



Trevayne

Robert Ludlum

TREVAYNE

“Trevayne, listen to me. You may never forgive me for what I am about to say to you. If you feel strong enough, I’ll accept the consequences and expect your roughest condemnation tomorrow. I won’t rebut you. But you must think now. The country knows you’ve been chosen. The hearing is only a formality now. If you tell them to shove it, how are you going to do it without paining your wife further?... Don’t you see? This is exactly what they want!”

Trevayne took a deep breath and replied evenly. “I have no intention of paining my wife further or of allowing any part of you to touch us. I don’t need you, Mr. President. Do I make myself clear?”

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BANTAM BOOKS

NEW YORK • TORONTO • LONDON • SYDNEY • AUCKLAND

A Bantam Book / published by arrangement with the author

PUBLISHING HISTORY

TREVAYNE was first published in January 1973

Bantam edition / September 1989

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For information address: Bantam Books.

eISBN: 978-0-307-81396-1

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Introduction

Every now and then throughout the human odyssey, forces seem to almost accidentally come together, producing men and women of startling wisdom, talent, and insight, and the results are wondrous, indeed. The arts and the sciences speak for themselves, for they are all around us, embellishing our lives with beauty, longevity, knowledge, and convenience. But there is another area of human endeavor that is both an art *and* a science, and it, too, is all around us—either enriching our lives or destroying them.

It is the guardianship of a given society under the common laws of governance. I'm not a scholar, but the courses in government and political science that I was exposed to in college indelibly left their marks on me. I was hooked, fascinated, smitten, and were it not for my stronger proclivities, I might have become the worst politician in the Western world. My "cool" levels off at around 300 degrees Fahrenheit.

For me, one of the truly great achievements of man is open, representative democracy, and the greatest of all the attempts throughout history to create such a system was the magnificent American experiment as expressed in our Constitution. It's not perfect, but to paraphrase Winston Churchill, it's the best damn thing on the block. But wait.

Someone's always trying to louse it up.

That's why I wrote *Trevayne* nearly two decades ago. It was the time of Watergate, and my pencil flew across the pages in outrage. Younger—not youthful—intemperance made my head explode with such words and phrases as *Mendacity! Abuse of Power! Corruption! Police State!*

Here was the government, the highest of our elected and appointed officials entrusted with the guardianship of our system, not only lying to the people but collecting millions upon millions of dollars to perpetuate their lies and thus the controls they believed were theirs alone to exercise. One of the most frightening statements to come out of the Watergate hearings was the following, delivered, in essence, by the nation's chief law enforcement officer.

"There's nothing I would not do to keep the presidency ..." I don't have to complete the exact sentence; the meaning was clear—to keep it *ours*. The presidency and the country were *theirs*. Not yours, or mine, or even the neighbors across the street with whom we frequently disagreed in things political. Only *theirs*. The rest of us were somehow neither relevant nor competent. *They* knew better, therefore the lies had to continue and the coffers of ideological purity kept full so that the impure could be *blitzkrieged* by money and buried at the starting gates of political contests.

I also had to publish *Trevayne* under another name. I chose Jonathan Ryder—the first the name of one son, the second a contraction of my wife's maiden name—not because of potential retribution, but because the conventional wisdom of the time was that a novelist did not author more than a book a year. Why? Damned if I could figure it out—something to do with "marketing psychology," whatever the hell that is. But wait. All that was nearly twenty years ago.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose, say the French. The more things change, the more they stay the same. Or perhaps history repeats its follies ad nauseam because man is a creature of helter-skelter appetites and keeps returning to the troughs of poison that make him ill. Or perhaps the sins of the generational parent are borne by the offspring because the

kids are too stupid to learn from their parent's glaring mistakes. Who knows? All that's been truly documented from time immemorial is that man continues to kill without needing the meat of his quarry; he lies in order to avoid accountability or, conversely, to seize the reins of accountability to such an extent that the social contract between the government and the governed is his alone to write; he endlessly seeks to enrich himself at the expense of the public weal and, while he's at it, tries all too frequently to turn his personal morality or religion into everyone else's legality or religiosity, no quarter given to the unbelievers or pariahdom. Good heavens, we could go on and on. But wait.

Last year our country witnessed two of the most disgraceful, debasing, inept, disingenuous and insulting presidential campaigns that living admirers of our system can recall. The candidates were "packaged" by cynical manipulators of the public's basest fears; "sound-bite zingers" were preferable to intelligent statements of position; image took precedence over issues. The presidential debates were neither presidential nor debates but canned Pavlovian "responses" more often than not having little or nothing to do with the questions. The ground rules for these robotic pavaues were drawn up by glib intellectual misfits who thought so much of their clients that they refused to allow them to speak beyond *two minutes!* The orators of the cradle of democracy that was ancient Athens, wherever they are, can be heard vomiting. Perhaps one bright day in the future we'll return to legitimate, civilized campaigns, where an open exchange of ideas can be heard, but this will not happen, I'm afraid, until those who convince us to buy deodorants hie back to the armpits. They've worn out their welcome in the election process, for they have committed the two cardinal sins of their profession—the same time. They've made their "products" appear simultaneously both offensive and boring. Of course, there's a solution. If I were either candidate, I'd refuse to pay them on the grounds of their moral turpitude—hell, it's as good a reason as any. Which of those imagemakers would go into court expounding one way or the other on that one? Enough. The campaigns turned off the country.

This numbing fiasco followed barely twenty-four months after we citizens of the Republic had been exposed to a series of events so ludicrous they would have been a barrel of laughs but for their obscenity. Unelected (?) officials fueled the fires of terrorism by selling arms to a terrorist state while demanding that our allies do no such thing. Guilt became innocence; malfeasance brought honor-to-office; zealous, obsequious poseurs were heroes; to be present was to be absent; and to have creatures soiling the basement was a sign of efficient house management. By comparison, Alice's looking-glass world was a place of incontestable logic. But *wait*—all right, you're ahead of me.

Someone's always trying to louse it up. That great experiment, that wonderful system of ours based on open checks and balances. *Mendacity? Abuse of Power? Corruption? Police State?*

Well, certainly not with lasting effect as long as citizens can voice such speculations and shout their accusations, however extreme. We can be heard. That's our strength and it's indomitable.

So, in a modest way, I'll try to be heard again in that voice from another time, another era, always remembering that I'm fundamentally and merely a storyteller who hopes you enjoy the entertainment, but perhaps will permit me an idea or two.

I have not attempted to "update" the novel or adjust the licenses I took with actual events or geography, for they served the story I was writing. As anyone who has built or remodeled

a home will tell you, once you start tinkering, you may as well throw away the schematics.
becomes a different house.

Thanks for your attention.

ROBERT LUDLUM

a.k.a. (briefly) Jonathan Ryd

November 1988

PART 1

The smoothly tarred surface of the road abruptly stopped and became dirt. At this point on the small peninsula the township's responsibility ended and the area of private property began. According to the United States Post Office, South Greenwich, Connecticut, the delivery route was listed on the map as Shore Road, Northwest, but to the carriers who drove out on the mail trucks it was known simply as High Barnegat, or just Barnegat.

And the carriers drove out frequently, three or four times a week, with special-delivered letters and certified-receipt-requested manila envelopes. They never minded the trip, because they received a dollar each time they made a delivery.

High Barnegat.

Eight acres of ocean property with nearly a half-mile bordering directly on the sound. Most of the acreage was wild, allowed to grow unhampered, untamed. What seemed contradictory in spirit was the compound—the house and grounds seventy yards up from the central beach. The long rambling house was contemporary in design, great expanses of glass encased in wood looking out over the water. The lawns were deep green and thick, manicured and broken up by flagstone paths and a large terrace directly above the boathouse.

It was late August, the best part of the summer at High Barnegat. The water was as warm as it would ever be; the winds came off the sound in gusts which made the sailing more exciting—or hazardous—depending on one's point of view; the foliage was at its fullest green. In late August a sense of calm replaced the hectic weeks of summer fun. The season was nearly over. Men thought once again of normal weekends and five full days of business; women began the agonizing process of selection and purchase that signaled the start of the new school year.

Minds and motives were slowly changing gears. Frivolity was ebbing; there were more serious things to consider.

And the steady flow of house guests diminished at High Barnegat.

It was four-thirty in the afternoon, and Phyllis Trevayne reclined in a lounge chair on the terrace, letting the warm sun wash over her body. She thought, with a degree of satisfaction that her daughter's bathing suit fitted her rather comfortably. Since she was forty-two and her daughter seventeen, satisfaction could have turned into minor triumph if she allowed herself to dwell on it. But she couldn't because her thoughts kept returning to the telephone, to the call from New York for Andrew. She had answered on the terrace phone, because the cook was still in town with the children and her husband was still a small white sail far out on the water. She'd nearly let the phone ring unanswered, but only very good friends and very important—her husband preferred the word “necessary”—business associates had the High Barnegat number.

“Hello, Mrs. Trevayne?” had asked the deep voice on the other end of the line.

“Yes?”

“Frank Baldwin here. How are you, Phyllis?”

“Fine, just fine, Mr. Baldwin. And you?” Phyllis Trevayne had known Franklyn Baldwin for several years, but she still couldn't bring herself to call the old gentleman by his first name. Baldwin was the last of a dying breed, one of the original giants of New York banking.

“I’d be a lot better if I knew why your husband hasn’t returned my calls. Is he all right? Not that I’m so important, God knows, but he’s not ill, is he?”

“Oh, no. Not at all. He’s been away from the office over a week now. He hasn’t taken any messages. I’m really to blame; I wanted him to rest.”

“My wife used to cover for me that way, too, young lady. Instinctively. Jumped right into the breach, and always with the right words.”

Phyllis Trevayne laughed pleasantly, aware of the compliment. “Really, it’s true, Mr. Baldwin. Right now the only reason I know he’s not working is that I can see the sail of the catamaran a mile or so off-shore.”

“A cat! God! I forget how young you are! In my day no one your age ever got so damn rich. Not by themselves.”

“We’re lucky. We never forget it.” Phyllis Trevayne’s voice spoke the truth.

“That’s a very nice thing to say, young lady.” Franklyn Baldwin also spoke the truth, and he wanted her to know that. “Well, when Captain Ahab bounds ashore, do ask him to call me. Will you, please? It’s really most urgent.”

“I certainly shall.”

“Good-bye, my dear.”

“Good-bye, Mr. Baldwin.”

But her husband *had* been in touch with his office daily. He’d returned dozens of calls to far less important people than Franklyn Baldwin. Besides which, Andrew liked Baldwin: he’d said so a number of times. He’d gone to Baldwin on many occasions for guidance in the tangled webs of international finance.

Her husband owed a great deal to the banker, and now the old gentleman needed him. Why hadn’t Andrew returned the calls? It simply wasn’t like him.

The restaurant was small, seating no more than forty people, and situated on Thirty-eighth Street between Park and Madison avenues. Its clientele was generally from the ranks of the approaching-middleage executives with suddenly more money than they’d ever made before, and a desire, a need, perhaps, to hold on to their younger outlooks. The food was only fair, its prices high, and the drinks were expensive. However, the bar area was wide, and the rich paneling reflected the soft, indirect lighting. The effect was a throwback to all those collegiate spots from the fifties that these drinkers remembered with such comfort.

It was designed precisely with that in mind.

Considering this, and he always considered it, the manager was slightly surprised to see a short, well-dressed man in his early sixties walk hesitantly through the door. The man looked around, adjusting his eyes to the dim light. The manager approached him.

“A table, sir?”

“No.... Yes, I’m meeting someone.... Never mind, thank you. We have one.”

The well-dressed man spotted the person he was looking for at a table in the rear. He walked abruptly away from the manager and sidled awkwardly past the crowded chairs.

The manager recalled the man at the rear table. He’d insisted on that particular table.

The elderly man sat down. “It might have been better to meet someplace other than this restaurant.”

“Don’t worry, Mr. Allen. No one you know comes here.”

"I certainly hope you're right."

A waiter approached, and the order was given for drinks.

"I'm not so sure *you* should be concerned," said the younger man. "It strikes me that I'm the one taking the risk, not you."

"You'll be taken care of; you know that. Let's not waste time. Where do things stand?"

"The commission has unanimously approved Andrew Trewayne."

"He won't take it."

"The feeling is that he will. Baldwin's to make the offer; he may have done so already."

"If he has, then you're *late*." The old man creased the flesh around his eyes and stared at the tablecloth. "We heard the rumors; we assumed they were a smokescreen. We relied on you." He looked up at Webster. "It was our understanding that you would confirm Trewayne's identity before any final action was taken."

"I couldn't control it; no one at the White House could. That commission's off-limits. I was lucky to zero in on the name at all."

"We'll come back to that. Why do they think Trewayne will accept? Why should he? The Danforth Foundation is damn near as big as Ford or Rockefeller. Why would he give it up?" Allen asked.

"He probably won't. Just take a leave of absence."

"No foundation the size of Danforth would accept a leave for that length of time. Especially not for a job like this. They're *all* in trouble."

"I don't follow you...."

"You think they're immune?" asked Allen, interrupting. "They need friends in your town. Not enemies.... What's the procedure? If Baldwin *has* made the offer. If Trewayne accepts?"

The waiter returned with the drinks and both men fell silent. He left, and Webster answered.

"The conditions are that whoever the commission selects receives the President's approval and is subject to a closed hearing with a bipartisan committee in the Senate."

"All right, all right." Allen raised his glass and swallowed a large portion of his drink. "Let's work from there; we can do something there. We'll disqualify him at the hearing."

The younger man looked puzzled. "Why? What's the point? *Someone's* going to chair the subcommittee. I gather this Trewayne's at least a reasonable man."

"You gather!" Allen finished his drink rapidly. "Just what *have* you gathered? What do you know about Trewayne?"

"What I've read. I did my research. He and his brother-in-law—the brother's an electronics engineer—started a small company dealing in aerospace research and manufacturing in New Haven in the middle fifties. They hit the motherlode seven or eight years later; they were both millionaires by the time they were thirty-five. The brother-in-law designed, while Trewayne sold the hell out of the products. He cornered half the early NASA contracts and set up subsidiaries all over the Atlantic seaboard. Trewayne pulled out when he was thirty-seven and took on a job with the State Department. Incidentally, he did a whale of a job for State." Webster raised his glass, looking over the rim at Allen. The young man expected to be complimented on his knowledge.

Instead, Allen dismissed his companion's words. "Shit. *Time*-magazine material. What's important is that Trewayne's an original.... He doesn't cooperate. We know; we tried reaching

him years ago.”

“Oh?” Webster put his glass down. “I didn’t realize ... Oh, Christ. Then he knows?”

“Not a great deal; perhaps enough. We’re not sure. But you still miss the point, Mr. Webster. It seems to me that you’ve missed the point from the beginning.... We don’t want him chairing that goddamned subcommittee. We don’t want him or anyone *like* him! That kind of choice is unthinkable.”

“What can you do about that?”

“Force him out ... if he’s actually accepted. The backup will be the Senate hearing. We make damn sure he’s rejected.”

“Say you succeed, then what?”

“We’ll nominate our own man. What should have been done in the first place.” Allen signaled the waiter, gesturing at both glasses.

“Mr. Allen, why didn’t you stop him? If you were in a position to do that, why didn’t you? You said you heard the rumors about Trevayne; that was the time to step in.”

Allen avoided Webster’s look. He drained the ice water in his glass, and when he spoke, his voice had the sound of a man trying very hard to maintain his authority; with lessening success. “Frank Baldwin, that’s why. Frank Baldwin and that senile son-of-a-bitch Hill.”

“The Ambassador?”

“The goddamned Ambassador-at-large with his goddamned embassy in the White House. Big Billy Hill! Baldwin and Hill; they’re the relics behind this bullshit. Hill has been circling like a hawk for the last two or three years. He talked Baldwin into the Defense Commission. Between them they picked Trevayne.... Baldwin put up his name; who the hell could argue ... But *you* should have told us it was final. If we’d been certain, we could have prevented it.”

Webster watched Allen closely. When he replied, there was a hardness he hadn’t displayed before. “And I think you’re lying. Somebody else blew it; you or one of the other so-called specialists. First, you thought this investigation would burn itself out in the forming, be killed in committee.... You were wrong. And then it was too late. Trevayne surfaced, and you couldn’t stop it. You’re not even sure you can stop him now. That’s why you wanted to see me.... So let’s dispense with this crap about my being late and missing the point, shall we?”

“You watch your tongue, young man. Just remember who I represent.” The statement was made without commensurate strength.

“And you remember that you’re talking to a man personally appointed by the President of the United States. You may not like it, but that’s why you came to me. Now, what is it? What do you want?”

Allen exhaled slowly, as if to rid himself of anger. “Some of us are more alarmed than others ...”

“You’re one of them,” interjected Webster quietly.

“Yes.... Trevayne’s a complicated man. One-part boy genius of industry—which means he knows his way around the board rooms; one-part skeptic—he doesn’t subscribe to certain realities.”

“Seems to me those assets go together.”

“Only when a man’s dealing from strength.”

“Get to the point. What’s Trevayne’s strength?”

“Let’s say he never needed assistance.”

“Let’s say he refused it.”

“All right, all right. That’s valid.”

“You said you tried reaching him.”

“Yes. When I was with ... Never mind. It was the early sixties; we were consolidating the ... and thought he might be a valuable addition to our ... community. We even offered to guarantee the NASA contracts.”

“Sweet Jesus! And he turned you down.” Webster made a pronouncement, not an inquiry.

“He strung us along for a while, then realized he could get the contracts without us. As soon as he knew that, he told us to go to hell. Actually, he went a lot further. He told me to tell my people to get out of the space program, get out of the government money. He threatened to go to the Attorney General.”

Bobby Webster absently picked up his fork and slowly made indentations on the tablecloth. “Suppose it had been the other way around? Suppose he *had* needed you? Would he have joined your ‘community’?”

“That’s what we don’t know. Some of the others think so. But they didn’t talk to him; I did. I was the intermediary. I was the only one he really had.... I never used names, never said who my people were.”

“But you believe the fact that they *were* was enough? For him.”

“The unanswerable question. He threatened us after he got *his*; he was sure he didn’t need anyone but himself, his brother-in-law, and his goddamned company in New Haven. We simply can’t afford to take the chance now. We can’t allow him to chair that subcommittee. He’s unpredictable.”

“What am I supposed to do?”

“Take every reasonable risk to get close to Trevayne. The optimum would be for you to be his White House connection. Is that possible?”

Bobby Webster paused, then answered firmly. “Yes. The President brought me into the session on the subcommittee. It was a classified meeting; no notes, no transcripts. There was only one other aide; no competition. I’ll work it out.”

“You understand, it may not be necessary. Certain preventive measures will be taken. If they’re effective, Trevayne will be out of the picture.”

“I can help you there.”

“How?”

“Mario de Spadante.”

“No! Absolutely no! We’ve told you before, we don’t want any part of him.”

“He’s been helpful to you people. In more ways than you realize. Or want to acknowledge.”

“He’s *out*.”

“It wouldn’t hurt to establish a minor friendship. If you’re offended, think of the Senate.”

Allen’s wrinkled frown dissolved. He looked almost appreciatively at the presidential aide. “I see what you mean.”

“Of course, it will raise my price considerably.”

“I thought you believed in what you’re doing.”

“I believe in protecting my flanks. The best protection is to make you pay.”

“You’re an obnoxious man.”

“I’m also very talented.”

Andrew Trewayne ran the twin hulls of the catamaran before the wind, catching the faint current into the shore. He stretched his long legs against a connecting spar and reached over the tiller to make an additional wake in the stern flow. No reason, just a movement, meaningless gesture. The water was warm; his hand felt as though it was being propelled through a tepid, viscous film.

Just as he was being propelled—inexorably propelled—into an enigma that was not of his choosing. Yet the final decision would be his, and he knew what his choice would be.

That was the most irritating aspect; he understood the furies that propelled him, and he disliked himself for even contemplating submission to them. He had put them behind him.

Long ago.

The cat was within a hundred yards of the Connecticut shoreline when the wind abruptly shifted—as winds do when buffeted against solid ground from open water. Trewayne swung his legs over the starboard hull and pulled the mainsheet taut as the small craft swerved and lurched to the right toward the dock.

Trewayne was a large man. Not immense, just larger than most men, with the kind of supple coordination that bespoke of a far more active youth than he ever bothered to reminisce about. He remembered reading an article in *Newsweek*, surprised at the description of his former playing-field prowess. They'd been greatly exaggerated, as all such descriptions were in such articles. He'd been good, but not that good. He always had the feeling that he *looked* better than he was, or his efforts camouflaged his shortcomings.

But he knew he was a good sailor. Maybe more than good.

The rest was meaningless to him. It always had been, except for the instant of competition.

There would be intolerable competition facing him now. If he made the decision. The kind of competition that allowed no quarter, that involved strategies not listed in any rulebook. He was good at those strategies, too. But not from participation; that was important, immeasurably important to him.

Understand them, be capable of maneuver, even skirt the edges, but never participate. Instead, use the knowledge to gain the advantage. Use it without mercy, without quarter.

Andrew kept a small pad fastened to a steel plate on the deck next to the tiller. Attached to the plate was a thin rust-proof chain that housed a waterproof casing with a ball-point pen. He said these were for recording times, markers, wind velocities—whatever. Actually, the pad and pen were for jotting down stray thoughts, ideas, memoranda for himself.

Sometimes things ... just “things” that seemed clearer to him while on the water.

Which was why he was upset when he looked down at the pad now. He had written one word. Written it unconsciously, without realizing it.

Boston.

He ripped off the page, crumpled it with far more intensity than the action called for, and threw it into the sound.

Goddamn! Goddamn it! he thought. No!

The catamaran pulled into the slip, and Trewayne reached over the side and held the edge of the dock with his right hand. With his left he pulled the release sheet, and the sail fluttered

as it buckled. He secured the boat and stood up, pulling down the rest of the canvas, rolling around the horizontal mast as he did so. In less than four minutes he had dismantled the tiller, stowed the jacket, lashed the sail, and tied off the boat at four corners.

He looked up beyond the stone wall of the terrace to the wood and glass structure that jutted from the edge of the hill. It never ceased to excite him. Not the material possession that wasn't important any longer. But that it had all come out the way he and Phyl planned it.

They had done it together; that fact was very important. It might never make up for other things, perhaps. Sadder things. But it helped.

He walked to the stone path by the boathouse and started up the steep incline to the terrace. He could always tell what kind of shape he was in by the time he reached midpoint of the climb. If he was out of breath, or his legs ached, he would silently vow to eat less and exercise more. He was pleased to find that there was little discomfort now. Or perhaps his mind was too preoccupied to relate the stress.

No, he was feeling pretty good, he thought. The week away from the office, the continuous salt air, the pleasantly energetic end of the summer months; he was feeling fine.

And then he remembered the pad and the unconsciously—subconsciously—written word *Boston*.

He didn't really feel fine at all.

He rounded the last steps to the flagstone terrace and saw that his wife was lying back in the deck chair, her eyes open, staring out at the water, seeing nothing he would see. He always felt a slight ache when he watched her like that. The ache of sad, painful memories.

Because of *Boston*, goddamn it.

He realized that his sneakers had covered the sound of his steps; he didn't want to startle her.

"Hi," he said softly.

"Oh?" Phyllis blinked. "Have a good sail, darling?"

"Fine. Good sleep?" Trewayne crossed over to her and kissed her lightly on her forehead.

"Great while it lasted. It was interrupted."

"Oh? I thought the kids drove Lillian into town."

"It wasn't the kids. Or Lillian."

"You sound ominous." Trewayne reached into a large rectangular cooler on the patio table and withdrew a can of beer.

"Not ominous. But I am curious."

"What are you talking about?" He ripped off the flip-top on the can and drank.

"Franklyn Baldwin telephoned.... Why haven't you returned his calls?"

Trewayne held the beer next to his lips and looked at his wife. "Haven't I seen that bathing suit on someone else?"

"Yes, and I thank you for the compliment—intended or not—and I'd still like to know why you haven't called him."

"I'm trying to avoid him."

"I thought you liked him."

"I do. Immensely. All the more reason to avoid him. He's going to ask me for something and I'm going to refuse him. At least, I think he'll ask me, and I want to refuse him."

“What?”

Trevayne walked absently to the stone wall bordering the terrace and rested the beer can on the edge. “Baldwin wants to recruit me. That’s the rumor; I think it’s called a ‘trial balloon.’ He heads up that commission on defense spending. They’re forming a subcommittee to make what they politely phrase an ‘in-depth study’ of Pentagon relationships.”

“What does that mean?”

“Four or five companies—conglomerates, really—are responsible for seventy-odd percent of the defense budget. In one way or another. There’s no effective control any longer. The subcommittee’s supposed to be an investigative arm of the Defense Commission. They’re looking for a chairman.”

“And you’re it?”

“I don’t want to be *it*. I’m happy where I am. What I’m doing now is positive; chairing the committee would be the most negative thing I can think of. Whoever takes the job will be a national pariah ... if he only half works at it.”

“Why?”

“Because the Pentagon’s a mess. It’s no secret; read the papers. Any day. It’s not even subtle.”

“Then why would anyone be a pariah for trying to fix it? I understand making enemies, not a national pariah.”

Trevayne laughed gently as he carried the beer over to a chair next to his wife and sat down. “I love you for your New England simplicity. Along with the bathing suit.”

“You’re pacing too much. Your thinking-feet are working overtime, darling.”

“No, they’re not; I’m not interested.”

“Then answer the question. Why a national pariah?”

“Because the mess is too ingrained. And widespread. To be at all effective, the subcommittee’s going to have to call a lot of people a lot of names. Fundamentally act on a large premise of fear. When you start talking about monopolies, you’re not just talking about influential men shuffling around stock issues. You’re threatening thousands and thousands of jobs. Ultimately, that’s any monopoly’s hold, from top to bottom. You exchange one liability for another. It may be necessary, but you cause a lot of pain.”

“My God,” said Phyllis, sitting up. “You’ve done a lot of thinking.”

“Thinking, yes. Not doing.” Andrew bounced out of the chair and walked to the table, extinguishing his cigarette in an ashtray. “Frankly, I was surprised the whole idea got this far. These things—in-depth studies, investigations, call them whatever you want—are usually proposed loudly and disposed of quietly. In the Senate cloakroom or the House dining room. This time it’s different. I wonder why.”

“Ask Frank Baldwin.”

“I’d rather not.”

“You should. You owe him that, Andy. Why do you think he chose you?”

Trevayne crossed back to the terrace wall and looked out over the Long Island Sound. “I’m qualified; Frank knows that. I’ve dealt with those government-contract boys; I’ve been criticized in print about the overruns, the openend agreements. He knows that, too. I’ve even been angry, but that goes back a long time ago.... Mainly, I think, because he knows how much I despise the manipulators. They’ve ruined a lot of good men, one especially. Remember?”

Trevayne turned and looked at his wife. “They can’t touch me now. I haven’t a thing to lose but time.”

“I think you’ve just about convinced yourself.”

Trevayne lit a second cigarette and leaned against the ledge, his arms folded in front of him. He continued to stare at Phyllis. “I know. That’s why I’m avoiding Frank Baldwin.”

Trevayne pushed the omelet around the plate, not really interested in it. Franklyn Baldwin sat opposite him in the bank’s executive dining room. The old gentleman was speaking intensely.

“The job’s going to get done, Andrew; you know that. Nothing’s going to prevent it. I just want the best man to do it. And I think you’re the best man. I might add, the commission’s voice was unanimous.”

“What makes you so sure the job’ll get done? I’m not. The Senate’s always yelling about economies; it’s a hell of an issue, and always will be. That is, until a highway project or an aircraft plant is closed down in some district. Then suddenly the shouting stops.”

“Not this time. It’s beyond cynicism now. I wouldn’t have become involved if I thought otherwise.”

“You’re expressing an opinion. There has to be something else, Frank.”

Baldwin removed his steel-rimmed glasses and laid them beside his plate. He blinked several times and gracefully massaged the bridge of his patrician nose. He smiled a half-smile, half-sadly. “There is. You’re very perceptive.... Call it the legacy of two old men whose lives—and the lives of their families for a number of generations—have been made more pleasantly productive in this country of ours. I daresay we’ve contributed, but the rewards have been more than ample. That’s the best way I can put it.”

“I’m afraid I don’t understand.”

“Of course not. I’ll clarify. William Hill and I have known each other since childhood.”

“Ambassador Hill?”

“Yes.... I won’t bore you with the eccentricities of our relationship—not today. Suffice it to say, we can’t possibly stay around too many more years; not sure that I’d want to.... The Defense Commission, the subcommittee—they’re our ideas. We intend to see them become working realities. That much we can guarantee; in our different ways we’re powerful enough to do that. And to use that dreadful term, sufficiently ‘respectable.’ ”

“What do you think you’ll gain?”

“The truth. The extent of the truth as we believe it to be. This country has the right to know that, no matter how much it may hurt. To cure any disease, a correct diagnosis has to be made. Not indiscriminate labels hung by self-righteous zealots, nor vindictive charges hurled by malcontents.... The truth, Andrew. Merely the truth. That gift will be ours, Billy and mine. Perhaps our last.”

Trevayne had the desire to move, to be physically in motion. The old gentleman opposite him was succeeding in doing exactly what he thought he’d do. The walls were closing in, the corridor defined.

“Why can this subcommittee do what you say? Others have tried; they failed.”

“Because, through you, it will be both apolitical and in no way self-seeking.” Baldwin replaced his glasses; the magnification of his old eyes hypnotized Trevayne. “Those are the

necessary factors. You're neither Republican nor Democrat, liberal nor conservative. Both parties have tried to recruit you, and you've refused both. You're a contradiction in this age of nomenclature. You have nothing to gain or lose. You'll be believed. That's the important thing.... We've become a polarized people, slotted into intransigent, conflicting positions. We desperately need to believe once again in objective truth."

"If I accept, the Pentagon and everyone connected with it will run to the hills—or the public relations' mimeographs. That's what they usually do. How are you going to prevent this?"

"The President. He has assured us; he's a good man, Andrew."

"And I'm responsible to no one?"

"Not even me. Only yourself."

"I hire my own staff; no outside personnel decisions?"

"Give me a list of those you want. I'll have it cleared."

"I call it as I find it. I get the cooperation I deem necessary." Trewayne didn't ask these last questions, he made statements which, nevertheless, anticipated answers.

"Total. That I'll guarantee. That I can promise you."

"I don't want the job."

"But you'll take it." Another statement, this time from Franklyn Baldwin.

"I told Phyllis. You're persuasive, Frank. That's why I was avoiding you."

"No man can avoid what he's meant to do. At the moment he's meant to do it. Do you know where I got that?"

"Sounds Hebraic."

"No.... But close. Mediterranean. Marcus Aurelius. Have you met many bankers who've read Aurelius?"

"Hundreds. They think he's a mutual fund."

Steven Trevayne looked at the expressionless mannequins clad in tweed jackets and varying shades of gray flannel slacks. The subdued lighting of the College Shoppe was appropriate for the quietly wealthy image sought after by the residents of Greenwich, Connecticut. Steven looked down at his own Levi's, soiled sneakers, and then noticed that one of the buttons on his old corduroy jacket was about to fall off.

He consulted his watch and was annoyed. It was nearly time. He'd told his sister that he'd drive her and her friends back to Barnegat, but he'd stipulated that they were to meet him by eight-thirty. He had to pick up his date over on Cos Cob by nine-fifteen. He was going to be late.

He wished to hell his sister hadn't picked this particular night to have an all-girl gathering at home, or at least not to have promised rides for everyone. His sister wasn't allowed to drive at night—an edict Steven Trevayne thought was ridiculous; she was seventeen—so when these occasions arose, he was elected.

If he refused, his father might just find that all their cars were in use and he'd be without wheels.

He was almost nineteen. He'd be off to college in three weeks. Without a car. His father said no car while he was a freshman.

Young Trevayne laughed to himself. His father was right. There was no earthly reason why he should have a car. He didn't want to travel first class; not that way.

He was about to cross the street to the drugstore and telephone his date when a police car pulled up to the curb in front of him.

"You Steven Trevayne?" asked the patrolman at the near window.

"Yes, sir." The young man was apprehensive; the policeman spoke curtly.

"Get in."

"Why? What's the matter? I'm just standing here ..."

"You got a sister named Pamela?"

"Yes. Yes, I do. I'm waiting for her."

"She won't make it down here. Take my word for it. Get in."

"What's the matter?"

"Look, fella, we can't reach your folks; they're in New York. Your sister said you'd be down here, so we came after you. We're doing you both a favor. Now, get in!"

The young man pulled open the back door of the car and got in quickly. "Was there an accident? Is she all right?"

"It's always an accident, isn't it?" said the policeman who was driving.

Steven Trevayne gripped the back of the front seat. He was frightened now. "Please, tell me what happened!"

"Your sister and a couple of girl friends started out with a pot party," answered the other patrolman. "At the Swansons' guest house. The Swansons are in Maine ... naturally. We got the tip about an hour ago. When we got there, we found it was a little more complicated."

"What do you mean?"

"That was the accident, young fellow," interjected the driver. "Hard stuff. The accident was

that we found it.”

Steven Trevayne was stunned. His sister may have had a stick now and then—who hadn’t—but nothing hard. That was out.

“I don’t believe you,” he said emphatically.

“You’ll see for yourself.”

The patrol car turned left at the next corner. It was not the way to Police Headquarters.

“Aren’t they at the station?”

“They’re not booked. Not yet.”

“I don’t understand.”

“We don’t want any story out. If they’re booked, we can’t control it. They’re still at the Swansons’.”

“Are the parents there?”

“We told you, we haven’t been able to reach them,” answered the driver. “The Swansons are in Maine; your folks are in town.”

“You said there were others. Girl friends.”

“Out-of-staters. Friends from boarding school. We want the local parents first on this one. We’ve got to be careful. For everyone’s sake. You see, we found two packages of uncut heroin. An educated guess would put the price around a quarter of a million dollars.”

Andrew Trevayne took his wife’s elbow as they walked up the short flight of concrete steps to the rear door of the Greenwich Police Station. It had been agreed that they would use the entrance.

The introductions were polite, abrupt, and the Trevaynes were ushered into a Detective Fowler’s office. Their son was standing by a window and walked rapidly to his parents the moment they entered the door.

“Mom! Dad!... This is a bunch of crap!”

“Just calm down, Steve,” said the father sternly.

“Is Pam all right?”

“Yes, Mother. She’s fine. They’re still at the Swansons’. She’s just confused. They’re all confused, and I don’t blame them one goddamned bit!”

“I said cool it!”

“I’m perfectly calm, Dad. I’m just angry. Those kids don’t know what uncut horse is, much less how or where to sell it!”

“Do you?” asked Detective Fowler impersonally.

“I’m not the issue, cop!”

“I’ll tell you once more, Steve, get hold of yourself or shut up!”

“No, I won’t!... I’m sorry, Dad, but I won’t! These jokers got a phone tip to check out the Swansons’. No name, no reason. They ...”

“Just a second, young man!” broke in the police officer. “We’re not jokers’ and I would advise you not to use that kind of language!”

“He’s right,” added Trevayne. “I’m sure Mr. Fowler can explain what happened. What was this phone call, Mr. Fowler? You didn’t mention it when we spoke.”

“Dad! He won’t *tell* you!”

“I don’t *know*!... That’s the truth, Mr. Trevayne. At seven-ten this evening the desk got

phone call that there was some grass at the Swansons'; that we should look into it because there was a lot more involved. The caller was male, spoke with kind of a ... well, high-toned speech. Your daughter was the only one mentioned by name. We followed it up.... Four kids. They admitted sharing a single cigarette between them during the last hour or so. It was no party. Frankly, the patrolman suggested we forget it. But by the time they radioed in the report, we'd gotten another call. Same voice. Same person. This time we were told to look at the milk box on the Swansons' guest-house porch. We found the two packages of heroin. Uncut; we figure two hundred, two hundred and fifty thousand. That's a lot of involvement.

"It's also the most transparent, trumped-up incrimination I've ever heard of. It's completely unbelievable." Trevayne looked at his watch. "My attorney should be here within a half-hour. I'm sure he'll tell you the same thing. Now, I'll stay and wait, but I know my wife would like to go out to the Swansons'. Is that all right with you?"

The detective sighed audibly. "It's fine."

"Do you need my son any longer? May he drive her?"

"Sure."

"Can we take her home?" asked Phyllis Trevayne anxiously. "Take all of them back to our house?"

"Well, there are certain formalities ..."

"Never mind, Phyl. Go on out to the Swansons'. We'll call you as soon as Walter gets here. Don't worry. Please."

"Dad, shouldn't I stay? I can tell Walter ..."

"I want you to go with your mother. The keys are in the car. Now, go on."

Trevayne and Detective Fowler watched the two of them leave. When the door was shut, Trevayne reached into his pocket for a pack of cigarettes. He offered one to the police officer, who refused.

"No, thanks. I eat pistachio nuts instead these days."

"Good for you. Now, do you want to tell me what this is all about? You don't believe there's any connection between that heroin and those girls any more than I do."

"Why don't I? It's a very expensive connection."

"Because if you did, you'd have them down here and booked. Precisely because it's expensive. You're handling the entire situation in a very unorthodox manner."

"Yes, I am." Fowler walked around his desk and sat down. "And you're right, I don't believe there's a connection. On the other hand, I can't dismiss it. Circumstantially, it's explosive; I don't have to tell you that."

"What are you going to do?"

"This'll surprise you, but I may be guided by your attorney."

"Which reinforces my statement."

"Yes, it does. I don't think we're on opposite sides, but I've got problems. We've got the evidence; I certainly can't ignore it. On the other hand, the manner of our getting it raises questions. I can't legally hang it on the kids—not considering everything ..."

"I'd have you in court on false arrest. *That* could be expensive."

"Oh, come on, Mr. Trevayne. Don't threaten. Legally, those girls, including your daughter, admitted using marijuana. That's against the law. But it's minor, and we wouldn't press it. The other is something else. Greenwich doesn't want that kind of publicity; and a quarter of

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