-bound shipment, and the quality of life had slid somewhat at the hooch. I made coffee by placing a filter in a large strainer and attempting to direct the boiling water in the general direction of another container underneath it. I lost myself in the Public View of the war, trying to contrast it with what we knew down in the Bunker. It was weird to see it all play out. The Iraqis were hitting the same targets we had planned only months before. Was it armeggon, or just the next step in the long battle for the Oil and the Gulf?

That was too hard to handle, judging by the state of my head. George was no longer ringing his bell, or listening to his music. It seemed safe. I stopped trying to find a four letter word for Dill, wadded up the cross word puzzle and went back to bed.

I woke again late in the afternoon. George had left the hooch and things were quiet, except for Soul Train on the T.V. which he had left at medium volume. I had the usual spaced-out feeling. I really should do something. It was a very nice afternoon, what was left of it, and the short walk up to the Club offered no remedy. I felt bloated, and decided that some exercise might purge the demons which had been plaguing me. I grabbed a Bean chamois shirt and locked the place up. Uphill or down? Whither would my gypsy feet carry me? I decided to walk around Namsan Mountain and down to Namdaemun. That way would take me up through the Ville, and I could check and see if the bandit who had that lovely Smith Astral Chronometer in the window would come down a few pesos on the price.

The Ville was jammed with Westerners trying things on, grabbing up Big Discounts on Industrial Roller-Bags, sneakers, and Brass Curiosities. The Koreans were starting to get off from their jobs, and the streets were crowded with couples and soldiers. I walked through the tourist district and up past the entrance to the Ville itself, where the hookers were already starting to do a thriving business. By the bi-weekly calendar that rules any garrison town, this was still Payday Weekend, and the greenbacks were flying. Past the Ville were the furniture shops, and the Clock place. No, the owner still wanted \$140 for the clock. Perhaps another day, one placed more strategically away from Payday. Closer to end of the month, just before the Korean Tax Authorities came to each little shop to inventory the goods and levy the appropriate amount on goods in stock.

The shops filled with rice-chests and apothecary cabinets and blanket boxes began to blend into tiny restaurants and Korean Drug stores. One in particular grabs a yank: it is dozens of formaldehyde bottles filled with snakes: big snakes, little snakes, poisonous snakes and snake eggs. Snakes are very beneficent, or so they say. A little open restaurant with the proprietor reading his paper, several small braziers smoking in the slanting rich sunlight. Not much longer for his season...or for the people living over the edge of the hill in the packing containers. They don't look up.

Over the crest of the ridge that slants down from the mountain on my left, down the long grade are the Korean stores for the big rollers. No English signs, and the clean, uncluttered display areas that screams megawon. Quite a contrast from the jammed stalls that service the Masses. With the downgrade I leave the yankee area. The boulevard still surges

with green taxis and the occasional huge Meguk-mobile, but the tempo is quieter. Nobody out hustling, no beggars, no flower girls. Refreshing. A quarter mile on is the intersection that divides the vehicular river; one arm rushes to the right, down to the Han Estuary and the Jam-su Bridge. The Bridge is a critical factor. When the North comes, the ROKs will blow the bridge and here we will all be, trapped in town, burning our documents in the parking lot. You can almost judge the political situation by whether the Bridge is open or not. When a coup is in the making, or the Students are rioting, the bridges are closed to seal the bacillus of discontent in the City, and prevent the contagion from spreading to outlying districts.

Contagion is a singularly appropriate word. Currently an outbreak of Cholera is in progress down south. The ROKs mutter that the agent-provocateurs have come ashore in the night with test tubes of death, to humiliate the central government and annihilate the populace. In their turn, the North claims an outbreak of diarrhea in the forward corps areas is the result of ROK germ warfare. The weird facet of the situation is that they are probably both right. I saw the CINC's schedule the ~~xxx~~ other day, and he was getting his shot. Hmmm.....

The road down to Namdaemung, or East Gate, hugs the mountain and curves off to the left. Walking along next to the rocks you can feel the cold breath of the mountain, damp and smelling of decayed foliage. A mile or so away is the only building on this stretch of road, a combination gas-station and antique shop. The road winds upwards, crossing another of Nam-san's mighty flanks. I pass the Eighth Army Retreat Center.

It is cool and green in there, safely fenced in. "A place to Get Close to God" the sign says. It looks peaceful and abandoned. The troops are no doubt off getting closer to something else at the moment. I am tempted, though, to walk up the little asphalt road and sit over the city, far away from the cocktails and loud music and clattering teletypes that comprise my little Seoul. Perhaps another time.

The center goes on for a mile or so, a vast piece of property. I am surrounded by greenery and high-speed traffic. Across the highway is an example of Asian Architecture. It is a towering concrete hotel, the structure supported by four massive pairs of grey cement. The rooms are hung between the pairs in the shape of an inverse cone; the topmost being the largest. It appears to be in the process of stabbing the earth below. It is modern beyond the possibility of doubt, and as improbable as a Japanese monster movie.

Laboring up the slope I pass a truck pulled over by a Korean traffic cop. He wears a sky-blue uniform and a golden forriquerre. He is shaking down the driver. I smile as I walk by. The corruption of the traffic cops is legendary. They have the traditional right to flag down any motorist and get free transportation. This is one of their lesser evils. A friend had a typical experience with the KNPs. The people who lived below them were engaged in a little blackmarketing. Just the usual; a little coffee, a few cosmetics, a couple odd cartons of cigarettes. It was a mixed couple a G.I. and his yobo. He would do the shopping and she would distribute the merchandise among her family for re-sale. Unfortunately the cops got wind of things. They took to stopping by on their lunch hours for the odd twenty dollar bill, the occasional free sex. As more cops got wind of the situation, there was a line out in front of the apartment building nearly every noon. The couple finally split. The cops started looking at

my friend to replace the lost income. They moved, too.

So I just toiled up over the top of the rise. The view was worth it. East Gate and the river were spread out below. To the right, the vast red brick of the Shilla Hotel dominated the skyline. To the left was a series of recreation fields and ornamental gardens. Just below the crest was a building with a large sign in front, proclaiming it 'Freedom House.' There was a garden in front, and peices of artillery arrayed in it. I dashed across the four lane to take a look. Beyond the gate there was an eery sort of quiet. Two small children played next to an ancient torpedo laid on a low pedistle. I walked down the line of armaments. They were relics of the War, I supposed, as the rubber tires were rotting away from the hubs. The entire place had an air of neglect. I walked down past a 76.2mm, a 57mm, and a 42.5mm FA peice. And a tractor. It was a bit baffling, as all the signs were in Korean. I wondered what sort of insidious purpose the North had devised for an ordinary Russian tractor. The best was at the far end. A bedraggled Republic P-51D Mustang pointed it's nose toward the Classical Music Hall across the road. The metal was oxidized. The canopy was smashed in at the front. At least three sets of markings were visible; The latest being "ROKAF 202". The older U.S. colors were still down there. The guns had been removed and the wingtips were dented. Still, the lines were there. I saw six Mustangs fly a few years back; the pilots were Sierra Hotel in their leather jackets and silk scarves. It was a long journey down from the Republic plant to the suburban Republic, a relic in a garden of other times and other democracies. Oh what passes for them in this neck of the woods.

I looked around at the other fascinating debris and walked down a set of stairs at the side of the building. Viewed from the back, you could see how the wood was rotted on the imposing facade. I said "Yobo-sayo" to the children as I left. They looked back gravely and responded with little bows in the war garden.

At the bottom of the hill was the entrance to the Namsan Tunnel #2. For a modest W100 you could drive through a narrow channel out through the living rock. I was out of that portion of town where Megucks are common sights. I wouldn't say my response was overwhelming. Wized old ladies looked at me over their carts loaded with sea slugs and outtlefish. Uniformed students ran for buses and scuffled on the sidewalk. I nodded to several, and a few nodded back. Not that many people smiled. Perhaps that is just the way things are over in East Gate. The sun was prettyx much set anyway.

East Gate is where the real people shop. Everything that is for sale over Itaewon is probably manufactured or wholesaled in East Gate. Of interest are the furiture shops, the textile carts, and the dog shops, if one is seeking added virility, Kay-gogi is what they call it. "Eye Goo" is what I say. The shops are set back in winding alleys, bisected by wide thoroughfares and the Expressway. Seoul Stadium sits green and massive near the Gate itself, remnant of the time not so long ago when Seoul was a walled City, trusting neither the Chinese coming south, or the Japanese headed for Manchuria. Also in the part of town is the Lost Compound of legend.

Actually the Far East Engineer's Compound is neither lost, not exactly the stuff of legend. I had just misplaced it.

I was walking at that particular instant through the District of small metal boxes with clasps.

~~Segregated as~~ They were near the new Subway Excavation, ~~the~~ ~~stalls~~. The long open stalls had every sized container, from tiny kimchi holders to enormous ten-liter rice holders. All with cunning metal clasps to hold the shiney lid on tight. I stopped at one to bargain, but I found one good reason why the prices are so steep near the Base. It is the English speaking surcharge. We went around and around, neither understanding, the little shop girl attempting to sell me the entire aisle of gleaming metal, and I saying "Gee this little shrimp holder would be nice to keep dangerous substances in." At length I realized that this was going nowhere fast, and that I at least had to have a pencil and paper to bid back and forth. With much bowing I exited the place, resolving to return as soon as I came to a realization of what I was going to do with the stuff once I bought it.

I had no more than hit the street again, shrouded in evening gloom, when the rocket-propelled grenade went off. I hit the sidewalk and started looking for the masked rocketeers.

It was with some chagrin, and soiled knees, that I saw the welder on the scaffolding over the subway looking at his former welding tanks. I got up sheepishly. This terrorist shit must have me on my knickers. I looked around and saw some Koreans holding their ears and didn't feel quite so bad.

What the situation obviously walled for was a beer or two to steady my nerves. The Compound was around someplace. All I had to do was circle a few blocks in the gloom and look for the quietest place in the commotion. At length I saw the unobtrusive gate with the guardshack. I showed my ID card and walked through.

It was like walking into a time warp. Above me loomed an imposing relic of the Japanese Occupation, three stories tall, and crumbling red brick where the Ivy allowed it to peek through. The main entrance had been bricked up years before to suit a new master's purpose. Around the old building was scattered a motley collection of quonset huts. The silence hurt my ears. The buildings brooded over the century of occupation. Grimy. Temporary. Temporary as a permanent lifestyle. Doubtless we will hand it back, as we are in the process of doing everywhere else. Like in Japan, where we trade land for new structures on steadily shrinking areas. So the Japanese can contain the Gaijins, wall them off from the people so their sensibilities are not offended. Well, I suppose that is the way of things in the Fall of the West. It still rankles.

Down one of the absurdly small little streets and around the corner lies the FED Club. I step in briskly to quench my thirst. The bar area is mostly empty; a few enlisted types with loud voices and a tired looking Korean Girl gyrating on the cylinder between the two rooms. She looks happy that MGEN Dohleman allowed the girls to put their brassiers back on. The enlisted guys are unhappy. It is all part of the good general's campaign to improve morale by making it impossible to get a drink during the day, and keep troublesome libidos under control by eliminating temptation. Similar to the old Navy joke, that is never far from the truth: "Liberty and Mail are secured until Morale improves!"

It is a depressing little place, and I stay just long enough to have three beers and change some greenbacks so I can take a cab someplace where the music is louder and the patrons not such vocal assholes. I wave to the ~~sleepy guard~~ and



sleepy guard and walk back into the crush of East Gate. The taxis are honking wildly. I dodge across the street and wave frantically.

I am nearly run down by four of them, crashing into the curb in search of a fare. Amid the smoke from burned tires I search for the best deal. Cabs seem to come in several flavors: the Greenies, the luxury models, and the dirty little night-hawkers. I select the dirtiest of the hawks: he will only grab W500 for the first kilometer. Unfortunately, he will also continue to hawk as we ride, swirving to the curb to ask others to join us. This does not result in a break on the tariff, but it is still a couple bucks cheaper than the luxury of privacy. No one else among my guests speaks English, anyway, and the window is down so the garlic fumes are not overwhelming.

We re-trace the course I had walked in the afternoon. It takes about twenty minutes. We are rolling down Itaewon Dong again, and I am overcome by the desire to hear some obnoxious Country Music. I gesture from the crowd in the back seat, and am rewarded by being dropped off only four blocks beyond the hill to Sam's Place. It is a paltry W800 all the way, though, so the hell with it.

I cross the street and cruise past the UN Club and the palpable noise wave emanating from the cellar of the Silver Wave R&R Club. Then turn to Whore's Hill, up the dark street until, puffing, I arrive at the top. Sam's is parked hard by the Hourly Rental Luxury Hotel, and directly under the Hollywood Disco. I walked into the place. It was jammed. They were playing Rocky Top. And I saw to my horror, none other but George and Dave sitting at a small table, pawing waitresses and having some pre-departure fun. George jumped up, dumping a waitress and two O.B. beers. He gave me a bear hug that was redolent of the Stroh's Brewery. I gave it up, and resigned myself to the inevitable.

Some hours later, I managed to extricate myself from the party. It was hard; George figured he was down to his last twenty or thirty beers on the Peninsula and wanted to get maximum enjoyment from them. I finally feigned a trip to the men's room, broke left at the door, and stood outside drinking in the crisp fall air. I wandered slowly down the hill, watching the blacks standing out in the street with their drinks, jiving with the women. Down past the Silver Wave.....say, wonder if Pat or Dale is out tonight? Maybe just stick my head in and check it out, just a beer, maybe...

Some hours later, still deafened, I found myself at the O Club, just for a couple nights caps with Dale. "Say, have you found yourself putting on weight over here?" he asked over his beer.

"Well, it is a challenging lifestyle, sitting down in the bunker, not being able to leave the room or anything, and then go out and have great fun like this all the time."

"Yeah. Me too."

"Just part of being in the Eighth Imperial Army, I suppose."

"But I'm in the Air Force!"

"And I thought I was in the Navy. Just goes to show you how wrong you can be."

"I have a bottle of rum over at the hooch" said Dale.

"That is about the last thing I need at this point. What have you got to mix with it?"

"How 'bout some Strawberry Daquiris?"

"Say, the other thing is, why is this all there is to do here?"

"You could always get yourself a Yobo and wind up trapped when she gets pregnant on you, and then have the Army force you to marry her and raise a nice Korean Family."

"You know, those Daquiris sound pretty good." I threw the rest of my money on the bar and we wandered out into the night. The stars were half covered by clouds, and it started to smell like rain.

\*\*\*\*\*

So there that is. I'll put this thing someplace and mail it when I figure out where. Hump day for Korea comes up in a week or so. From then on it is all downhill (although lately it appears to have been that way in more ways than chronological.) Funny how there is subjective and objective time.

I hope the roar of the ocean is treapeutic, and the winds cool in the evening and sun hot during the day. Take care. I think about you all the time.

Love,

De Snake Ranch  
Avenue de la Ohon  
6 OCT 1980  
Seoul

Dear Spike,

Just got your note and the checks today. You are right; I was on pins and needles trying to figure out what was going on. I had talked (shouted) at Mother over the tenuous JOSS-AUTOVON-SSELFRIGE AFB-GRAND RAPIDS connection, and she had indicated that the deal had fallen through. I am pleased that you trusted me sufficiently to ask for the money, but do remember, money is always available. Even such piddling amounts as 12K. Remember that tired G.I. shit....all you have to cough up is points. Granted that land contract is convenient, but I look at its interest I am paying out over such a short time as three years (I'm thinking ahead again, dammit) and it just seems that creative financing is good enough to cover small amounts, like 10K.

Well, you are there, and from what I understand, the United Snakes I grew up in don't exist anymore. So I will dispense with that. As you have already gathered, one of the checks is not in this letter. I am enclosing a grand as a demonstration of my good faith. Unfortunately, the flesh is weak. Untill after next payday, I am still on white bread. I decided to go out and have Beef Wellington tonight. So I am going to hold onto the five Cs for a couple days to make sure I can cover some checks that I would like to be able to cover.

(One of the pleasant side-lights of being a Government Minion is that when the fucking Congress pulls typical bone-headed stunts like not passing appropriations bills before they go home, money is not transferred to Claims accounts to write overdue checks to young Naval Officers) Hence, the money I had hoped to toss back into savings, and to tide over the \$220 monthly payment to Beth Zorn. It is going to take a while to get healthy again, but fuckit. I am also up in the air on whether we are going to score a couple grand on Nick Danger, or whether I am going to have to eat a few hundred copies. For all I know, they went into the drink with Rog's A-7 or something horrible and I will be paying back for years, even if the Firesign Theater doesn't sue me for every penny.

So the future still has it's little uncertainties. I think I told you that Larry Jensen asked me to come work for him in Hawaii, and I really didn't have it in my heart to turn down a good boss in a nice place, particularly in light of the ravaging of my escape fund, and the acquisition of a monthly debt in excess of 350 bucks. That don't even include trying to begin a New Life actually in a Small Part of the U.S.

But fuck that, too. I can handle a couple years on the islands, and worry about the future after that. Considering the global picture in the Intel traffic, I ain't sure I want to worry about it/ have to worry about it. I do know that staying here even four months longer (the logical consequence of making a break for the door) is a hardship I point-blank refuse to bear. I am drinking too much, working out too little, and just don't feel very goddam happy about it.

I am also not too goddam happy about the way my reproductive system is atrophying, and the only alternatives to remedy the situation out here.

The horror stories abound. They are starting to look good- like barmaids, that is, and when you go to an Indie party and hear all the Yobo-saying going on from the wife's corner you start to go buggy. Not for me.

Don't get me wrong: I am glad (sorta) I did this. It has had it's interesting and educational moments. I have learned more about how things work (really work, or don't work) than ever. It was good to get out of the insular world of Aviation, in a way, despite loosing the most interesting linear family I have encountered. But like I said, I ain't sticking here a heartbeat longer than is absolutely necessary.

I agree with your assesment of Salmon. I want property there, this seems to be a good way to get it before things fall apart. So let's get this thing together:

RE: the fucking agreement. I agree with many of your feelings about it. It is grude, and the legal sounding words just leaped off the fucking typewriter. But let me pass on something.....Everyone with any brains I knew that came out here was trying to do real estate as a hedge. A Navy salary is pathetic, but it is steady. Invested right, parlayed with a partner, you can make enough over a decade or so to be comfortable forever. But likewise, every one that left the holdings with a partner got fucked. It is that fundamental problem I mentioned in the last letter. You are there, and I am here. It would be nice to just chuck this shit and go live in the great West (and the Midwest in the Fall and Coast o' Hampshire) but to do that I have to keep working. I am not going back to scuffling and being broke all tthe time. It is the time of life to work, and try to lay up some assets so I can stop working early, and write my stupid little tales and have some fun. I don't see any alternatives. The only work I do well requires Oities, or alternatively, solidtude and enough cash to not have to work. The traditional delema.

So: what I have to have is clear legal claim to my share of the deal. We agree on that. We also have to have defined the amount of insurance we want to carry and all the other tired shit. (Incidently, Smelly just burned down the house she was living in out in Grattan, and lost evrerything. That is the first thing that has to be protected.)

We both are in what could be termed high-risk businesses. You moreso at the moment, barring terrorist bombs and the NKs, but whare I live, it is a lead pipe cinch I am history when the shit comes down. If I go back to sea the odds change again, but what should be a first order of business is updating wills and that tired shit to make sure nobody gets probated into the poorhouse. If you don't have a valid will you should look into it. You are already one of my beneficiaries (but I am sti ll quick, so don't count on getting the drop on me.)

In the event of default: Hey, I don't know what your oeck-book looks like, and frankly I don't give a fuck. But, the question of default has got to be covered. If we have things worked out in advance, we can spare ourselves a world of anger and hurt if things get short. I am not going to let you down, nor do I think you will me. But let me tell you, if the fuckin

Iranians close the Hormuz, you are going to see the tourist business go to hell in a hurry. Hopefully my death benefits from the war will cover the rest of the payments. But like I saying, there is a shit-load of externals that can come out of left feild. So give me your thoughts on that. Before the Hormuz gets closed.

(Parantheticly, let me just run this by you: the ragheads run a Vosper class FF out through the Straits. They announce that they have just laid frequency detonated mines, hand constructed in the Allah Akbar Mine Factory. You know they don't have them. I know they don't have them. The goddam Navy knows that. But Lloyds of London cancels all insurance so fast that it makes your head spin. And even though there is not a real threat in the world, even though we have enough firepower in that neck of the woods to sterilize every raghead for a thousand miles, the Straits, and the Oil, is stopped just as good as if they built the Grand Coolbe Dam across it. There is more than one way to skin a cat.)

My carping about improvements and the payment thereof: O.K., O.K., point well taken. Repairs and shit, no sweat. What I am talking about is mystery improvemetns that I have to chip in for. I know that the place is going to look great with anti-gravity panels and two-tone porch. How could any sane man disagree about that? But I want to know about it first. That does not apply to stopped up sinks and overflowing toilets. But I do want to know what my responsibilities are before I get into a decade contract.

If you are not living in the place, and in fact some chump is going to cover the bulk of the payments, I have no heartburn about paying a management fee to you. After all, it is a write-off to me in the long run. But if you wind up living there, I am paying the half shre of the rent and getting nothing except the eventual appreciation, and the knowlege that I am having some vicarious fun. But in that vein, I ain't going to pay for shit that is a direct result of living there. Sounds fair to me, in re phones (less installation, perhaps, if registered in both names) and electricity and water. So don't sweat that. The MGT Fee, that ix. I would naturally prefer to see it rented. Then we can buy other places and keep cashflow going and become land barons untill the Oil stops and everybody is wiped out at a single stroke, and we are left watching the bank tear the place down after evicting us with laser-tractor beams as the babies cry and the women weep.

A term in my land contract is the ability of the owner to re-negotiate the interest rate unilaterally, shouldthe State allow the ceiling to rise. It is an interesting clause. It seems like an annual review of the status of agreement is not a bad thing. But I will grant you that my little paragraph about buy-outs and loss free escapes is a little far-fetched. I will accept a certain amount of risk on the deal.

I am glad you agree about not using the equity as collateral on other loans. I would be mildly distraught to discover an eighth mortgage some morning over the first bloody mary of the day.

Well, let me know the details ASAP. I think it is important to own

real property, and I like the sound of salmon. I further like giving you a focus for your formidable talents. But most of all I think it is important to work together. The whole thing about the semi-legal instrument was to let you know what kind of shit we are getting into. I have only been paying on the lots for some seven months, and it is a bit tedious watching the big number turn into a little number when the interest (at only 10%) is subtracted.

Well, fuckit. I am only in for half, and you are going to be doing all the legwork. Let me know what is going on. In the meantime, I am going to go out and eat some meat for a change. Let me hasten to assure you that I am just hungry, not backpeddling. The 15th marks my first big check, and if the claim comes through like they keep promising, I will be able to cough up the remainder in a matter of a few days.

Take care,

-A MEMORANDUM OF LIMITED PARTNERSHIP-

for the purchase of a house

in SALMON, IDAHO

A. Michael S. Reddig and James R. Reddig agree to jointly purchase a Structure (hereafter termed 'the house') in the town of Salmon, Idaho, at \_\_\_\_\_, such to be registered jointly at the local registry office.

*As* Above is to be an equal venture, shared jointly, with 50% interest to each Partner.

G. Acceptance of above terms shall be constituted by the cashing of checks issued by James R. Reddig in the amount of \$1500 (one thousand five hundred dollars) dated 29 Sept, 1980, nos. 112 (Drawn on the Navy Federal Credit Union) and check 9024 (Drawn on the American Express Yongsan Military Banking Facility.) Cashing of these checks shall express consent for the Terms listed herein, in lieu of the receipt to the issuing Partner.

D. Partners agree to divide equally Insurance, monthly loan payments to \_\_\_\_\_ Bank, and applicable taxes.

E. Default by either Partner on debts incurred shall cause implementation of paragraph I and J. *Bank loans too costly, owner will carry paper.*

F. A full accounting of all expenses shall be provided to the non-resident Partner prior to reimbursement. *Why Reimbursement?*

G. Structural improvements, remodeling, and miscellaneous repairs shall be borne jointly with the prior consent of both partners. Damages and breakage shall be borne solely by the Partner resident at the time of occurrence, as shall all telephone, utility, and other bills incurred as an expense of residency. ~~max~~

*Must be some latitude as many repairs & improvements depend on time & availability and some require immediate action*

H. Rents or other income derived from the Property shall be applied to the monthly payments equally. *IF PROPERTY IS RENTED, WHAT ABOUT A MANAGEMENT FEE FOR PARTNER COLLECTING RENT, DOING MAINTENANCE?*

I. Partners agree to a periodic review of the agreement, to be held at least once per annum, or more often as required. *Where? How?*

J. Partners agree to arbitrate the dissolution of the Partnership on these terms: Equity in Property at the time of such dissolution, to include actual improvements and other payments, plus a figure equaling the highest passbook interest rate at that time, or a percentage of the fair market price, whichever is higher. *what if house cannot be sold for equity plus improvements?*

*Not valid for IRS.*

K. In the event of the death of either Partner, it is agreed that the equity be transferred unencumbered to the surviving partner, to encompass only such equity in the Structure and Property named.

l. Equity in the House shall not be used as collateral for further loans without prior consent of both Partners.

SIGNED James R Reddig

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 14 SEPT 80

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NOTARY PUBLIC \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

THE SNAKE RANOH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT CHON  
14 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear Jane,

It is cold this morning. I awoke in the 0500 darkness with a start. I had the horrible feeling that I had overslept; that I was already late for the early shift in the Bunker. The Dream had been particularly vivid. I had fired again and again, the 9mm Browning bucking in my hand there on the concrete Mexican border. The Female Arch Criminal had gone round for round with me. I kept forgetting how to cook the weapon. In the end, though, she was subdued by the busload of fighter pilots wearing their black-and-yellow helmets. I gathered that the Television show was just about over; time for the closing credits. Was I late for work? I looked up from my bed, not far from the Mexican border into the stygian darkness. Why, I had the day off. The curtains blew gently in the crisp breeze.

It had been the second dream of the day: the first had technicolored itself out during my post-work nap. It was funny how real they had been. The last real Grade-A dream had been months ago, one so convincing that when the alarm went off and my feet hit the cold steel deck I was yanked physically all the way from Home, and journey of eight thousand miles in milliseconds.

I debated whether to rise. I could just roll over; after all, the mound of blankets was a snug and secure place to be. I savored the dream for a while, enjoying the middleground between REM sleep and the first cup of coffee. It was nice to dream, and for some reason the cycle had come around again. It was a pity, though, that you couldn't plan them in advance. I would like to have a good rousing technicolor adventure under the Florida sun, on the brilliant white beach, hearing the roar of the lapis lazuli ocean and talking to a bronzed blonde lady of my acquaintance. Instead, I had wound up on the Mexican side of a shooting match. Well, what can you say?

I snuggled down under the thick covers and let my mind ramble down the last week. I had heard from Florida, of course, and that was a high that lasted days. I could commence writing those inane letters again. And ran into one of those characters that makes all this Asian bullshit tolerable. Now that was a strange case. It had wrapped up a few loose ends from Bangkok. It had spies and the fall of empires. It even had a beautiful representative of the KOIA, or Korean Central Intelligence, in attendance. In fact, that is why I called the interlude

#### "FUN AND GAMES WITH/THE KOIA"

Captain Terry had talked me into walking uptown to pick up a birthday present for his daughter. Capt Terry was a good man. He was a little high strung, a little dedicated for my taste, but a real family man. He missed his wife and little girl so desperately it was a little sad. He was a Humanist, too, an oddity in Army Intelligence. He brought his soft southern drawl on up the Bunker stairs and popped out his umbrella. A soft grey mist was falling. We walked up the hill and out the gate.

The late afternoon crowds hurried along the wet streets. Taxis threw



grey roostertails behind. Puddles filled the uneven cobblestones. We made a dangerous crossing of Itaewon-dong near the Traffic Box and at length arrived at one of the ten-thousand tiny clothing shops.

Capt Terry negotiated coolly with the proprietor. He held up a cute little cordrouy jumper. "How much this dress?"

"I would estimate three-thousand won for that particular article of clothing, Sir" said the owner. His jet-black hair was brilliantined. He wore a windbeaker and neat slacks.

"You say yesterday W2,500. Same-same pricee today, Nai?" Capt Terry's face was contorted with the effort of the negotiations.

"I'm extremely sorry, Sir, but I'm afraid we can't accept a won less than the aforementioned quotation."

"I only havee W2500. I give you, you take sam-same one dress."

"In those circumstances, I'm sure we could take what funds you possess, and utilize them as a dawnpayment on the article."

"Aw, shit. O.K. I'll give you the W3,000."

"Thankyou, Sir. I'm confident your little child will be most pleased."

We left the shop with the dress in a bag. Capt Terry turned to me and said "You gotta bargain hard with these guys or they don't respect you. It helps if you speak a little of the language, too."

"I'm hip," I said. A taxi nearly sideswiped us across from the Hamilton Hotel.

"What say we have a beer to celebrate?"

"Nah, I gotta go on watch in a few hours. Want to be sharp just in case the Godless North comes South tonight."

"Oh hell" he said waving the bag. "There ain't nothing going on. Besides, it is only one. I guarantee it on my honor as an Army Officer." He didn't have to twist hard. We ducked into the Hamilton Hotel, partly because it was convenient, and partly because we had never been there.

The lobby was crowded with Megucks carrying large sacks of treasures gleaned from the shops. Tourists with as many as eight sets of Korean sneakers around thier necks, quilts under arms, and four or five brass cranes clutched in hand. We went past the coffeeshop and took the elvator to the second floor. The Adam bar was concealed behind some shrubbery and it took a minute to find.

Perhaps I should digress here just for a second. The Hamilton Hotel is a strange place. It used to be the only Western-style hotel in the district; the only place for Garrisson rats and Visiting Firemen to stay. Consequently, it became a haven for Hookers, hucksters, and just incidently, a little Intel collection. All in fun, just between Allies, you understand. I mean, our host nationals would never target the Megucks to find out what we are really up to, now would they?

But one of the tools of the trade is to get people relaxed and trusting. Consequently the Adam Bar is a nice little place with artificial rocks and bamboo screens. And never a hint that the place has a lot more going on in it than one would imagine from a cursory examination.

We walked in and took a couple stools at the bar. Trade was slow. Terry ordered a couple beers. I knew we were in trouble when they appeared over the smooth black surface. They were giant liter bottles. "Oh no" I said.

"No sweat, buddy. Just one and back to the Yard." He forked out about three thousand won for the tariff. Raindrops spattered against the window. Funny how people bargain like crazy over about fifty cents, and then throw away the bundle on cocktails, never thinking to dicker on the prices. I had a few slips and began to get expansive. When Spooks get together the topics can be far ranging. We settled upon Zimbabwe as a nice, safe subject. We didn't follow it in the classified traffic that heavy, so there wasn't much danger of inadvertently blurting out something we weren't supposed to know. Of course Spooks are among the most garrulous of people. I was rolling in a hurry. I had read that Mr. Robert Mugubwe had laid on a special Air Zimbabwe flight to attend Tito's funeral. He dragged along an entourage of 80 assorted 'dignitaries', who had been unwashed tribal guerrillas only months before.

By way of contrast, I pointed out, Mrs. Thatcher, the Prime Minister of England flew tourist-class and took two. Mugubwe had been in the U.K. attempting to extort aid from Mrs Thatcher just a couple weeks before. I was beginning to gesture. "And what about Joshua Nkomol" I demanded. "That fat pig is in charge of the State Research Bureau, and the Idi Amin stuff is starting to happen already!"

We covered the prospects of civil war there, and the tawdry spectacle of the Union Jack going up the flagpole to wave limply for a few weeks before coming down for the last time on the continent they had once dominated. Terry was of the opinion that civil war wasn't going to happen, and that all the commotion would die down and things would get sane. We argued about that as the level of the beers got lower and lower. We wound up in Kenya and Malaysia, debating the possibility of beating an authentic independence movement like the Mau-Maus. I was lecturing on the successes and failures of Counter-insurgency, and the lasting benefits of English Common Law in East Africa when a polite cultured British Voice broke in.

"Excuse me, hate to barge in on you, chaps, but I fought in Kenya and Malasia, and I just wanted to say that I found your discussion fascinating."

"Holy shit!" I said coolly.

That was how our encounter with Jim Slowey began, and it was to be the finest exercise in paranoia and alcohol of the year.

And that is going a ways.

Jim was a benign-looking fellow. He allowed to 48 years of age. His blue eyes twinkled behind military-issue glasses. He was very properly attired in a coat and tie. He was smoking some sort of thin mentol cigarettes and holding hands with an attractive Korean girl with a Vidal Sassoon haircut only a few years out of date. We had to toast to "hale-fello-well-met" and so raised our glasses. "Tipshi-dal" said Jim.

A mistake. That term is used to say "chug-a-lug" in Korean. That is why Koreans are such good fun at parties, at least for the first hour or so. Naturally we were committed by that point. Jim seemed to have one of those bottomless wallets which produced tall brown bottles at increasingly shorter intervals.

We had traveled through a young subaltern's life in the Coldstream Guards in the disintegrating Empire; from the dim reaches of Suez to Kenya and Malaysia. To the climes of this very nation, wracked by flame. Thence to China, to a POW camp. In chains. They were a hard nut to crack, the Brits and the Turks. They maintained their military units even behind the wire. As the Chinese removed each Senior Ranking Officer, those left consulted lineal numbers and replaced him. The Yanks, by way of contrast, just sort of sat behind the fence and wondered what was going on.

"There was a case" I said to Capt Terry "of three Turkish Privates left in the compound. They figured out who had signed up on what days, and the one who had been a Private the longest took command. Drove the Chinks crazy like that. Pretty soon they had Turks and Brits scattered all over, trying to break the military units up, and they were starting again as soon as two prisoners got together again."

"Quite right" said Jim in a clipped tone. "Then one day an NKVD Major showed up with the Chinese guards. The SRO got us all together and told us we were for it unless we went for the wire that night. So 17 of us went for it and four got across."

"You did what?"

"Walked out of China, apparently. We didn't know until we woke up one morning in a rice paddy and saw rifles leveled at us. I looked at the weapons and didn't know what to think. They were British .303s. We thought the Chinks had grabbed a group of our guns. That was the first time I heard Thai."

"Let me get this straight" I said "You had walked out of China and into Thailand?"

"Quite right. Surprised us, too. We thought we had crossed over into Laos someplace. We had thought we forded the Mekong, but perhaps it had been the Kwai. Didn't have anything in the way of maps, don't you know." He polished his glasses and asked the Korean girl whether she still remembered him. Her Sassoon waved emphatically. Obviously didn't speak much English. "They stuck us in Butterworth down in Malaysia for five weeks R&R and then back to the line in Korea. They did things differently in those days."

I can smell a line of bullshit a mile away. I had checked him several key points and asked him a question in Thai. He appeared to be quite genuine, except for the career decision he took after Korea. He had returned to England and completed his Masters degree, and then joined the U.S. Army as a private soldier. He got up and wandered off to the head. "Terry" I whispered "either this guy is what he says he is, or he is something even more intense. Head's up." Terry had briefly slumped head first on the bar.

I looked at both of my Rolex watches. It was getting on towards time to be headed for another evening of hard-hitting Intelligence.

First a stop in the head to off-load some of the beer. I was standing next to Jim when he leaned over. "One thing about that cross-border operation I was telling you about...."

"Say, Jim, if there was a place in all of Korea less secure than this one, I don't know where it is." I waved at the false ceiling.

"Quite right. Good show." We weaved back to the bar. Capt Terry was staring blankly into space. He was clearly overwhelmed at this juncture. I was roaring drunk and nearly late for work. We exchanged addresses and agreed to meet the following afternoon. All I had to do was get through the evening.....

I lurched downhill and regrouped slightly. I climbed into our winter blue uniform that makes us look like cops. I ate some aspirin to ward off the inevitable hangover that was going to hit between 2330-and -0300. Finally I arrived in the green painted room and listened blankly to the pass-down brief from the jerk Air Force first loonie.

It was not what you would call one of our more memorable watches. It passed as they all do, the intermittable minutes slowly accumulating to eight hours; hearing the National Anthems of the Republic and the Mother Country at 0200 sharp. "Jeeze Sarge, we're more than half way done already and I'm even getting sober....." No flaps, unidentified personnell wandering around in the DMZ, or naval excursions by the NK Forward Guardships. Quiet as a tomb.

They always end, though, and this was no exception. I turned over in record time and slouched back over to the Hooch to sleep away the morning. The skies were clear and the light breeze refreshing. It was a pity to have to waste it asleep.

Some hours later I awoke with the characteristic feeling: disoriented, <sup>ATON.</sup> thirsty, and out of sorts. The human body is an exceptional thing, but it never really gets used to shift work. The revenge is cumulative and subtle. You can not work around the clock once a week for long and not end up with a sort of constant fatigue, a short temper, and the continuing hallucination that you are living in a military dictatorship surrounded by foreigners jabbering in a language that resembles nothing so much as the wanderings of a demented chicken. Never known it to fail.

Four cups of coffee and a perusal of the Stars n' Stripes brought me to a truce with Saturday. It was actually marvelous weather, and after administering a mental kick in the ass, I managed to slump out of the hooch and into the brilliant Korean afternoon. I blinked like a mole and put on my sunglasses. I supposed the only thing to do was cash a check and talk to that weird Brit again. To prolong the inevitable, I walked the long way. A pass at the Embassy Club to get money. Then up the back hill past the General Officer's quarters, and down into Korea again. I made a bold decision to attempt to navigate the lower Ville.

Naturally, you cannot go from point A to point B. You take a line of bearing on a known structure; in this case the twin spires of the Mosque. That becomes a known factor to plug into the feet, as you wander down narrow alleys, around blind corners, into dead ends, and once in a while, right into authentic Korean families hunched over cook-fires and kimchi-pots. It was, if I may humbly say, a superb peice of navigation. I found a worn set of steep stone steps, climbed them, and found myself directly across th

street from the Hamilton. The rich golden sun was slanting across the cuttlefish carts and the chestnut vendors. I felt like going to a football game, but not a chance. I was going to plunge full speed into a paranoid dream of unprecedented proportions. Worse, it was about 90% true. A flashback to other times, when the plainclothes guys in the car out in front of the house probably were looking for the dealer who lived in the apartment next to you. Or worse.

I found Jim esconced in the bar, studying a tall bottle of Crown lager ("a headache in every bottle.") We plunged immediately into a recap of the previous evening's discussions; the Fall of Empires, weird towns in forgotten countries ("PHU BAI is O.K.!") and unregentive armies of lost wars. Pointless speculations, perhaps, but the stuff of a dozen lifetimes and a hundred books.

"Well if you were up in Ohing Mai at that time, you must have stopped to watch the public hangings. That was always a big drawing card on the weekends from what I heard."

"Oh yes, absolutely. When we could get out, mind you. We were operating against what was left of the original Kuomintang Army that controlled the Golden Triangle. Mostly on the Burma side, if you tell."

"Pity about Burma. Always wanted to go there. Rangoon was one of the great ones."

"Oh my yes. But not now, just depressing. They have completely eradicated the Buddhist ethic, you know. Like old Marxist China. Just the husk is left and that is falling down, too."

"Say, you wouldn't happen to know a Special Forces type named LOOL M \_\_\_\_\_, would you? He was active up there."

"No, not there. I knew him somewhere else."

"Leopoldville?"

"Well, er, the Congo was a strange thing wasn't it. But I say, I was thinking about what you said last night about our friends.....that large organization...."

"Yeh." The conversation was getting cryptic by now. I knew that he didn't want to talk about the Congo, about the units we had running around Katanga Province to ensure that the revolutionaries did not get the rich copper deposits away from Anaconda and the other companies. After all, Congress certainly would never put American troops in Africa, now would they? But suddenly the KCIA was involved. I wondered what Jim was actually doing in the ROK, and more, why he wanted to talk to me. The wheels within wheels began to rotate around. He claimed to be working for the Army Veterinary Corps, which controls all food distribution for the Armed Forces. But his background argued against it. I couldn't quite figure it out, but was enjoying the ride.

"Well, frankly, old chap, I believe that my young friend is one of them."

"Huh?" I said cleverly.

"Well, you see, she had a bit of a problem with English last night, re-

member?"

"Yeah. Poor thing, she didn't seem to be enjoying the little gab-fest that much."

"On the contrary. I imagine she is off filing her report right now. You weren't around at 0400 this morning when her English became quite fluent. Remarkable characteristic."

Well, that one took me for a loop. I try to be the manly cynic, been there and seen everything. Not a chance. Makes you wonder what the hell is really going on. Maybe the people you know aren't really what they seem. I could see why they were keeping an eye on Jim, but now I had got myself written up on their dossiers. The next time I was out in the Ville having some fun I would have to see just who was buying the next round....

"So, she dashed off this morning. No charge for services rendered. Another anomaly. She knows quite well that I am only staying for three days. I have been many places and rarely seen such enthusiasm strictly pour lamour. Except for the only fully-rated female helicopter pilot in the Vietnamese Air Force....."

That story went on for some minutes and somehow we got over to Gen Kriangsak Chamanand, who was just shit-canned as the Thai Prime Minister. I had the opportunity to see him when I was in Bangkok the last time, and so we analyzed the situation in my favorite Asian Nation for a while. I asked him about one of the characters I had met there, a Hungarian expatriate and restaurateur named Nick Yarow. He had really put on the dog for the Fleet when we rolled in. Very happy to see us.

"Nick? oh, sure. Sort of General Collector for the Bloc. Nice enough chap. Ran a nice restaurant on the side."

"That explains a lot of things. The last time I saw him was from the back of his lime-green cadillac when he gave me a lift down to Pattaya Beach."

"Oh yes. I should think he was glad to see the Fleet. Pretty lean times for an agent after the pull-out, don't you know." Jim looked up. The KCIA had arrived with a swish of silk skirt. She sat down and Jim ordered reinforcements. He gave me a broad wink. "Hello my dear. Do you still love me?" The KCIA laughed and then gravely shook hands with me. The bottles began to pile up amid a series of half-references to assorted spookery. At length we discussed a change of venue. I suggested a few quick drinks in the Sky Room of the Shilla hotel, renowned as Seoul's finest and most expensive hotel.

The KCIA was horrified. Whether it was because the bugging equipment was not adequate at that location, or because the local controller would not be able to keep track of her. "Shi-la OH-tel?" she said "I no hear of same."

"Patent nonsense, Jim. The Shilla is famous. It sounds like just the place for us."

"Right ho! Jolly good idea. Off we go!"

"No, no" said the KCIA. "Cannot go Shilla."

"It's allright my

"It's alright, my dear. We promise to get you back to an approved location long before curfew. We will never tell anyone that you sold out and can no longer be trusted."

"Jeem, why you say that?" She looked worried.

I threw some money on the bar and we stumbled out; one young Spook, one active Mata Hari, and the last flower of the Empire singing "Waltzing Matilda" at the top of our lungs. Mata looked embarrassed.

There was a fortuitous cab waiting in front. We sped through the evening streets past the brooding bulk of Namsan Mountain where the Tower poked up at the bright stars. Within minutes we were piling out at the Shilla. The KOIA looked resigned to the affair. We passed through the revolving doors and into a lobby as big as a train station. The marble floors gleamed and bellhops scurried about in red jackets. It was about a five minute hike to the elevators. My ears popped before we reached the sky room, and it was amazing how nice the acoustics were in the elevator car. Really gave the big sound to our vocal characterizations.

It was at that juncture that Jim determined that whiskey was the only way out. He was drinking them neat, and things very nearly got out of hand. I was thinking about that while taking a leak off the 12th floor balcony. This was exactly the sort of aberrant behavior I had been meaning to give up. And in the near proximity of hostile agents. I decided it was just about it to get on home for three hours of well-earned sleep before work. I pretended to be the Big Spender and lavishly threw my Amex Card at the \$11,500 tab. We floated out of the place with glazed grins. The KOIA looked grateful, as I have a suspicion their expense account is not in the Shilla class.

One frantic cab ride back around the mountain brought us to the Hamilton, back within range of the directional microphones. The KOIA positively beamed.

"Well, listen young man, you will absolutely have to look me up next time you are in Japan. Perhaps we can find a secure area to talk in and we can sort this adventure out."

"It would be a pleasure. I'd be interested in finding out just what we have done to whom this evening." I drained the nightcap and slid off the barstool.

"Have to look at the transcripts for that. But perhaps I'll get some information tonight." The KOIA smiled bravely. I put my vagabond sneakers on the way back to the exciting world of the Joint Intelligence Command. As the elevator doors closed I could hear the strains of "Waltzing Matilda" drift out of the Adam Bar.

It is a dirty job out here; monitoring the global collision of the Great Powers, sorting through the wreckage of Empires. It should be comforting, though, to realize that competent professionals are riding around in cabs and actually spending their own money for drinks. Someone has to do it, I mused, as I threw my clothing in a neat pile over by the typewriter. But could it all just have been another one of those paranoid acid flashbacks? Maybe it would be safer, shooting it out with Female Arch Criminals on the concrete Mexican Border. I was asleep again almost before my head hit the pillow....to sleep, perchance to dream.....

So much for the latest chapter of New Adventures in Old Asia. I got your postcard last night, and I am delighted things are going well. Unfortunately, there was also bad news in the little stack of letters. My old Boss's wife is dying of liver cancer at the moment, and I have to get a letter off chop-chop. She is young, and has lived an exemplary life. I don't understand it. Old reprobates go through seven wars and are still power-drinking cocktails, and some are struck down. I just don't know.....

Plus the Koreans demolished the beautiful tile roof on the hooch this morning, swooping down at 0730 sharp to start banging and rending and carrying on. They are pounding lead gutter fixtures outside my window right now, and raining debris on ojima's garden.

I really love this military life at times like this. I also talked to the great white father in Washington to see what they are thinking about these days. They say it is very tough to tell exactly where they might put me, as Hawaii is starting to look a little shakey. "Lot of people want those jobs, you know." So I said fine, if you can't do that, or give me London or Spain, just let me know. (So I can resign and get out of here ball-bali. I'll stick around for something fun, but if they try any bullshit they will see my backside so fast it will make their heads spin. They seemed to be of the opinion that being out of the states for three years, forward deployed, is the same as sitting in San Diego or something. We shall see about that. The one thing you have to do in talking to them is keep your temper. It is hard, but horrible things can happen if you piss-off the people who control your destiny absolutely for another nine months.)

Well, I have to get moving. This room is starting to fill up with dust from the little people on the roof sweeping 35 years of dirt onto my windows. I'll try to keep these little letters down to a more reasonable length in the future. Have some fun....I love you.....



THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA OHON  
15 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear Mr. Bill & Mr. Sluggo,

Since T.R. is finally showing his true colors and departing his Comrades, perhaps even under fire, I have been forced to Strip him of the Distribution for these fascinating chronicals. It was a hard choice, naturally, but what can I say.

As you may be able to devine from the accompanying tale, once more calculated to keep Jane's lap warm and waiting, things have not been easy here in Beautiful Seoul. I have been engaged in personal feats of idiocy here in this outpost. I have today vaulted from the depths of Need to the heights of the median poverty level.

Gentlemen, the Dead Horse is a thing of the Past.

Dozens of dollar bills litter my desktop. Here, allow me to demonstrate my contempt for mere money. Let me light up a Lucky with this quarter. Ah, much better.

But let me tell you of a remarkable case of deja vu. I was lying abed this morning, stricken with a mild case of mal de mer. The refreshing Fall breeze fluttered the curtains. It was an absolutely splendid morning to not hop out of the rack. I was prepared for a long seige. The bottle of bourbon which had contributed to my trifling illness was near at hand. A fresh package of Luckies had been thumbed open; the Vigilante Lighter was fueled and laid casually atop the smokes. I could have stayed right through the World Series....which I hasten to remind you I am capable of listening to Live, during daylight hours the way God meant it to be. Suddenly I was stricken by the horrible sensation that I had been here before....it was a numbing sensation....it began at my ears and made my bowels turn to jelly.

There were Asians on the Roof! I swear to God! They were jabbering in a language that sounds very much like something horrible happening to the cat. They were banging...things...Noxious fumes began to waft through the open windows. I had felt all this before, I knew it. I just couldn't place it...Two stocky workmen entered my room. They just walked in. It was unconscious....they produced a welding torch and began to gesture at my window....I had it! It was just like a mobile home I used to live in.. I lept up from the bed, blankets tangled on my lithe, tanned body...I raised a baseball bat I keep near the headboard to combat particularly vivid hallucinations...I clubbed the curs out of my way, shouting.... I battled my way to the hall....There were Asians in the Bathroom!.. they were talking to each other and smoking Turtleboat Cigarettes...No!.. that meant...it....was...real!!!!

ARRRAGGHHH!!!

On a calmer note, I suppose it is just one of those conditioned responses the Service is so kind to program into you. Why, I remember the tragic incident of my Army roommate who thought it the height of cleverness to ring a small ship's bell in the dead of night....six times. The real pity

of the thing is that he was so close to going home.

And now he will never see his family again. Well, noone ever said this wasn't a dangerous business.

I'd like to just ramble on here for another eight or nine pages, but I have spared myself the necessity of having to be creative twice in the same day. In order to orient yourself to the active portion of the enclosed tale, imagine yourself to be a lovely blonde lady in Delray Florida, pining for her Serviceman overseas. Or perhaps not. It gets better about halfway down the first page. The real goofy parts are back about page eight, but don't spoil it. Like all fine-crafted works of literature, it took a lot of drinks to get it the way it is. I only hope that you still have enough in the roomsafes to be able to read it in the same lofty state.

I understand from Rog Hull that Nick is embarked in some Navy conveyance for the trip to the Gulf. I am filled with trepidation at the prospect of all those important volumes swinging across on an unrep...the course of my Summer Vacation could depend on it. I intend to have several cocktails on my leisurely progress out of here to visit the Browns in exotic and colorful England, an important country that once had a history before they gave it away to the arabs.

In the meantime, I spoke to the Great White Father in Washington about the topic which has had Washington abuzz for lo these many weeks: "Have you heard? Reddig is up for orders again! The 1630 Detailers office has been closed to tourists!"

The low-life mothers in that august body told me that "We really can't be sure about Hawaii, after all there are a lot of people who would like to get those jobs, you know." A lot of them who were on the Midway for a couple years before being taken prisoner by a crazed and dangerous group of Lunatics, who masquerade as a U.S. Army. Well, it would be nice to be bitter and cynical for a while, but (imagine this!) I am "going to step out for drinks." I know, I know. I used to say the same thing about land-based assholes and douchebags.

In the meantime, Gentlemen, this concludes my presentation. Are there any questions?

K.O.S.,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA CHON  
16 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear Helen,

Got the book and both post cards.

Thanks for Sophie's Choice. I'll get to it as quickly as possible.

Hope Europe was fun. I would like to have been in Duetchland for Oktoberfest, but what with the explosions maybe not.

Something just struck me....in the Ocupado Card you sent, you referenced moving on...I hope that doesn't mean street adress, else this is a pointless exercise. Hummm...I suppose there is nothing for it but to plow ahead....

Re a trip to Seoul: sounds fine by me, save for a couple of details. I am a shift worker at the moment, and I am not real flexible as far as scheduling goes. I would have to know when....and since you won't be back for a while, could be difficult. I had contemplated taking some leave to check on business affairs in Japan or the Philippines either in early Nov or very late in the month. Since I have to meet an aircraft carrier, that is sort of time sensitive, too....ok well. It isn't all that difficult, I suppose. How's about letting me know the dates and I will let you know whether it is possible. The Boss is pressuring me to get definite on the leave dates (within the next day or so) so he can in turn make up the watch bill for next month.

If I play my cards right, I might be able to patch a call through the Auotvon lines, so we can cut down the turnaround time on scheduling data.

No apologies are necessary....and what for I don't know...we are batting .560 on encounters, and that is better than Ted Williams ever did. The thing that mystifies me is why it clicked so well the first time and why it was so awkward the second. I suspect it was the going-away vibes I was radiating, but then perhaps the entire tempo of my life and temper is out of phase with yours. I do <sup>temp</sup> be very prickly at times, and unfortunately my exile here in Korea has done nothing to improve that. If anything, it has exacerbated things. I don't know. It had only been 32 months out of the country. Maybe the places and the people have something to do with it.

In any event, if you want to come, it is likely to be while I am working some weird shifts as we will be down to three watch officers in the middle part of the month. No biggie, there are still 14 other hours in the day. If you think it still worthwhile despite the constrictions, let me know. We run a 24 hr a day operation.

Take care,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA OHON  
16 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

DEAN,

Got the bad news letter. It was in a big mail drop, which included my new three volume history of the British Empire. I saved the personal mail for later, having some fun reading the postcards and strewing invoices and packing materials around the room. It was all great, right up until the second paragraph of yours. I was drunk, naturally (not my fault, farewell party and all that) and sat like I had been poleaxed.

Well. Sure makes you wonder about justice in the world.

Anyhow, I wrote Larry yesterday. Didn't know quite what to say. Offered whatever my prayers (the Bon Dieu must have raised his eyebrows at that) and support are worth. Which is not much I suspect. I don't like the feeling of helplessness you experience even at this range. A friend of mine died of the big O back in College....it was almost too much to be borne.

Quite aside from all that, I enclosed a copy of one of my latest mis-adventures with the letter. It is about the only thing I can think of to be doing from here. Originally it was a reading support program for the Skidway's deployment, but I will redirect it at Hawaii. See if you can get a readout on whether that is helpfull or just stupid. Which is as accurate a summing up as I can render of how I feel dealing with the Interface. Why not the warriors?

Anyhow, there that is. In other events....I was in touch with Rog, via letter, and the news from the boat is that the Eagles lost a bird the other night. Bif McCole went swimming with Andy Anderson. Both O.K. Banner year for ejection seats in OVW-5. I wonder how long what passes for our Leadership thinks we can go on with these intermittable blue water deployments? And why the hell didn't we send them into Muscat if we are so buddy-buddy with the Sultan? Are we still just ominous and over the horizon? It is about time for that shit to end.

Speaking of which I voted the other day. I got the absentee ballot and got drunk. I looked at it for the longest time. I flat didn't know what to do with it. I took out the small-animal eviscerator that came with the punch card and voted "no" on all the ammendments...there were some beauties, including one which would have granted immunity from civil arrest and prosecution for State Legislators during the Session. I voted against lowering the drinking age to 19 again (When did that change back? and was torn over whether to build more prisons. Fuckit, I said, if they don't know where they are going to build them, it could be next door. I couldn't even figure out the taxation ammendments. Not enough data. They all seemed to lower taxes but insert escalator clauses.

But that still brought me back to the top of the punchcard. I don't know Still don't. Used to vote Libertarian. Even voted for Gus Hall in '72. I took a stiff swallow. Not even a good protest vote this time, and I'll

BE DAMNED

if I will see that Georgia self-righteous son-of-a-bitch back again. Where is Jerry when you need him? Goddam it. I voted for War in the end, and it still leaves a bad taste in my mouth. Well, we shall see what madness overcomes us this time.

If/when you see the Boss, ask him about my little tale of Adventure with the KOIA. It was fun....and covered many of the key points of Empires tossed away. The gent in question was Guards, officer type, fought Kenya Malaysia & Korea, captured, escaped from China with three others, back to Korea, masters degree, resigned commision, joined U.S. Army old-SF, fought Golden Triangle, Congo, Vietnam. The way he had it figured, the Empire may have been vanguished, but He wasn't. Sort of fun. Read it if you get a chance.

Talked to the Great White Father in pointy-building. He sez don't know orders same-same Hawaii. "Many people they ask" he say "Don't know you fel la come along CINCPACFLT. You maybe one fella like PG school OK Sailorman? You give many preference, we see maybe fill one, you no get hopes up."

Whoa, I said to myself, where is the payback for the Fucking Midway and Korea? that was just another cruel hoax, too. Oh well. PG school sounds allright, but Jesus, there I am a career sailor without even trying. I donna, man, I get so tired sometimes.

Well, that covers the key points. If there are no questions, that concludes my fucking presentation, Sir.

Take care, Dean, and let me know what I can do for Larry besides my inane little letters.....

Thumbs Up & Bums away,

PS: Rog says 800 copies of Danger disappeared into the Navy supply system for transit out to the Ship. I think I have just discovered the perfect way to stay in print for 130 years.....

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA CHON  
16 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear Ruth,

O.K., O.K., so it has been about six months since I wrote. So I have had a lot of important stuff on my mind, like trying to figure out why they all think I am a First Lieutenant, and that I should be over at the rifle range practising with my M-16, and why all these Japanese are speaking Korean and pretending that this isn't the Kanto Plain, but rather someplace called Seoul. It just Beats me.

Anyhow, it was nice to get your letter. Seriously, I have been suffering from a clear case of 32 month burn-out here. It is so strange. I went from the closest kind of military family to shift work in a tiny watch center with only four other officers. They are nice enough people, but if you are not working, that means that they are. Hard to socialize. So I have been in virtual seclusion. Paying off the six-month Dead Horse didn't help much, either, so I have been reading a lot and drinking cut-rate cocktails.

Which is not to say I have been miserable...it has just been strange. You go through Emergency Martial law, a Coup, and civil insurrection all in six months, it keeps your attention. Very interesting. Glad I came to see Life in a Military Dictatorship (even though relatively benign) and Life in the Army. It has given me new resolution not to do that again.

I am supposed to be up for orders pretty quick, and I am wondering what will happen...will it be a hit, or a miss? Another weird one, or a fun tour for a change? Don't know yet....might even have to go back to America, perish the thought.

Most of the old crew has of course departed. I hear Nasty is looking 10 years younger, Scooter is dallying with a divorcee with kids, Splash grew up, Space dropped out of sight in P-cola, and Rocket and Ellen are not quite so happy now that Ellen is just another fairly attractive girl in California, instead of the Most Beautiful Caucasian for Miles Around. That is a few months old, though, so all is subject to change without notice. I published a book, with the considerable aid of my friend Rog Hull...we are still waiting on tenterhooks to see if we make the money back or have to eat a few hundred copies...they are all at sea right now, so there is no way to know....it is the Collected Adventures of Nick Danger. We shall see what happens. But I am sort of working on two other projects which may or may not see the light of day.

That is about the news from the East. I miss Japan, too (although I never thought that would happen) and I am glad school is going well for you. Take care of yourself! The offer for goodies is much appreciated, but I have gained about 20 lbs with my sedantary lifestyle as it is....Say hi to Dena, and I will answer her letter, too.....

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT OHON  
16 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

Mr. McCole,

This letter is to notify you of your selection as the Attack Community Representative to the Coveted Vigilante Disposa-Phantom Award for the Calendar year 1980.

Congratulations!

In association with the Bic Corporation (Godd for thousands of lights, Then just throw it away!) it is my pleasure to confer the munificent sum of W1,000 as a token of the appreciation of the Defense Contractors Benevolent Fund. Unfortunately, due to currency restrictions, you are going to have to come and get it.

Seriously, and I mean that folks, I am happy that everything turned out O.K. I'm not kidding about that thousand won, either.

I know things have been tough out there, but I just want to pass along the fact that it ain't easy on land, either. Have you any idea what kind of V.D. rates we have to face constantly here in the Seoul Area? or the way the cocktail prices have soared recently? Why, just last night, when I was having about thirty drinks, I was forced to break another \$20 bill. So listen, we are all part of the Big Defense Team.

I have it on excellent authority from one of our Air Force Representatives on the Joint Staff that the going-to-defend America in the Gulf is a peice of cake. What's more, he has great credentials....he is coming from a strategic base, buddy, forward deployed at Offutt AFB, almost eight blocks from the Officer's Club right in Omaha.

Nothing happening with me that a few gunshots wouldn't cure. That brings to mind an unfortunate incident we had on Chu-Sak night, but I will have to let that pass....still too dangerous to discuss....see Roger Hull, he has a copy of the after action report....really pretty fortunate there were no Koreans involved....tough to explain them away when they aren't moving anymore.....

I would also like to pass along my best regards to those of the Eagle Lodge who still remember the thrilling days of yesteryear, back before they extended you because the fucking Iranians mined the fucking Strait... Oops...well, I am having too much fun right here in Korea to stay at the typescripting machine much longer...cocktails call out "Drink me! Drink Me!".....maybe see you same-same pretty good you sailorman come back Japan O.K. Gee Eye?

Thumbs up & Bums away,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA PRESIDENT CHON  
16 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear Rog,

I am in receipt of your latest...of 3 Oct. The Army is convinced they have to route everything through San Fran...after all, it says that, y'know....let me get the news out of the way first....

I too got a letter from Dean. This one was not so hot. It seems Larry Jensen's wife Carole has contracted cancer of the liver. It is a particularly virulent type. They are not giving her real good odds. So when you pass through, you might want to remember Larry. I am not so red-hot in dealing with crisis-variants of the mortal sort. She is young, and has no vile habits. It makes you wonder.

My little struggle here has just about reached the mid-point. I was shocked the other day when an eager young Ens called up the indic and told me he was my relief. I was staggered. Unfortunately, he ain't really going to show up for some months. Still, a graphic reminder that someone still cares, way back there at the puzzle factory. I was prompted to talk to the Great White Father in the Building, to determine whether they had stuck me in a link of the diasy-chain yet. He seemed surprised to hear from me, but allowed as how he had given the odd thought to my manifest destiny. He asked about my preferences, and I reminded him about Hawaii, London and Rota. He hemmed and hawed for a while, telling me that many were asking, but few had been chosen. He asked about Post Grad school, as they have a few openings, and I said, wekl, yeah, sure I like tuna and if I was in Monterey I could go to the Del Monte factory and watch Seals who weren't so unpredictable as to shoot you or something.

He seemed as mystified as I was. Anyhow, I may have just made a career decision and not even known it. More likely, I have a feeling they would like to stick me in some building in Washington with no windows. That would be about par for the course, as I haven't had windows since Denver & at Spook School and they were painted over to let you know what was coming at you.

Korea is quiet at the moment, which is nice, but it may be because they just held the sixth Party Congress and are now ready to go for it in Earnest (whoever that is.) Which ain't so good. This is a very ambivilent business sometimes.

There are Koreans working on the house. It feels a lot like Yoko, as they stabb banging on the roof about 0700, and don't cease and desist untill after dinner time. They seem to be moving rapidly, as we are running out of Fall in a hurry. That is good and bad (more ambivilence.) I'm not really ready for my first winter in three years, but on the other hand, each day puts me one closer to my great outta-asia pilgrimage. Hump day is at 0700 on the 29th of this very month.

Personal life has been very wild. Depression ran rampant for the last few months. Wasn't writing much, and what did come out was shitty. Drinking too much, putting on weight. Yuck. Seems to be passing. I hear regularly from Jane, who I have developed an emotional instability over, and have



extricated myself from certain destruction with Anne, who remains married to the Admiral's Aide. Thank God. Very nice Lady and all that, but thankfully didn't get to the point of no return.

I would like to have the semblance of a normal life again, just to touch base in a fleeting manner with reality. (Although I did tell the detailee that if they activate the O Boat again I was just his boy to head back to the bounding main. Goodness!)

If only Jane was closer.....of well, 32 months away does do strange things to the libido.

Can't tell you how neat it was to see you up here. It was like a crisp wind blowing through the perennial fog of politics and horse-shit. I got reprimanded the ther morne for wearing my leather jacket. They said they would confiscate any such un-authorized gear in the future.....Eye Goo! says the kid....that was why I joined up in the first place.....

I am on tenterhooks about Nick. I was intimidated by the small pile you left here, but whatdayaknow, they were all gone in a week and a half. Some irate people who didn't get theirs....Dad wants twenty@five copies to pass around to his friends....I said, well, er, this is a very complicated business, you know.... when you said they all (save 175) went into a grey van I couldn't help but think of the great Chicago Christmas Card Caper, signed by 17,000 citizens...oops, we don't know exactly where the little bugger got off too, but we sure will look....let me know how the thing turns out, for good or ill. If you get burned I'm in for a split on the losses....save a couple dozen of the Cubi Copies if we are so fortunate to seal out on the Boat....

I won't hash over the immediate past, as it is all pretty well laid out in the assorted correspondance enclosed. A couple adventures, some trash, keep 'em or trash 'em as you see fit. I am going to go ahead and try to get a typist to do up some of the Carrier stuff in Ms format so I can see what it looks like. I still want to have at least a working copy of the next one before I get out of Korea. May be a month or two, but I will try to have it together before you head for VX-5. Also will update orders and future plans as they become available.

Voted for Prez the other day. Dropped the fucker in the mailbox. I voted for War, naturally. If this thing is doomed, lets get it sorted out now. In re the "Fun and Games with the KOIA" adventure, Jim summed things up rather nicely. He left the British Empire because it was beaten. He wasn't I don't think it is too late for us, but we skirt the brink.

Wish I was there for the Oil Wars II. I have developed into the local man of the hour, advisor to the OIA and assorted General Officers. It is amazing how rare it is to run into anyone who knows what is going on. It took the first four weeks of the conflict to even find a TPO chart of the area....tunnel vision? Shit, they invented the word here!

I have to leave it at that. Of my three day break I have spend 1+1/2 at the typewriter and the rest at the bar. Have to go buy Walt Grenade a diving helmet....OVW-5's boy in Etae-won.....If I can find out when the boat gets to the P.M. I will try to get leave....Thumbs up, Mr. Hull, you are the greatest.....

FRM: SNAKERANCH  
TO: VF-161 POC LODR GRENADE  
SUBJ: HELMET/ ACQUISITION AND CONTRACT LET  
DTG: 19 1134I OCT 80  
info: OINSAC  
WHITESITROOM  
5TH AF  
314TH AD  
MAW ONE FIVE  
ZEN USSMIDWAY  
2ND ID  
YOMOMA

\*\*\*\*\* U N C L A S S // NOCONTRACT \*\*\*\*\*

BT

- A. REF: SNAKERANCH 16 1530I OCT 80
- B. ONO OPPLAN %%.@#.1F
- C. SHOPPED LIKE SUMBITCH. TALKED LIKE CRAZY. HAVE ESTABLISHED FIRM BASELINE PRICE DIVING HELMET ONE EACH. DID NOT BRINK INITIAL FUNDING. HAVE HELMET SITTING IN CORNER OF HOOCH 4330 YONGSAN SOUTH POST. A BEAUTY. ALL WINDOWS INTACT. HAVE NOT REPEAT NOT FLOAT CHECKED ITEM.
- D. BASELINE INTSUM: FIRM BOTTOM PRICE FOR OUTLETS ETAEWON AREA APPEARS US\$ 105/ LOWEST QUOTED PRICE 120. THREATENED, CAJOLED, DRANK HEAVILY. NO AVAIL. BEST PRICE SAMEE-SAMEE YOU PAY GREENBACK O.K. GEE EYE WAS US\$ 110. THIS OFFICE WENT AHEAD, CONTEMPLATED OVER ONE LITER BEERS AT HAMILTON HOTEL, AND BOUGHT SAME ARTICLE.
- E. EVENTUAL AMORTIZED COST TO FLEET DEPLOYED PERSONELL, LESS MEDICAL CHARGES FOR HERNIA SUFFERED IN CARRYING COPPER/BRASS HELMET ABOUT THREE MILES FROM SHOP AS TAXI MONEY NOT INCLUDED IN PRELIMINARY FUNDING from congress: US\$110 + POSTAGE. CAN JUGGLE MEDICAL EXPENSES FROM ALTERNATE BUDGET. POSTAGE, PACKING, INSURANCE AS YET UNDETERMINED.
- F. FORCED MARCH W/ HELMET COMPLICATED BY PURCHASE OF ONE OF A KIND SEVEN DAY MARINE CHRONOMETER TYPE SMITH ASTRAL. AIDED IN ACHIEVING BEST PRICE I BUY TWO ARTICLES PAY CASH RIGHT NOW YOU GIVE HELMET US\$110? HE SAY OK GEE EYE YOU PLYCK YOU HAVE POOR SHOPKEEPER OVER BARREL COLONIAL EXPLOITER. I SAY "EYE GOO, IT TWO DAYS PAST PAYDAY I BROKE AGAIN BUT AT THESE PRICES WHO CAN AFFORD TO THINK!"
- G. REMARKS: THIS IS A TOUGH FORMAT TO FOLLOW, YOU TELL ME SAILORMAN WHAT YOU THINK DEAL? YOU NO LIKE I TAKE OBJECT IN QUESTION/ YOU LIKE PRETTY GOOD I MAIL BALI-BALI CHOP-CHOP. DO MAHANA JOB, NUMBER ONE O.K.? YOU HAVE SOME FUN GULF OF OMAN, NO LET JUNIOR STICKS FRIGHTEN BEHIND BOAT, O.K.?

BT

REVIEW FOR DECLASSIFICATION: NOT APPLICABLE

NNNNN

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA CHON  
20 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

Roger,

O Frabjous Day! Caloo, Calay!

Can't tell you what a jolt of good news your letter of 7 Oct gave me. I am overwhelmed by the action packed intrigue, the soft swirl of the cloak, dagger concealed, as the master brings the Plan to fruition, duping the Powerful and the Mighty, bending them to our insidious purpose....the master stroke with the Admiral is a modern classic. I only wish I could have had my bearded but cherubic face at the rear of the room to see the consternation on the faces of the Staff weinées....

Well, aside from my heart soaring like an Eagle, or a Champ rather, let me run down a few critical items.....

I passed your address along to Dad so he should be mailing the requisite funds to you. With luck this will occur prior to the Shipp going someplace within sight of land, but if not, I have arranged to take my own pathetic body to the Land of the Rising Sun long about NOV 26-27. If there are loose ends, I will try to wrap them up there before you depart the traveling vale of tears. I was going to shoot for the P.I., but between mad bombers and the lack of qualified Watch Personnel here, that is the only timeframe I can wangle. If this does not coincide with the new War Contingency plans out there, a heads up will enable me to abort before V/1 or whatever it is you are doing as the last couple boards slide past the cockpit.

I am temporarily fat in the wallet due to the Navy finally paying me off for the stereo gear the Koreans channeled into the Free Market Economy for me. Hence, unless some madness overcomes me before next month, some small funs may be in the offing.

I am at work on a contest entry for a Free Press contest for the holiday season. I am calling it "Gonzo Christmas" at this point, and will forward it along in the next week or so.

I read in the paper that Ranger is in Subic, preparing for possible Indian Ocean Ops. I shook my head, as that seems to be the maximum prior planning you could do with that boat. Possibly a ship of some sort. Anyway, I am praying they have their act together enough to make it through the Straits this time and can relieve you...unless Jimmy decides that we actually needed three CV battle groups out there all along....

Not much else to pass on since my letter of a few days ago. The War remains the highest interest thing for the CINC (which figures, it is the only place where something is actually going on) and we have been busy compromising all our best sources so he can brief Prez Chon. What a set up....I'll leave it all at that until something worth talking about comes up.....But again, I am delighted that Solvenoy appears to be staring the project in the face...with luck...depending on how many of the True Believers have bought in, and if the market is saturated, I can distribute an additional few dozen copies if we need to....God, this is Great!

Thumbs Up!

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA CHON  
20 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

DEAR FOLKS,

Here is a quicky, prompted by Dad's nice package of goodies catalogs, supplications from Alma Maters and Footbal Digests, Magnum Natops Manual, and Hunting Expedition Guide.

The Koreans are almost done putting the new roof on the hooch....it has been like being back on the ship....Asians crawling on my roof, banging tools, shouting in gibberish, and destroying sleep at 0730 sharp (even if you have returned from the Night Watch only minutes before.) The Army, in a stunning feat of good taste, has determined that they will produce a plant renovation by destroying the beautiful grey tile roofs with good old American asphalt.

Yuck.

Anyhow, things are going quietly on the peninsula. They just wrapped up the 6th Party Congress in Pyongyang, and we can expect the weirdness to commence again in earnest soon. But for now, nothing much happenin. So much the better. Down here Chon is trying to ramrod through another repressive Constitution to Purify the ROK, the student's had their first protest since the Kwang-ju unpleasantness this Spring. The Government closed the Univesity for three years....untill the students who participated would have graduated. Sort of what you might call a warning to the other schools. Interesting.

The Big News has been Nick Danger. I just got word that a mahogany crate jammed with the priceless volumes actually arrived out in the Gulf of Oman in time for the deployment. There was a slight glitch, in that one cannot run profit making enterprises while underway; my partner Rog got around that one by presenting a copy to the Admiral ("with the Author's Compliments, of course, Sir") and nailed the Captain and the CAG for their six bucks on the spot. I understand we did over 1200 smackens worth of business in the first twenty-four hours. I had mentioned that you might want to purchase some of the things, so I asked him to put a couple dozen aside, just in case (re Dad's Sustancial Order memorandum). He said he has done so, and would be delighted to send them along; price is \$6.00 the copy, plus 66¢ postage per. I hate to be so crass, but with solvancy staring us in the face, what can a poor capitalist do? The adress, should you wish to go ahead in spite of the outrageous tariff is:

L0DR ROGER HULL  
VA-56  
USS MIDWAY (CV-41)  
FPO SAN FRAN CA 96601

I don't know how I can sign them, since the books are there and I am here, but maybe we can work something out later.

While persusing a copy of the Freep magazine, I saw that they are having a "Christmas Story" contest. Since it is for micro-tales, I think I will

give it a shot. I am tentitively calling my effort "Gonzo Cristmas" and will start out something like "The Russians came on Okhristmas Eve...."

It could stink, but what the heck.

In other events, I have recieved my first real check in six months, and may be able to start putting something in my sorry excuse for a savings account. Naturally (and with brilliant brinksmaship) my resources reached zero the smae day the check arrived, and the payment was due to Beth Zorn. I should be able to get ahead though in the next couple months, unless I blow everything on my trip to Japan next month. The Yen has risen against the dollar again, so it could be a steep jaunt.

In other bright news, the Navy finally settled my claim from half a year ago, so I can replace the stereo gear the Koreans ripped off. To celebrate this happy turn of events, I went up down, dangerously equipted with nearly one hundred dollars. I was not to be burdened with the loot for long. I have had my eye on a beautiful Smith Astral Ship's clock in one of the antique stores for quite a while, and in a frenzy of negotiations I was able to knock the price down from US\$ 150 to \$98. With prices like this, who can afford to think?

Can't think of much else at the moment. Halfway through this thing next week. Should be hearing from Washington on what is next on the Magical Mystery Tour. Will it be a hit, or a miss? Post Grad School or Naval liaison Officer in Berbera, Somalia? Just don't know. I'd hate to wind up in the United States again (where ever that is....)

I'll send along a copy of the story when I get to it. Postmark NLT 7 Nov, so not too long.....

All my love,

THE SNAKE RANOH  
AVENUE DE LA CHON  
20 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

Doctor,

I received your most recent with the very deepest Fear and Loathing. Somehow the last trip to the Dark Continent lacked many of the finer points delineated in your opening paragraphs. Although one of my more memorable blow-jobs occurred in that very port, it was on the first jaunt. The second seemed to be filled with ominous violins. It was a TWA stew, as I recall, and the fall-out from that one has yet to be completely dispersed. She wrote and asked if it was all right if she came to Korea for a few days. Naturally, I was overcome with ambivalence. Can I go back to White Women now? is it too late in point of fact?

Maybe if I just pretend she has a flat yellow face and slanty eyes and keep mine closed it could work out.....

I understand Ranger is in the P.I. even as I write. I am filled with the quiver of anticipation. Can she actually do it this time? Can all that machinery actually drive out of port, out past sight of land, drive past the shining towers of Singapore and actually debouche into the long oil y swells without finding an excuse to head back to North Island? The Korean Command holds it's breath; the collective inhalents of an entire 1/4 strength Infantry Division could hang in the balance...

Speaking of which, that is to say that lovely little green country with the lovely little brown girls and beers, I have been intouch with the retired on active duty ODR who masquerades as my Boss here at the Ministry of Cement. He says he will look favorably on my request for Leave except for a couple small details. He can't let me go a day before 26 Nov. I can grab as much as I want after that, but there just ain't no bodies to sit in the chair eight hours a day prior to that. Please update as Required....are you winging out of colorful P.W., or you sailorman fly one time fly pretty good from Yokota Airgate? I not knowing so good. You be Tennessee in early Dec, I not figure so good, what mean?

We maybe discuss coffee can and mach 3 pretty good I see you, not send in mail. Many dogs here, good eating but number one noses when not cooked yet. I feeling great terror thinking of Stockade Time with good Army mans friend all time.

Have much fun other night, we meet KOIA for real. Eye Goo! I now having dossier over at Ministry of Cement, maybe get picked for extra special good times from sexy agents and kimchi wiretap. We buy many drinks, not so subtle in analysis of what wrong with National Progress Way under the great Leader President Chon. Why I do these things? I not knowing so good. Becoming irrational I think this 32nd happy month along overseas fun times having. We pissing at one time off 12th floor very nice hotel

Shilla. Very nice number one for Tourist people luxury. Charge steep for drinks, we have AMEX, not care if we save OPS Budget for KOIA some won. "Good God" say friend, he claim Army Veterinary Corps but I thinking maybe someone else why carry gun? "Where are we?"

"I thinking KOIA know pretty good, you ask her maybe." I wave Scotch Cocktail out window of Sky Room. "Anyway, we with Ministry of Cement, they no let us be arrested by troubling National Police after curfew. We have more fun, sing songs, piss off building again for distance."

Eye Goo, some kind good fun we have in wild Martial Law Progressive Democracy. I hear KOIA give good head, English even improve after 0400 when wants ask questions when mouth not filled hard salami.

Speaking briefly in re the land baron business. I am thinking many look nice for fun times, but you number one smart. You buy much land, selling trees and streams to Govt with Wildfowl living sanctuaries and broad cocktail sized porches on ancient hereditary manses.

I like little piece acreage, small mortar range maybe, some small guerrilla agri-business, I watch trees turn colors, drink much. What best way to communicate with Land Owner representative, Maudie Reed Wallace? I needing counsel with Master at Bar. Where Donelson Shores? I write directly, say "Hello, you not know me but I have powerfull violent friends they know you pretty good?" You no send bullshit stuff, number one good deals?

You see dilemma. I liking idea better and better, prices number one. I retiring from this pretty soon maybe. Like to get good idea, then strike quick while ironing hot for number one crease. Many sailormans, they buy stupid book, I maybe have extra venture capital I not knowing yet? Must talk to accountant business manager before he and books DEROS go States, we see you later.

Well, I having much fun here, but looking clockside, I seeing time for Mickey's big hand putting in uniform, working all night having some fun with many Unidentified NK weirdness and writing Watch Summaries and doing vital crossword puzzles for National Security. Wishing I flying along up Straits in agile AOM platform same same E-2B many sidewinders and dangerous Moles hiding behindside, croaching, strangle Islamic Revolution with cribboards and beating with many Classified KneeBoard Cards (Ha! You take, Muslim Man! US Man we beat same! Ha!)

I thank you, buy more books, read once, tear up buy more. You not having cool, dark cocktail lounge and prostitute you spend on there! Eye Goo!

Cryptioly,

THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA CHON  
28 OCT 1980  
SEOUL

Dear Spike.

Well, this one kills the golden goose or whatever it was. I hate to low-ball ya on the 900-1000 option, but this is what de kid has got.

I agree about it being nice to buy the land outright....I shudder when I think of the interest I am paying Beth Nelson....and worse, that is only a ten percent note....good god this country is falling apart.

Send along a contract drawn to the terms you outlined in your last. I find it all hunky dory; the only place I must specify my name appears with few typos is on the transfer deed when we get it. Will help spring for the cost of a safety deposit box to place valube paper in.

One thing about putting the house together next Spring: I am going to be cash poor about that time, mostly because you have all my savings in your jeans with the receipt of this piddling check. I am also going to Get Lost In Asia for about a month, maybe go home the long way via Bali and New Delhi and London. I jave some friends that are going to Empire Test Pilot School in that time frame, so I am scratching my bid for Jo-burg and up through Daocar to Rio de Janero for the time being. In any event, you can see that that little jaunt is going to cost mega-won. The kicker is that I don't know what the mysterious Department of Prectioal Jokes and Future Assignments has got on tap yet. I could wind up stationed in England (I did request it) or (Spain, eye goo, you crazy number one sailor man!) and would be completely confused.

As apposed to my current state. Anyhow, the Browns have cleared out of town, a lady named Helen claims she is going to fly in this month, and I have to go to Japan to regain my sanity for Thanksgiving. (Never thought I would see that one!)

So as to grabbing enough seed money for the land and the house this year I Just Don't Know. But let's get the one and worry about the other later. It is Hump Day today, everything is downhill from here. (Longest goddam six months I have ever spent, excepting maybe the Gulf Exoursions, things get so intense.)

Just got the word that our Sea Service ribbons came through with two clusters....plus a cluster on the Naval Expeditionary Medal. In a dim light you might think I had been someplace or something. (With the one depressing fact that the Air Force gets medals for such challegning and dangerous missions as Graduating From Computer School...)

Well, thumbs up and good luck with the deal. Just remember how many Gin&Tonics at the Long Bar at the Raffles Hotel and hallucinagenic omelettes those checks represent.....Take care Bro, I love having a personal Death Commando right there in Salmon.....



THE SNAKE RANCH  
AVENUE DE LA CHON  
1 NOV 80  
SEOUL

MY DEAR BUNS,

I am delighted that you have entered that most August Company of the Road; the Traveling Representative of New York Capitalism at it's finest. The Regime of the Holiday Inn, the Expense Account Luncheon, the Weekly (Weakly?) memorandum to the Editorial Staff in The City.

And seeing the Boss every month or two whether you need it or not.

Let me begin this solicited missive by correcting a misque (inadvertant I'm sure) on the part of Mhammad: I am currently escounced at the Pleasure of the Imperial Eighth Army on the Penninsula of decomosed cabbage and interred democracy. Yes, I live in Colorful Korea at the moment. Yuk. Interesting, but I'm afraid my tastes run to more tropical Asia. I am quivering through the onset of my first Winter in three years, and between the Communists and the Celcius I am not altogether pleased. I could go on for a few dozen pages on the peculiarities of this experience, but as a fellow Asiatic, I shall let that dog lie till we have a chance to discuss the Larger Picture over a bottle.

My mind is tripping right now over the last couple of Arabian deployments and the boxcars of Intell Gargage I sift through for the cruel sharade that is my bi-weekly payocheck. Back over the last dozen or two thrid world low-rent heavens. Back to my Company Car, and that time when I becam e convinced that the world was my partioular oyster. I was a Bright Young Man at the time, I recall it vividly now, and employed at a job so patently tailored for leisure that it seems a fairey tale now. Let's see: J.R.'s E-Z Steps to Sales Leadership.....

O.K. The first thing is work hard at first. Any territory is utterly virginal untill the salesman's personal paws run over it's luscious thighs and bosom. Oh sure, someone else worked the place before. Someone else has explored those secret and intimate places. But let us take the Territory as you stride across it boldly with the dew still fresh upon the Fall Adoptions.

You gotta know the people, the departments, the movers and shakers within each one. The key people to target for these disgusting aand self-serving sales pitches. I found it existential in the extreme. There you are, a single wolf, nibbling at the edges of the Beast of Academe. Lounges gaàore beckoning, "here I am, knock it off early today, you have four days here anyway....."

So target each campus as carefully as you would plan a nuclear ~~st~~ strike. Because as you know, being on the road is fun. You have to maximize both ends of this thing. One ploy I found to be most successful was donating  
xxdayxxx xxxxxx for xxxxxxxx the principal of College Books xxxxxxxxxxxx

ends of the thing; both the effective time you have in the Professor's office, and the time in the lounges of the many towns you will call your part time home. If you don't, you can wind up hating the road. Naturally, a traveler with your credentials will have few problems in that regard. Still, as I think you will see, it the existential nature of the Road that will eat your fecows alive. The Old Pros are the guys who have their routine, know their people, and work regularly.

I'm tickled about your territory, incidently. I was in line for a promotion to the West Coast when the Hindu firestorm erupted. They wanted pennance to atone for that one, and it just wasn't in the cards. Thankfully I was unenoumbred at the moment, and dismissed the Corporate Power with an arrogant (and quite youthfull) extension of the middle finger.

One word about the game out there....things run in cycles. Sometimes there is little to do about it. For example, the Boss will call up one day and say "Buns, we appear to be twenty-five thousand dollars behind last years tempo here. What are your tactics to remedy the matter?"

To which the successful traveler will delve into his bag of tricks, tell him a fairey story about how the Big Book Store has changed ordering patterns this year, and that it is cool, and it really isn't because the glossy new Soc and Anthro books are dogs that will never, ever, sell, and the big solid sellers are getting a little long in the tooth, add what's more, the new head of the Adoption Committee for intro to Grammer is a goddam faggot communist, who has his own book, published by those cock-suckers and leeches at Prentis-Hall.

Which is to say, don't sweat the small shit. The market has a distinct life of it's own, quite apart from what us mere mortals can do about it. A good tactic, I found, was to throw books at it. I liked to hikk that the pros were always sort of glad to see me, because I would give them any of our back-list they wanted- for "examination" of course- ho ho ho- and just make sure they had the New One on the desk long before the deadline came up. Shoot the shit....this guy likes Notre Dame football, place side bets with him, this other likes the kid gloves treatment, a lunch once in a while for this aggressive new Female type who needs to get some of the goodies her chauvinist pig bosses have gotten all along... stroke egos, smile a lot, provide a service...in short, be vauable to them. They are mostly egocentric arrested juveniles anyway.... don't cost nothing to be nice, after all.

Always ask about their pet books. Every prof has one someplace. It could have all the marketing possibilities of a sea slug, but fuck it. It is the central point of his/her life....even if the Editorial staff calls you a jerk for submitting it. I got two projects signed from the feild, only one of which broke even, but you better believe that almost everyone on those two campuses got a favorable view of McNigger-Hill because they knew I was trying for them.

Donate a day or two at the really big bookstores right at Rush. I made a lot of hay with that ploy. The Managers love having a free body; the Company looks good, and you learn the list at that Campus better than knocking on doors for a month. You learn the predilictions of the Store, and you will even find you can pick up adoptions through the back door. Example: Jesse At WSU calls up and says: "P-H can't fill the new Econ order. The Prof is screaming, the kids are going to get behind. We will loos the sales if we don't get