ARTHUR HAILEY

THE EVENING NEWS

A N O V E L

BY
ARTHUR HAILEY
ALSO BY ARTHUR HAILEY
STRONG MEDICINE
OVERLOAD
THE MONEYCHANGERS
WHEELS
AIRPORT
HOTEL
IN HIGH PLACES
THE FINAL DIAGNOSIS
RUNWAY ZERO-EIGHT
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RAD
To Sheila and Diane
with special gratitude
and to
my many friends in the media
who trusted me
with off-the-record information.
Author's Note: In Frederick Forsyth's novel The Day of the Jacka4 published 1971, an assassin obtains a fraudulent British passport. In The Evening News, a terrorist obtains such a passport-in a differing way, the description the result of my own research.
However, I acknowledge that in this matter, Mr. Forsyth's footprints were there first. -A.H.
THE
EVENING
NEWS
PART

ONE

At CBA Television News headquarters in New York, the initial report of a stricken Airbus A300, on fire and approaching DallasFort Worth Airport, came only minutes before the network's first feed of the National Evening News.

It was 6:21 P.m. eastern daylight time when CBA's bureau chief at Dallas told a producer on the New York Horseshoe through a speakerphone, "We're expecting a big aircraft crash at DFW any moment. There's been a midair collision-a small plane and an Airbus with a full passenger load. The small plane went down. The Airbus is on fire and trying to make it in. The police and ambulance radios are going wild."

"Jesus!" another Horseshoe producer said. "What's our chance of getting pictures?"

The Horseshoe, an outsize desk with seating for twelve people, was where the network's flagship news broadcast was planned and nurtured from early each weekday morning until the last second of air time every night. Over at rival CBS they called it the Fishbowl, at ABC the Rim, at NBC the Desk. But whichever name was used, the meaning was the same.

Here, reputedly, were the network's best brains when it came to making judgments and decisions about news: executive producer, anchorman, senior producers, director, editors, writers, graphics chief and their ranking aides. There were also, like the instruments of an orchestra, a halfdozen computer terminals, wire news service printers, a phalanx of state-of-the-art telephones, and TV monitors on which could be called up in-

stantly anything from unedited tape, through a prepared news segment ready for broadcast, to competitors' transmissions.

The Horseshoe was on the fourth floor of the CBA News Building, in a central open area with offices on one side-those of the National Evening News senior staff members who, at various times of day, would retreat from the often frenzied Horseshoe to their more private work quarters.

Today, as on most days, presiding at the Horseshoe's head was Chuck Insen, executive producer. Lean and peppery, he was a veteran newsman with a print press background in his early years and, even now, a parochial preference for domestic news over international. At age fifty-two Insen was elderly by TV standards, though he showed no sign of diminished energy, even after four years in a job that often burned people out in two. Chuck Insen could be curt and often was; he never suffered fools or small talk. One reason:

under the pressures of his job there wasn't time.
At this moment-it was a Wednesday in mid-Septemberthe pressures were at maximum intensity. Through the eritire day, since early morning, the lineup of the National Evening News, the selection of subjects and their emphasis, had been reviewed, debated, amended and decided. Correspondents and producers around the world had contributed ideas, received instructions and responded. In the whole process the day's news had been whittled down to eight correspondent reports averaging a minute and a half to two minutes each, plus two voice-overs and four "tell stories." A voice-over was the anchorman speaking over pictures, a "tell story," the anchorman without pictures; for both the average was twenty seconds.
Now, suddenly, because of the breaking story from Dallas and with less than eight minutes remaining before broadcast air time, it had become necessary to reshape the entire news lineup. Though no one knew how much more information would come in or whether pictures would be available, to include the Dallas story at least one intended item had to be dropped, others shortened. Because of balance and timing the sequence of stories would be changed. The broadcast would

start while rearrangement was continuing. It often happened that way.
"A fresh lineup, everybody." The crisp order came from Insen. "We'll go with Dallas at the top. Crawf will do a tell story. Do we have wire copy yet?"
"AP just in. I have it." The answer was from Crawford Sloane, the anchorman. He was reading an Associated Press bulletin printout handed to him moments earlier.
Sloane, whose familiar craggy features, gray-flecked hair, jutting jaw and authoritative yet reassuring manner were watched by some seventeen million people almost every weeknight, was at the Horseshoe in his usual privileged seat on the executive producer's right. Crawf Sloane, too, was a news veteran and had climbed the promotion ladder steadily, especially after exposure as a CBA correspondent in Vietnam. Now, after a stint of reporting from the White House followed by three years in the nightly anchor slot, he was a national institution, one of the media elite.
In a few minutes Sloane would leave for the broadcast studio. Meanwhile, for his tell story he would draw on what had already come from Dallas over the speakerphone, plus some additional facts in the AP report. He would compose the story himself. Not every anchor wrote his own material but Sloane, when possible, liked to write most of what he spoke. But

hehad to do it fast.
Insen's raised voice could be heard again. The executive producer, consulting the original broadcast lineup, told one of his three senior producers, "Kill Saudi Arabia. Take fifteen seconds out of Nicaragua . . ."
Mentally, Sloane winced on hearing the decision to remove the Saudi story. It was important news and a well-crafted two and a half minutes by CBA's Middle East correspondent about the Saudis' future marketing plans for oil. But by tomorrow the story would be dead because they knew that other networks had it and would go with it tonight.
Sloane didn't question the decision to put the Dallas story first, but his own choice for a deletion would have been a Capitol Hill piece about a U.S. senator's malfeasance. The legislator

had quietly slipped eight million dollars into a gargantuan appropriations bill, the money to oblige a campaign contributor and personal friend. Only through a reporter's diligent scrutiny had the matter come to light.
While more colorful, the Washington item was less important, a corrupt member of Congress being nothing out of the ordinary. But the decision, the anchorman thought sourly, was typical of Chuck Insen: once more an item of foreign news, whose emphasis Sloane favored, had gone into the discard.
The relationship between the two--executive producer and anchorman-had never been good, and had worsened recently because of disagreements of that kind. Increasingly, it seemed, their basic ideas were growing further apart, not only about the kind of news that should have priority each evening, but also how it should be dealt with. Sloane, for example, favored indepth treatment of a few major subjects, while Insen wanted as much of that day's news as could be crammed in, even if-as he was apt to express it-"we deal with some of the news in shorthand."
In other circumstances Sloane would have argued against dropping the Saudi piece, perhaps with positive effect because the anchorman was also executive editor and entitled to some input--except right now there wasn't time.
Hurriedly, Sloane braced his heels against the floor, maneuvering his swivel chair backward and sideways with practiced skill so that he confronted a computer keyboard. Concentrating, mentally shutting out the commotion around him, he tapped out what would be the opening sentences of tonight's broadcast.
From DallasFort Worth, this wordjust in on what may be a tragedy in

the making. We know that minutes ago there was a midair collision between two passenger planes, one a heavily loaded Airbus of Muskegon Airlines. It happened over the town of Gainesville, Texas, north of Dallas, and Associated Press reports the other plane--a small one, it's believed-went down. There is no word at this moment on itsfate or of casualties on the ground The Airbus is still

in the air, but on fire as its pilots attempt to reach DallasFort Worth Airport for a landing. On the ground, fire fighters and ambulance crews are standing by . . .

While his fingers raced across the keyboard, Sloane reflected in a corner of his mind that few, if any, viewers would switch off until tonight's news was concluded. He added a sentence to the tell story about staying tuned for further developments, then hit a key for printout. Over at Teleprompter they would get a printout too, so that by the time he reached the broadcast studio, one floor below, it would be ready for him to read from the prompter screen.

As Sloane, a sheaf of papers in hand, quickly headed for the stairs to the third floor, Insen was demanding of a senior producer, "Dammit, what about pictures from DFW?"

"Chuck, it doesn't look good." The producer, a phone cradled in his shoulder, was talking to the national editor in the main newsroom. "The burning airplane is getting near the airport but our camera crew is twenty miles away. They won't make it in time."

Insen swore in frustration. "Shit!"

If medals were awarded for dangerous service in the field of television, Ernie LaSalle, the national editor, would have had a chestful. Although only twenty-nine, he had served with distinction and frequent peril as a CBA field producer in Lebanon, Iran, Angola, the Falklands, Nicaragua and other messy places while ugly situations were erupting. Though the same kind of situations were still happening, nowadays LaSalle viewed the domestic American scene, which could be equally messy at times, from a comfortable upholstered chair in a glass-paneled office overlooking the main newsroom.

LaSalle was compact and small-boned, energetic, neatly bearded and carefully dressed-a yuppie type, some said. As national editor his responsibilities were large and he was one of two senior functionaries in the newsroom. The other was the foreign editor. Both had newsroom desks which they occupied when any particular story became hot and either

was closely

involved. The DallasFort Worth Airport story was hot--ergo, LaSalle had rushed to his newsroom desk.
The newsroom was one floor below the Horseshoe. So was the news broadcast studio, which used the bustling newsroom as its visual backdrop. A control room, where a director put the technical components of each broadcast together, was in the News Building basement.
It was now seven minutes since the Dallas bureau chief had first reported the wounded Airbus approaching DFW. LaSalle slammed down one phone and picked up another, at the same time reading a computer screen alongside him on which a new AP report had just appeared. He was continuing to do everything he could to ensure coverage of the story, at the same time keeping the Horseshoe advised of developments.
It was LaSalle who reported the dispiriting news about CBA's nearest camera crew-though now rushing toward DFW and ignoring speed limits en route, still twenty miles from the scene of action. The reason was that it had been a busy day at the Dallas bureau, with all camera crews, field producers and correspondents out on assignment, and by sheer bad luck all of the assignments were a long way from the airport.
Of course, there would be some pictures forthcoming shortly, but they would be after the fact and not of the critical Airbus landing, which was certain to be spectacular and perhaps disastrous. It was also unlikely that pictures of any kind would be available for the first feed of the National Evening News, which went via satellite to most of the eastern seaboard and parts of the Midwest.
The only consolation was that the Dallas bureau chief had learned that no other network or local station had a camera crew at the airport either, though like CBA's others were on the way.
From his newsroom desk Ernie LaSalle, still busy with telephones, could see the usual prebroadcast action in the brightly lit news studio as Crawford Sloane came in. Television viewers watching Sloane during a broadcast had the illusion that the anchorman was in, and part of, the newsroom. But in fact there

was thick soundproof glass between the two so that no newsroom noises intruded, except when deliberately faded in as an audio effect.
The time was 6:28 P.m., two minutes before first-feed air.
As Sloane slipped into the anchor desk chair, his back to the newsroom and

facing the center camera of three, a makeup girl moved in. Ten minutes earlier Sloane had had makeup applied in a small private room adjoining his office, but since then he had been sweating. Now the girl mopped his forehead, dabbed on powder, ran a comb through his hair and applied a touch of hair spray.

With a hint of impatience Sloane murmured, "Thanks, Nina," then glanced over his papers, checking that the opening words of his tell story on top corresponded with those displayed in large letters on the Teleprompter in front of him, from which he would read while appearing to look directly at viewers. The papers which news readers were often seen to shuffle were a precaution, for use only if the Teleprompter failed.

The studio stage manager called out loudly, "One minute!"

In the newsroom, Ernie LaSalle suddenly sat up straight, attentive, startled.

About a minute earlier, the Dallas bureau chief had excused himself from the line on which he had been talking with LaSalle to take another phone call, Waiting, LaSalle could hear the bureau chief's voice but not what was being said. Now the bureau man returned and what he reported caused the national editor to smile broadly.

LaSalle picked up a red reporting telephone on his desk which connected him, through amplified speakers, to every section of the news operation.

"National desk. LaSalle. Good news. We now have immediate coverage at DFW airport. In the terminal building, waiting for flight connections, are Partridge, Abrams, Van Canh. Abrams just reported to Dallas bureau-they are onto the story and running. More: A mobile satellite van has abandoned an-

other assignment and is en route to DFW, expected soonest. Satellite feed time, Dallas to New York, is booked. We expect pictures in time for inclusion in the first-feed news."

Though he tried to sound laconic, LaSalle found it hard to keep the satisfaction from his voice. As if in response, a muffled cheer drifted down the open stairway from the Horseshoe above. Crawford Sloane, in the studio, also swung around and gave LaSalle a cheerful thumbs up.

An aide put a paper in front of the national editor who glanced at it, then continued on the speakerphone, "Also from Abrams, this report: On board Airbus in distress are 286passengers, eleven crew. Second plane in collision, a private Piper Cheyenne, crashed in Gainesville, no survivors. There are other casualties on ground, no details, numbers or seriousness.

Airbus has one engine ripped off, is attempting landing on remaining engine. Air Traffic Control reportsfire isfrom the location of missing engine. Report ends."

LaSalle thought: Everything that had come from Dallas in the past few minutes was totally professional. But then, it was not surprising because the team of Abrams, Partridge and Van Canh was one of the crack combinations of CBA News. Rita Abrams, once a correspondent and now a senior field producer, was noted for her quick assessment of situations and a resourcefulness in getting stories back, even under difficult conditions. Harry Partridge was one of the. best correspondents in the business. He normally specialized in war stories and, like Crawford Sloane, had reported from Vietnam, but could be relied on to do an exceptional job in any situation. And cameraman Minh Van Canh, once a Vietnamese and now an American citizen, was noted for his fine pictures sometimes shot in dangerous situations with disregard for his own safety. The fact that the three of them were onto the Dallas story guaranteed that it would be well handled.

By now it was a minute past the half hour and the first-feed National Evening News had begun. Reaching for a control beside his desk, LaSalle turned up the audio of an overhead monitor and heard Crawford Sloane doing the top-of-the-news tell story about DFW. On camera, a hand-it was a writer's-

slipped a paper in front of him. Clearly it contained the additional report LaSalle had just dictated and, glancing down and ad-libbing, Sloane incorporated it into his prepared text. It was the kind of thing the anchorman did superbly.

Upstairs at the Horseshoe since LaSalle's announcement, the mood had changed. Now, though pressure and urgency remained, there was cheerful optimism with the knowledge that the Dallas situation was well in hand and pictures and a fuller report would be forthcoming. Cfiuck Insen and others were huddled, watching monitors, arguing, making decisions, squeezing out seconds, doing still more cutting and rearranging to leave the needed space. It looked as if the report about the corrupt senator would fall by the way after all. There was a sense of everyone doing what they did best-coping in a timeconfined, exigency situation.

Swift exchanges, jargon-loaded, flowed back and forth.

"This piece is picture-poor."

"Make that copy shorter, pithy."

"Tape room: We're killing '16: Corruption.' But it may come back in if we don't get Dallas."
"The last fifteen seconds of that piece is deadly. We'll be telling people what they already know."
"The old lady in Omaha doesn't know."
"Then she never will. Drop it."
"First segment just finished. Have gone to commercial. We're forty seconds heavy."
"What did the competition have from Dallas?"
"A tell story, same as us."
"I need a bumper and cutline fast for 'Drug Bust.'
"Take out that sequence. It does nothing."
"What we're trying to do here is put twelve pounds of shit into a ten-pound bag."
An observer unfamiliar with the scene might wonder: Are these people human? Don't they care? Have they no emotion, no feelings of involvement, not an ounce ofgrief? Have any of them spared a thoughtfor the nearly three hundred terrified souls on

that airplane approaching DFW who may shortly die? Isn't there anyone here to whom that matters?
And someone knowledgeable about news would answer: Yes, there are people here to whom it matters, and they will care, maybe right after the broadcast. Or, when some have reached home, the horror of it all will touch them, and depending on how it all turns out, afew may weep. At this moment, though, no one has the time. These are news people. Their job is to record the passing parade, the bad with the good, and to do it swiftly, efficiently, plainly so that-in a news phrase from an older time"he who runs may read. "
Therefore at 6:40 P.m., ten minutes into the National Evening News half hour, the key remaining question for those around the Horseshoe and others in the newsroom, studio and control room was: Will there or won't there be a story soon, with pictures, from DFW?
For the group of five journalists at DallasFort Worth Airport, the sequence of events had begun a couple of hours earlier and reached a high point at about 5:10 P.m., central daylight time.
The five were Harry Partridge, Rita Abrams, Minh Van Canh, Ken O'Hara, the CBA crew's sound man, and Graham Broderick, a foreign correspondent for the New York Times. That same morning, in predawn darkness, they had

left El Salvador and flown to Mexico City, then, after delay and a flight change, traveled onward to DFW. Now they were awaiting other flight connections, some to differing destinations.

All were weary, not just from today's long journey, but from two months or more of rough and dangerous living while reporting on several nasty wars in unpleasant parts of Latin America.

While waiting for their flights, they were in a bar in Termi-The Evening News 15

nal 2E, one of twentyfour busy bars in the airport. The bar's d6cor was mod-utilitarian. Surrounded by an imitation garden wall containing plants, it sported hanging fabric panels overhead in pale blue plaid, lit by concealed pink lighting. The Timesman said it reminded him of a whorehouse he had once been in in Mandalay.

From their table near a window they could see the aircraft ramp and Gate 20. It was from that gate Harry Partridge had expected to leave, a few minutes from now, on an American Airlines flight to Toronto. But this evening the flight was late and an hour's delay had just been announced.

Partridge, a tall and lanky figure, had an untidy shock of fair hair that had always made him look boyish and still did, despite his forty-odd years and the fact that the hair was graying. At this moment he was relaxed and not much caring about flight delays or anything else. He had ahead of him three weeks of R&R, and rest and relaxation were what he sorely needed.

Rita Abrams' connecting flight would be to MinneapolisSt. Paul, from where she was headed for a holiday on a friend's farm in Minnesota. She also had a weekend rendezvous planned there with a married senior CBA official, a piece of information she was keeping to herself. Minh Van Canh and Ken O'Hara were going home to New York. So was Graham Broderick.

The trio of Partridge, Rita and Minh was a frequent working combination. On their most recent trip, O'Hara had been with them, as sound recordist, for the first time. He was young, pale, pencil-thin, and spent most of his spare time absorbed in electronics magazines; be had one open now.

Broderick was the odd man out, though he and the TV-ers often covered the same assignments and mostly were on good terms. At this moment, however, the Timesman-rotund, dignified and slightly pompous-was being antagonistic.

Three of the group had had a little too much to drink. The exceptions were Van Canh, who drank only club soda, and the sound man, who had nursed a beer for a long time and declined more.

"Listen, you affluent son of a bitch," Broderick said to Par-16 ARTHUR HAILEY

tridge, who had pulled a billfold from his pocket, "I said I'd pay for this round, and so I will." He put two bills, a twenty and a five, on a waiter's tray on which three double scotches and a club soda had been delivered. "Just because you pull down twice as much as I do for half the work is no reason to hand the print press charity."

"Oh, for chrissakes!" Rita said. "Brod, why don't you throw away that old cracked record."

Rita had spoken loudly, as she sometimes did. Two uniformed officers from the airport's Department of Public Safety force, which policed DFW, had been walking through the bar; they turned their heads curiously. Observing them, Rita smiled and waved a hand. The officers' eyes took in the group and, around them, the assortment of cameras and equipment on which the CBA logo was prominent. Both DPS men returned the smile and moved on.

Harry Partridge, who had been watching, thought: Rita was showing her age today. Even though she exuded a strong sexuality which had drawn many men to her, there were telltale lines on her face; also, the toughness which made her as demanding of herself as of those she worked with came through in imperious little mannerisms, not always attractively. There was recent reason, of course-the strain and heavy work load which she, Harry and the other two had shared through the past two months.

Rita was forty-three, and six years ago was still appearing on camera as a news correspondent, though far less often than when she was younger and more glamorous. Everyone knew it was a rotten, unfair system that allowed men to continue as correspondents, to keep on facing the camera even when their faces revealed them to be growing older, whereas women couldn't and were shunted aside like discarded concubines. A few women had tried to fight and beat the system-Christine Craft, a reporter and anchor-woman, pursued the issue through the courts, but had not succeeded.

But Rita, instead of starting a fight she knew she wouldn't win, had switched to producing and, behind the camera instead of in front of it, had been triumphantly successful. Along the

way she had badgered senior producers into giving her some of the tough foreign assignments which almost always went to men. For a while her male bosses had resisted, then they had given in, and soon Rita was sent automatically-along with Harry-to where the fighting was fiercest and the living hardest.

Broderick, who had been pondering Rita's last remark, now said, "It isn't as if your glamour gang is doing anything important. Every night that

tiny news hole has only tooth pickings of all that's happened in the world. How long is it-nineteen minutes?"
"If you're shooting at us sitting ducks," Partridge said amiably, "at least the print press should get its facts straight. It's twenty-one and a half."
"Leaving seven minutes for commercials," Rita added, "which, among other things, pay Harry's excessive salary which turns you green with jealousy."
Rita, with her usual bluntness, was on the nose about jealousy, Partridge thought. With print press people, the difference between their own and TV news pay was always a sore point. In contrast with Partridge's earnings, which were $250,000 a year, Broderick, a first-class, highly competent reporter, probably got $85,000.
As if his train of thought had not been interrupted, the Timesman continued, "What your entire network news department produces in a day would only fill half of one of our paper's pages."
"A dumb comparison," Rita shot back, "because everyone knows a picture is worth a thousand words. We have hundreds of pictures and we take people to where the news is so they can see it for themselves. No newspaper in history ever did that."
Broderick, holding in one hand the fresh double scotch he had been sipping, waved the other hand dismissingly. "'S not relevant." The last word gave him trouble; he pronounced it "revelant."
It was Minh Van Canh, not usually a great talker, who asked, "Why not?"
"Because you people are dodos. TV network news is dying.

All you ever were was a headline service and now the local stations are taking over even that, using technology to bring in outside news themselves, picking off pieces of you like vultures at a carcass."
"Well," Partridge said, still agreeably relaxed, "there are some who've been saying that for years. But look at us. We're still around, and still strong, because people watch network news for quality."
"You're goddamn right," Rita said. "And something else you have wrong, Brod, is the notion that local TV news is getting better. It isn't. It's getting worse. Some of the people who left networks with high hopes to work in local news have gone back to the networks in disgust."
Broderick asked, "Why so?"
"Because local station managements see news as hype, promotion, massive revenue. They use that new technology you talk about to pander to the

lowest viewer tastes. And when they send someone from their news department on a big outside story, it's usually a kid, out of his depth, who can't compete with a network reporter's know-how and backup."
Harry Partridge yawned. The thing about this conversation, he realized, was that it was a retread, a game that filled vacant time but required no intellectual effort, and they had indulged in the game many times before.
Then he became aware of some activity nearby.
The two DPS officers were still in the bar through which they had moved casually, but had suddenly become attentive and were listening to their walkie-talkies. An announcement was being transmitted. Partridge caught the words, ". . . condition Alert Two . . . midair collision . . . approaching runway one-seven left . . . all DPS personnel report
Abruptly, hurrying, the officers left the bar.
The others in the group had heard too. "Hey!" Minh Van Canh said. "Maybe . . ."
Rita jumped up. "I'll find out what's happening." She left the bar hurriedly.
Van Canh and O'Hara began to gather together their cam- era and sound ' gear. Partridge and Broderick did the same with their belongings.
One of the DPS officers was still in sight. Rita caught up with him near an American Airlines checkin counter, noting that he was youthfully handsome with the physique of a football player.
"I'm from CBA News." She showed her network press card.
His eyes were frankly appraising. "Yes, I know."
In other circumstances, she thought briefly, she might have introduced him to the pleasures of an older woman. Unfortunately there wasn't time. She asked, "What's going on?"
The officer hesitated. "You're supposed to call the Public Information Office-"
Rita said impatiently, "I'll do that later. It's urgent, isn't it? So tell me."
"Muskegon Airlines is in trouble. One of their Airbuses had a midair. It's coming in on fire. We're on Alert Two, which means all the emergency stuff is rolling, heading for runway one-seven left." His voice was serious. "Looks pretty bad."
"I want my camera crew out there. Now and fast. Which way do we go?"
The DPS man shook his head. "If you try it unescorted, you won't get beyond the ramp. You'll be arrested."

Rita remembered something she had once been told, that DFW airport prided itself on cooperating with the press. She pointed to the officer's walkie-talkie. "Can you call Public Information on that?"
"I could."
"Do it. Please!"
Her persuasion worked. The officer called and was answered. Taking Rita's press card, he read from it, explaining her request.
A reply came back. "Tell them they must first come to public safety station number one to sign in and get media badges."
Rita groaned. She gestured to the walkie-talkie. "Let me speak. "

The DPS officer pressed a transmit button. He held the radio out.
She spoke urgently into the built-in mike: "There isn't time; you must know that. We're network. We have every kind of credential. We'll do any paperwork you want afterward. But please, please, get us to the scene now."
"Stand by." A pause, then a new voice with crisp authority. "Okay, get to gate nineteen fast. Ask someone there to direct you to the ramp. Look for a station wagon with flashing lights. I'm on my way to you."
Rita squeezed the officer's arm. "Thanks, pal!"
Then she was hurrying back toward Partridge and the others who were leaving the bar. Broderick was last. As he left, the New York Times man cast a regretful glance back at the unconsumed drinks for which he had paid.
Briskly, Rita related what she had learned, telling Partridge, Minh and O'Hara, "This can be big. Go out on the airfield. Don't waste time. I'll do some phoning, then come to find you." She glanced at her watch: 5:20 P.m., 6:20 in New York. "If we're fast we can make the first feed." But privately she doubted it.
Partridge nodded, accepting Rita's orders. At any time, the relationship between a correspondent and producer was an imprecise one. Officially, a field producer such as Rita Abrams was in charge of an entire crew, including the correspondent, and if anything went wrong on an assignment the producer got the blame. If things went right, of course, the correspondent whose face and name were featured received the praise, even though the producer undoubtedly helped shape the story and contributed to the script.
However, in the case of a "Big Foot" senior correspondent like Harry Partridge, the official pecking order sometimes got turned around, with

the correspondent taking charge and a producer being overawed and sometimes overruled, But when Partridge and Rita worked together, neither gave a damn about status. They simply wanted to send back the best reports that the two of them, in harness, could produce.
While Rita hurried to a pay phone, Partridge, Minh and

O'Hara moved quickly toward gate 19, looking for an exit to the air traffic ramp below. Graham Broderick, quickly sobered by what was happening, was close behind.
Near the gate was a doorway marked:
RAMP-RESTRICTED AREA
EMERGENCY EXIT ONLY
ALARM WILL SOUND
No official person was in sight and without hesitation Partridge pushed his way through, the others following. As they clattered down a metal stairway, a loud alarm bell sounded behind them. They ignored it and emerged onto the ramp.
It was a busy time of day and the ramp was crowded with aircraft and airline vehicles. Suddenly a station wagon appeared, traveling fast, with roof lights flashing. Its tires screeched as it halted at gate 19.
Minh, who was nearest, opened a door and jumped inside. The others piled in after him. The driver, a slim young black man in a brown business suit, pulled away, driving as swiftly as he had come. Without looking back he said, "Hiya, guys! I'm Vemon-Public Info."
Partridge introduced himself and the others.
Reaching down to the seat beside him, Vernon came up with three green media badges. He passed them back. "These are temp; better clip them on. I already broke some rules, but like your girlfriend said, we ain't burdened with time."
They had left the ramp area, crossed two taxiways and were traveling east on a parallel access road. Two runways were ahead and to the right. Alongside the farther runway, emergency vehicles were assembling.
Rita Abrams, in the terminal, was talking on a pay phone with CRA's Dallas bureau. The bureau chief, she had discovered, already knew of the airport emergency and had been trying to get a local CBA crew to the scene. He learned with delight of the presence of Rita and the others.

She told him to advise New York, then asked, "What's our satellite feed situation?"

"Good. There's a mobile satellite van on the way from Arlington."
Arlington, she learned, was only thirteen miles away. The van, which belonged to a CBA affiliate station, KDLS-TV, had been setting up for a sports broadcast from Arlington Stadium, but now that story had been abandoned and the van dispatched to DFW. The driver and technician would be advised by cellular phone to cooperate with Rita, Partridge and the others.
The news excited and elated her. There was, she realized, now a good possibility of getting a story and pictures to New York in time for the first-feed National Evening News.
The station wagon carrying the CBA trio and the Timesman was nearing runway 17L-the figures denoted a magnetic heading of 170 degrees, almost due south; the L showed it to be the left runway of two that were parallel. As at all airports, the designation was in large white characters on the runway surface.
Still driving fast, Vernon explained, "A pilot in distress gets to choose the runway he wants. Here it's usually one-seven left. That baby is two hundred feet wide and closest to emergency help."
The station wagon halted on a taxiway that intersected 17L and from where the incoming aircraft's approach and landing would be seen.
"This will be the on-site command post," Vernon said.
Emergency vehicles were still arriving, some converging around them. From the airport's firefighting force were seven yellow trucks-four mammoth Oshkosh M 15 foam vehicles, an aerial ladder truck and two smaller Rapid Intervention Vehicles. The foam trucks, riding on giant tires nearly six feet high, with two engines, front and rear, and high-pressure projection nozzles, were like self-contained fire stations. The RIV's, fast and maneuverable, were designed to go in close and quickly to a burning aircraft.
A halfdozen blue-and-white police cruisers disgorged of-The Evening News 23 ficers who opened the cars' trunks, pulled out silver fire suits and climbed into them. Airport police were cross-trained in fire fighting, Vernon explained. On the station wagon's DPS radio a stream of orders could be heard.
The fire trucks, supervised by a lieutenant in a yellow sedan, were taking positions on ramps at intervals down the runway's length. Ambulances summoned from nearby communities were streaming into the airport and assembling nearby, but clear of the runway area.
Partridge had been the first to jump from the station wagon and, standing

beside it, was scribbling notes. Broderick, less hurriedly, was doing the same. Minh Van Canh had clambered to the station wagon's roof and now, standing, his camera ready, was scanning the sky to the north. Behind him was Ken O'Hara, trailing wires and a sound recorder.

Almost at once the stricken inbound flight was visible, about five miles out, with heavy black smoke behind it. Minh raised his camera, holding it steady, one eye tight against the viewfinder.

He was a sturdy, stocky figure, not much more than five feet tall, but with broad shoulders and long, muscular arms. His squarish dark face, pockmarked from a childhood bout with smallpox, held wide brown eyes which looked out impassively, unrevealing of what thoughts might lie behind them. Those who were close to Minh said it took a long time to get to know him.

About some things, though, there was consensus-namely, that Minh was industrious, reliable, honest, and one of the best TV cameramen in the business. His pictures were more than good; they were invariably attention-getting and oftentimes artistic. He had worked for CBA first in Vietnam, as a local recruit who learned his trade from an American cameraman for whom Minh carried equipment amid the jungle fighting. When his mentor was killed after stepping on a land mine, Minh, unaided, carried his body back for burial, then returned with the camera into the jungle where he continued filming. No one at CBA could ever remember hiring him. His employment simply became a fait accompli.

In 1975, with the fall of Saigon imminent, Minh, his wife and two children were among the all-too-few lucky ones airlifted from the U.S. Embassy courtyard by CH-53 military helicopter to the safety of the American Seventh Fleet at sea. Even then Minh filmed it all, and much of his footage was used on the National Evening News.

Now he was filming another aerial story, different but dramatic, whose ending had yet to be determined.

In the viewfinder the shape of the approaching Airbus was becoming clearer. Also clearer was a halo of bright flame on the right side with smoke continuing to stream behind. It was possible to see the fire coming from where an engine had been, and where now only a part of the engine pylon remained. To Minh and others watching, it seemed amazing that the entire airplane had not yet been engulfed.

Inside the station wagon, Vernon had switched on an aviation band radio. Air Traffic Control could be heard speaking with the Airbus pilots. The

calm voice of a controller, monitoring their approach by radar, cautioned, "You are slightly below glide path . . . drifting left of center line . . . Now on glide path, on center line . . ."

But the Airbus pilots were clearly having trouble holding altitude and an even course. The plane seemed to be crabbing in, the damaged right wing lower than the left. At moments the plane's nose veered away; then, as if from urgent efforts in the cockpit, swung back toward the runway. There was an uneven up-and-down movement as at one moment too much height was lost, at the next retrieved, but barely. Those on the ground were asking themselves the tense, unspoken question: Having come this far, would the Airbus make it all the way in? The answer seemed in doubt.

On the radio, the voice of one of the pilots could be heard. "Tower, we have landing-gear problems . . . hydraulic failure." A pause. "We are trying the gear down 'free fall' now. "

A fire captain, also listening, had stopped beside them. Partridge asked him, "What does that mean?"

"On big passenger planes there's an emergency system to

get the landing wheels down if hydraulic power is out. The pilots release all hydraulic power so the gear, which is heavy, should fall under its own weight, then lock. But once it's down they can't get it up again, even if they want to."

As the fireman spoke, the Airbus landing gear could be seen slowly coming down.

Moments later, once more the calm voice of an air traffic controller: "Muskegon, we see your gear down. Be advised that flames are close to the right front gear."

It was obvious that if the right front tires were consumed by fire, as seemed probable, that side of the landing gear might collapse on impact, skewing the airplane to the right at high speed.

Minh, fondling a zoom lens, had his camera running. He too could see the flames which had now reached the tires. The Airbus was floating over the airport boundary . . . Then it was closer in, barely a quarter mile from the runway . . . It was going to make it to the ground, but the fire was greater, more intense, clearly being fed by fuel, and two of the four right-side tires were burning, the rubber melting . . . There was a flash as one of the tires exploded.

Now the burning Airbus was over the runway, its landing speed 150 mph.

As the aircraft passed the waiting emergency vehicles, one by one they swung onto the runway, following at top speed, tires screaming. Two yellow foam trucks were the first to move, the other fire trucks close behind.

On the runway, as the airplane's landing gear made contact with the ground, another right-side tire exploded, then another. Suddenly all right tires disintegrated . . . the wheels were down to their rims. Simultaneously there was a banshee screech of metal, a shower of sparks, and a cloud of dust and cement fragments rose into the air . . . Somehow, miraculously, the pilots managed to hold the Airbus on the runway . . . It seemed to continue a long way and for a long time . . . At last it stopped. As it did, the fire flared up.

Still moving fast, the fire trucks closed in, within seconds pumping foam. Gigantic whorls of it piled up with incredible speed, like a mountain of shave cream.

On the airplane, several passenger doors were opening, escape slides tumbling out. The forward door was open on the right side, but on that side fire was blocking the mid-fuselage exits. On the left side, away from the fire, another forward door and a mid-fuselage door were open. Some passengers were already coming down the slides.

But at the rear, where there were two escape doors on each side, none had so far opened.

Through the three open doors, smoke from inside the airplane was pouring out. Some passengers were already on the ground. The latest ones emerged coughing, many vomiting, all gasping for fresh air.

By now the exterior fire was dying down under a mass of foam on one side of the airplane.

Firemen from the RIV's, wearing silver protective clothing and breathing apparatus, had swiftly moved in and rigged ladders to the unopened rear doors. As the doors were opened manually from outside, more smoke poured out. The firemen hurried inside, intent on extinguishing any interior fire. Other firemen, entering the wrecked Airbus through the forward doors, helped passengers to leave, some of them dazed and weak.

Noticeably, the outward flow of passengers slowed. Harry Partridge made a quick estimate that nearly two hundred people had emerged from the plane's interior, though from the information he had gathered he knew that 297, including crew, were reportedly aboard. Firemen began to carry some who appeared badly burned-among them two women flight attendants.

Smoke was still drifting from inside, though less of it than earlier.
Minh Van Canh continued to videotape the action around him, thinking only professionally, excluding other thoughts, though aware that he was the only cameraman on the scene and in his camera he had something special and unique. Probably not since the Hindenburg airship disaster had a major air crash been recorded visually in such detail, while it happened.
Ambulances had been summoned to the on-site command post. A dozen were already there, with more arriving. Para-

medics worked on the injured, loading them onto numbered backboards. Within minutes the crash victims would be on their way to area hospitals alerted to receive them. With the arrival of a helicopter bringing doctors and nurses, the command post near the Airbus was becoming an improvised field hospital with a functioning triage system.
The speed with which everything was happening spoke well, Partridge thought, of the airport's emergency planning. He overheard the fire captain report that a hundred and ninety passengers, more or less, were out of the Airbus and alive. At the same time that left nearly a hundred unaccounted for.
A fireman, pulling off his respirator to wipe the sweat from his face, was heard to say, "Oh Christ! The back seats are chock full of dead. It must have been where the smoke was thickest." It also explained why the four rear escape doors had not been opened from inside.
As always with an aircraft accident, the dead would be left where they were until a National Transportation Safety Board field officer, reportedly on the way, gave authority to move them after approving identification procedures.
The flight-deck crew emerged from the Airbus, pointedly declining help. The captain, a grizzled four-striper, looking around him at the injured and already knowing of the many dead, was openly crying. Guessing that despite the casualties the pilots would be acclaimed for bringing the airplane in, Minh held the captain's grief-stricken face in closeup. It proved to be Minh's final shot as a voice called, "Harry! Minh! Ken! Stop now. Hurry! Bring what you've got and come with me. We're feeding to New York by satellite."
The voice belonged to Rita Abrams, who had arrived on a Public Information shuttle bus. Some distance away, the promised mobile satellite van could be seen. The van's satellite dish, which folded like a fan for travel, was being opened and aimed skyward.

Accepting the order, Minh lowered his camera. Two other TV crews had arrived on the same shuttle bus as Rita--one from KDLS, the CBA affiliate-along with print press reporters and photographers. They and others, Minh knew, would

carry the story on. But only Minh had the real thing, the crash exclusive pictures, and he knew with inward pride that today and in days to come, his pictures would be seen around the world and would remain a piece of history.
They went with Vernon in the PIO station wagon to the satellite van. On the way Partridge began drafting the words he would shortly speak. Rita told him, "Make your script a minute fortyfive. As soon as you're ready, cut a sound track, do a closing standup. Meanwhile, I'll feed quick and dirty to New York."
As Partridge nodded acknowledgment, Rita glanced at her watch: 5:43 P.m., 6:43 in New York. For the first-feed National Evening News, there was barely fifteen minutes left of broadcast time.
Partridge was continuing to write, mouthing words silently, changing what he had already written. Minh handed two precious tape cassettes to Rita, then put a fresh cassette in the camera, ready for Partridge's audio track and standup close.
Vernon dropped them immediately alongside the satellite van. Broderick, who had come too, was going on to the terminal to phone his own report to New York. His parting words were, "Thanks, guys. Remember, if you want the indepth dope tomorrow, buy the Time& "
O'Hara, the high-technology buff, regarded the equipmentpacked satellite van admiringly. "How I love these babies!"
The fifteen-foot-wide dish mounted on the van's platform body was now fully open and elevated with a 20-kilowatt generator running. Inside, in a small control room with editing and transmitting equipment tightly packed in tiers, a technician from the two-man crew was aligning the van's uplink transmitter with a Ku-band satellite 22,300 miles above themSpacenet 2. Whatever they transmitted would go to transponder 21 on the satellite, then instantly by downlink to New York to be rerecorded.
Inside the van, working alongside the technician, Rita expertly ran Minh's tape cassettes through an editing machine,

viewing them on a TV monitor. Not surprisingly, she thought, the pictures were superb.
On normal assignments, and working with an editor as an extra team member,

producer and editor together would select portions of the tapes, then, over a sound track of a correspondent's comments, put all components together as a fully edited piece. But that took fortyfive minutes, sometimes longer, and today there wasn't time. So, making fast decisions, Rita chose several of the most dramatic scenes which the technician transmitted as they were-in TV jargon, "quick and dirty."

Outside the satellite van, seated on some metal steps, Partridge completed his script and, after conferring briefly with Minh and the sound man, recorded a sound track.

Having allowed for the anchorman's introduction, which would be written in New York and have the story's up-front facts, Partridge began:

"Pilots in a long-ago war called it comin'in on a wing and a prayer. There was a song with that name . . . It's unlikely anyone will write a song about today.

"The Muskegon Airlines Airbus was sixty miles out from DallasFort Worth . . . with a near-full passenger load . . . having comefrom Chicago . . . when the mid-air collision happened . . .

As always, when an experienced correspondent wrote for TV news, Partridge had written "slightly off the pictures." It was a specialized art form, difficult to learn, and some in television never quite succeeded. Even among professional writers the talent did not receive the recognition it deserved, because the words were written to accompany pictures and seldom read well alone.

The trick, as Harry Partridge and others like him knew, was not to describe the pictures. A television viewer would be seeing, visually, what was happening on the screen and did not need verbal description. Yet the spoken words must not be so far removed from the pictures as to split the viewer's consciousness. It was a literary balancing act, much of it instinctive.

Something else TV news people recognized: The best news writing was not in neat sentences and paragraphs. Fragments of

sentences worked better. Facts must be taut, verbs strong and active; a script should crackle. Finally, by manner and intonation the correspondent should convey a meaning too. Yes, he or she had to be an excellent reporter, but an actor also. At all those things Partridge was expert, though today he had a handicap: he had not seen the pictures, as a correspondent normally did. But he knew, more or less, what they would be.

Partridge concluded with a standup-himself, head and shoulders, speaking directly to the camera. Behind him, activity was continuing around the

wrecked Airbus.
"There is more of this story to come . . . tragic details, the toll of dead and injured. But what is clear, even now, is that collision dangers are multiplying . . . on the airways, in our crowded skies . . . Harry Partridge, CBA News, DallasFort Worth. "
The cassette with the narration and standup was passed to Rita inside the van. Still trusting Partridge, knowing him too well to waste precious time checking, she ordered it sent to New York without review. Moments later, watching and listening as the technician transmitted, she was admiring. Remembering the discussion half an hour earlier in the terminal bar she reflected: with his multitalents, Partridge was demonstrating why his pay was so much higher than that of the reporter for the New York Times.
Outside, Partridge was performing still one more of a correspondent's duties-an audio report, spoken from notes and largely ad-libbed, for CBA Radio News. When the TV transmission was finished, that would go to New York by satellite too.
The Evening News 31
The CBA News headquarters building in New York was a plain and unimpressive eight-story brownstone on the east side of upper Manhattan. Formerly a furniture factory, now only the shell of the original structure remained, the interior having been remodeled and refurbished many times by an assortment of contractors. Out of this piecemeal work had come a maze of intersecting corridors in which unescorted visitors got lost.
Despite the drab domicile of CBA News, the place contained a sultan's fortune in electronic wizardry, a considerable portion of it in technicians' country, two floors below street level, sometimes referred to as the catacombs. And here, among a multitude of functions, was a vital department with a prosaic name-the Oneinch-tape Room.
All news reports from CBA crews around the world came in, via satellite and occasionally by landline, to the One-inchtape Room. From there, too, all taped recordings of finished news went out to viewers, via a broadcast control room and again by satellite.
Endemic to the Oneinch-tape Room were enormous pressures, taut nerves, tension, instant decision making and urgent commands, especially just before and during broadcasts of the National Evening News.
At such times, someone unaware of what was happening might consider the scene disorganized bedlam, a technological nightmare. The impression would be heightened by surrounding semidarkness, necessary for watching a forest of TV screens.

But in fact the operation functioned smoothly, quickly and with skill. Mistakes here could he disastrous. They rarely happened.

A halfdozen large and sophisticated reel-to-reel tape ma-32 ARTHUR HAILEY chines, built into consoles and with TV monitors above, dominated the activity; the machines used one-inch magnetic tape, the highest-quality and most reliable. At each tape machine and console sat a skilled operator receiving, editing and transmitting tapes swiftly, according to instructions. The operators, older than most workers in the building, were a motley group who seemed to take pride in dressing shabbily and behaving boisterously. Because of this, a commentator once described them as the "fighter pilots" of TV broadcasting.

Every weekday, an hour or so before National Evening News broadcast time, a senior news producer moved down five floors from his seat at the Horseshoe to preside over the Oneinch-tape Room and its operators. There, acting as a maestro, shouting instructions while sernaphoring with his arms, he viewed incoming material for that night's news, ordered further editing if necessary, and kept colleagues at the Horseshoe informed of which expected items were now in-house and how, at first glance, each looked.

Everything, it always seemed, arrived at the Oneinch-tape Room in haste and late. It was a tradition that producers, correspondents and editors working in the field polished and repolished their pieces until the last possible moment, so that most came in during the half hour before the broadcast and some after the broadcast had begun. There were even nail-biting occasions when the front half of a report was going out from one tape recorder and being broadcast while the back portion was still feeding into another machine. During those moments nervous, sweating operators pushed themselves to the limit of their skills.

The senior producer most often in charge was Will Kazazis, Brooklyn-born of an excitable Greek family, a trait he had inherited. His excitability, though, seemed to fit the job and despite it he never lost control. Thus it was Kazazis who received Rita Abrams' satellite transmission from DFW-first Minh Van Canh's pictures sent "quick and dirty," then Harry Partridge's audio track, concluding with his standup.

The time was 6:48 . . . ten minutes of news remaining. A commercial break had just begun.

Kazazis told the operator who had taken the feed in, "Slap it together fast. Use all of Partridge's track. Put the best pictures over it. I

trust you. Now move, move, move!"
Through an aide, Kazazis had already let the Horseshoe know that the Dallas tape was coming in. Now, by phone, Chuck Insen, who was in the broadcast control room, demanded, "How is it?"
Kazazis told the executive producer, "Fantastic! Beautiful! Exactly what you'd expect of Harry and Minh."
Knowing there wasn't time to view the piece himself, and trusting Kazazis, Insen ordered, "We'll go with it after this commercial. Stand by."
With less than a minute to go, the tape operator, perspiring in his air-conditioned work space, was continuing to edit, hurriedly combining pictures, commentary and natural sound.
Insert's command was repeated to the anchorman and a writer seated near him. A lead-in was already prepared and the writer passed the single sheet to Crawford Sloane who skimmed it, quickly changed a word or two, and nodded thanks. A moment later on the anchor's Teleprompter, what were to have been the next segment's opening words switched over to the DFW story. In the broadcast studio as the commercial break neared its conclusion, the stage manager called, "Ten seconds
. five . . . four . . . two . . ."
At a hand signal Sloane began, his expression grave. "Earlier in this broadcast we reported a midair collision near Dallas between a Muskegon Airlines Airbus and a private plane. The private plane crashed There are no survivors. The Airbus, on fire, crash-landed at DallasFort Worth Airport a few minutes ago and there are heavy casualties. On the scene is CBA News correspondent Harry Partridge who has just filed this report.
"
Only seconds before had the frantic editing in the One-inchtape Room been completed. Now, on monitors throughout the building and on millions of TV sets in the Eastern and Midwestern United States and across the Canadian border, a dramatic picture of an approaching, burning Airbus filled the

screen and Partridge's voice began, "Pilots in a long-ago war called it comin' in on a wing and a prayer . . . "
The exclusive report and pictures had, as the final item, made the first-feed National Evening News.
There would be a second feed of the National Evening News immediately after the first. There always was and it would be broadcastin the East by

affiliate stations who did not take the first feed, widely in the Midwest, and most Western stations would record the second feed for broadcast later. The Partridge report from DFW would, of course, lead the second feed and while competing networks might, by now, have after-the-fact pictures for their second feeds, CBA's while-ithappened pictures remained a world exclusive and would be repeated many times in the days to follow.
There were two minutes between the end of the first feed and the beginning of the second and Crawford Sloane used them to telephone Chuck Insen.
"Listen," Sloane said, "I think we ought to put the Saudi piece back in."
Insen said sarcastically, "I know you have a lot of pull. Can you arrange an extra five minutes' air time?"
"Don't play games. That piece is important."
"It's also dull as oil. I say no."
"Does it matter that I say yes?"
"Sure it matters. Which is why we'll talk about it tomorrow. Meanwhile, I'm sitting here with certain responsibilities."
"Which include-or ought to-sound judgments about foreign news."
"We each have our jobs," Insen said, "and the clock is creeping up on yours. Oh, by the way, you handled the Dallas thing-at both ends-nicely."
Without answering, Sloane hung up the telephone at the broadcast desk. As an afterthought he told the writer beside him, "Ask someone to get Harry Partridge on the phone at Dallas. I'll talk with him during the next break. I want to congratulate him and the others."
The stage manager called out, "Fifteen seconds!"

Yes, Sloane decided, there would be a discussion between himself and Insen tomorrow and it would be a showdown. Perhaps Insen had outlived his usefulness and it was time for him to go.
Chuck Insen was tight-lipped and unsmiling when, after the end of the second feed and before going home, he returned to his office to gather up a dozen magazines for later reading.
Reading, reading, reading, to keep informed on a multitude of fronts, was a news executive producer's burden. Wherever he was and no matter what the hour, Insen felt obliged to reach for a newspaper, a magazine, a newsletter, a nonfiction booksometimes obscure publications in all categories-the way others might reach for a cup of coffee, a handkerchief, a cigarette. Often he awoke in the night and read, or listened to overseas news on short-wave broadcasts. At home, through his personal computer, he had access to the major news wire services and each

morning, at 5 A.M., reviewed them all. Driving in to work, he listened to radio news-mainly to CBS whose radio network news he, like many professionals, acknowledged as the finest.

It was, as Insen saw it, this widest possible view of the ingredients of news, and of subjects which interested ordinary people that made his own news judgments superior to those of Crawford Sloane, who thought too often in elitist terms.

Insen had a philosophy about those millions out there who watched the National Evening News. What most viewers wanted, he believed, was the answers to three basic questions: Is the world safe? Are my home and family safe? Did anything happen today that was interesting? Above all else, Insen tried to ensure that the news each evening supplied those answers.

He was sick and tired, Insen thought angrily, of the anchorman's I-know-best, holier-than-thou attitude about news selection, which was why tomorrow the two of them would have a slam-bang confrontation during which Insen would say exactly what he was thinking now, and to hell with consequences.

What were those consequences likely to be? Well, in the past, in any kind of contest between a network news

anchorman and his executive producer, the anchor had invariably won, with the producer having to look for work elsewhere. But a lot of things were changing in network news. There was a different climate nowadays, and there could always be a first, with an anchor departing and a producer staying on.

With just that possibility in mind, a few days ago Insen had had an exploratory, strictly confidential phone talk with Harry Partridge. Would Partridge, the executive producer wanted to know, be interested in coming in from the cold, settling down in New York, and becoming anchor of the National Evening News? When he chose to, Harry could radiate authority and would fit the part-as he had demonstrated several times by filling in while Sloane was on vacation.

Partridge's response had been a mixture of surprise and uncertainty, but at least he hadn't said no. Crawf Sloane, of course, knew nothing of that conversation.

Either way, concerning himself and Sloane, Insen was convinced they couldn't go on feuding without some kind of a resolution soon.

4

It was 7:40 P.M. when Crawford Sloane, driving a Buick Somerset, left the garage at CBA News headquarters. As usual, he was using a CBA car; one was always available as part of his employment contract and he could have a driver if he wanted, though most of the time he didn't. A few minutes later, as he turned onto Fifty-ninth Street from Third Avenue, heading east toward the FDR Drive, he continued thinking about the broadcast just concluded. At first his thoughts had gone in the direction of Insen, then he decided to put the executive producer out of his mind until tomorrow. Sloane had not the slightest doubt of his ability to cope with Insen and send him on his way-perhaps to a net-

work vice presidency which, despite the high-sounding title, would be a demotion after the National Evening News. It did not occur to Sloane for a moment that the reverse of that process could possibly happen. Had it been suggested fto him, he would undoubtedly have laughed.

Instead, he turned his thoughts to Harry Partridge.

For Partridge, Sloane recognized, the hasty but excellent reporting job from Dallas had been one more solid performance in an outstanding professional career. Through DFW's airport paging system Sloane had been successful in reaching Partridge by phone and had congratulated him, asking him to pass on the same message to Rita, Minh and O'Hara. From an anchorman that kind of thing was expected-a matter of noblesse obligeeven though, where Partridge was concerned, Sloane did it without any great enthusiasm. That underlying feeling was why, on Sloane's part, the conversation had a touch of awkwardness, as conversations with Partridge often did. Partridge had seemed at ease, though he sounded tired.

Within the moving car, in a moment of silent, private honesty, Sloane asked himself-How do I feel about Harry Partridge? The answer, with equal honesty, came back: He makes me feel insecure.

Both question and answer had their roots in recent history.

The two of them had known each other for more than twenty years, the same length of time they had been with CBA News, having joined the network almost simultaneously. From the beginning they were successful professionally, yet opposites in personality.

Sloane was precise, fastidious, impeccable in dress and speech; he

enjoyed having authority and wore it naturally. Juniors were apt to address him as "sir" and let him go through doorways first. He could be cool, slightly distant with people he did not know well, though in any human contact there was almost nothing his sharp mind missed, either spoken or inferred.

Partridge, in contrast, was casual in behavior, his appearance rumpled; he favored old tweed jackets and seldom wore a

suit. He had an easygoing manner which made people he met feel comfortable, his equal, and sometimes he gave the impression of not caring much about anything, though that was a contrived deception. Partridge had learned early as a journalist that he could discover more by not seeming to have authority and by concealing his keen, exceptional intelligence.

They had differences in background too.

Crawford Sloane, from a middle-class Cleveland family, had done his early television training in that city. Harry Partridge served his main TV news apprenticeship in Toronto with the CDC-Canadian Broadcasting Corporation-and before that had worked as an announcer-newscaster-weatherman for small radio and TV stations in Western Canada. He had been born in Alberta, not far from Calgary, in a hamlet called De Winton where his father was a farmer.

Sloane had a degree from Columbia University. Partridge hadn't even finished high school, but in the working world of news his de facto education expanded rapidly.

For a long time at CBA their careers were parallel; as a result they came to be looked on as competitors. Sloane himself considered Partridge a competitor, even a threat to his own progress. He was not sure, though, if Partridge ever felt the same way.

The competition between the two had seemed strongest when both were reporting the war in Vietnam. They were sent there by the network in late 1967, supposedly to work as a team, and in a sense they did. Sloane, though, viewed the war as a golden opportunity to advance his own career; even then he had the anchor desk of the National Evening News clearly in his sights.

One essential in his advancement, Sloane knew, was to appear on the evening news as often as possible. Therefore, soon after arriving in Saigon he decided it was important not to stray too far from "Pentagon East"-headquarters of the United States Military Assistance Command for Vietnam (MACV) at Tan Son Nhut air base, five miles outside Saigon-and,

when he did travel, not to be away too long.
He remembered, even after all these years, a conversation

between himself and Partridge, who had remarked, "Crawf, you'll never get to understand this war by attending the Saigon Follies or hanging around the Caravelle." The first was the name the press corps gave to military briefings; the second, a hotel that was a popular watering hole for the international press, senior military and U.S. Embassy civilians.
"If you're talking about risks," Sloane had answered huffily, "I'm willing to take as many as you are."
"Forget risks. We'll all be taking them. I'm talking about coverage in depth. I want to get deep into this country and understand it. Some of the time I want to be free from the military, not just tagging along on fire fights, reporting bangbang the way they'd like us to. That's too easy. And when I do military stuff I want it to be in forward areas so I can find out if what the USIS flacks say is happ~ning really is."
"To do all that," Sloane pointed out, "you'll have to be away for days, maybe weeks at a time."
Partridge had seemed amused. "I thought you'd catch onto that quickly. I'm sure you've also figured that the way I plan to work will make it possible for you to get your face on the news almost every night."
Sloane had been uncomfortable at having his mind read so easily, though in the end that was how it worked out.
No one could ever say about his time in Vietnam that Sloane didn't work hard. He did, and he also took risks. On occasion he went along on missions to where the Viet Cong were operating, was sometimes in the midst of firefights, and in dangerous moments wondered, with normal fear, whether he would make it back alive.
As it turned out, he always did and was seldom away more than twentyfour hours. Also, when he came back it was invariably with dramatic combat pictures plus human interest stories about young Americans in battle, the kind of fare that New York wanted.
Following his plan shrewdly, Sloane didn't overdo the dangerous exploits and was usually available in Saigon for military and diplomatic briefings which, at the time, were newsworthy. Only much later would it be realized how superficial Sloane's

kind of coverage had been and how-for television-dramatic pictures were a first priority, with thoughtful analysis and sometimes truth trailing far

behind. But by the time that became apparent, to Crawford Sloane it didn't matter.

Sloane's overall ploy worked. He had always been impressive on camera and was even more so in Vietnam. He became a favorite with the New York Horseshoe producers and was frequently on the evening news, sometimes three or four times a week, which was how a correspondent built up a following, not only among viewers but with senior decision makers at CBA headquarters.

Harry Partridge, on the other hand, stayed with his own game plan and operated differently. He sought out deeper stories which required longer investigation and which took him, with a cameraman, to more distant parts of Vietnam. He made himself knowledgeable about military tactics, American and Viet Cong, and why sometimes those of both sides didn't work. He studied the balance of forces, stayed in forward areas gathering facts on ground-and air-attack effectiveness, casualties and logistics. Some of his reports contradicted official military statements in Saigon, others confirmed them, and it was that second kind of reporting-faimess to the U.S. military-that separated Partridge and a handful of others from the majority of correspondents reporting out of Vietnam.

The bulk of reportage on the Vietnam war was, by that time, negative and adversary. A generation of young journalists -some of them sympathetic to anti-war protesters at homedistrusted, at times despised, the U.S. military, and most media coverage reflected that conviction. An example was the enemy's Tet offensive. The media proclaimed Tet as a total, smashing communist victory, a claim which calmer research two decades later showed to be untrue.

Harry Partridge was one who, at the time, reported that U.S. forces at Tet were doing much better than they were being giver! credit for; also that the enemy was doing less well than generally reported and had failed in some of its objectives. At first senior Horseshoe producers queried those reports and

wanted to delay them. But after discussion, Partridge's record of solid accuracy won out and most were aired.

One Partridge report which was not aired involved a criticism of negative personal opinion presented in a news context by the venerable Walter Cronkite, then anchorman for CBS.

Cronkite, reporting from Vietnam, declared during a CBS "post-Tet special" that "the bloody experience of Vietnam" would "end in stalemate," and "for every means we have to escalate, the enemy can match us . . ."

He continued, "To say that we are closer to victory today is to believe . . . the optimists who have been wrong in the past." Therefore, Cronkite urged, America should "negotiate, not as victors, but as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy, and did the best they could."

Because of its source, this strong editorializing-intertwined with honest news-had tremendous effect and gave, as a commentator put it, "strength and legitimacy to the anti-war movement." President Lyndon Johnson was reported as saying that if he had lost Walter Cronkite, he had lost the country.

Partridge, through interviews with a series of people on the scene, managed to suggest that not only might Cronkite be wrong but that, well aware of his power and influence, the CBS anchorman had behaved, in one interviewee's words, "like an unelected President and contrary to his own vaunted tenets of impartial journalism."

When Partridge's piece reached New York it was discussed for hours and went to the highest CBA levels before a consensus was reached that to attack the national father figure of "Walter" would be a no-win gambit. However, unofficial copies of the Partridge report were made and circulated privately among TV news insiders.

Partridge's excursions into areas of heavy fighting usually kept him away from Saigon for a week, sometimes longer. Once, when he went underground into Cambodia, he was out of touch for nearly a month.

Every time, though, he returned with a strong story, and after the war some were still remembered for their insights. No

one, including Crawford Sloane, ever disputed that Partridge was a superb journalist.

Unfortunately, because his reports were fewer and therefore less frequent than Sloane's, Partridge didn't get noticed nearly as much.

Something else in Vietnam affected the future of Partridge and Sloane. She was Jessica Castillo.

Jessica . . .

Crawford Sloane, driving almost automatically over a route he traveled twice each working day, had by now turned off Fifty-ninth Street onto York Avenue. After a few blocks he swung right to the northbound ramp of the FDR Drive. Mo-' ments later, alongside the East River and free from intersections and traffic lights, he allowed his speed to increase. His home in Larchmont, north of the city on Long Island Sound, was now half an hour's driving time away.

Behind him, a blue Ford Tempo increased its speed also.
Sloane was relaxed, as he usually was at this time of day, and as his thoughts drifted they returned to Jessica . . . who, in Saigon, had been Harry Partridge's girlfriend . . . but in the end had married Crawford Sloane.
In those days, in Vietnam, Jessica had been twenty-six, slim, with long brown hair, a lively mind and, on occasion, a sharp tongue. She took no nonsensefrom thejournalists with whom she dealt as a junior information officer at the United States Information Agency (known as USIS overseas). The agency had its headquarters on Le Qui Don Street, in the tree-shrouded 'Eincoln Library" which used to be the Rex Theater, and the old theater sign remained in place throughout the USIS tenure. Members of the press went to the agency sometimes more than they needed, bringing queries that they hoped might allow them time with Jessica.
Jessica played along with the attention, which amused her. But in her affections when Crawford Sloane first knew her, Harry Partridge was firmly number one.

Even now, Sloane thought, there were areas in that early relationship between Partridge and Jessica of which he had no knowledge, some things he had never asked about and now would never know. But the fact that certain doors had been closed more than twenty years ago, and had remained closed ever since, never had . . . never would . . . stop him wondering about the details and intimacies of those times.

5

Jessica Castillo and Harry Partridge were drawn instinctually to each other the first time they met in Vietnam-even though the meeting was antagonistic. Partridge had gone to USIS seeking information that he knew existed but that had been refused him by the United States military. It concerned the widespread drug addiction of American troops in Vietnam. Partridge had seen plenty of evidence of addiction during his travels through forward areas. The hard drug being used was heroin and it was plentiful. Through Stateside inquiries made at his request by CBA News, he learned that veterans' hospitals back home were filling up alarmingly with addicts sent back from Vietnam. It was becoming a national problem, rather than just military.

The New York Horseshoe had given a green light to pursue the story, but official sources had clammed up tight and would provide no information. When he entered Jessica's cubicle office and broached the subject, she reacted in the same way. "I'm sorry. That's something I can't talk about. "

Her attitude offended him and he said accusingly, "You mean you won't talk because you've been told to protect somebody. Is it the ambassador, who might be embarrassed by the truth?"

She shook her head "I can't answer that either.

Partridge, growing angry, bored in hard. "So what you're telling me is that you, in this cozy billet, don't give a goddamn about the GIs out in the jungle who are shit-scared, suffering, and then-for an outlet, because they don't know any betterdestroy themselves with drugs, becoming junkies. "

She said indignantly, "I said nothing of the kind.

"Oh, but you said exactly that. "His voice was contemptuous. "You said you won't talk about something rotten and stinking which needs a public airing, needs people to know a problem exists so something can be done. So other green kids coming out here can be warned and maybe saved. Who do you think you're protecting, lady? For sure, not the guys doing the fighting, the ones who count. You call yourself an information officer. I call you a concealment officer. "

Jessica flushed. Unused to being talked to that way, her eyes blazed with

anger. A glass paperweight was on her desk and her fingers clenched around it. For a moment Partridge expected her to throw it and prepared to duck. Then, noticeably, the anger diminished and Jessica asked quietly, ""at is it you want to know?"
Partridge moderated his tone to match hers. "Statistics mostly. I know someone has them, that records have been kept, surveys taken. "
She tossed back her brown hair in a gesture he would later become used to and love. "Do you know Rex Talbot?"
"Yes. " Talbot was a young American vice-consul at the Embassy on Thong Nhut Street, a few blocks away.
"I suggest you ask him to tell you about the MACV Project Nostradamus report. "
Despite the seriousness, Partridge smiled, wondering what kind of mind dreamed up that title.
Jessica continued, "There's no need to have Rex know I sent you. You could let him think you know . . . "
He finished the sentence. ". . . a little more than I really do. It's an o1djournalist's trick "
"The kind of trick you just used on me.
"Sort of, " he acknowledged with a smile.
The Evening News 45
"I knew it all the time, " Jessica said. "Ijust let you get away with it.
"
"You're not as soulless as I thought, " he told her. "How about exploring that subject some more over dinner tonight?"
To her own surprise, Jessica accepted.
Later, they discovered how much they enjoyed each other's company and it turned out to be thefirst of many such meetings. For a surprisingly long time, though, their meetings remained no more than that, which was something Jessica, with her blunt, plain speaking, made clear at the beginning.
"I'd like you to understand that whatever else goes on around here, I am no pushover. If I go to bed with someone it has to mean something special and important to me, and also to the other person, so don't say you weren't warned. " Their relationship also endured long separations, due to Partridge's travels to other parts of Vietnam.
But inevitably a moment came when desire overwhelmed them both. They had dined together at the Caravelle, where Partridge was staying. Afterward, in the hotel garden, an oasis of quiet amid the discord of

Saigon, he had reached for Jessica and she came to him eagerly. As they kissed, she clung tightly, urgently, and through her thin dress he sensed her physical excitement. Years later, Partridge would remember that time as one of those rare and magic moments when allproblems and concerns-Vietnam, the war's ugliness, future uncertainties-seemedfar away, so all that mattered was the present and themselves.

He asked her softly, "Shall we go to my room?"

Without speaking, Jessica nodded her consent.

Upstairs in the room, with the only lightingfrom outside and while they continued to hold each other, he undressed her and she helped him where his 6nds proved awkward.

As he entered her, she told him, "Oh, I love you sol"

Long after, he could never remember if he told her that he truly loved her too, but knew he had and always would.

Partridge was also deeply moved by the discovery that Jessica had been a virgin. Then, as time went by and their lovemaking

continued, they found the same delight in each other physically that they had in other ways.

In any other time and place they might have married quickly. Jessica wanted to be married; she also wanted children. But Partridge, for reasons he afterward regretted, held back In Canada he had had one failed marriage and knew that marriages of TV newsmen so often were disastrous. TV news correspondents led peripatetic lives, could be away from home two hundred days a year or more, were unused tofamily responsibilities and encountered sexual temptations on the road which few could permanently resist. As a result, spouses often grew away from each other-intellectually as well as sexually. When reunited after long absences, they met as strangers.

Combined with all that was Vietnam. Partridge knew his life was at risk each time he left Saigon and, though luck had been with him so far, the odds were against that luck enduring. So it wasn't fair, he reasoned, to burden someone else-in this case Jessica-with persistent worry, and the likelihood of heartbreak later on.

He confided some of this to Jessica early one morning after they had spent the night together, and he could not have picked a worse occasion. Jessica was shocked and jolted by what she perceived as a puerile cop-out by a man to whom she had already given her heart and body. She told Partridge coldly that their relationship was at an end

Only much later did Jessica realize she had misread what, in reality, was

kindness and deep caring. Partridge left Saigon a few hours afterward, and that was the time he went into Cambodia and was away a month.
Crawford Sloane had met Jessica several times while she was in Harry Partridge's company, and saw her occasionally in the USIS offices when he had queries that took him there. On all occasions Sloane was strongly attracted to Jessica and longed to know her better. But recognizing she was Partridge's girl, and being punctilious in such matters, he had never asked her for a date, as others often did.
But when Sloane learned, from Jessica herself that she and Partridge had "split up, " he promptly asked Jessica to dine with

him. She agreed to, and they went on seeing each other. Two weeks later, confiding that he had loved herfor a long timefrom a distance and now with closer knowledge adored her, Sloane proposed marriage.
Jessica, taken by surprise, asked for time to think
Her mind was a tumult of emotions. Jessica's love for Harry had been passionate and all-consuming. No man had ever swept her away as he had done; she doubted if anyone ever would again. Instinct told her that what she and Harry had shared was a once-in-a-lifelime experience. And she still loved him, she was sure of that. Even now Jessica missed him desperately; if he came back and asked her to marry him she would probably say yes. But, clearly, Harry wasn't going to ask He had rejected her and Jessica's bitterness and anger lingered A part of her wanted to
. . . just show him! So there!
On the other hand, there was Crawf Jessica liked Crawford Sloane . . . No-more than that! . . . She felt a strong affectionfor him. He was kind andgentle, loving, intelligent, interesting to be with. And Crawf was solid. He possessed-Jessica had to admit--a stability that Harry, while an excitingperson, sometimes lacked Butfor a lifetime, which was how Jessica saw marriage, which of the two loves on different levels---one with excitement, the other with stability-was more important? She wished she could be positive about the answer.
Jessica might also have asked herself the question, but did not: Why make a decision at all? Why not wait? She was still young . . .
Unacknowledged, but implicit in her thinking, was the presence of all of them in Vietnam. The fervor of war surrounded them; it was all-pervading like the air they breathed There was a sense of time being compressed and accelerated, as if clocks and calendars were running at extra speed Each day of life seemed to spill in a precipitous torrent through the open

floodgates of a dam. Who among them knew how many days remained? Which of them would ever resume a normal pace of living?
In every war, throughout all human experience, it had been ever thus.

After weighing everything as best she could, the next day Jessica accepted Crawford Sloane's proposal.
They were married at once, in the U.S. Embassy by an army chaplain. The ambassador attended the ceremony and afterward gave a reception in his private suite.
Sloane was ecstatically happy. Jessica assured hersezrthat she was too; determinedly she matched Crawf's mood.
Partridge did not learn of the marriage until his return to Saigon and only then did it dawn on him, with overpowering sadness, how much he had lost When he met Jessica and Sloane to congratulate them, he tried to conceal his emotions. With Jessica, who knew him so well, he did not wholly succeed.
But if Jessica shared some of Partridge's feelings, she kept them to herself and also put them behind her. She reasoned that she had made her choice and was determined to be a good wife to Sloane which, across the years, she was. As in any normal marriage there were some midway conflicts and disruptions, but they healed Now-incredibly, it seemed to all concerned-lessica and Crawford's silver wedding anniversary was less than five years distant.
At the wheel of the Buick Somerset, Crawford Sloane was midpoint in his journey home. The Triboro Bridge behind him, he was on the Bruckner Expressway and would shortly join Interstate 95, the New England Thruway, exiting at Larchmont.
The same Ford Tempo that had followed him from CBA News headquarters was still behind.
It was not surprising that Sloane had failed to notice the other car, either tonight or on other occasions during the past several weeks when it had followed him. One reason was that the driver-a young, thin-lipped, cold-eyed Colombian cur-

rently using the code name Carlos-was expert at stalking any quarry.
Carlos, who had entered the United States two months earlier using a forged passport, had been involved in this stealthy surveillance for almost four weeks, along with six others from Colombia-five men and a woman. Like Carlos, the others were identified only by fictitious first names, which

in most cases covered criminal records. Until their present task began, the members of the group were unknown to one another. Even now, only Miguel, the leader, who tonight was several miles away, was aware of real identities.

The Ford Tempo had been repainted twice during the short period of its use. Also, it was just one of several vehicles available, the objective being not to create a detectable pattern.

What had accumulated from the surveillance was a precise and detailed study of Crawford Sloane's movements and those of his family.

In the fast-moving expressway traffic, Carlos allowed three other cars to move up between himself and Sloane, though keeping the tailed Buick still in sight. Beside Carlos, another man noted the time and made an entry in a log. This was Julio -swarthy, argumentative and bad-tempered, with an ugly scar from a knifing down the left side of his face. He was the group's communications specialist. Behind them, in the back seat, was a mobile cellular phone, one of six that linked vehicles and a hidden temporary headquarters.

Both Carlos and Julio were ruthless, trained marksmen and were armed.

After slowing down and negotiating a traffic diversion caused by a multiple rear-end collision in the Thruway's left lane, Sloane resumed his speed and also his thoughts about Vietnam, Jessica, Partridge and himself.

Despite his own great success in Vietnam and since, Crawford Sloane had continued to worry about Partridge, just a little. It was why he was slightly uncomfortable in Partridge's company. And on a personal level he occasionally wondered:

Did Jessica ever think about Harry, remembering the privileged, private moments there must have been between them?

Sloane had never asked his wife any truly intimate questions about her long-ago relationship with Harry. He could have done so many times, including at the beginning of their marriage, and Jessica, being Jessica, would probably have answered frankly. But posing that kind of question was simply not Sloane's style. Nor, he supposed, did he really want to know the answers. Yet, paradoxically, after all these years those old thoughts came back to him at times with newer questions: Did Jessica still care about Harry? Did the two of them ever communicate? Did Jessica, even now, have residual regrets?

And professionally . . . Guilt was not a word that preoccupied Sloane in relation to himself, but down in some private corner of his soul he knew

that Partridge had been the better journalist in Vietnam, though he himself gained more acclaim and on top of that married Partridge's girl . . . All of it illogical, he knew, an insecurity that need not be . . . but the visceral unease persisted.

The Ford Tempo had now switched places and was several vehicles ahead of Sloane. The Larchmont exit from the Thruway was only a few miles farther on and Carlos and Julio, by this time knowing Sloane's habits, were aware that he would exit there. Getting ahead of a quarry on occasion was an old trick of tailing. Now the Ford would take the Larchmont exit first, be waiting for Sloane when he turned off, then would fall in behind him once more.

Some ten minutes later, as the CBA anchorman entered the streets of Larchmont, the Ford Tempo followed discreetly at a distance, stopping well short of the Sloane house which was located on Park Avenue, facing Long Island Sound.

The house, befitting someone with Sloane's substantial income, was large and imposing. Painted white under a gray slate roof, it was set in a sculptured garden with a circular driveway. Twin pine trees marked the entrance. A wrought-iron lantern hung over double front doors.

Sloane used a remote control in the car to open the door of a three-car garage, then drove in, the door closing behind him.

The Ford moved forward and, from a discreet distance, the surveillance continued.

Sloane could hear voices and laughter as he walked through a short, closed corridor between the garage and the house. They stopped as he opened a door and entered the carpeted hallway onto which most of the downstairs rooms opened. He heard Jessica call out from the living room, "Is that you, Crawf?"

He made a standard response. "If it isn't, you're in trouble."

Her melodious laugh came back, "Welcome, whoever you are! Be with you in a minute."

He heard a clink of glasses, the sound of ice being shaken, and knew that Jessica was mixing martinis, her nightly homecoming ritual to help him unwind from whatever the day had brought.

"Hi, Dad!" the Sloanes' eleven-year-old son, Nicholas, shouted from the stairway. He was tall for his age and slimly built. His intelligent eyes lit up as he ran to hug his father.

Sloane returned the embrace, then ran his fingers through the boy's curly

brown hair. It was the kind of greeting he appreciated, and he had Jessica to thank for that. Almost from the time Nicky was born, she had conveyed to him her belief that feelings about loving should be expressed in tactile ways.

At the beginning of their marriage, being demonstrative did not come easily to Sloane. He held back in matters of emotion, left certain things unsaid, to be assumed by the other party. It was part of his built-in reserve, but Jessica would have none of it, had worked hard at smashing the reserve and, for herself, then Nicky, had succeeded.

Sloane recalled her telling him early on, "When you're married, darling, barriers come down. It's why we were 'joined together'-remember those words? So for the rest of our lives, you and I are going to say to each other exactly what we feeland sometimes show it too."

That final phrase had been about sex, which for a long time after their marriage held surprises and adventure for Sloane. Jessica had acquired several of the explicit, illustrated sex books which were plentiful in the East and loved to experiment, trying new positions. After being slightly shocked and diffident at first, Sloane came around to enjoying it too, though it was always Jessica who took the lead.

(There were times when he couldn't help wondering: Had she owned those sex books when she and Partridge were going together? Had they made use of what was in them? But Sloane had never summoned the nerve to ask, perhaps because he feared both answers might be yes.)

With other people his reserve lived on. Sloane couldn't remember when he had last hugged his own father, though a few times recently he had considered doing so but held back, uncertain how old Angus-stiff, even rigid in his personal behaviormight react.

"Hello, darling!" Jessica appeared wearing a soft green dress, a color he always liked. They embraced warmly, then went into the living room. Nicky came in for a while, as he usually did; he had eaten dinner earlier and would go to bed soon.

Sloane asked his son, "How's everything in the music world?"

"Great, Dad. I'm practicing Gershwin's Prelude Number Two."

His father said, "I remember that. Didn't Gershwin write it when he was young?"

"Yes, twenty-eight."

"Near the beginning, I think, it goes dum-de-dah-dum-DEE-da-da-de-dum-de-dum-de-dum-de-dum." As he attempted to sing, Nicky

and
Jessica laughed.
"I know the part you mean, Dad, and maybe why you re-The Evening News 53
member it." Nicky crossed to a grand piano in the room, then sang in a clear young tenor, accompanying himself
"In the sky the bright stars glittered On the bank thepale moon
shone And from Aunt Dinah's quilting party I was seeing Nellie
home. "
Sloane's forehead creased with an effort of memory. "I've heard that
before. Isn't it an old song from the Civil War days?"
Nicky beamed. "Right on, Dad!"
"I think I understand," his father said. "What you're telling me is, some
of those notes are the same as in Gershwin's Prelude Two."
Nicky shook his head. "The other way 'round-the song was first. But no one knows if Gershwin knew the song and used it, or if it was just chance."
"And we'll never know." Amused, and impressed with Nicky's knowledge, Sloane exclaimed, "I'll be damned!"
Neither he nor Jessica could remember exactly how old Nicky had been when he began to exhibit an interest in music, but it was in his very early
years and now music was Nicky's dominant concern.
Nicky had gravitated to the piano and took lessons from a former concert pianist, an elderly Austrian living in nearby New Rochelle. A few weeks earlier, speaking with a heavy accent, the tutor had told Jessica, "Your
son already has a mastery of music unusual for his age. Later he may follow one of several paths-as a performer or composer, or perhaps a scholar and savant. But more important is that for Nicholas, music speaks with the tongues of angels and of joy. It is part of his soul. It will, I predict,
be the mainstream of his life."
Jessica glanced at her watch. "Nicky, it's getting late."
"Ah, Mom, let me stay up! Tomorrow's a school holiday."
"And your day will be as full as any other. The answer is no.,,
Jessica was the family disciplinarian and, after affectionate

good-nights, Nicky left. Soon after, they could hear him playing on a portable electronic keyboard in his bedroom which he used when the living-room piano was unavailable.
In the softly lighted room, Jessica returned to the martinis she had been mixing earlier. Watching her dispense them, Sloane thought, How lucky can you get? It was a feeling he often had about Jessica and the way she looked

after more than twenty years of marriage. She no longer wore her hair long and didn't bother to conceal streaks of gray. There were also lines around her eyes. But her figure was slim and shapely and her legs still brought men's eyes back for a second glance. Overall, he thought, she really hadn't changed and he still felt proud to enter a room, any room, with Jessica beside him.

As she handed him a glass she commented, "It sounded like a rough day?"

"It was pretty much that way. You watched the news?"

"Yes. Those poor passengers on that airplane! What a terrible way to die! They must have known for the longest time they didn't have a chance, then just had to sit there, waiting."

With a pang of conscience, Sloane realized he hadn't thought about that at all. Sometimes as a professional news person you became so preoccupied with gathering the news, you forgot the human beings who made it. He wondered: Was it callousness after long exposure to the news or a necessary insulation, the kind acquired by doctors? He hoped it was the second, not the first.

"If you saw the airplane story," he said, "you saw Harry. What did you think?"

"He was good."

Jessica's answer seemed indifferent. Sloane watched her, waiting for more, wondering: In her mind, was the past completely dead?

"Harry was better than good. He did it like that," Sloane said, snapping his fingers. "Without warning. With hardly any time." He went on to describe CBA's luck in having the crew in the DFW terminal. "Harry, Rita and Minh all came through. We beat the pants off the other networks."

"Harry and Rita seem to be working a lot together. Is something going on there?"

"No. They're simply a good working team."

"How do you know?"

"Because Rita's having an affair with Les Chippingham. The two of them think nobody knows. Of course everybody does."

Jessica laughed. "My god! You're an incestuous little group."

Leslie Chippingham was the president of CBA News. It was Chippingharn whom

Sloane intended to see the next day about the removal of Chuck Insen as executive producer.

"Don't include me in any of that," he told Jessica. "I'm happy with what

I have at home."
The martini had relaxed him, as it always did, though neither he nor Jessica was a heavy drinker. One martini plus a glass of wine with dinner was their limit, and during the day Sloane never drank at all.
"You're feeling good tonight," Jessica said, "and you have another reason to." She got up and from a small bureau across the room brought back an envelope, already opened-a normal procedure since Jessica handled most of their private business. "It's a letter from your publisher and a royalty statement."
He took the papers out and studied them, his face lighting with a smile. Crawford Sloane's book The Camera and the Truth had been published several months earlier. Written with a collaborator, it was his third.
In terms of sales, the book got off to a slow start. The New York critics savaged it, leaping at the opportunity to humble someone of Crawford Sloane's stature. But in places like Chi cago, Cleveland, San Francisco and Miami, reviewers liked the book. More important, a ' s weeks passed, certain comments in it gained attention in general news columns-the best kind of publicity any book can have.
In a chapter about terrorism and hostages Sloane had written bluntly of "the shame most Americans felt after the 198687 revelations that the U.S. Government bought freedom for a

handful of our hostages in the Middle East at the expense of thousands of Iraqi deaths and mutilations, not only on the Iran-Iraq battlefield but among civilians."
The war casualties, he pointed out, resulted from weaponry supplied by the U.S. to Iran in payment for the hostages' release. "A modem dirty thirty pieces of silver" was how Sloane had described the payment, and he quoted Kipling's Dane-geld.-

We never pay any-one Dane-geld,
No matter how trifling the cost;
For the end of that game is oppression and shame,
And the nation thatplays it is lostl
Other applauded Sloane remarks were:
-No politician anywhere has the guts to say it aloud, but hostages, including American hostages, should be regarded as expendable. Pleas from hostages'families should be heard sympathetically, but should not sway

government policy.
-The only way to deal with terrorists is by counterterrorism, which means whenever possible seeking out and covertly destroying them-the only language they understand It includes not striking bargains with terrorists or paying ransom, directly or indirectly, everl
-Terrorists who observe no civilized code should not expect, when caught red-handed, to shelter under laws and principles which they despise. The British, in whom respectfor law is deeply ingrained, have been forced to bend that law at times in defending themselvesfrom a depraved and ruthless IRA.
-No matter what we do, terrorism will not go away because the governments and organizations backing terrorists don't really want settlements or accommodations. They are fanatics using other fanatics and perverted religions as their weapons.
- We who live in the United States will not remain freefrom terrorism in our own backyard much longer. But neither mentally nor in other ways are we preparedfor this pervasive, ruthless kind of warfare.
When the book came out, some of CBA's brass were ner-The Evening News 57 vous about the "hostages should be regarded as expendable" and "covertly destroying" statements, fearing they would create political and public resentment of the network. As it turned out, there was no reason for concern and the executives quickly joined the chorus of approval.
Sloane beamed as he put aside the impressive royalty accounting.
"You deserve what's happened and I'm proud of you," Jessica said. "Especially because it isn't like you to take chances in being controversial." She paused. "Oh, by the way, your father phoned. He's arriving early tomorrow and would like to stay a week."
Sloane grimaced. "That's pretty soon after the last time."
"He's lonely and he's getting old. Maybe if you're that way someday you'll have a favorite daughter-in-law you'll want to be with."
They both laughed, knowing how fond Angus Sloane was of Jessica and vice versa, and that in some ways the two were closer than the father and son. Angus had been living alone in Florida since the death of Crawford's mother several years earlier.
"I enjoy having him around the house," Jessica said. "So does Nicky."
"Okay then, that's fine. But while Dad's here, try to use your great influence to stop him sounding off so much about honor, patriotism and all the rest."
"I know what you mean. I'll do what I can."

Behind the exchange was the fact that the elder Sloane could never quite let go of his World War 11 hero status-as an Army Air Forces lead bombardier who won a Silver Star and the Distinguished Flying Cross. After the war he had been a certified public accountant-not a spectacular career, though on retirement it provided him a reasonable pension and independence. But the military years continued to dominate Angus's thoughts.

While Crawford respected his father's war record, he knew the old man could be tedious when launched on one of his favorite themes-"the disappearance nowadays of integrity and

moral values," as he was apt to put it. Jessica, though, managed to let her father-in-law's preachments flow over her.

Talk between Sloane and Jessica continued over dinner, always a favorite time. Jessica had a maid come in daily but prepared dinner herself, managing to be organized so that she spent minimal time in the kitchen after her husband's arrival for the evening.

Sloane said thoughtfully, "I know what you meant back there, that it isn't like me to venture out on limbs. I guess, in my life, I haven't taken chances as often as I might. But I felt strongly about some things in the book. Still do."

"The terrorism part?"

He nodded. "Since that was written I've done some thinking about how terrorism might, how it could, affect you and me. It's why I've taken some special precautions. Until now I haven't told you, but you ought to know."

While Jessica regarded him curiously, he went on. "Have you ever thought that someone like me could be kidnapped, become a hostage?"

"I have when you've been overseas."

fie shook his head. "It could happen here. There's always a first and I, like some others on television, work in a goldfish bowl. If terrorists begin operating in the U.S.-and you know I believe they will, quite soon-people like me will be attractive bait because anything we do, or is done to us, gets noticed in a big way."

"What about families? Could they be targets too?"

"That's highly unlikely. Terrorists would be after a name. Someone everybody knows."

Jessica said uneasily, "You spoke of precautions. What kind?"

"The kind that would be effective after I'd been taken hostage-if it

happened. I've worked it out with a lawyer I know, Sy Dreeland. He has all the details, and authority to make them public if and when that's needed."
"I don't much like this conversation," Jessica said. "You're making me nervous, and how can precautions be any good after something bad has already happened?"

"Before it happens," he said, "I have to trust the network to provide some kind of security protection, and they do that now, more or less. But afterward, just as I said in the book, I wouldn't want any kind of ransom to be paid by anyone, including from our own money. So one thing I've done is make a solemn declaration-it's all in legal form-to that effect."
"Are you telling me all our money would be tied up, frozen?"
He shook his head. "No. I couldn't do that, even if I wanted. Almost everything we have-this house, bank accounts, stocks, gold, foreign currencies-you and I own jointly and you could do whatever you wanted with them, just as you can now. But after that solemn declaration was made public and everybody knew the way I felt, I'd like to think you wouldn't go some other route."
Jessica protested, "You'd rob me of the right to make a decision!"
He said gently, "No, dearest. I'd relieve you of a terrible responsibility and a dilemma."
"But supposing the network were willing to pay a ransom?"
"I doubt they would be, but certainly not against my wishes which are on record in the book and repeated in the declaration."
"You said the network is giving you some kind of security protection. It's the first I've heard of it. Just what kind?"
"When there are telephoned threats, or screwball letters which sound a certain way, or a rumor of some kind of possible attack-it happens at all networks and especially to anchor people--then private security men are called in. They hang around the CBA News Building, wherever I'm working, doing whatever security people are supposed to. It's happened with me a few times."
"You've never told me."
"No, I guess I never have," he conceded.
"What else haven't you told me?" There was an edge to Jessica's voice, though clearly she had not made up her mind whether to be angry at the concealment or just anxious.

"Nothing else at the network, but there are some other things I've arranged with Dreeland."
"Would it be too much to let me know about those too?"
"It's important that you know." Sloane ignored the sarcasm which his wife sometimes resorted to when emotional. "When someone is kidnapped, no matter where in the world, nowadays it's a certainty they will make, or be compelled to make, videotape recordings. Then those recordings turn up, sometimes are played on television, but no one knows for sure whether they were voluntary or forced and, if forced, to what extent. But if there's a prearrangement of signals, someone who is taken hostage has a good chance of getting a message back that is clearly understood. Incidentally, more and more people who might one day be hostages are doing that, leaving instructions with their lawyers and establishing a signal code."
"If this weren't so serious, it would sound like a spy novel," Jessica said. "So what kind of signals have you arranged?"
"Licking my lips with my tongue, which is something anyone might do without its being noticed, would mean, Y am doing this against my will. Do not believe anything I am saying.' Scratching or touching my right earlobe would mean, 'My captors are well organized and strongly armed.' Doing the same thing to my left earlobe would mean, 'Security here is sometimes lax. An attack from outside might succeed' There are some others, but we'll leave it for now. I don't want all this to distress you."
"Well, it does distress me," Jessica said. She wondered: Could it happen? Could Crawf be kidnapped and spirited away? It seemed unbelievable, but almost every day unbelievable things did happen.
"Apart from fear," she said thoughtfully, "I have to admit some of this fascinates me, because it's a side of you I don't believe I've ever seen before. But I do wonder why you haven't taken that security course we talked about."
It was an anti-terrorism course put on by a British company, Paladin Security, that had been featured on several American news programs. The course lasted a week, and in part was intended to prepare people for just the possibility

Sloane had raised-how to behave as a victim in a hostage situation. Also taught was unarmed self defense-something Jessica had urged her husband to learn after a savage attack on the CBS anchorman Dan Rather on a New

York street in 1986. The unprovoked attack by two unknown men had sent Rather to a hospital; the assailants were never found.
"Finding time for that course is the problem," Sloane said. "Speaking of that, are you still taking CQB lessons?"
CQB was shorthand for close quarters battle, a specialized version of unarmed combat practiced by the elite British Army SAS. The instruction was given by a retired British brigadier now living in New York, and that was something else Jessica had wanted Crawford to do. But when he simply couldn't find time she took the lessons herself.
"I'm not taking them regularly anymore," she answered. "Though I do an hour every month or two to keep refreshed, and Brigadier Wade sometimes gives lectures which I go to."
Sloane nodded. "Good."
That night, still troubled by what had passed between them, Jessica found it difficult to sleep.
Outside, the occupants of the Ford Tempo watched as one by one the lights in the house went off. Then they made a report by cellular phone and, ending that day's vigil, drove away.
Shortly after 6:30 A.M. the surveillance of the Sloanes' Larchmont house resumed. A Chevrolet Celebrity was being used this morning, and slouched down in the car's front seats-a standard observation technique so the occupants would not be noticed by other passing vehicles-were the Colombians, Carlos and Julio. The Chevy was parked beyond the Sloane house

on a convenient side street, the observation being carried on through side and rearview mirrors.
Both men in the car were feeling tense, knowing that this would be a day of action, the culmination of long and careful planning.
At 7:30 A.m. an unforeseen event occurred when a taxi arrived at the Sloane house. From the taxi an elderly man carrying a suitcase emerged. He went into the house and remained there. The newcomer's unexpected presence meant a complication and prompted a call by cellular phone to the watchers' temporary headquarters some twenty miles away.
Their efficient communications and ample transport typified an operation on which expense had not been spared. The conspirators who had inspired and organized the surveillance and what was to follow were expert, resourceful and had access to plenty of money.
They were associates of Colombia's Medellin cartel, a coalition of vicious, criminal, fabulously wealthy drug lords. Operating with bestial savagery,

the cartel had been responsible for countless violent, bloody murders including the 1989 assassination of Colombian presidential candidate Senator Luis Carlos Gal6n. Since 19 81 more than 220 judges and court officials had been murdered, plus police, journalists and others. In 1986, a Medellin alliance with the socialist-guerrilla faction M-19 resulted in a killing orgy of ninety deaths, including half the members of Colombia's Supreme Court.

Despite the Medellin cartel's repulsive record, it enjoyed close ties with the Roman Catholic Church. Several cartel bosses boasted private chapels. A cardinal spoke favorably of Medellin's people and a bishop blandly admitted taking money from drug traffickers.

Murder was not the only process by which the cartel ruled. Large-scale bribery and corruption financed by the drug lords ran like a massive cancer through Colombia's government, judiciary, police and military, beginning at topmost levels and filtering to the lowest. A cynical description of the drug trade's standard offer to officialdom was plata o plomo-silver or lead.

For a while, through 1989 and 1990 during a wave of hor-
ror following the Galin assassination, cartel leaders were inconvenienced by law enforcement efforts against them, including some modest intervention by the United States. A retaliatory response, accurately described by the drug conspirators as "total war," involved massive violence, bombings and still more killings, a process which seemed certain to continue. But survival of the cartel and its ubiquitous drug trade-perhaps. with fresh leaders and bases-was never in doubt.

In the present instance, while operating undercover in the United States, Medellin was working not for itself but for the Peruvian Maoist-terrorist organization Sendero Luminoso, or "Shining Path." Recently in Peru, Sendero Luminoso had grown more powerful while the official government became increasingly inept and weak. Where once Sendero's domain had been limited to the Andes Mountains, Huallaga Valley and centers like Ayacucho and Cuzco, nowadays its bombing teams and assassination squads roamed the capital city, Lima.

Two strong reasons existed for linkages between Sendero Luminoso and the Medellin cartel. First, Sendero customarily employed outside criminals to conduct kidnappings which were frequent in Peru, though not widely reported by the American media. Second, Sendero Luminoso controlled most of Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley where sixty percent of the world's coca crop was grown. The coca, in leaf form, was converted to coca paste-the basis of

cocaine-and afterward flown from remote airstrips to the Colombian cartels. In the whole process drug money contributed heavily to Sendero finances, the group exacting a substantial tribute both from coca growers and traffickers-the Medellin connection among them.
Now, in the surveillance Chevrolet, the two Colombian hoodlums were searching through a collection of Polaroid photos which Carlos, an adept photographer, had taken of all persons seen to have entered the Sloane house during the past four weeks. The elderly man who had just arrived was not among them.
Julio, on the telephone, spoke in code phrases.
"A blue package has arrived. Delivery number two. The

package is in storage. We cannot trace the order." Translated: A man has arrived. Delivered by =4 He has gone into the house. We do not know who he is; there is no Polaroid of him.
The sharp-edged voice of Miguel, the project's leader, snapped back through the phone, "What is the docket number?"
Julio, not comfortable with codes, swore softly as he leafed through a notebook to decipher the question. It asked him: "at age is this person?
He looked to Carlos for help. "Un viejo. How old?"
Carlos took the book and read the question. "Tell him, docket seventy-five."
Julio did, producing another terse question. "Is anything special about the blue package?"
Abandoning code, Julio lapsed into plain language. "He carried a suitcase in. Looks like he plans to stay."
South of Hackensack, New Jersey, in a dilapidated rented house, the man whose code name was Miguel silently cursed Julio's carelessness. Those pendejos he wasforced to work withl In the code book was a phrase that would have answered the question, and he had warned all of them, over and over, that on nidio phones anyone could be listening. Scanning devices that could eavesdrop on cellular phone conversations were available in stores. Miguel had heard of a radio station that used a scanner and boasted of foiling several criminal plots.
iEstzipidosl He simply could not get through to the idiots assigned to him-when the success of their mission, plus all their lives and freedoms were at stake-the importance of being vigilant, cautious, on guard, not just most of the time, but all of it.
Miguel himself had been obsessively cautious for as long as he could

remember. It was why he had never been arrested, even though he was on "most wanted" lists of police forces in North and South America and some in Europe too, including Interpol. In the Western Hemisphere he was becoming as keenly sought after as his brother-in-tefforism Abu Nidal, on the other side of the Atlantic. About that, Miguel permitted

himself a certain pride, though never failing to remember that pride could beget overconfidence, and that was something else he guarded against.
Despite all the turmoil he had been a part of, he was still a young man-in his late thirties. In appearance he had always been unremarkable, with average good looks but no more; anyone passing him on a street might think he was a bank clerk or, at best, manager of a small store. In part, this was because he worked hard at seeming unimportant. He also made a habit of being polite to strangers, but not to the point of creating a memorable impression; most who met him casually, not knowing who he was, tended to forget having done so.
In the past, this ordinariness had been Miguel's great good fortune, as was the fact that he did not radiate authority. His power of command remained hidden except to those on whom he exercised it, and then it was unmistakable.
An advantage to Miguel in his present enterprise was that, although Colombian, he could appear and sound American. In the late-1960s and early '70s he had attended the University of California at Berkeley as a foreign student, majoring in English and patiently learning to speak the language without an accent.
In those days he was using his real name, Ulises Rodriguez.
His well-to-do parents had provided the Berkeley education. Miguel's father, a Bogotd neurosurgeon, hoped his only son would follow him into medicine, a prospect in which Miguel had no interest, even then. Instead, as the 1970s neared, the son foresaw basic changes ahead for Colombia--conversion from a prosperous democratic country with an honest legal base to a lawless, unbelievably rich mobsters' haven ruled through dictatorship, savagery and fear. The pharaoh's gold of the new Colombia was marijuana; it would later be cocaine.
Such was Miguel's nature that the coming transition did not faze him. What he coveted was part of the action.
Meanwhile he indulged in some action of his own at Berkeley where he discovered himself to be totally devoid of conscience and able to kill other human beings, swiftly and decisively, without compunction or

unpleasant aftertaste.
The first time it happened was after a sexual session with a

young woman he had met earlier on a Berkeley street while both were getting off a bus. Walking from the bus stop, they got into conversation and discovered they were both freshmen. She seemed to like him and invited him to her apartment, which was at the seedy Oakland end of Telegraph Avenue. It was at a time when such encounters were normal, long before the AIDS-anxiety era.
After some energetic sex he fell asleep, then awakened to find the girl quietly looking through the contents of his wallet. In it were several identification cards in fictitious names; even then he was practicing for his international beyond-the-law future. The girl was too interested in the cards for her own good; perhaps she was some kind of informant, though he never found out.
What he did was spring from the bed, seize and strangle her. He still remembered her look of unbelief as she thrashed around, trying to release herself; then she looked up at him with desperate, silent pleading just before consciousness ebbed. He was interested, in a clinical way, to discover that killing her did not trouble him at all.
Instead, with icy calm he calculated his chances of being caught, which he assessed as nil. While on the bus the two of them had not sat together; in fact they had not known each other. It was unlikely that anyone observed them walking away from the bus stop. On entering the apartment building, and in an elevator going to the fourth floor, they encountered no one.
Taking his time, he used a cloth to wipe the few surfaces where he might have left fingerprints. Then, using a handkerchief to cover his right hand, he turned out all lights and left the apartment, allowing the door to lock behind him.
He avoided the elevator and went down by the emergency stairs, checking that the lobby was empty before passing through it to the street outside.
The next day, and for several days after, he watched local newspapers for any item about the dead girl. But it was nearly a week before her partially decomposed body was discovered, then after two or three days more, with no developments and

apparently no clues, the newspapers lost interest and the story disappeared.
Whatever investigation there was had not connected him with the girl's

murder.
During Miguel's remaining years at Berkeley he killed on two other occasions. Those were across the Bay in San Francisco-what he supposed could be called "thrill killings" of total strangers, though he considered both as serving a need to hone his developing mercenary skills. He must have honed them well because in neither case was he a suspect, or even questioned by police.
After Berkeley, and home in Colombia, Miguel flirted with the developing alliance of mad-dog drug lords. He had a pilot's license and made several flights conveying coca paste from Peru to Colombia for processing. Soon a developing friendship with the infamous but influential Ochoa family helped move him on to larger things. Then came M-19 with its orgy of murders and the Medellin cartel's "total war," beginning in late 1989. Miguel participated in all the major killings, many minor ones, and had long since lost count of the corpses in his wake. Inevitably his name became known internationally, but due to his meticulous precautions there was little else on record.
Miguel's---or Ulises Rodriguez's---connections with the Medellin cartel, M-19 and, more recently, Sendero Luminoso, expanded as the years went by. Through it all, though, he maintained his independence, becoming an international outlaw, a gun-for-hire terrorist who was, because of his efficiency, constantly in demand.
Of course, politics was supposedly a part of it all. Miguel was by instinct a socialist, hated capitalism passionately and despised what he thought of as the hypocritical, decadent United States. But he was also skeptical about politics of any kind and simply enjoyed, as one might an aphrodisiac, the danger, risk and action of the life he led.
It was that kind of life which had brought him to the United States a month and a half ago, to work undercover, preparing for what would happen today, which the entire world would shortly learn of.

The route he had originally planned to the U.S. was roundabout but safe-from Bogotd, Colombia, through Rio de Janeiro to Miami. In Rio he would change passports and identities, appearing in Miami as a Brazilian publisher en route to a New York book fair. But an undercover contact in the American State Department had warned Medellin that U.S. Immigration at Miami had urgently requested all available information on Miguel, especially about identities he was known to have used in the past.
Miguel had, in fact, used the Brazilian publisher identity once before and

although he believed it was still unexposed, it seemed wiser to avoid Miami altogether. Therefore, even though it meant some delay, he flew from Rio to London where he acquired an entirely new identity and a brand-new, official British passport.
The process was easy.
Ah, the innocent democraciesl How stupid and nalve they were! How simple it was to subvert their vaunted freedoms and open systems to advance the purposes of those who, like Miguel, believed in neither!
He had been briefed, before reaching London, on how it was done.
First he went to St. Catherine's House, at the junction of Kingsway and A ldwych, where births, marriages and deaths for England and Wales are recorded There Miguel appliedfor three birth certificates.
"ose birth certificates? Those of anyone whose date of birth was the same as, or close to, his own.
Without speaking to anyone or being questioned, he picked upfive blank birth certificate applications, then walked to where a series of large volumes were on shelves, identified under various years. Miguel-chose 1951. The volumes were divided into quarters of the year. He selected M to R, October-December.
His own birth date was November 14 that year. Leafing through pages, he came across the name "Dudley Martin" who had been born in Keighley, Yorkshire, on November 13. The name seemed suitable; it was neither too distinctive nor as obvi-

ously common as Smith. lPerfecto! Miguel copied the details onto one of the red-printed application forms.
Now he needed two other names. It was his intention to apply for three passports; the second and third applications would be backups in case anything went wrong with thefirst. It was always possible that a current passport had already been issued to the same Dudley Martin. In that case a new one would be refused
He copied the remaining names onto two moreforms. Deliberately, he had selected surnames whose initial letters were widely spacedfrom the "M" of Martin; one began with "B, " the other "Y " That was because, at the Passport Office, different clerks handled different letter groups of applications. The spread ensured that the three applications would be dealt with by separate persons, so any similarity would not be noticed
At allpoints Miguel was careful not to touch any of theforms on which he wrote. That was why he had picked up five forms, the two outside ones

were to protect the others from his fingerprints and he would destroy those later. He had learned since Berkeley that nothing could take away fingerprints totally, not even careful wiping-new high-tech fingerprint tests the Ninhydrin and ion-argon laser, would reveal them.
Next was a short walk to a cashier's window. There he presented the three applications, still managing not to touch any of those he would leave.
A male cashier asked him for a fee offive pounds for each certificate, which he paid in cash. He was told the birth certificates would be ready in two days' time.
During those intervening days he arranged to use three accommodation addresses.
From Kelly's London Business Directory he noted several secretarial agencies to whose unembellished street addresses mail could be sent and then collected Going to one of the agencies, he pa id a fee offifty pou nds, again cash. He had a cover story ready -that he was starting a small business but could not yet afford an office or secretary. As it turned out, no questions were asked He repeated the process at two other agencies which were equally incurious. He now had three separate addresses for the trio of passport applications, none of them traceable to himself.
Then, making use of automatic photography machines, he

obtained three sets ofpassport photographs, each time varying his appearance. For one picture he applied a neat mustache and beard, in another he was clean-shaven and changed his hair parting, for the third he wore heavy, distinctive glasses.
Next day he collected the three birth certificates from St. Catherine's House. As before, no one was in the least interested as to why he wanted them.
He had already obtained passport applications from a post office, again being careful not to touch them. Now, wearing disposable plastic gloves, he completed the forms. On each, as the applicant's address he used one of the accommodation addresses already arranged.
Two photographs had to accompany each passport application. One photo was required to have on it a statement by a '~7rofessionally qualified person, " such as a doctor, engineer or lawyer, identifying the applicant; also the same person affirmed that he or she had known the applicant for at least two years. Based on advice he had received, Miguel wrote and signed the statements himset(, disguising his handwriting and using names and

addresses selected at random from a phone book. He had also bought a rubber stamp set which he used to make the names and addresses more convincing. Despite a warning on the passportform that checks of support signatories were made, in fact they rarely were, and the chance of a false statement's being discovered was extremely remote. There were simply too many applications and too small a staff.

Finally, Miguel dealt with the three "identified" photosthose that had writing on them and therefore would not appear in any of the passports he was applyingfor, but were destinedfor Passport Office file& Using a soft sponge, he applied a weak solution of Domestos, a household bleach similar to the North American product Clorox. This ensured that within two or three months the photographs on file wouldfade and blur, and thus no picture would exist of Miguel, alias Dudley Martin or the other names.

Now Miguel mailed the three applications, each with a postal order for fifteen pounds, knowing it would take at least four

weeks for the passports to be processed and sent back. It was a tedious wait but, for safety's sake, worthwhile.

During this hiatus he mailed several letters to himself at the accommodation addresses. In each instance, after waiting a day or two he telephoned to inquire whether mail was there, and when the answer was '~ves" stated that a messenger would make the collection. He then used unknown youthsfrom the streetfor the pickups, paying them a few pounds and, before revealing himself afterward, watching carefully to ensure that none was followed. It was Miguel's intention to collect the passports when delivered, in the same way.

All three passports arrived within a few days of each other during thefifth week and were collected without a hitch. When the third was in his hands, Miguel smiled to himself. iExcelente! He would use the Dudley Martin passport now, retaining the other twoforfuture use.

One final step remained-to buy a round trip ticket to the United States. Miguel did so that same day.

Before 1988, all holders of British passports required a visa to enter the U.S. Now a visa was not needed, provided the intended visit would not exceed ninety days and the traveler possessed a return ticket. Though Miguel had no intention of using his return portion and later would destroy it, its cost was trifling compared with the risk of another sally through bureaucracy. As to the ninety-day rule, it made no difference to him either way. While he did not expect to stay that long in the U.S.,

when he left it would be either secretly or with another identity, the Dudley Martin passport having been discarded
America's rule change about visas had delighted Miguel. Once more those convenient open systems were being helpful to his kind!
The next morning he flew to New York and, at John F Kennedy Airport, was admitted without hindrance.
After reaching New York, Miguel went immediately to where a sizable Colombian community lived in the borough of Queens and where a safe house had been arranged by a Medellin cartel agent.

"Little Colombia" in Jackson Heights extended from Sixtyninth to Eighty-ninth streets. A thriving narcotics center, it was one of New York's most dangerous high-crime areas where violence was a hiccup and murder commonplace. Uniformed police officers seldom ventured there alone, and even in pairs did not move around on foot at night.
The district's reputation did not bother Miguel at all; in fact, he thought of it as protection while he began his planning, drew on money made secretly available, and assembled the small force he would lead. That force's seven members, including Miguel, had been selected in BogotA.
Julio, at this moment on surveillance duty, and Socorro, the only woman in the group, were Colombians who had been 4.sleeping agents" of Medellin. Several years ago both were sent to the United States, ostensibly as immigrants, their only instructions to establish themselves and wait until such time as their services were needed for drug-related activity or some other criminal purpose. That time had now arrived.
Julio was a communications specialist. Socorro, during her waiting period, had trained and qualified as a nursing aide.
Socorro had an additional affiliation. Through friends in Peru she had become a sympathizer and part-time U.S. agent for the revolutionary Sendero Luminoso. Among Latin Americans such crossovers between politically motivated and profitmotivated crime were common and now, because of her dual connection, Socorro held a watching role also on Sendero's behalf.
Of the remaining four, three others were Colombians, who had been assigned the code names Rafael, Luis and Carlos. Rafael was a mechanic and general handyman. Luis had been chosen for his driving skills; he was expert at eluding pursuit, especially from crime scenes. Carlos was young, quick-witted and had organized the surveillance of the past four

weeks. All three spoke English fluently and had been in the U.S. several times before. On this occasion they had come in unknown to each other and using forged passports with false names. Their instructions were to make themselves known to the same Me-

dellin agent who arranged Miguel's safe house, after which they received orders directly from Miguel.
The final member of the group was an American, his name for this operation, Baudelio. Miguel mistrusted Baudelio totally, yet this man's knowledge and skills were essential to the mission's chances of success.
Now, in Hackensack at the Colombian group's temporary operating center, thinking about the renegade American, Baudelio, Miguel felt a surge of frustration. It compounded his anger with Julio for the careless lapse into plain language during the telephoned report from outside the Sloane house in Larchmont. Still holding the telephone, disciplining himself to subdue personal feelings, Miguel considered his reply.
The surveillance report had referred to a man aged about seventy-five, who arrived at the Sloane house a few minutes earlier with a suitcase he had carried inside-in Julio's careless words, "like he plans to stay."
Before leaving Bogoti, Miguel had received extensive intelligence, not all of which he had shared with the others under his command. Included in this dossier was the fact that Crawford Sloane had a father who fitted the description of the new arrival. Miguel reasoned: Well, if the old man had joined his son, expecting to see him for a while, it constituted a nuisance but nothing more. The father would almost certainly have to be killed later that day, but that presented no problem.
Depressing the telephone transmitter, Miguel ordered, "Take no action about the blue package. Report new billing only." "New billing" meant: if the situation changes.
"Roger," Julio acknowledged curtly.
Replacing the cellular phone, Miguel glanced at his watch. Almost 7:45 A.M. In two hours all seven members of his group would be in place and ready for action. Everything that would follow had been carefully planned, with problems anticipated, precautions taken. When the action started, some improvisation might be needed, but not much.

And there could be no postponement. Outside the United States, other movements, dovetailing with their own, were already in motion.

9

Angus Sloane gave a contented sigh, put down his coffee cup and patted his mouth and silver-gray mustache with a napkin. "I'll state positively," he declared, "that no better breakfast has been served this morning in all of New York State."
"And not one with higher cholesterol either," his son said from behind an opened New York Times across the table. "Don't you know all those fried eggs are bad for your heart? How many was it you had? Three?"
"Who's counting?" Jessica said. "Besides, you can afford the eggs, Crawf. Angus, would you like another?"
"No thank you, my dear." The old man, sprightly and cherubic-he had turned seventy-three a few weeks earliersmiled benevolently at Jessica.
"Three eggs isn't many," Nicky said. "I saw a late movie once about a Southern prison. Somebody in it ate fifty eggs."
Crawford Sloane lowered the Times to say, "The movie you're speaking of was Cool Hand Luke. It starred Paul Newman and came out in 1967. I'm sure, though, that Newman didn't really eat those eggs. He's a fine actor who convinced you that he did."
"There was a salesman here once from the Britannica," Jessica said. "He wanted to sell us an encyclopedia. I told him we already had one, living in."
"Can I help it," her husband responded, "if some of the news I live with sticks to me? It's like fluff, though. You can never tell which bits will stay in memory and what will blow away."
They were all seated in the bright and cheerful breakfast

room, which adjoined the kitchen. Angus had arrived a half hour earlier, embracing his daughter-in-law and grandson warmly and shaking hands more formally with Crawford.
The constraint between father and son-sometimes translating to irritation on Crawford's part-had existed for a long time. Mainly it had to do with differing ideas and values. Angus had never come to terms with the easing in national and personal moral standards which had been accepted by most Americans from the 1960s onward. Angus ardently believed in "honor, duty and the flag"; further, that his fellow countrymen should still exhibit the uncompromising patriotism that existed during World War 11- -the high point

of Angus's life, about which he reminisced ad infinitum. At the same time he was critical of many of the rationales that his own son, in his news-gathering activities, nowadays accepted as normal and progressive.
Crawford, on the other hand, was intolerant of his father's thinking which, as Crawford saw it, was rooted in antiquity and failed to take into account the greatly expanded knowledge on all fronts-notably scientific and philosophical-in the fourplus decades since World War 11. There was another factor, too -a conceit on Crawford's part (though he would not have used that word) that having attained the top of his professional tree, his own judgments about world affairs and the human condition were superior to most other people's.
Now, in the early hours of this day, it already appeared that the gap between Crawford and his father had not narrowed.
As Angus had explained on countless other occasions, and did so once again, all his life he had liked to arrive wherever he was going early in the morning. It was why he had flown from Florida to La Guardia yesterday, stayed overnight with an American Legion crony who lived near the airport, then, soon after dawn, came to Larchmont by bus and taxi.
While the familiar recital was proceeding, Crawford had raised his eyes to the ceiling. Jessica, smiling and nodding as if she had never heard the words before, had prepared for Angus his favorite bacon and eggs, and for herself and the other two served a more healthful homemade granola.

"About my heart and eggs," Angus said-he sometimes took a few minutes to absorb a remark that had been made, and then returned to it-"I figure if my ticker's lasted this long, I shouldn't worry about that cholesterol stuff. Also, my heart and I have been in some tight spots and come through them. I could tell you about a few."
Crawford Sloane lowered his newspaper enough to catch Jessica's eye and warn her with a glance: Change the subject quick, before he gets launched on reminiscences. Jessica gave the slightest of shrugs, conveying in body language: If that's what you want, do it yourself.
Folding the Times, Sloane said, "They have the casualty figures here from that crash at Dallas yesterday. It's pretty grim. I imagine we'll be doing follow-up stories through next week."
"I saw that on your news last night," Angus said. "It was done by that fellow Partridge. I like him. When he does those bits from overseas, especially about our military forces, he makes me feel proud to be American too. Not all your people do that, Crawford."

"Unfortunately there's a joker in there, Dad," Sloane said. "Harry Partridge isn't American. He's a Canadian. Also you'll have to do without him for a while. Today he starts a long vacation." Then he asked curiously, "Who, of our people, doesn't make you feel proud?"
"Just about all the others. It's the way almost all you TV news folk have of denigrating everything, especially our own government, quarreling with authority, always trying to make the President look small. No one seems to be proud of anything anymore. Doesn't that ever bother you?"
When Sloane didn't answer, Jessica told him, sotto voce, "Your father answered your question. Now you should answer his."
"Dad," Sloane said, "you and I have been over this ground before, and I don't think we'll ever have a meeting of the minds. What you call 'denigrating everything' we in the news business think of as legitimate questioning, the public's right to know. It's become a function of news reporting to challenge the

politicians and bureaucrats, to question whatever we're toldand a good thing too. The fact is, governments lie and cheatDemocrat, Republican, liberal, socialist, conservative. Once in office they all do it.
"Sure we who seek out the news get tough at times and occasionally-I admit it-go too far. But because of what we do, a lot of crookedness and hypocrisy gets exposed, which in older days those in power got away with. So because of sharper news coverage, which TV pioneered, our society is a little better, slightly cleaner, and the principles of this country nudged nearer what they should be.
"As to presidents, Dad, if some of them look small, and most of them have, they've accomplished that themselves. Oh sure, we news guys help the process now and then, and that's because we're skeptics, sometimes cynics, and often don't believe the soothing syrup that presidents hand out. But skulduggery in high places, all high places, gives us plenty of reason to be the way we are."
"I wish the President sort of belonged to everybody, not one party," Nicky said. He added thoughtfully, "Wouldn't it have been better if the Founding Fathers had made Washington the king, and Franklin or Jefferson the President? Then Washington's kids and their children and grandchildren could have been kings and queens, so we'd have a head of state to feel proud of and a President to blame for things, the way the British do with their prime minister."
"America's great loss, Nicky," his father said, "is that you weren't at the

Constitutional Convention to push that idea. Despite Washington's kids being adopted, it's more sensible than a lot else that happened then and since."
They all laughed, then becoming serious Angus said, "The reporting in my war-that's World War II to you, Nicky-was different from what it is today. We had the feeling then that those who wrote about it, talked on the radio, were always on our side. It's not that way anymore."
"It was a different war," Crawford said, "and a different time. Just as there are new ways of gathering news, concepts

about news change too. A lot of us don't believe anymore in 'My country right or wrong.'"
Angus complained, "I never thought I'd hear a son of mine say that."
Sloane shrugged. "Well, you're hearing it now. Those of us who aim at truth in news want to be sure our country's right, that we're not being fed hocus-pocus by whoever is in charge. The only way you can find out about that is to ask tough, probing questions."
"Don't you believe there were tough questions asked in my war?"
"Not tough enough," Sloane said. He paused, wondering whether to go farther, then decided he would. "Weren't you one of those who went on the first B-17 bombing raid to Schweinfurt?"
"Yes." Then to Nicholas: "That was deep in Germany, Nicky. At the time, not a nice place to go."
With a touch of ruthlessness, Crawford persisted. "You told me once that the objective at Schweinfurt was to destroy ballbearing factories, that those in charge of the bombing believed they could bring Germany's war machine to a halt because it had to have ball bearings."
Angus nodded slowly, knowing what was coming. "That's what they told us."
"Then you also know that after the war it was discovered that it didn't work. Despite that raid and others, which cost so many American lives, Germany never was short of ball bearings. The policy, the plans, were wrong. Well, I'm not saying that the press in those days could have stopped that awful waste. But nowadays questions would be asked-not after it was over, but while it was happening, so the questioning and public knowledge would be a restraint and probably lessen the loss of life."
As his son spoke, the old man's face was working, creased by memory and pain. With the others' eyes upon him he seemed to diminish, to sink into himself, suddenly to become older. He said, his voice quavering, "At Schweinfurt we lost fifty B-17s. There were ten people in a crew. That's

five hun-

dred fliers lost that single day. And in that same week of October '43, we lost another eighty-eight B-17s-near enough nine hundred people." His voice dropped to a whisper. "I was on those raids. The worst thing afterward was at night being surrounded by so many empty beds---of people who didn't come back. In the night, waking up, looking around me, I used to wonder, Why me? Why did I get back-in that week and others after-when so many didn't?"

The effect was salutary and moving, causing Sloane to wish he had not spoken, hadn't tried to score a debater's point against his father. He said, "I'm sorry, Dad. I didn't realize how much I was opening an old wound."

As if he had not heard, his father went on, "They were good men. So many good men. So many of my friends."

Sloane shook his head. "Let's leave it. As I said, I'm sorry."

"Gramps," Nicky said. He had been listening intently. "When you were in the war, doing those things, were you frightened very much?"

"Oh god, Nicky! Frightened? I was terrified. When the flak was exploding all around, throwing out razor-sharp hunks of steel that could cut you into slices . . . when the German fighters swarmed in, with guns and cannon firing and you always thought they were aiming just at you . . . when other B-17s went down, sometimes in flames or in tight spirals so you knew the crews could never get out to use their parachutes . . . all of it at 27,000 feet, in air so cold and thin that if the fear made you sweat it froze, and even with oxygen you could hardly breathe . . . Well, my heart was in my mouth and sometimes, it seemed, my guts too."

Angus paused. There was silence in the breakfast room; somehow this was different from his usual reminiscing. Then he went on, speaking only to Nicky who was following every word, so there seemed a communion between the two, the old man and the boy.

"I'll tell you something, Nicky, and it's something I've never told a soul before, not anybody in this world. One time I was so scared, I ."

He glanced around as if appealing for

understanding. ".I was so scared, I messed my pants."

Nicky asked, "What did you do then?"

Jessica, concerned for Angus, seemed about to interrupt but Crawford gestured her to silence.

The old man's voice strengthened. Visibly, a little of his pride returned.
"What could I do? I didn't like it, but I was there, so I got on with what I'd been sent for. I was the group bombardier. When the group commander-he was our pilotreached the IP and set us on our target course, he told me over the intercom, 'It's yours, Angus. Take it.' Well, I was stretched out over the Norden bombsight and I steadied myself and took my time. For those few minutes, Nicky, the bombardier flew the airplane. I got the target exactly in the cross hairs, then the bombs were away. It was the signal to the group to release theirs too."
Angus went on, "So let me tell you, Nicky, there's nothing wrong with being scared to death. It can happen to the best. What counts is hanging on, somehow staying in control and doing what you know you should."
"I hear you, Gramps." Nicky's voice was matter-offact and Crawford wondered how much he had understood. Probably a good deal. Nicky was smart and sensitive. Crawford also wondered if he himself, in the past, had taken the trouble to understand as much as he should about his own father.
He glanced at his watch. It was time to leave. Usually he arrived at CBA News at 10:30 A.M.; today though, he would be earlier because he wanted to see the division president about firing Chuck Insen as National Evening News executive producer. The memory of last night's clash with Insen still rankled, and Sloane was as determined as ever to ensure changes in the news selection process.
He rose from the breakfast table and, excusing himself, went upstairs to finish dressing.
Selecting a tie-the same one he would wear on camera that evening-and carefully tying it in a Windsor knot, he thought about his father, envisaging the scenes the old man had described, in the air over Schweinfurt and else*here. Angus, at that time, would have been in his early twenties-half Crawford's age now, just a raw kid who had hardly lived and

was terrified he was about to die, most likely horribly. Certainly not even during his time as a journalist in Vietnam had Crawford endured anything comparable.
Suddenly he had a pang of conscience for what he had failed to understand sooner, in any deep or caring way.
The trouble was, Crawford thought, he was so caught up professionally in each day's current, breaking news that he tended to dismiss the news of earlier eras as history and therefore irrelevant to the brimming,

bustling here and now. That mind-set was an occupational hazard; he had seen it in others. But the older news was not irrelevant, and never would be, to his father.

Crawford was well informed. He had read about the raid on Schweinfurt in a book, Black Thursday. The author, Martin Caidin, compared the attack with the "immortal struggles of Gettysburg, St. Mihiel and the Argonne, of Midway and the Bulge and Pork Chop Hill."

My father, Crawford reminded himself, was a part of that long saga. He had never viewed that fact before in quite the same perspective as today.

He put on the jacket of his suit, inspected himself in the mirror, then, satisfied with his appearance, returned below.

He said goodbye to Jessica and Nicky, then approached his father and told the old man quietly, "Stand up."

Angus seemed puzzled. Crawford repeated himself. "Stand up.

Pushing his chair back, Angus slowly rose. Instinctively, as he so often did, he brought his body to the equivalent of military attention.

Crawford moved close to his father, put his arms around him, held him tight, then kissed him on both cheeks.

The old man seemed surprised and flustered. "Hey, hey! What's all this?"

Looking him directly in the eye, Crawford said, "I love you, you old coot."

At the doorway, on the point of leaving, he glanced back. On Angus's face was a small, seraphic smile. Jessica's eyes, he saw, were moist. Nicky was beaming.

The surveillance duo of Carlos and Julio were surprised to see Crawford Sloane leaving his home by car earlier than usual. They reported the fact immediately by code to the leader, Miguel.

By now, Miguel had left the Hackensack operating center and, accompanied by others in a Nissan passenger van equipped with a cellular phone, was crossing the George Washington Bridge between New Jersey and New York.

Miguel was unperturbed. He issued, also in code, the order that prearranged plans were now in effect, their time of implementation to be advanced if needed. He reasoned confidently: What they were about to do was the totally unexpected; it would turn logic upside down, then soon after raise the frantic question, Why?

10

At about the same time Crawford Sloane left his Larchmont home to drive to CBA News headquarters, Harry Partridge awakened in Canada-in Port Credit, near Toronto. He had slept deeply and spent the first few moments of the new day wondering where he was. It was a frequent experience because he was used to waking in so many different places.

As his thoughts arranged themselves he took in familiar landmarks of an apartment bedroom and knew that if he sat up in bed-which he didn't feel like doing yet-he would be able to see, through a window ahead, the broad expanse of Lake Ontario.

The apartment was one Partridge used as his base, a retreat, and the nomadic nature of his work meant that he got to it for only a few brief periods each year. And even though he stored his few possessions here-some clothes, books, framed photographs, and a handful of mementos from other times and places

-the apartment was not registered in his name. As a card alongside a bell push in the lobby six floors below advised, the official tenant was V. Williams (the V for Vivien), who resided here permanently.

Every month, from wherever in the world Partridge happened to be, he sent Vivien a check sufficient to pay the apartment rent and, in return, she lived here and kept it as his haven. The arrangement, which had other conveniences including casual sex, suited them both.

Vivien was a nurse who worked in the Queensway Hospital nearby, and he could hear her now, moving around in the kitchen. In all probability she was making tea, which she knew he liked each morning, and would bring it to him soon. Meanwhile he let his thoughts drift back to the events of yesterday and the journey the night before on his delayed flight from Dallas to Toronto's Pearson International . . .

The experience at DFW Airport had been a professional one which he took in stride. It was Partridge's job to do what he did, a job for which he was well paid by CBA News. Yet thinking about it last night and again this morning, he was conscious of the tragedy behind the surface of the news. From the latest reports he heard, more than seventy aboard the Muskegon Airlines flight lost their lives, with others critically injured, and all six people died aboard the smaller airplane that had collided

with the Airbus in midair. Today, he knew, many grief-stricken families and friends were struggling, amid tears, to cope with their abrupt bereavement.

The thought reminded him that there were times when he wished he could cry too, could shed tears along with others because of things he had witnessed in his professional life, including perhaps the tragedy of yesterday. But it hadn't happened--except on one unparalleled occasion which, as it came to mind, he thrust away. What he did remember was the first time he ever wondered about himself and his apparent inability to cry.

Early in his reporting career, Harry Partridge was in Britain when a tragedy occurred in Wales. It was in Aberfan, a mining

village where a vast pile of coal waste-slurry-slid down a hillside and engulfed a junior school A hundred and sixteen children died

Partridge was on the scene soon after the disaster, in time to see the dead being pulled out. Each small pathetic body, covered with black, evil-smelling sludge, had to be hosed down before it was carted awayfor identification.

Around him, watching the same scene, other reporters, photographers, police, spectators, were weeping, choking on their tears. Partridge had wanted to cry too, but couldn't. Sickened but dry-eyed, he had done his reportingjob and gone away.

Since then there had been countless other witnessed scenes where there was cause for tears, but he hadn't cried there either.

Was there some deficiency, some inner coldness in himsetf? He asked that question once of a woman psychiatristfriend, after both of them, following an evening of drinking, had been to bed together.

She told him, "There's nothing wrong with you, or you wouldn't care enough to ask the question. "at you have is a defense mechanism which depersonalizes what you feel. You're banking it all, tucking the emotion away inside you somewhere. One day everything will overflow, crack open, and you'll cry. Oh, how you'll cry!"

Well, his knowledgeable bed partner had been right, and there had come a day . . . But again he didn't want to think about it, and pushed the image away just as Vivien came into the bedroom, carrying a tray with morning tea.

She was in her mid-forties, with angular, strong features and straight black hair, now streaked with gray. While neither beautiful nor

conventionally pretty, she was warm, easygoing and generous. Vivien had been widowed before Partridge knew her and he gathered the marriage had not been good, though she rarely talked about it. She had one child, a daughter in Vancouver. The daughter occasionally stayed here, though never when Partridge was expected.

Partridge was fond of Vivien though not in love with her, and had known her long enough to be aware he never would be.

He suspected that Vivien was in love with him and would love him more if he encouraged it. But as it was, she accepted the relationship they had.

While he sipped his tea, Vivien regarded Partridge quizzically, noting that his normally lanky figure was thinner than it should be; also, despite a certain boyishness he still retained, his face showed lines of strain and tiredness. His unruly shock of fair hair, now noticeably grayer, was in need of trimming.

Aware of her appraisal, Partridge asked, "Well, what's the verdict?"

Vivien shook her head in mock despair. "Just look at you! I send you off healthy and fit. Two and a half months later you come back looking tired, pale and underfed."

"I know, Viv." He grimaced. "It's the life I lead. There's too much pressure, lousy hours, junk food and booze." Then, with a smile, "So here I am, a mess as usual. What can you do for me?"

She said, with a mixture of affection and firmness, "First I'll give you a good healthful breakfast. You can stay in bed-I'll bring it to you. For other meals you'll have nutritious things like fish and fowl, green vegetables, fresh fruit. Right after breakfast I'm going to trim your hair. Later, I'm taking you for a sauna and massage-I've already made the appointment."

Partridge lay back and threw up his hands. "I love it!"

Vivien went on, "Tomorrow, I figured you'll want to see your old cronies at the CBC-you usually do. But in the evening I have tickets for an all-Mozart concert in Toronto at Roy Thomson Hall. You can let the music wash over you. I know you like that. Apart from all that, you'll rest or do whatever you wish." She shrugged. "Maybe in between those other things you'll feel like making love. You tried last night but were too tired. You fell asleep."

For a moment Partridge felt more gratitude for Vivien than he had ever felt before. She was rock-solid, a refuge. Late last night, when his flight finally arrived at Toronto Airport, she had been patiently waiting, then

had brought him here.
He asked, "Don't you have to work?"

"I had some vacation due. I've arranged to take it, starting today. One of the other nurses will fill in for me."
He told her, "Viv, you're one in a million."
When Vivien had gone and he could hear her preparing breakfast, Partridge's thoughts returned to yesterday.
There had been that congratulatory call-they had paged him for it in the DFW terminal-from Crawford Sloane.
Crawf had sounded awkward, as he often was when they talked. There were times when Partridge wanted to say, "Look, Crawf, if you think I have any grudge against you-about Jessica or your job or anything, forget it! I haven't and I never did." But he knew that kind of remark would strain their relationship even more, and probably Crawf would never believe it anyway.
In Vietnam, Partridge had known perfectly well that Sloane was taking only short air trips so he could hang around Saigon and get on CBA network news as often as possible. But Partridge hadn't cared then, and still didn't. He had his own priorities. One of them could even be called an addiction-the addiction to the sights and sounds of war.
Wa r . . . the bloody bedlam of battle . . . the thunder and flame of big artillery, the whistle scream and awesome crump of falling bombs . . . the stentorian chatter of machine guns when you didn't know who was firing at whom or from where . . . the near-sensuous thrill of being under attack, despite fear that set you trembling . . . all of it fascinated Partridge, set his adrenaline flowing, his other juices running . . .
He discovered the feeling first in 'Nam, his initial war experience. It had been with him ever since. More than once he had told himself, Face it-you love it; then acknowledged, Yes, I do, and a stupid son of a bitch I am.
Stupid or not, he had never objected to being sent to wars by CBA. Partridge knew that among his colleagues he was referred to as a "bangbang," the slightly contemptuous name for a TV correspondent addicted to war-a worse addiction, it was sometimes said, than to heroin or cocaine and with a final ending almost as predictable.

But they also knew at CBA News headquarters-which was what mattered

most-that for that kind of news coverage, Harry Partridge was the best. Therefore he had not been overly concerned when Sloane won the National Evening News anchor chair. Like every news correspondent, Partridge had had ideas about getting that topof-the-pile appointment, but by the time it happened to Sloane, Partridge was enjoying himself so much it didn't matter.

Strangely, though, the question of the anchorman's job had come up recently and unexpectedly. Two weeks ago, during what Chuck Insen warned was "a delicate private conversation," the executive producer confided to Partridge that there might be major changes soon in the National Evening News. "If that happens," Insen had asked, "would you be interested in coming in from the cold and anchoring? You do it damn well."

Partridge had been so surprised that he hadn't known how to respond. Then Insen had said, "You don't have to answer now. I just want you to think about it in case I come back to you later."

Subsequently, through his own inside contacts, Partridge had learned of the ongoing power struggle between Chuck Insen and Crawford Sloane. But even if Insen won, which seemed unlikely, Partridge doubted if permanent anchoring was something he would want or could even endure. Especially, he told himself half mockingly, when in so many places of the world there was still the sound of gunfire to be heard and followed.

Inevitably, when thinking in a personal way about Crawford Sloane, there was always the memory of Jessica, though it was never more than memory because there was nothing between them now, not even occasional communication, and they seldom met socially-perhaps only once or twice a year. Nor had Partridge ever blamed Sloane for his loss of Jessica, having recognized that his own foolish judgment was the cause. When he could have married her, Partridge had decided not to, so Sloane simply stepped in, proving himself the wiser of the two, with a better sense of values at that time . . .

Vivien reappeared in the apartment bedroom, bringing

breakfast in stages. It was, as she had promised, a healthful meal: freshly squeezed orange juice, thick hot porridge with brown sugar and milk, followed by poached eggs on whole wheat toast, strong black coffee, the beans freshly ground, and finally more toast and Alberta honey.

The thoughtfulness about the honey especially touched Partridge. It reminded him, as it was intended to, of his native province where he made

his start in journalism on local radio. He remembered telling Vivien that he had worked for what was known as a 20/20 radio station; it meant that rock 'n' roll, the staple programming, was interrupted every twenty minutes by a few shouted news headlines ripped from the AP wire. A young Harry Partridge had done the shouting. He smiled at the recollection; it seemed a long time ago.

After breakfast, prowling around the apartment in pajamas, he observed, "This place is getting tacky. It needs repainting and new furniture."

"I know," Vivien acknowledged. "I've been after the building owners about repainting. But they say this apartment isn't due to have money spent on it."

"Screw 'em! Do it without the owners. You find a painter and order whatever's needed. I'll leave enough money before I go.,,

"You're always generous about that," she said; then added, "do you still have that wonderful arrangement where you don't pay income tax?"

He grinned. "Sure do."

"To anybody, anywhere?"

"Not to anyone, and it's perfectly legal and honest. I don't file any income tax return, don't have to. Saves a lot of time and money."

"I've never understood how you manage it."

"I don't mind telling you," he said, "though normally I don't talk about it. People who pay income tax get jealous; that's because misery likes company."

The critical factor, he explained, was being a Canadian citizen, using a Canadian passport, and working overseas.

"What a lot of people don't realize is that the United States

is the only major country in the world that taxes its citizens no matter where they live. Even when Americans reside outside the U.S., they still get taxed by Uncle Sam. Canada doesn't do that. Canadians who move out of the country aren't liable for Canadian taxes, and once the revenue service is satisfied you're gone, they've no further interest in you. The British are the same."

He continued, "The way it works is that CDA News pays my salary each month into a New York account I have at Chase Manhattan. From there I move the money to accounts in other countries-the Bahamas, Singapore, the Channel Islands, where savings cam interest, totally tax-free."

"What about taxes in countries you go to-those you work in?"

,,As a TV correspondent I'm never in one place long enough to be liable

for tax. That even includes the U.S., provided I'm there no more than 120 days a year, and you can be sure I never stay that long. As for Canada, I don't have a domicile here, not even this one. This is solely your place, Viv, as we both know."

Partridge added, "The important thing is not to cheat-tax evasion's not only illegal, it's stupid and not worth the risk. Tax avoidance is quite different He stopped. "Hold it! I have something here."

Partridge produced a wallet and from it extracted a folded, well-fingered news clipping. "This is from a 1934 decision by Judge Learned Hand, one of America's great jurists. It's been used by other judges many times."

He read aloud, " 'Any one may so arrange his affairs that his taxes shall be as low as possible; he is not bound to choose that pattern which will best pay the Treasury; there is not even a patriotic duty to increase one's taxes. ' "

"I can understand why people envy you," Vivien said. "Are there others in TV who do the same?"

"You'd be surprised how many. The tax advantages are a reason Canadians like to work overseas for American networks."

Though he didn't mention them, there were other reasons,

including U.S. network pay scales, which were substantially higher. But even more important, to work for an American network was to have made the prestigious "big time" and be on the exciting center stage of world affairs.

For their part, the U.S. networks were delighted to have Canadian correspondents, who came to them well trained by CBC and CTV. They had learned also that American viewers liked a Canadian accent; it was a contributing reason for the popularity of many news figures-Peter Jennings, Robert MacNeil, Morley Safer, Allen Pizzey, Barrie Dunsmore, Peter Kent, John Blackstone, Hilary Bowker, Harry Partridge, others . . .

Continuing to prowl through the apartment, Partridge saw on a sideboard the tickets for the Mozart concert the next day. He knew he would enjoy it and was grateful once more to Vivien for remembering his tastes.

He was grateful too for the three weeks of vacation-restful idleness, as he thought of it-that lay ahead.

Jessica went household shopping every Thursday morning and she intended to follow her usual routine today. When Angus learned this, he volunteered to accompany her. Nicky, who was home because of a school holiday, asked

to go as well so he could be with his grandfather.
Jessica asked doubtfully, "Don't you have some music to practice?"
"Yes, Mom. But I can do it later. I'll have time."
Knowing that Nicky was conscientious about practicing, sometimes for as long as six hours a day, Jessica raised no objection.
The three of them left the Park Avenue house in Jessica's Volvo station wagon shortly before I I A.M., about an hour and

a quarter after Crawford's departure. It was a beautiful morning, the trees rich with fall colors and sunlight glistening off Long Island Sound. The Sloanes' day maid, Florence, was in the house at the time and, through a window, watched the trio leave. She also saw a car parked on a side street start up and follow in the same direction as the Volvo. At the time she gave no thought to the second vehicle.
Jessica's first stop was, as usual, the Grand Union supermarket on Chatsworth Avenue. She parked the Volvo in the store lot, then, accompanied by Angus and Nicky, went inside,
The Colombians, Julio and Carlos, in the Chevrolet Celebrity which had trailed the station wagon from a discreet distance, observed their movements. Carlos, who had already reported the departure from the house, now made another cellular phone call, announcing that "the three packages are in container number one."
This time Julio was driving, and he did not turn into the store parking lot, instead making observations from the street outside. Following instructions given earlier by Miguel, Carlos now left the Chevy and moved on foot to a position near the store. Unlike other days when he had been casually dressed, today he was wearing a neat brown suit and tie.
When Carlos was in place, Julio drove the Chevrolet away, in case it had been noticed, to the safe seclusion of the Hackensack operating center.
When the first of the two phone messages reached Miguel, he was in the Nissan passenger van, parked near the New Haven Railroad's Larchmont station. The van was inconspicuous, surrounded by other parked vehicles left by New York commuters. With Miguel were Luis, Rafael and Baudelio, though all four occupants were mostly out of sight because of dark, thin plastic sheets covering the side and rear windows. Luis, because of his specialized driving skills, was at the wheel.
When it became known that three people had left the house, Rafael exclaimed, "jAyl That means the viejo's along. He'll be in our goddamn way."

"Then we'll 'off' the old fart," Luis said. He touched a bulge in his suede jacket. "One bullet will do."
Miguel snapped, "You'll follow the orders you have. Do nothing else without my say-so." He was aware that Rafael and Luis were perpetually aggressive, like smoldering fires likely to burst into angry flame. Rafael, heavily built, had been a professional boxer for a while and bore visible fight scars. Luis had been in the Colombian army-a harsh, rough schooling. There could be a time when the belligerence of both men would be useful, but until then it needed to be curbed.
Miguel was already considering the complication of the third person. Their long-standing plan had involved, at this point, only the Sloane woman and the boy. All along, theynot Crawford Sloane-had been the Sendero Luminoso/Medellin objective. The two were to be seized and held as hostages for as yet unspecified demands.
But now the question was how to handle the old man? Killing him, as Luis suggested, would be easy, but that could create other problems. Most probably Miguel would not make up his mind until the crucial moment, which was coming soon.
One thing was fortunate. The woman and the boy were now together. The several weeks of careful surveillance had shown that the woman always shopped on Thursday mornings. Miguel had also known that the boy had a school holiday today. Carlos, posing on the telephone as a parent, had obtained that information from the Chatsworth Avenue grammar school, which Nicholas attended. What had remained in doubt was how to corral the woman and the boy together. Now, without knowing it, they had solved that problem for him.
When the second message from Carlos came, indicating that all three Sloanes were inside the supermarket, Miguel nodded to Luis. "Okay. Roll!"
Luis put the Nissan van in gear. The next stop, just a halfdozen blocks away, would be the store parking lot.
While they were moving, Miguel turned his head to look at Baudelio, the American in the Medellin group, who continued to be a source of worry. Baudelio-the name had been chosen for him and, like the

others, it was an alias-was in his mid-fifties but looked twenty years older. Gaunt, lantern-jawed, with a sallow skin and a droopy gray mustache he seldom trimmed, he had the appearance of a walking ghost. He had once been a medical doctor, a specialist in anesthesiology practicing in Boston,

and a drunk. When left to his own devices he was still a drunk, but no longer a doctor, at least officially. A decade earlier Baudelio's license to practice medicine had been revoked for life because while in
';ient undergoing
an alcoholic haze he had overanesthetized a pa surgery. There had been similar lapses before and colleagues had covered for him, but in this instance it cost the patient's life and could not be overlooked.
There had been no future for him in the United States, no family ties, no children. Even his wife had left him several years before. He had visited Colombia several times and, for want of a better place, decided to go there. After a while he found he could use his considerable medical skills for shady, sometimes criminal purposes, without arousing any questions. He was in no position to be particular and took whatever came his way. Amid it all he managed, by reading medical journals, to stay up to date in his specialty. This last was why he had been chosen for this assignment by the Medellin cartel, for whom he had worked before.
All of this background had been made known to Miguel in advance, with a warning that while the assignment lasted Baudelio was to be deprived of any alcohol. Antabuse pills would be used to enforce the prohibition, one pill to be taken by the ex-doctor every day. The effect of Antabuse was that anyone drinking liquor afterward became violently ill, a fact of which Baudelio was well aware.
Since it was common practice among alcoholics to spit out the pill secretly if they wanted to cheat, Miguel was cautioned to be sure the Antabuse was always swallowed. While Miguel carried out the instructions, they did not please him. In the comparatively short time available he had a multitude of responsibilities and acting as a "wet nurse" was one he could have done without.
Also in light of Baudelio's weakness, Miguel decided not to

trust him with a firearm. Thus he was the only one in the group not armed.
Now, regarding Baudelio warily, Miguel asked, "Are you ready? Do you understand everything that is to be done?"
The ex-doctor nodded. Briefly a vestige of professional pride returned to him. Looking Miguel directly in the eye, he said, "I know precisely what is necessary. When the moment comes, you may rely on me, and concentrate on what you have to do yourself."
Not entirely reassured, Miguel turned away. The Grand Union supermarket was now directly ahead.

Carlos saw the Nissan passenger van arrive. The parking lot was not crowded and the Nissan entered a conveniently vacant slot alongside Jessica's Volvo station wagon. When Carlos had observed this, he turned into the store.
Jessica gestured to her partly filled shopping cart and told Angus, "If there's something you especially like, just drop it in.,,
Nicky said, "Gramps likes caviar."
"I should have remembered that," Jessica said. "Let's get some."
They moved to the gourmet section to discover it was featuring a special caviar assortment. Angus, inspecting prices, said, "It's awfully expensive."
Jessica said softly, "Have you any idea how much that son of yours earns?"
The old man smiled; he kept his voice low too. "Well, I did read somewhere it was close to three million dollars a year."
"Close is right." Jessica laughed; being with Angus always made her feel good. "Let's blow some of it." She pointed to a seven-ounce can of beluga caviar in a locked display case, priced at $199.95. "We'll have some of this with drinks before dinner tonight."
It was at that moment that Jessica noticed a young man, slightly built and well dressed, approaching another woman shopper nearby. He appeared to ask a question. The woman shook her head. The young man approached a second shopper.

Again an apparent question and a negative reply. Mildly curious, Jessica watched the young man as he approached her.
"Excuse me, ma'am," Carlos said. "I'm trying to locate someone." He had been aware of Jessica all the time but deliberately had not gone to her first, instead positioning himself so that she could see him speaking with the other people.
Jessica noticed a Spanish accent, though that was not unusual in New York. She also thought the speaker had cold, hard eyes, but that was none of her business. All she said was, "Oh?"
"It's a Mrs. Crawford Sloane."
Jessica was startled. "I'm Mrs. Sloane."
"Oh ma'am, I have some bad news for you." The facial expression of Carlos was serious; he was playing his part well. "Your husband has been in an accident. He's badly injured. The ambulance took him to Doctors Hospital. I was sent to find you and take you there. The maid at your house told me you would be here."
Jessica gasped and turned deathly pale. Instinctively her hand went to her

throat. Nicky, who had returned in time to hear the last few words, looked stunned.
Angus, though equally shocked, was the first to recover and take charge. He gestured to the shopping cart. "Jessie, leave all this. Just let's go."
"It's Dad, isn't it?" Nicky said.
Carlos answered gravely, "I'm afraid so."
Jessica put her arm around Nicky. "Yes, dear. We're going to him now."
"Please come with me, Mrs. Sloane," Carlos said. Jessica and Nicky, still dazed by the sudden shattering news, went quickly with the brown-suited young man toward the store's main door. Angus followed. Something was bothering him, though he wasn't quite sure what.
Outside in the parking lot, Carlos preceded the others. He moved toward the Nissan van. Both doors on the side next to the Volvo were open. Carlos could see that the Nissan's engine was running and Luis was in the driver's seat. A shadowy form in the back had to be Baudelio. Rafael and Miguel were out of sight.

Alongside the Nissan, Carlos said, "We'll go in this vehicle, ma'am. It will be . - ."
"No, no!" Jessica, tense and anxious, was groping in her purse for car keys. "I'll take my car. I know where Doctors Hospital-"
Carlos interposed himself between the Volvo and Jessica. Grasping her arm, he said, "Ma'am, we'd rather you-"
Jessica attempted to withdraw her arm; as she did, Carlos held her more firmly and pushed her forward. She said indignantly, "Stop that! What is this?" For the first time Jessica began to think beyond the impact of the awful news she had been given.
A few feet behind, Angus now realized what had been troubling him. Inside the store the strange young man had said, "He's badly injured. The ambulance took him to Doctors Hospital."
But Doctors Hospital didn't take emergencies. Angus happened to know because over several months the year before he had visited an old Army Air Forces comrade who was a patient there and got to know the hospital well. Doctors Hospital was big and famous; it was close to Gracie Mansion, the mayor's residence, and alongside the route Crawford used on the way to work. But emergencies were sent to New York Hospital, a few blocks south . . . Every ambulance driver knew it.
So the young man was lying! The setup in the store had been afakel What was happening out here wasn't right either. Two men-Angus didn't like

their looks at all-had just appeared from around the back of the passenger van. One of them, a huge bruiser, had joined the first man; they were forcing Jessica inside! Nicholas, a little way behind, was not yet involved.
Angus shouted, "Jessica, don't go! Nicky, run! Get-"
The sentence was never finished. A pistol butt crashed down on Angus's head. There was a fierce, searing pain, everything around him spun, then he fell to the ground unconscious. It was Luis who had jumped out of the driver's seat, rushed around, and attacked him from behind. In almost the same motion, Luis grabbed Nicholas.
The Evening News 97
Jessica began screaming and crying out. "Helpl Someoneanyone-please help!"
The burly Rafael, who had joined Carlos in seizing Jessica, now clamped a massive hand across her mouth, set another in her back and flung her inside the van. Then, jumping in himself, he continued to hold her while she screamed and struggled. Jessica's eyes were wild. Rafael snarled at Baudelio, "IApi~rate!"
The ex-doctor, with a medical bag open on the seat beside him, produced a gauze pad which moments earlier he had soaked in ethyl chloride. He slapped the pad over Jessica's nose and mouth and held it there.
Instantly Jessica's eyes closed, her body sagged and she became unconscious. Baudelio gave a grunt of satisfaction, though he knew the effect of ethyl chloride would last only five minutes.
By now, Nicholas, struggling too, had been hauled inside. Carlos held him while he received the same treatment.
Baudelio, still working quickly, used scissors to cut the sleeve of Jessica's dress, then injected the contents of a hypodermic syringe intramuscularly into her upper arm. The drug was midazolam, a strong sedative that would ensure continued unconsciousness for at least an hour. He gave the boy a similar injection.
Miguel, meanwhile, had dragged the unconscious Angus over to the van. Rafael, now freed of Jessica, jumped down and pulled out a pistol, a Browning automatic. Clicking the safety off, he urged Miguel, "Let me finish him!"
"No, not here!" The entire operation of seizing the woman and boy had gone with incredible speed, occupying barely a minute. To Miguel's amazement, no one else appeared to have witnessed what had happened. One reason: They had been shielded by the two vehicles; also, fortuitously,

there had been no passersby. Miguel, Carlos, Rafael and Luis had all come armed and there was a Beretta submachine gun in the van for use if they had to fight their way out of the parking lot. Now a fighting exit wasn't necessary and they would have a head start on any pursuit. But if they left the old man behind-his head was bleeding profusely, with blood dripping to the ground-an

immediate alarm would be raised. Making a decision, Miguel ordered, "Help me get him in."

It was accomplished in seconds. Then, as he entered the van himself and closed the side door, Miguel saw he had been wrong about no witnesses. An elderly woman, white-haired and leaning on a cane, was watching from between two cars some twenty yards away. She appeared uncertain and puzzled.

As Luis moved the Nissan van forward, Rafael caught sight of the old woman too. In a single swift movement he grabbed the Beretta, raised it, and through a rear window was taking aim. Miguel shouted to him, "No!" He didn't care about the woman, but the chances looked good that they could still get away without raising an alarm. Pushing Rafael aside and making his voice cheerful, Miguel called out, "Don't be alarmed. It's just part of a film we're making."

He saw relief and the beginning of a smile on the woman's face. Then they left the parking lot and, soon after, Larchmont. Luis was driving skillfully, wasting no time. Within five minutes they were on Interstate 95, the New England Thruway, heading south and moving fast.

12

There had been a time when Priscilla Rhea possessed one of the sharpest minds in Larchmont. She had been a schoolteacher who pounded into several generations of area youngsters the fundamentals of square roots, quadratic equations, and how to discover-she always made it sound like the search for a holy grail-the algebraic values of x or y. Priscilla also urged them to have a sense of civic responsibility and never to shirk their obvious duty.
But all of that was prior to Priscilla's retirement fifteen years earlier, and before the toll of age and illness slowed her body, then her mind.
Nowadays, white-haired and frail, she

walked slowly, using a cane, and had recently described her thought processes, disgustedly, as "having the speed of a threelegged donkey going uphill."
Nevertheless Priscilla was exercising her thought processes now, moving them along as best she could.
She had watched two people-a woman and a boy-being taken into what looked like a small bus, apparently against their will. They were certainly struggling and Priscilla thought she'd heard the woman cry out, though about that she wasn't sure, her hearing having deteriorated along with everything else. Then another person, a man who seemed unconscious and hurt, was lifted into the same small bus before it drove away.
Her natural anxiety at seeing this was immediately relieved by the shouted information that it was all part of a film show. That made sense. Film and television crews seemed to be everywhere nowadays, photographing their stories against real backgrounds and even interviewing people for TV news, right on the street.
But then, the moment the little bus had gone Priscilla looked around for the cameras and film crew which should have been recording the action she had watched, and for the life of her she couldn't find any. She reasoned that if there had been a film crew, it couldn't possibly have disappeared that fast.
The whole thing was a worry Priscilla wished she didn't have, in part because she knew that perhaps she was all mixed up in her mind, the way she had been some other times. The sensible thing to do, she told herself, was go into the Grand Union store, do her bit of shopping and

mind her own business. Just the same, there was her lifelong credo of not shirking responsibility, and perhaps she shouldn't, even now. She only wished there were someone handy whom she could ask for advice, and just at that moment she saw Erica McLean, one of her old pupils, also on her way into the supermarket.

Erica, now a mother with children of her own, was in a hurry but stopped to ask courteously, "How are you, Miss Rhea?" (No one who had ever been a pupil of Miss Rhea ever presumed to address her by her first name.)

"Slightly bewildered, my dear," Priscilla said.

"Why, Miss Rhea?"

"Something I just saw ... But I'm not sure what I saw. I'd like to know what you think." Priscilla then described the scene, which was still remarkably clear in her mind.

"And you're sure there was no film crew?"

"I couldn't see one. Did you, as you came in?"

"No." Within herself, silently, Erica McLean sighed. She had not the least doubt that dear old Priscilla had been subject to some kind of hallucination and it was Erica's bad luck to have come along just then and be roped in. Well, she couldn't walk away from the old duck, for whom she had a genuine fondness, so she had better forget being in a hurry and do what she could to help.

"Just where did all this happen?" Erica asked.

"Over there." Priscilla pointed to the still-empty parking slot next to Jessica's Volvo station wagon. They walked to it together. "Here!" Priscilla said. "It happened right here."

Eriea looked around her. She had not expected to see anything significant, and didn't. Then, about to turn away, her attention was caught by a series of small pools of liquid on the ground. Against the blacktop surface of the parking lot the liquid seemed dark brown. It was probably oil. Or was it? Curiously, Erica leaned down to touch it. Seconds later she looked with horror at her fingers. They were covered in what was unmistakably blood, still warm.

It had been a quiet morning in the Larchmont police department, a small but efficient local force. In a glass cubicle a uniformed desk officer was sipping coffee and glancing through the local Sound View News when the call came in-from a pay phone on the comer of Boston Post Road, a half block from the supermarket.

Erica McLean spoke first. After identifying herself she said, "I have a

lady here, Miss Priscilla Rhea . . ."
"I know Miss Rhea," the desk officer said.
"Well, she thinks she may have seen something criminal, perhaps some kind of abduction. I'd like you to speak to her."
"I'll do better than that," the desk officer said. "I'll send an

officer in a patrol car and you can tell it to him. Where are you ladies?"
"We'll be outside the Grand Union."
"Stay there, please. Someone will be with you in a few minutes."
The desk officer spoke into a radio microphone. "Headquarters to car 423. Respond to Grand Union store. Interview Mrs. McLean and Miss Rhea waiting outside. Code one."
The answer came back, "Four twenty-three to headquarters. Ten four."
Eleven minutes had now passed since the passenger van carrying Jessica, Nicholas and Angus had left the supermarket parking lot.
The young police officer, named Jensen, had listened carefully to Priscilla Rhea who was more confident in reporting for the second time what she had seen. She even remembered two additional details-the color of what she continued to call the "little bus" light tan-and the fact that it had dark windows. But no, she had not noticed a license number, or even if the license plates were New York's or out-of-state.
The officer's first reaction, though he kept it to himself, was of skepticism. Police forces were used to citizens who became alarmed about matters that turned out to be harmless; such incidents happened every day, even in a small community like Larchmont. But the officer was conscientious and listened attentively to all that was said, making careful notes.
His interest began to mount when Erica McLean, who seemed a responsible, rational woman, told him about some splotches on the parking lot that looked like blood. The two of them walked over to inspect. By this time most of the liquid had dried, though there was enough that was moist to reveal it as red to the touch. There was no proof it was human blood, of course. But, Officer Jensen reasoned, it gave more credence to the story, more urgency too.
Hurrying back to where they had left Priscilla, they found her talking with several other people who were curious about what was going on.

One man volunteered, "Officer, I was inside and saw four people leave in a hurry-two men, a woman and a boy. They were in such a hurry that the

woman left her shopping cart. It was full, but she just left it."
"I saw them too," a woman said. "That was Mrs. Sloane, the TV anchorman's wife. She often shops here. When she left she looked upset-like something bad happened."
Another woman said. "That's funny. A man came to me and asked if I was Mrs. Sloane. He asked others, too."
Now several people were talking at once. The police officer raised his voice. "Did anyone see what this lady"-he motioned to Priscilla-"calls a 'small bus,' color light tan?"
"Yes, I saw that," the first man said. "It pulled into the lot as I was walking to the store. It was a Nissan passenger van."
"Did you notice the license plate?"
"It was a New Jersey plate, but that's all I saw. Oh, one other thing, it had dark windows-the kind of glass where you can see out, but can't see in."
"Hold it!" the officer said. He addressed the growing crowd. "Any of you who have more information, and those who've given me some already, please stay. I'll be right back."
He jumped into the white police cruiser he had parked alongside the supermarket and grabbed the radio mike.
"Car 423 to headquarters. Possible kidnap at Grand Union parking lot. Request help. Description of suspect vehicle: Nissan passenger van, color light tan. New Jersey plates, license unknown. Dark windows, believed one-way glass. Three persons may have been seized by unknown occupants of Nissan van.,,
The officer's transmission would be heard by all Larchmont police cars as well as those in neighboring Mamaroneck Town and Mamaroneck Village. The headquarters desk officer, through a "hot line" phone, would automatically alert all other police forces in surrounding Westchester County and the New York State Police. The New Jersey State Police would not, at this point, be informed.
Already, at the supermarket, two sirens could be heard

from other approaching police cruisers responding to the request for help. Nearly twenty minutes had elapsed since the Nissan passenger van's departure.
Some eight miles away, the Nissan van was about to leave the 1-95 Thruway and enter a maze of streets in the Bronx.
From Larchmont, Luis had made good progress heading south. He had been

driving at five miles above the legal speed limit, which most motorists did-a good speed but not fast enough to attract attention from any cruising State Police. Now, Thruway exit 13, an intermediate objective, was ahead. Luis eased into a right-hand lane to take the turn. Both Luis and Miguel had been looking behind for signs of any pursuit. There was none.

Just the same, as they left the 1-95 Miguel urged Luis, "Move it! Move it!" Since the departure from Larchmont, Miguel had been wondering if he had made a mistake in not letting Rafael kill the old woman on the parking lot. She might not have believed the phony story about what she had seen being part of a film. By now she could have spread the alarm. Descriptions could be circulating.

Luis was pushing his speed, going as fast as he could on the roughly paved Bronx streets.

Baudelio, since leaving Larchmont, had several times checked vital signs of their two sedated captives, and all appeared to be well. He estimated that the drug midazolarn which he had administered would keep the woman and boy unconscious for another hour. If it didn't he would give them more, though he preferred not, since it might delay the much more complex medical task needed at the end of this journey.

He had also stanched the bleeding of the older man and applied a dressing to his head. The old man was now stirring, slight moans escaping him as he neared a return to consciousness. Anticipating possible trouble, Baudelio prepared another hypodermic of midazolam and injected it. The stirring and moans subsided. Baudelio had no idea what would happen to the old man. Most likely Miguel would shoot him and dispose

of the body in a safe place; during his association with the Medellin cartel, Baudelio had seen it happen often. Not that he cared one way or the other. Caring about other human beings was an emotion he had long since discarded.

Rafael had produced some brown blankets and he and Carlos, with Baudelio watching, wrapped the woman, boy and old man in one each, so that only their heads protruded. In each case sufficient blanket was left folded at the top so it could be turned back to cover the face when the three were removed from the Nissan van. Carlos tied each rolled bundle with a length of cord around the middle so that in transit it would resemble nothing more than a piece of conventional cargo.

Conner Street in the Bronx, which they had reached, was desolate, gray

and depressing. Luis knew where he was going; in rehearsals for today they had traveled the route twice before. At a corner with a Texaco station they turned right into a semideserted industrial area. Trucks were parked at intervals, some looking as if they had been there a long time. Few people were in sight.

Luis brought the van to a halt against a long, unbroken wall of an unoccupied warehouse. As he did, a truck that had been waiting on the opposite side of the street pulled across and stopped slightly ahead of the Nissan. The truck was a white GMC with a painted sign, "Superbread," on either side.

Inquiry would have shown there was no such product as Superbread. The truck was one of a total of six vehicles obtained by Miguel soon after his arrival, employing a fake rental agency as a front. The GMC truck had been used occasionally for the Sloane surveillance duty and otherwise for general use. As with other vehicles in the small fleet, the truck had been repainted several times, the legend on its sides changed too-all of it the handiwork of Rafael. Today the truck was being driven by the remaining member of the group, the woman, Socorro, who jumped down from the driver's seat and went around to open the double rear doors.

At the same time the door of the Nissan van was opened and the rolled bundles, with all three faces covered, were

quickly transferred by Rafael and Carlos to the GMC truck. Baudelio, having gathered up his medical equipment, followed.

Miguel and Luis were busy in the Nissan van. Miguel peeled off the dark, thin plastic sheets from the windows; they had been useful for concealment but were now an identifying feature to be disposed of From beneath the driver's seat Luis took a pair of New York State license plates he had put there earlier.

Going outside, and after looking around to make sure he was not observed, Luis removed the Nissan van's New Jersey plates, replacing them with the New York plates. The process took only a few seconds because all of the group's vehicles had special license plate holders, with one side hinged. The hinged portion could be lifted upward while the original plate was slid out and a fresh one put in. The side of the holder was then snapped back and held in place by a spring fastener.

Miguel, soon after his arrival in New York, had arranged through an underworld contact to buy a series of New York and New Jersey plates from vehicles no longer in use but on which license fees had been kept up to

date.
The licensing systems of New York, New Jersey and most other states made it possible to get license plates for any vehicle long after it was totally dismantled and all of its parts discarded. All that a state registration agency cared about was receiving a license fee along with evidence-equally easy to obtain-that the nonexistent vehicle was insured. Neither the state agency nor the insurance company, which would renew an old insurance policy by mail as long as the required premium was tendered, ever required the vehicle to be produced.
Consequently in criminal circles a brisk business existed in such plates which, while illegal, were not on any police "hot list" and were for that reason worth many times their actual cost.
Miguel emerged from the Nissan van with the plastic sheets, which he dumped in an overflowing trash container nearby. Luis hurriedly brought the discarded New Jersey plates and stuffed those in too.
Luis then took over the wheel of the GMC truck which now

contained the unconscious Jessica, Nicholas and Angus, as wen as Miguel, Rafael, Baudelio and Socorro. After a swift U-turn they headed back to the Thruway and, within less than ten minutes after leaving it, were back on the 1-95 in the new vehicle, continuing south.
Carlos, now driving the empty Nissan passenger van, also made a U-turn. He too went to 1-95, but headed north. With the van's appearance changed by removal of the dark windows and the substitution of New York for New Jersey license plates, it was now like thousands of others in normal use and unlike the description circulated by the Larchmont police.
Carlos's assignment was to dispose of the Nissan passenger van and that, too, had been carefully planned. After three miles he left the Thruway, then continued north for twelve miles on secondary roads as far as White Plains. There he drove to a public parking garage, a four-story structure adjoining an indoor shopping complex-Center City Mall.
Parking on the third level, Carlos moved with apparent casualness through his next activities. Among shoppers parking nearby and getting in or out of cars, no one seemed remotely interested in him or the Nissan van.
First, Carlos wiped all obvious surfaces to make fingerprint detection difficult. That was in case the van was recovered by law authorities in its present condition. The next step was to ensure it wasn't.
From a locker in the van's interior Carlos withdrew a Styrofoam container. Opened, it contained a formidable quantity of plastic

explosive, a small detonator unit with a release pin, two lengths of pliant wire and a roll of adhesive tape. With the tape he fastened the explosive and detonator behind the front seats, low down and out of sight. He ran wires from the detonator release pin to the inside handles of each front door. After fastening a wire to each handle with the door almost closed, he shut each door carefully, then locked it. Now, opening either door would pull the release pin from the detonator.

Peering into the van, Carlos satisfied himself that neither the plastic explosive nor the wires were visible from outside.

Miguel had reasoned that several days would pass before the van was noticed, by which time the kidnappers and their victims would be far away. But when the van was found, a typical terrorist surprise would emphasize that those who had been involved with the kidnap were to be taken very seriously,

Carlos left the parking garage through the shopping mall, then used public transport to head for Hackensack where he would rejoin the others.

The GMC truck continued south for five miles, as far as the Cross Bronx Expressway where it turned west. About twelve minutes later it crossed the Harlem River and, soon after, the George Washington Bridge spanning the Hudson River.

Halfway across the bridge the truck and its occupants left New York State and entered New Jersey. Now, for Miguel and the others in the Medellin gang, the haven of their Hackensack headquarters was reassuringly close.

13

Bert Fisher lived and worked in a tiny apartment in Larchmont. He was sixty-eight and had been a widower for a decade. His business cards described him as a news reporter, though in the parlance of journalism he was more realistically a stringer.

Like other stringers, Bert was the local representative of several news organizations based in larger centers, some of which paid him a small retainer. He submitted information or written copy and got paid for what was used, if anything. Since small-town local news rarely had national or even area-wide significance, getting something published in a major newspaper or reported on radio or television was difficult, which was why no one ever made a fortune as a stringer and most-like Bert Fisher-barely scraped by.

Still, Bert enjoyed what he was doing. During World War

II, as an American G. I. in Europe he had worked for the armed forces newspaper, Stars and Stripes. It had put journalism in his bloodstream and ever since he had happily been a modest part of it. Even now, though age had slowed him a little, he still made telephone calls each day to local sources and kept several scanner radios switched on, thus hearing communications of local police, fire departments, ambulances and other public services. He always hoped that something might be worth following up and reporting to a major chronicler of news.

That was how Bert heard the Larchmont police transmission ordering an officer in car 423 to go to the Grand Union supermarket. It seemed like a routine call until, soon after, the officer alerted police headquarters to a possible kidnap. At the word "kidnap," Bert sat up straight, locked the radio on the Larchmont police frequency, and reached for copy paper to make notes.

By the time the transmission finished, Bert knew he must hurry to the scene of action. First, however, he needed to call New York City television station WCBA.

At WCBA-TV an assistant news director took Bert Fisher's call.

WCBA, a wholly owned affiliate of the CBA network, was a prestigious local station serving the New York area. It operated out of three floors of a Manhattan office building a mile or so from its network parent. Although

a local station, it had an enormous audience; also, because of the amount of news which New York generated, WCBA's news organization was in many ways
a microcosm of the network's.
In a bustling, noise-filled newsroom where thirty people worked at closely clustered desks, the assistant news director checked Bert Fisher's name against a list in a loose-leaf binder. "Okay," he said, "what do you have?"
He listened while the stringer described the police radio message and his intention to go to the Larchmont scene.
"Just a 'possible' kidnap, eh?"
"Yes, sir. "
Although Bert Fisher was almost three times as old as the

young man he was addressing, he still observed a deference to rank, carried forward from another age.
"All right, Fisher, get going! Call back immediately if there's anything real."
"Right, sir. Will do."
Hanging up, the assistant news director realized the call might be just a false alarm. On the other hand, big-breaking news sometimes tiptoed in through unlikely doorways. For a moment he considered dispatching a camera crew to Larchmont, then decided not. At this point the stringer's report was nebulous. Besides, the available crews were already on assignment, so it would mean pulling one away from an active story. Nor, without more information, was there anything which could be broadcast.
The assistant did, however, walk over to the elevated newsroom desk where the station's woman news director presided, and tell her about the call. After hearing him out, she confirmed his decision. But afterward a thought occurred to her and she picked up a telephone that connected her directly to CBA network news. She asked for Ernie LaSalle, the national editor with whom she sometimes exchanged information.
"Look," she said, "this may turn out to be nothing." Repeating what she had just heard, she added, "But it is Larchmont and I know Crawford Sloane lives there. It's a small place, it might involve someone he knows, so I thought you'd want to tell him."
"Thanks," LaSalle said. "Let me know if there's anything more."
When he hung up the phone, Ernie LaSalle momentarily weighed the potential importance of the information. The likelihood was, it would amount to zero. Just the same . . .

On instinct and impulse he picked up the red reporting phone.
"National desk. LaSalle. We are advised that at Larchmont, repeat Larchmont, New York, the local police radio reports a

possible kidnapping. No other details. Our friends at WCBA are following up and will inform us."
As always, the national editor's words were carried throughout the CBA News headquarters. Some who heard wondered why LaSalle had put something so insubstantial on the speaker system. Others, unconcerned, returned their attention to whatever else they had been doing. One floor above the newsroom, senior producers at the Horseshoe paused to listen. One of them, pointing to Crawford Sloane who could be seen through the closed glassed doorway to his private office, observed, "If there's a kidnapping let's be thankful it's someone else in Larchmont and not Crawf. Unless that's his double in there." The others laughed.
Crawford Sloane heard LaSalle's announcement through a speaker on his desk. He had closed the door for a private meeting with the president of CBA News, Leslie Chippingham. While Sloane, in asking for the meeting, had suggested he go to Chippingham's office, the other man had chosen to come here.
Both paused until the national editor's words concluded and Sloane's interest was quickened by the mention of Larchmont. At any other time he would have gone to the newsroom to seek more information. But as it was, he did not want to stop what had suddenly become a no-holds-barred confrontation which, to the anchorman's surprise, was not going at all the way he had expected.

14

"My instinct tells me, Crawf, you have a problem," the CBA News president said, opening their conversation.
"Your instinct is wrong," Crawford Sloane responded. "It's you who have the problem. It's readily solvable, but you need to make some structural changes. Quickly."
Leslie Chippingham sighed. He was a thirty-year veteran of
The Evening News III
TV news who had begun his career at age nineteen as a messenger at NBC's Huntley-Brinkley Report, the premier news show of its day. Even then he had learned that an anchorman must be handled as delicately as a Ming vase and receive the deference accorded heads of state. It was Chippingham's success in doing both which, along with other talents, had raised him to executive producer, then kept him a senior management survivor while other high climbers-including a bevy of network news presidents-were exiled to TV's backwaters or the oblivion of early retirement.
Chippingham had a facility for being at ease with everyone and making others feel the same way. It was once said of him that if he fired you, he made you feel good about it.
"So tell me," he asked Sloane. "What changes?"
"I can't continue to work with Chuck Insen. He has to go. And when we choose a new exec producer I want the casting vote."
"Well, well. You're right about there being a problem." Chippingharn chose his words cautiously and added, "Though it's perhaps a different one, Crawf, from what you think."
Crawford Sloane regarded his nominal superior. What he saw was a towering figure, even seated-Chippingham was sixfoot-four and weighed a trim 205 pounds. The face was more rugged than handsome, the eyes bright blue and the hair a forest of tight curls, now mostly gray. Across the years a succession of women had taken pleasure in running their fingers through Chippingham's curls, that particular pleasure invariably preceding others. Women, in fact, had been Les Chippingham's lifelong weakness, their conquest an irresistible hobby. At this moment, because of those indulgences, he was facing marital and financial disaster-a fact unknown to Sloane, though he, like others, was aware of Chippingham's womanizing. Chippingham, however, knew he must put his own concerns aside to cope

with Crawford Sloane. It would be like walking a high wire, as any colloquy with an anchorman always was.

"Let's quit futzing around," Sloane said, "and come to the point."
Chippingham agreed, "I was about to. As we both know, many things in network news are changing . . ."
"Oh for chrissakes, Les, of course they are!" Sloane cut in impatiently. "That's why I have problems with Insen. We need to change the shape of our news-with fewer quick headlines and more important stories developed thoroughly."
"I'm aware of your feelings. We've been over this before. I also know what Chuck believes and, by the way, he came to see me earlier this morning, complaining about you."
Sloane's eyes widened. He had not expected the executive producer to take the initiative in their dispute; it was not the way things usually happened. "What does he think you can do?" he asked.
Chippingham. hesitated. "Hell, I suppose there's no point in not telling you. He believes the two of you are so far apart that your differences aren't reconcilable. Chuck wants you out."
The anchorman threw back his head and laughed. "And him stay? That's ridiculous."
The news president met his gaze directly. "Is it?"
"Of course. And you know it."
"I knew it once; I'm not sure I do now." Ahead of them both was untrodden ground. Chippingham eased onto it guardedly.
"What I'm trying to get through to you, Crawf, is that nothing anymore is the way it used to be. Since the networks were bought out, everything's in flux. You know as well as I do there's a good deal of feeling among our new masters-at this network and the others-about the power of the evening anchormen. Those goliaths running the parent companies want to diminish that power; also they're unhappy about some of the big salaries for which they think they're not getting value. Recently there's been talk about private, quiet agreements."
Sloane said sharply, "What kind of agreements?"
"The way I hear, the kind big entrepreneurs reach in their exclusive clubs and private homes. For example: 'We'll tell our network not to try to hire away your network news people, pro-

vided you agree not to go after ours. That way we won't push salaries up

all around, and can work on reducing some of the big ones. ' 11
"That's collusion, restraint of trade. It's goddamned illegal!"
"Only if you can prove it happened," Chippingham pointed out. "How can you, though, if the agreement's made over drinks at the Links Club or the Metropolitan, and no record is kept, nothing ever written down?"
Sloane was silent and Chippingham pressed the message home. "What it amounts to, Crawf, is that this is not the best of times to push too hard."
Sloane said abruptly, "You said Insen envisaged someone else in my place. Who?"
"He mentioned Harry Partridge."
Partridget Once more, Sloane thought, he was looming as a competitor. He wondered if Partridge had planted the idea. As if divining the thought, Chippingham said, "Apparently Chuck mentioned the idea to Harry, who was surprised but didn't think he'd be interested."
Chippingham added, "Oh, another thing Chuck Insen told me: If it comes to a choice between him and you, he isn't going without a fight. He's threatened to take it personally to the top."
"Meaning what?"
"Meaning he'll talk to Margot Lloyd-Mason."
Crawford Sloane exploded. "Go to that bitch! He wouldn't dare!"
"I believe he would. And she may be a bitch, but Margot has the power."
As Leslie Chippingham well knew.
CBA had been the last of the major broadcast networks to fall victim to what those in the business privately labeled "the invasion of the Philistines. " That was the description given to the takeover of the networks by industrial conglomerates whose insistence on constantly enlarging profits outweighed their sense of privilege and public duty. This, in contrast to the past when

leaders like CBSs Paley, NBCs Sarnoff and ABCs Goldenson, while dedicated capitalists, were consistent demonstrators Of theirpublic obligations too.
Nine months before, afterfailed attempts to keep CBA independent, the network had been swallowed by Globanic Industries Inc., a corporate giant with worldwide holdings. Like General Electric, which had earlier acquired NBC Globanic was a major defense contractor. Also like GE, Globanic's record included corporate criminality. On one occasion, following grandjury investigations, the company was fined and top-rank executives sentenced to prison terms for rigging bids and price-fixing.

On another the company pleaded guilty to defrauding the US. Government byfalsifying defense contract accounting records; a million-dollarfine was levied-the maximum under law, though a small amount compared with a single contract's total value. As a commentator wrote at the time of Globanic's takeover, "Globanic hasjust too many special interestsfor CBA not to have lost some editorial independence. Can you envisage CBA ever again digging deeply into a sensitive area where its parent is involved?"
Since the takeover of CBA, there had been public assurances from the network's new owners that the traditional independence of CBA News would be respected. The viewfrom inside, though, was that such promises were proving hollow.
The transformation of CBA began with the arrival of Margot Lloyd-Mason as the network's new president and chief executive officer. Known to be efficient, ruthless and exceedingly ambitious, she was already a vice president of Globanic Industries. It was rumored that her move to CBA was a trial run to see whether she would demonstrate sufficient toughness to qualify as eventual chairman of the parent company.
Leslie Chippingham first encountered his new chieftain when she sentfor him a few days after her arrival. Instead of the usual personal phone call--a courtesy extended by Mrs. Lloyd-Mason's predecessor to divisional presiden is-he received a peremptory message through a secretary to appear immediately at "Stonehenge, " the colloquial network namefor CBA's Third Av-

enue headquarters. He went there in a chauffeur-driven limousine.
Margot Lloyd-Mason was tall, with upswept blond hair, a high-cheekboned, lightly tanned face and shrewdly appraising eyes. She wore an elegant taupe Chanel suit with a paler-toned silk blouse. Later, Chippingham would describe her as "attractive but formidable. "
The chief executive's manner was both friendly and cool. "You may use myfirst name, "she told the news president, while making it sound like an order. Then, without wasting time, she got down to business.
"There will be an announcement sometime today about a problem Theo Elliott is having. "
Theodore Elliott was chairman of Globanic Industries.
"The announcement's already been made," Chippingharn said. "By the IRS in Washington, this morning. They claim our king-of-kings has underpaid his personal taxes by somefour million dollars. "
By chance, Chippingham had seen the story on the AP wire. The

circumstances were that Elliott had made investments in what was now exposed as an illegal tax shelter. The creator of the tax shelter was being criminally prosecuted. Elliott was not, but would be required to pay back taxes plus large amounts in penalties.
"Theo has telephoned, " Margot said, "assuring me he had no idea the arrangement was illegal. "
"I suppose there are some who'll believe that, " Chippingham said, aware of the army of lawyers, accountants and tax advisers which someone like the Globanic chairman would have at his disposal.
Margot said icily, "Don't beflippant about this. I sentforyou because I want nothing about Theo and taxes to appear on our news, and Id like you to ask the other networks not to report it either. "
Chippingham, shocked and scarcely believing what he had just heard, struggled to keep his voice calm. "Margot, if I were to call the other networks with that request, not only would they turn it down, but they would report on the air that CBA News

had attempted to arrange a cover-up. Andfrankly, if something similar happened in reverse, at CBA we'd do the same. "
Even while speaking, he realized that the new network head had demonstrated in a single brief exchange not only her lack of knowledge of the broadcast business, but a total insensitivity to news-gathering ethics. But then, he reminded himself it was public knowledge that neither of those things had brought her here, but instead, herfinancial acumen and an ability to create profits.
"All right, " she said grudgingly, "I suppose I have to accept what you say about the other networks. But I want nothing on our own news. "
Chippingham sighed inwardly, knowing thatfrom now on his job as news president was going to be monumentally moredifficult. "Please believe me, Margot, when I tell you as a certainty that tonight the other networks will use that piece of news about Mr. Elliott and his taxes. And if we don't use it also, it will create more attention byjar than if we do. That's because everyone will be watching to see how fair and impartial we are, especially after the statements by Globanic that the freedom of our News Division will not be interfered with. "
The network president's strong face was set grimly, her lips compressed, but her silence showed she understood the point Chippingham had made. At length she said, "You'll keep it short?"
"That will happen automatically. It's not something that's worth a long

report. "
"And I don't want some smart-ass reporter implying that Theo knew about the illegality when he says he didn't. "
"The one thing I'llpromise you, " Chippingham said, "is that whatever we do will be fair. I'll see to it myself. "
Margot made no comment and instead picked up a slip of paper on her desk "You came here in a chauffeured limo. "
Chippingham was startled. "Yes, I did. " The car and driver were one of the perks of hisjob, but the experience of being spied on-which had obviously happened-was new and unsettling.
"Injuture, use a taxi. Ido. So can you. And something else.
Shefixed him with a steely glance. "The News Division's budget

is to be cut by twentypercent immediately. You'll receive a memo from me tomorrow and 'immediately' means just that. I shall expect a report within a week on how economies have been made. "
Chippingham was too dazed for more than a polite, formal leave-taking.
The item about Theodore Elliott and income taxes appeared on the CRA National Evening News and the Globanic chairman's statement about his innocence was left unchallenged. As a Horseshoe producer observed a week later, "If it had been a politician, we'd havepoured skepticism on him, then peeled away his skin like an onio& As it is, we haven't even done a followUP. -
In fact, a follow-up was considered; there was sufficient new material. But during a discussion at the Horseshoe in which the news president participated, it was decided that other news that day was more important, so the follow-up didn't run. The decision was subtle; few, even to themselves, conceded it to be a copout.
The matter of budget cutting was something else. It was an area where all networks were vulnerable to their conquerors and everyone knew it, including Leslie Chippingham. The News Divisions in particular had becomefat, overstaffed and ripeforpruning.
When it happened at CBA News-the result of the demanded cost economies-the process was painful, mainly because more than two hundred lost theirjobs.
The firings produced cries of outrage from those left jobless, and their friends. The print press had a bonanza, with newspapers running human interest stories slanted sympathetically toward the economy wave's victims--even though, quitefrequently, print publishers exercised the

same kind olf economies themselves.
A group within CBA News, all of whose members were on longterm contracts, sent a letter of protest to the New York Times. The signatories included Crawford Sloane, four senior correspondents and several producers. Their letter lamented that among those abruptly unemployed were veteran correspondents

who had served CBA Newsfor most of their working lives. It also pointed out that CBA overall was in no financial difficulty and that the network's profits comparedfavorably with those of major industrial companies. The published letter was discussed and quoted nationwide.
The letter and the attention accorded it infuriated Margot Lloyd-Mason. Once more she sent for Leslie Chippingham.
With the Times open in front of her she railed, "Those overpaid, conceited bastards are part of management. They should be supporting management decisions, not undermining us by public bellyaching. "
The news president ventured, "I doubt if they consider themselves management. They're news people first and are unhappy about their colleagues. And I may as well tell you, Margot, so am L"
The network head impaled him with a glare. "I've enough problems without any from you, so forget that brand ofgarbage. See to it that you ream out the people who signed that letter and let them know I expect no more disloyalty. You may also inform them that their kind of double-dealing will be remembered at contract renewal time. "ich reminds me-some of the amounts we're paying news people are insanely exorbitant, especially for that arrogant son of a bitch Crawford Sloane. "
Subsequently, Leslie Chippingham relayed a softer version of Margot's comments, reasoning that he was the one who had to hold the News Division together, something that was becoming increasingly difficult.
The difficulty was compounded a few weeks later when a new proposal by Mrs. Lloyd-Mason was announced through a CBA internal memo. The intention was to create a political action fund to pay for lobbying in Washington on behalf of CBA network Moneyfor thefund would be contributed "voluntarily" by network executives and deductedfrom their salaries. Senior personnel in the News Division would be included The announcement pointed out that the arrangement conformed to a similar one within the parent company, Globanic Industries.
The same day the announcement arrived, Chippingham was

near the Horseshoe when a producer asked him, "Les, you're going to fight that political action shit for all of us, aren't you?"
From several feet away, Crawford Sloane interjected, "Of course he is. Les would never agree to anything which had the News Division asking for political favors instead of reporting them. We can all rely on him for that. " -
The news presidentfound it hard to tell whether or not there was irony in the anchorman's voice. Either way, Chippingham recognized he had another serious problem, originating through Margot's ignorance--or was it plain uncaring?--about news integrity. Should he go to her and argue against the political action fund? He doubted, though, that it would make any difference since Margot's main objective was clearly to please her Globanic masters and advance her own career.
In the end he solved his problem by leaking the story, along with a copy of the internal CBA memo, to the Washington Post. He had a contact there whom he had used before and who could be trusted not to reveal a source. The resulting Post report, which was picked up by other papers, ridiculed the idea of involving a news organization in political lobbying. Within days the plan was officially abandoned-according to rumors, on the personal orders of Globanic's chairman, Theodore Elliott.
Once more the CBA network president sent for Chippingham.
Coldly, without greeting or preliminaries, she asked, "Who in the News Division gave my memo to the Post?"
"I have no idea, " he lied
"Bullshitl Ifyou don't knowfor sure, you have a damn good notion. "
Chippingham decided to keep quiet, though noting with relief that it had not occurred to Margot he himsetf might be responsible for the leak.
She broke the silence between them. "You have been uncooperative ever since I came here. "
"I'm sorry you feel that way because I don't believe it's true. In fact, I've tried to be honest with you. "
Ignoring the disclaimer, Margot continued, "Because ofyour persistent attitude I've had inquiries made about you and have

learned several things. One is that yourjob is important to you at this moment, because financially you can't afford to lose it. "
"My job has always been important to me As to financially important, isn't that true of most people? Perhaps even of you.
Chippingham wondered uneasily what was coming.

With a thin, superior smile the network chief said, "I'm not in the middle of a messy divorce action. You are. Your wife wants a large financial settlement, including most of your joint property and, if she doesn't get it, will produce evidence in court of a hat(-dozen adulterous relationships which you were careless about concealing. You also have debts, including a big personal bank loan, so you desperately need a continuing income; otherwise you'll be a personal bankrupt and the next thing to a pauper. Y9

Raising his voice, he objected, "That's insultingl It's an intrusion on my personal privacy."

Margot said calmly, "It may be, but it's true.

Despite the protest, he was jolted by the extent of her knowledge. He was in a near-desperate financial bind, in part because he had never been able to manage his personal money and across the years had not only spent his substantial salary as it came in, but had borrowed heavily. He had also never been able to resist the temptations of other women, a weakness that Stasia, his wife of twenty years, had appeared to accept-until three months ago. Then, without warning, Stasia's pent-up rage and stored-up evidence exploded into a ferocious divorce action. Even with that to contend with, he had foolishly started another affair, this time with Rita Abrams, a CBA News producer. He hadn't intended it to happen but it had Now hefound it exciting and wanted to go on. But the thought of losing his job frightened him

"Now listen to me carefully, " Margot said. "It isn't hard to replace a News Division president and if I need to, I will Before you even know what's happening, you'll be out on your ass and someone else in. There are plenty of candidatesfor yourjob, here and at the other networks. Is that clear?"

Chippingham said resignedly, "Yes, it's clear.

"However, if you play ball with me, you'll stay on. But News Division policy will be the way I want it. Remember that And

one more thing: When I want something done which you don't like, don't waste my time with crap about news ethics and purity. You stopped being pure-if you ever were-when you didn't use those follow-up pieces about Theo Elliott's taxes. " Margot gave her thin smile again. "Oh yes, I know about that. So you've been corrupted already and a few more times won't make any difference. That's all, You can go. "

That conversation had taken place two days before Chuck Insen, and then

Crawford Sloane, had come to the news president with their personal problems about the National Evening News. Chippingham knew that their differences must be settled promptly within the News Division. For as long as possible he wanted no more visits to Margot, no more confrontations.

"I'm telling you, Crawf, just as I told Chuck," Chippingham said, "right now you'll do the greatest harm to all of us in news if the two of you go public with your infighting. Over at Stonehenge, the News Division is out of favor. As for Chuck's idea of involving Margot Lloyd-Mason, she won't take his side or yours. What she'll probably do is more cost cutting on the grounds that if we have time for internal feuding we're not busy enough, and are therefore overstaffed."

"I can fight that," Sloane said.

"And I guarantee you'll be ignored." Unusually, Chippingham was becoming angry. At times it was a news president's function to protect his reporting staff, including an anchorman, from the network's top management. But there were limits; for once he decided to be rough.

"Something you may as well know is that our new boss doesn't have a lot of time for you. Because of that damnfool letter you and the others wrote to the Times, she described you as arrogant and overpaid."

Sloane protested, "That letter was on target. I'm entitled to a free opinion and I expressed it."

"Balls! You had no business putting your name there. In that I agree with Margot. For god's sake, Crawf, grow upl You can't take the kind of money you do from the network and

continue being 'one of the boys,' shooting off at the mouth when you feel like it."

There was no reason, Chippingham thought, why he should take all the flak from the network's new owners. Let other senior staffers, including Sloane and Insen, carry their sharel The news president also had a private reason for irritation. Today was Thursday. Tonight he planned to leave for a long, love-filled weekend with Rita Abrams in Minnesota. Rita was already there, having arrived the night before. What he didn't want was to have this stupid brawl fomenting in his absence.

"I still come back to what we started with," Sloane said. "There need to be changes in our news format."

"There can be," Chippingham told him. "I have some ideas myself. We'll work them out here."

"How?"
"Starting next week I'll hold meetings with you and Chuck Insenas many as it takes to get agreement. Even if I have to slam your heads together, we'll find an acceptable compromise."
"We can try it," Sloane said doubtfully, "but it's not totally satisfactory."
Chippingham shrugged. "Tell me something that is."
When the news president had gone, Sloane sat silently in his office brooding over their discussion. Then he remembered the speakerphone announcement about Larchmont. Curious to know if there was any more information, he left his office and headed for the newsroom.

15

Bert Fisher, the Larchmont stringer, was continuing to pursue a potential news story stemming from the police radio message about a "possible kidnap." After telephoning WCBA-TV, Bert

hurried out of his apartment, hoping that his battered twentyyear-old Volkswagen bug would start. Following an anxious minute of abortive whines and grunts, it did. He kept a scanner radio in the car and set it to the Larchmont police frequency. Then he headed for downtown-the Grand Union supermarket.

Partway there some more police radio exchanges caused him to change direction.

"Car 423 to headquarters. Proceeding to house of possible victims of reported incident. Address, 66 Park Avenue. Request a detective meet me there. "

"Headquarters to 423. Ten four.

A brief pause, then, "Headquarters to car 426 Proceed urgently to 66 Park Avenue. Meet post officer, car 423. Investigate officer's report. "

In local police usage, Bert realized, "proceed urgently" meant: with flashing lights and siren. Clearly, the action was heating up and Bert increased his own speed as much as the ancient Volkswagen would allow. Now, heading for Park Avenue, he felt excited about that address number-66. He wasn't sure, but if the house belonged to the person he thought it did, this was really a big story.

Officer Jensen, who had responded to the original call from the Grand Union supermarket and interviewed the old lady, Priscilla Rhea, now had a feeling he was involved in something serious. In his mind, he went over the situation so far.

During his questioning of others at the supermarket, several witnesses confirmed seeing a fellow shopper-identified by two of them as Mrs. Crawford Sloane-leave the store suddenly, apparently in distress. She was accompanied by her young son and two other men, one about thirty, the other elderly. The thirty-year-old appeared to have come to the store on his own. At first he had asked other shoppers whether they were Mrs. Sloane. Then, when he encountered the real Mrs. Sloane, the hasty exodus ensued.

From that point, the only person claiming to have seen any of those

described was Miss Rhea. Her story about an attack,

with the victims being carried away in a "little bus," was increasingly believable. Contributing to the credibility was that Mrs. Sloane's Volvo station wagon-pointed out to Officer Jensen by someone who knew her-was still parked in the supermarket lot, with no sign of Mrs. Sloane or the others with her. There were also those splotches on the ground which possibly were blood. Jensen had asked one of the other officers now on the scene to protect them as evidence, for examination later.

Another onlooker, who lived near the Sloanes, had given Jensen the family's home address. This, coupled with the fact that there was nothing more for him to do at the supermarket, had prompted Jensen's radio message asking for a detective to meet him at 66 Park Avenue. In other circumstances, and because Larchmont police radio conversations were casual compared with those of larger forces, he would have included the Sloane name with the address. But knowing that Larchmont's most famous resident was involved, and being aware that outsiders might be listening, he withheld the name for the time being.

Jensen was on his way to Park Avenue now-a journey of only a few minutes. He had just entered the driveway of number 66 when a second police car-unmarked, though with a portable flashing roof light and screaming siren-pulled in behind. Detective Ed York, an old-timer on the force whom Jensen knew well, stepped out. York and Jensen conferred briefly, then walked to the house together. The policemen identified themselves to Florence, the Sloanes' day maid, who bad come to the front door at the sound of the siren. She let them in, her face showing a mixture of surprise and alarm.

"There's a possibility, only a possibility," Detective York informed her, "that something may have happened to Mrs. Sloane." He began asking questions which Florence answered, her concern mounting as she did.

Yes, she had been in the house when Mrs. Sloane, Nicky, and Mr. Sloane's father left to go shopping. That was about eleven o'clock. Mr. Sloane had left for work just as Florence arrived, which was 9:30. No, she had not heard from anyone in

the family since Mrs. Sloane left, though she hadn't expected to. In fact there had been no phone calls at all. No, there had been nothing unusual when Mrs. Sloane and the others drove away. Except . . . well . . .

Florence stopped, then asked anxiously, "What's this all about? What's

happened to Mrs. Sloane?"
"Right now there isn't time to explain," the detective said. "What did you mean by 'except . . . well'T'
"Well, when Mrs. Sloane, her father-in-law and Nicky were leaving, I was in there." Florence motioned toward a sun-room at the front of the house. "I saw them drive away."
"And?"
"There was a car parked on the side street; you can see it from there. When Mrs. Sloane left, all of a sudden the car started and went the same way she did. I didn't think anything about it at the time."
"No reason why you should," Jensen said. "Can you describe the car?"
"It was dark brown, I think. Sort of medium size."
"Did you see a license plate?"
"No."
"Did you recognize the make?"
Florence shook her head. "They all look the same to me."
"Leave that for now," Detective York told Jensen. Then to Florence, "Think about that car. Try to remember anything else, and we'll come back to you."
The detective and Jensen returned outside. As they did, two more police cruisers arrived. One brought a uniformed sergeant, another the Larchmont chief of police. The chief, in uniform, was tall and rangy, with a deceptively low-key manner. The four began a hasty conference in the driveway.
Near the end of it the chief asked Detective York, "Do you think this is for real-a kidnap?"
"At this moment," York said, "everything points that way."
"Jensen?"
"Yes, sir. It's for real."
"You said the Nissan van that was seen leaving had New Jersey plates?"

"According to a witness, yes, sir."
The chief mused. "If it is a kidnap and they cross a state line, it becomes the FBI's jurisdiction. That's the Lindbergh law." He added, "Not that that kind of detail worries the FBI."
The last words came out sourly, reflecting the conviction of many local lawmen that the FBI moved in on any high-profile case they wanted and found reasons to decline the ones they didn't. Then the chief said decisively, "I'm calling in the FBI now."
He returned to his car and picked up the radio mike.

A minute or two later, rejoining the others, the chief ordered Detective York to go back to the house and stay inside. "The first thing you do, have that maid put you in touch with Mr. Sloane and speak to him yourself. Tell him as much as you know, and that we're doing all we can. After that, answer any incoming phone calls. Keep a note of everything. You'll be getting help soon."

The sergeant and Jensen were instructed to remain on protective duty outside. "Soon, there'll be more people here than flies around a shithouse. Let no one past the front gate except the FBI. When the press get here with their questions, direct them to headquarters."

At that moment they heard the sound of a noisy approaching car. Their heads turned. It was a battered white Volkswagen bug and the chief said glumly, "Here's the first."

Bert Fisher had no need to check which house on Park Avenue was number 66. The assembled police cars were direction enough.

As he stopped his VW at the curb and climbed out, the police chief had entered his own car and was about to leave. Bert hurried forward. "Chief, can you make a statement?"

"Oh, it's youl" The chief ran down his window on the driver's side; he had encountered the old news stringer many times before. "A statement about what?"

"Oh, come on, Chief! I've heard all the radio buzz, including your instruction just now to call in the FBI." Bert looked

around him, realizing that his hunch was right. "This is Crawford Sloane's home, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is."

"And is it Mrs. Sloane who's been kidnapped?"

As the chief hesitated, Bert pleaded, "Look, I'm the first here. Why not give a local boy a break?"

The chief who was a reasonable man, thought, Well, why not? He was even a little fond of Fisher, a nuisance at times like a persistent mosquito, though never vicious the way some press people could be.

"If you heard all the messages," the chief said, "you'll know we aren't certain of anything yet. But yes, we do think Mrs. Sloane may have been abducted, along with the Sloanes' son Nicholas and Mr. Sloane's father."

Bert, scribbling as the chief spoke, knew this was the most important story of his life and he wanted to be careful. "So what you're telling me is that the Larchmont police are acting on the assumption there have

been three kidnappings."
The chief nodded. "That's an okay quote."
"Do you have any idea who might have done this?"
"No. Oh, just one thing. Mr. Sloane has not been informed and we're trying to get in touch with him. So before you start sounding ofr, for god's sake give us time to do that."
With that, the chief pulled away and Bert dived for his VW. Despite the chief's caveat, he had no intention of waiting for anything. The only question in his mind was: Where was the nearest pay phone?
Moments latey, as Bert turned out of Park Avenue, he saw another car turning in and recognized the occupant-the local stringer for WNBC-TV. So the competition was onto the story. Now, if Bert was to stay ahead he had to move fast.
Not far away, on Boston Post Road, he found a pay phone. As he punched out the numbers of WCBA-TV, his hand was trembling.

16

At 11:20 A.M. in the pressure-driven newsroom of WCBA-TV, tension was rising
as it always did during the hour preceding the local New York station's News at Noon. Today especially, there was a heavy budget of news with several developing stories competing for the lead position.
A famous evangelist, in New York to receive a religious prize, had been found dead in his Waldorf suite, apparently from a cocaine overdose, and a prostitute who had spent the night with him was being questioned by police. In midtown Manhattan an office building was on fire; people trapped on high floors were being rescued by helicopter. A Wall Street billionaire, terminally ill with cancer, was being wheeled around the Bronx in an invalid chair as he handed out fistfuls of one-hundred-dollar bills. Every few minutes, from a trailing armored car, his supply was replenished.
Amid a scene of near-bedlam, Bert Fisher's phone call was routed to the same assistant news director as before who, on hearing who was calling, snapped, "We're swamped here. Make it short and quick!"
Bert did, at which the young newsman said incredulously, "You're sure? Absolutely sure? Do you have confirmation?"
"From the chief of police." Bert added proudly, "He gave me an exclusive statement and, to be safe, I had him repeat it."
The assistant news director was already on his feet, signaling to the news director, shouting urgently, "Line four! Line four!" He told an assignment editor at a desk beside him, "We need a camera crew in Larchmont fast. Don't ask me how to find one, just pull them off something else, anything else, and get them there."
The woman news director was already listening to Bert

Fisher. When she had made notes of the essentials, she asked him, "Who else has the story?"
"I was the first. Still am. But WNBC's man was arriving as I left."
"Did he have a camera crew?"
"No.,,
The assistant news director crossed the newsroom to report, "I've a crew on the way, We pulled them from the Bronx."
The news director spoke into the phone, instructing Bert Fisher, "Stay

on the line." Then to a writer at a desk nearby: "Take line four. It's Fisher, Larchmont. Get everything he has, then write it as our noon lead."
At the same time the news director picked up a telephone connecting her directly to the network. Ernie LaSalle, CBA's national editor, answered and she told him, "The kidnap in Larchmont is confirmed. Half an hour ago unknown persons violently seized Crawford Sloane's wife, his son, and Crawford's father."
"Good Christl" LaSalle's shock and incredulity came down the line. "Has Crawf been told?"
"I don't think so."
"Are the police involved?"
"Very much so, and they've called in the FBI. Our man Fisher has a statement from the Larchmont chief." Checking her notes, the news director read aloud the chief's statement, Bert Fisher's query, and the chief's words, "That's an okay quote."
"Run that past me again." LaSalle was frantically typing as he spoke.
The WCBA news director did so, adding, "We've heard that WNBC is onto the story, though a tad behind us. Look, we'll go with this at noon anyway, and I'm considering breaking into programming now. But I thought, since this is family . . ."
Before she could finish, LaSalle snapped, "Don't do a damn thing over there. The brass will be in on this. And if anybody breaks it, we will."

Taking seconds only, Ernie LaSalle debated his options.
He had several.
One was to take whatever time was necessary to first contact Crawford Sloane, who might or might not be in the building, then personally and gently as possible convey to Crawf the frightening information. A second was to pick up the red reporting phone in front of him and announce to the entire News Division the kidnapping of the Sloane family, after which urgent action to make an on-air report would undoubtedly begin. The third was to issue an order to network master control that CBA News would "take air" in approximately three minutes, interrupting network programming with a special bulletin. LaSalle was one of a halfdozen people who had the power to authorize such intrusion and, in his judgment, the news just received was not only preeminent, but of immense public interest.
He made his decision, opting for the second choice. Influencing his judgment was the knowledge that another New York station, WNBC-TV---

owned
by NBC network-was on the Larchmont scene. Undoubtedly NBC News would receive a report swiftly from their affiliate, just as CBA had. Therefore there wasn't time for humane niceties. As for going on the air at once, there were plenty of other people around, including the News Division president, Les Chippingham, to make that decision.
I'm sorry as hell to do this to you, Crawf LaSalle thought, then picked up the red reporting phone.
"National desk. LaSalle. The earlier reported kidnapping at Larchmont, New York, has been confirmed by the local chief of police who has called in the FBI. According to police, the reported victims are Mrs. Crawford Sloane, young Nicholas Sloane and . . ." Despite his resolve and professionalism, LaSalle found his voice breaking. Steeling himself he continued. ". . . and Crawford's father, who were violently seized and driven away by unknown persons. WCBA has reliable on-scene coverage, details available here. NBC is believed to be working on this story, though we have a slight lead. National desk recommends taking network air immediately."
The Evening News 131
Horror and consternation swept through the News Division like a tidal wave. Everyone stopped working. Many looked at each other, asking silently, Did I really hear that? When confirmation was forthcoming, unanswerable questions sprang to lips: How could it happen? Who would do such a thing? Is it a kidnap for ransom? "at do the kidnappers want? What are the chances the police will catch them quickly? Oh god, how must Cra wfo rd feel?
One floor above the newsroom, senior staffers at the Horseshoe were equally appalled, though their shock lasted only moments. After it, out of habit and discipline, they were galvanized to action.
Chuck Insen, as senior producer in the building, left his office on the run. All his newsman's instincts told him that the national desk advice to take network air immediately would be followed. When that happened, Insen's appointed place was in the broadcast control room four floors below. Reaching a bank of elevators, he jabbed a down button with his thumb.
Impatiently awaiting for an elevator, Insen's mind overflowed with sympathy for Sloane, their differences for the moment totally erased. He wondered: Where was Crawf? Earlier, Insen had seen him briefly in the distance and knew that he and Les Chippingharn had had their heads

together in Sloane's office for reasons Insen already knew. Presumably Crawf was somewhere in the building and must have heard the hot-line call. Which raised a crucial question.

When urgent breaking news was deemed significant enough to interrupt the network with a special report, it was the evening news anchorman-in CBA's case, Crawford Sloane-who faced the cameras. If the anchorman wasn't on the scene he would be sent for, with any available correspondent fillin~ in until the anchor arrived. But, Insen realized, there was absolutely no way Sloane could be expected to handle this sudden, harrowing news about his own family.

At that moment a "down" elevator arrived and the business correspondent of CBA News, Don Kettering, prepared to step out. Kettering, middle-aged with a thin mustache and looking

like a well-to-do businessman himself, opened his mouth to say something but never got started. This was because Insen shoved him back inside the elevator and hit the B I button for first basement. The elevator doors closed.

Kettering spluttered, "What the-"

"Hold it," Insen said. "You heard the speakerphone just now?"

"Yes, I'm damn sorry. I was going to tell Crawf-"

"Where you're going," Insen said, "is on the air. Get to the flash studio and take the hot seat. Crawf can't do this. You're available. I'll talk to you from the control room."

Kettering, a quick thinker and an experienced general reporter before he became a business specialist, nodded. He even seemed a little pleased at the prospect. "Do I get some briefing?"

"We'll give you all we have so far. You'll get maybe a minute to do a quick study, then ad-lib. More will be fed to you as it comes in."

"Right."

As Insen left the elevator, Kettering pressed a button which would take him upward to the broadcast floor.

Elsewhere, other activity was in high gear, some proceeding automatically.

In the newsroom, the Northeast assignment editor was rounding up two network camera crews and correspondents. Their instructions were to proceed posthaste to Larchmont and obtain pictures of the kidnap scene as well as interview police and any witnesses. A mobile transmitting van would follow right behind.

In a small research department adjoining the Horseshoe, an offshoot of a larger research library in another building, a halfdozen people were hastily assembling a computer biography of Crawford Sloane and the few known facts about his familyfew because Jessica Sloane had always insisted on privacy for herself and Nicholas.
From somewhere, though, main research had acquired a photograph of Jessica which was coming through on a fax machine; a graphics editor hovered over the machine, waiting to

remove the picture and convert it to a slide. Printing out from another computer was the war record of Crawford's father, Angus Sloane. There would be a photo of him too. No picture of Nicky had been located so far.
A research assistant grabbed all the material available and ran down a flight of stairs to the flash facility studio where Don Kettering had just arrived. Right behind research, a messenger from the national desk brought a printout of Bert Fisher's Larchmont report, received from WCBA-TV. Kettering sat down at the studio's central desk and, blocking out all else, immersed himself in reading. Around him technicians were arriving, lights coming on. Someone clipped a microphone onto Kettering's jacket. A cameraman framed Kettering in his lens.
The flash facility was the smallest studio in the building, no bigger than a modest living room. It had a single camera and was kept for occasions such as this when it could be activated and ready in rnoments.
Meanwhile, in the darkened control room where Chuck Insen had now established himself, a woman director slid into her central seat facing a bank of TV monitors, some illumined, others black. On her right, an assistant with an open notebook joined her. Operators and technicians were taking their places, a stream of orders flowing.
"Standby camera one. Mike check."
"Bill, this will be a live announce. 'We interrupt this programming' open and a 'resume programming' close. Okay?"
"Okay. Got it."
"Do we have a script yet?"
"Negative. Don may go ad-lib."
"Bring the video up ten units."
"Camera one, let's see Kettering."
More monitors were coming alight, among thern one from the flash facility. The face of Don Kettering filled the screen.
The director's assistant was talking with network master control. "This

is news. We're expecting to break into the network with a bulletin. Please stand by."
The director inquired, "Is the special slide ready?"

A voice responded, "Here it is."
On another monitor, bright red letters filled the screen:
CBA NEWS
SPECIAL
BULLETIN
"Hold it there." The director turned in her chair to speak to Insen. "Chuck, we're ready as we'll ever be. Do we go or not?"
The executive producer, a telephone cradled in his shoulder, told her, "I'm finding out now."
He was talking to the News Division president who was in the main newsroom where Crawford Sloane was pleading for delay.
The time was 11:52 A.M.
When the shattering national desk announcement began, Crawford Sloane was at the head of a stairway on the fourth floor, about to descend to the newsroom. His intention had been to find out more, if he could, about the earlier report from Larchmont.
As the speakerphones went live, he stopped to listen, then, scarcely believing what he had heard, stood briefly, dazed and in a state of shock. His momentary trance was interrupted by one of the Horseshoe secretaries who had seen him leave and now came running after him, calling out breathlessly, "Oh, Mr. Sloane! The Larchmont police are on your line. They want to talk to you urgently."
He followed the girl back and took the call in his office.
"Mr. Sloane, this is Detective York. I'm at your home and have some unfortunate-2'
"I just heard. Tell me what you know."
"Actually, sir, it's very little. We know that your wife, son and father left for the Grand Union supermarket about fifty minutes ago. Inside the store, according to witnesses, they were approached . . ."
The detective continued his recital of known facts, inelud-
ing the trio's apparently forced departure in a Nissan van. He added, "We've just heard that FBI special agents are on the way here, and someone from FBI is coming over to you. I've been asked to tell you there's concern about your own safety. You'll receive protection, but for the time

being you should not leave the building you are in."
Sloane's mind was whirling. Consumed with anxiety, he asked, "Is there any idea who might have done this?"
"No, sir. It all happened suddenly. We're absolutely in the dark."
"Do many people know about this-what's happened?"
"As far as I know, not many." The detective added, "The longer we can keep it that way, the better."
"Why?"
"With a kidnapping, Mr. Sloane, publicity can be harmful. We may be hearing from the kidnappers-they'll probably try to contact you first. Then we, or more likely the FBI, will want a dialog with them, a start to negotiating. We won't want the whole world in on that. Nor will they because . . 29
Sloane interrupted. "Detective, I'll talk to you later. Right now there are things I have to do."
Aware of activity around the Horseshoe and knowing what it meant, Sloane wanted to curb precipitate action. Hurrying from his office he called out, "Where's Les Chippingham?"
"In the newsroom," a senior producer said. Then, more gently, "Crawf, we're all damn sorry, but it looks as if we're going on the air."
Sloane scarcely heard. He raced for the stairs and descended them swiftly. Ahead he could see the news president in hasty conference with several others around the national desk. Chippingham was asking, "How sure are we of that Larchmont stringer?"
Ernie LaSalle answered, "WCBA say he's a little old guy they've had for years-foursquare, reliable."
"Then I guess we should go with what we have."
Sloane broke into the circle. "No, no, nol Les, don't go with it. We need more time. The police just told me they may hear from the kidnappers. Publicity could harm my family."

LaSalle said, "Crawf, we know what you're going through. But this is a big story and others have it. They won't hold off. WNBC-"
Sloane shook his head. "I still say no!" He faced the news president directly. "Les, I beg of you-delay!"
There was an embarrassed silence. Everyone knew that in other circumstances, Sloane would be the first to urge going ahead. But no one had the heart to say, Crawf you're not thinking coherently.
Chippingham glanced at the newsroom clock: 11:54.

LaSalle had taken over the phone call from Insen. Now he reported, "Chuck says everyone's set to go. He wants to know: Are we breaking into the network or not?"

Chippingham said, "Tell him I'm still deciding." He was debating: Should they wait until noon? On monitors overhead he could see the national feeds of all networks. On CBA a popular soap opera was still in progress; when it concluded, commercials would follow. Cutting in now would be a costly disruption. Would less than another six minutes make much difference?

At that moment, simultaneously, several newsroom computers emitted a "beep." On screens a bright "B" appearedthe signal for an urgent press wire bulletin. Someone reading a screen called out, "AP has the Sloane kidnap story."

On the national desk another phone rang. LaSalle answered, listened, then said quietly, "Thank you for telling us." Hanging up, he informed the news president, "That was NBC. They called us as a courtesy to say they have the story. They're going with it on the hour."

The time was fifteen seconds short of 11:55.

Making a decision, Chippingham said, "We go now!" Then to LaSalle, "Tell Chuck to break the network."

17

In the CBA News headquarters building, two floors below street level in a small, plain room, two male operators sat facing complex switching systems with a galaxy of colored lights and dials, computer terminals and television monitors. Two sides of the room had glass surrounds looking out onto drab corridors. Passersby, if so inclined, could look in. This was network master control, technical command post for the entire CBA national network.

Through here all network programming flowed---entertainment, news, sports, documentaries, presidents' addresses, Capitol Hill follies, assorted live coverage and prerecordings, and national commercials. Surprisingly, for all its importance as an electronic pulse center, master control's location and appearance were uninspiring.

At master control, each day usually advanced routinely according to a meticulous plan which codified each twentyfour hours of broadcasting in terms of minutes, sometimes seconds. Principally, execution of the plan was by computer, with the two operators overseeing-and occasionally interceding when unexpected events required regular programming to be interrupted.

An interruption was occurring now.

Moments earlier on a direct line from the News Division control room, Chuck Insen had instructed, "We have a news special. It's for the full network. Were taking air-nowl"

As Insen spoke, the slide "CBA News Special Bulletin," fed from the news control room, came up on a master control monitor.

The experienced master control operator who received the call knew the command "now" meant exactly that. In the absence of that word, if a program in progress were within a

minute and a half of finishing, he would wait until its conclusion before breaking into the network feed. Similarly, if a commercial were airing, he would allow it to finish.

But "now" meant no delay, no holding. A one-minute commercial was being broadcast and had thirty seconds to go. But moving a switch, the operator cut it, thereby costing CBA in lost revenue some $25,000. With another switch he put the "Special Bulletin" slide on the network video feed.

Instantly the bright red words appeared on the screens of more than twelve million television sets.
For five seconds, as he watched a digital clock in front of him, the master control operator kept the audio feed silent. This was to allow control rooms of affiliate stations which had not been broadcasting the network program to interrupt their local programming and take the special bulletin. Most did.
At the end of five seconds the audio feed was opened and an announcer's voice heard.
"We interrupt our regular programming to bring you a special report from CBA News. Now, from New York, here is correspondent Don Kettering."
In the news control room, the director ordered, "Cue Don!"
Across the nation, the face of CBA's business correspondent filled television screens.
His voice and expression serious, Kettering began, "Police in Larchmont, New York, have reported the apparent kidnapping of the wife, young son and father of CBA News anchorman Crawford Sloane."
A slide of Sloane's familiar face appeared as Kettering continued, "The kidnapping, by unidentified persons, occurred about forty minutes ago. According to police and a witness at the scene, it was preceded by a violent assault
The time was 11:56 A.M.
Beating out its competitors, CBA News had broken the story first.
P A R T
TWO
The aftereffects of CDA's special bulletin announcing the Sloane family kidnap were instantaneous and widespread.
NBC News, whose decent, courteous gesture of informing CBA had robbed it of a possible lead, followed with its own bulletin barely a minute later-ahead of its original plan to break the story at noon.
CBS, ABC and CNN, alerted by wire reports from AP and Reuters, were all on the air with the news within minutes. So were TV stations across the country not connected to a network, but with their own news services.
Canadian television also made the Sloane kidnapping the lead item on noon news broadcasts.
Radio stations, with their lightning immediacy, were even faster than television in spreading the story.
From coast to coast, afternoon newspapers at once began replating front pages with banner headlines. Major out-of-state papers instructed their

New York correspondents to work on individual by-line stories.
News photo agencies began a frantic search for pictures of Jessica, Nicholas and Angus Sloane. There was no shortage of Crawford Sloane photos.
The main switchboard of CBA was flooded with calls for Crawford Sloane. When the callers were told politely that Mr. Sloane was not available, most left sympathetic messages.
The press and other media reporters, knowing better than to call a switchboard, used direct lines into CBA News. As a

result, some telephones were constantly blocked, making outside communication difficult. Journalists who got through, wanting to interview Sloane, were advised that he was too distressed to talk with anyone and that, in any case, there was no more information than had already been broadcast.
One caller who did reach Sloane was the President of the United States.
"Crawf, I've just been told this awful news," the President said. "I know you have too much on your mind to talk right now, but I wanted you to know that Barbara and I are thinking about you and your family, and hoping for good news very soon. Like you, we want this ordeal to be over."
"Thank you, Mr. President," Sloane said. "That means a lot."
"I've given orders to the Justice Department," the President said, "that the FBI's search for your family is to have priority, and any other resources of government that are needed will be used."
Sloane repeated his thanks.
The substance of the President's call was immediately made public by a White House spokesman, adding to the growing flow of information which clearly would dominate the evening news broadcasts of all networks.
TV camera crews from New York stations and the networks reached Larchmont shortly after the initial bulletins, and interviewed-as an observer put it-"almost every breathing body in sight," including some with only a tenuous connection to the case. The ex-schoolteacher, Priscilla Rhea, blossoming under all the attention, proved to be the favorite interviewee, with the Larchmont police chief a close second.
A startling new development emerged when several people living near the Sloanes came forward with information that the Sloane house had apparently been under observation for several weeks, perhaps a month. A succession of different cars, and several times a truck, had been seen

to arrive. They remained parked near the house for long periods, with whoever came in the vehicles remaining inconspicuously inside. Some makes of cars were mentioned, though detailed information was sketchy.
The Evening News 143
There was agreement among the observers that sometimes the cars had New York license plates, at other times New Jersey's. No one, though, remembered numbers.
One of the cars described by a neighbor matched the description of that seen by the Sloanes' maid, Florence-the same car that followed Jessica Sloane's Volvo when Jessica, Nicky and Angus left to do the household shopping.
Press and TV interviewers asked the obvious question: Why had no one reported the apparent surveillance to the police?
In each case the answer was the same. It was assumed that some kind of security protection was being provided for the famous Mr. Crawford Sloane, and why would neighbors interfere with that?
Now, belatedly, information about the various vehicles was being sought by police.
Overseas media, too, were showing keen interest in the kidnap story. While the face and voice of Crawford Sloane were not as familiar to foreigners as to North Americans, the involvement of a major TV personality seemed of international consequence in itself.
This overwhelming reaction was proof that the modem network anchorman-species Homo promulgare ancora, as the next day's Wall Street Journal would dub it-had become a special breed, ranking in public idolization with kings and queens, movie and rock stars, popes, presidents and princes.
Crawford Sloane's mind was a turmoil of emotions.
He moved through the next several hours partly in a daze, half-expecting to learn at any moment that the entire episode was a misunderstanding, a readily explained mistake. But as time went by, with Jessica's Volvo still standing unclaimed in the Larchmont supermarket parking lot, this seemed increasingly less likely.
What troubled Sloane greatly was the memory of his conversation the preceding evening with Jessica. It was he who had brought up the possibility of kidnap, and it was not the coincidence which exercised him-he knew from long experience that real life and real news were full of coincidences, sometimes

incredible ones. But, as he saw it at this moment, his own selfishness and self-importance made him assume that only he could be a kidnap victim. Jessica had even asked, ""at about families? Could they be targets too?" But he had dismissed the idea, not believing it could happen or that Jessica and Nicky should be protected. Now, blaming himself for indifference and neglect, his sense of guilt was overwhelming.

He was greatly concerned, of course, about his father, though clearly Angus's inclusion in today's events was accidental. He had arrived unexpectedly and, unhappily, had been caught in the kidnappers' net.

At other moments during the day Sloane fretted impatiently, wanting to take some action, any action, yet knowing there was little he could do. He considered going to Larchmont, then realized he would gain nothing and would be out of touch if any fresh news broke. Another reason for staying put was the arrival of three FBI field agents who began a flurry of activity centering around Sloane.

Special Agent Otis Havelock, who was senior in the trio, at once demonstrated himself to be, in the words of an observing Horseshoe producer, "a take-charge guy." He insisted on being conducted directly to Crawford Sloane's office and there, after introducing himself to Sloane, demanded from his escort the presence of the head of the network's security force. Next, the FBI agent used a telephone to summon help from the New York City Police Department.

Havelock-small, dapper and balding-had deep-set green eyes and a direct gaze which seldom shifted from the person with whom he was conversing. His permanently suspicious expression appeared to say, I've seen and heard it all before. Later, Sloane and others would learn that the unspoken assertion was the truth. A twentyyear FBI veteran, Otis Havelock had spent the greater part of his life dealing with the worst of human infamies.

CBA's security chief, a grizzled retired New York police detective, arrived speedily. Havelock told him, "I want this entire floor secured immediately. The people who've taken Mr. Sloane's family may make an attempt on Mr. Sloane himself

The Evening News 145

Station two of your security guards at the elevators and post other guards at any stairways. They're to check, carefully check, the identity of all persons entering or leaving the floor. As soon as that's done, begin a thorough check of everyone who is on this floor already. Is that clear?"

The older man protested, "Sure it's clear, and we're all concerned for

Mr. Sloane. But I don't have unlimited people and what you're asking is excessive. I have other security responsibilities I can't neglect."
"You've neglected them already," Havelock snapped. He produced a plastic identity card. "Look at this! I used it to get in this building. Just showed it to the guard downstairs and he waved me past."
The security head peered at the card on which was a photo of a man in uniform. "Whose picture is that?"
"Ask Mr. Sloane." Havelock handed Crawford Sloane the card.
As Sloane glanced at it, despite his anxieties he burst out laughing.
"It's Colonel Qaddafi."
"I had it specially made," the FBI man said. "I use it sometimes to prove to companies like this how lousy their security is." He told the crestfallen security chief, "Now get on with what I said. Secure this floor and tell your people to look at ID cards carefully, including pictures."
When the other man had gone, Havelock told Sloane, "The reason security's bad in most big companies is because security's not a revenue-producing department; therefore budget people cut it to the bone. If you'd had proper security here, it would have included protection for you and your family at home."
Sloane said ruefully, "I wish you'd been around to suggest it.-
A few minutes earlier, when Havelock phoned the New York Police Department, he had spoken with the chief of detectives, explaining that a kidnapping had taken place and asking for police protection of Crawford Sloane. Now, from outside, the sound of several rapidly approaching sirens grew louder,

then stopped. Minutes later a uniformed police lieutenant and a sergeant marched in.
"What I'd like you to do," Havelock told the lieutenant after introductions, "is keep a couple of radio cars outside to advertise police presence, also post an officer at every outside entrance, with one inside the main lobby. Tell your men to stop and question anyone suspicious."
The police lieutenant said, "Will do." To Crawford Sloane, he added almost reverently, "We'll take good care of you, sir. Whenever I'm home, my wife and I always watch you on the news. We like the way you do it."
Sloane nodded. "Thank you."
The policemen, looking around them, seemed inclined to linger, but

Havelock had other ideas. "You can do a perimeter check by sending someone up to the roof. Take a look at the building from above. Make sure all exits are covered."
With assurances that everything possible would be done, the lieutenant and the sergeant left.
"You'll be seeing a lot of me, I'm afraid, Mr. Sloane," the special agent said when they were alone. "I've been ordered to stay close to you. You heard me say that we think you could be a kidnap target too."
"I've sometimes thought I might be," Sloane said. Then, expressing the guilt that had been building in him, "It never occurred to me that my family could be in danger."
"That's because you were thinking rationally. But clever criminals are unpredictable."
Sloane asked nervously, "You think that's the kind of people we may be dealing with?"
The FBI man's expression did not change; he seldom wasted time with words of comfort. "We don't know yet what kind they are. But I've found it useful never to underestimate the enemy. Then if it turns out later that I overrated him, that's to my advantage."
Havelock continued, "Some more of our people will be moving in soon, here and at your home, with electronic gadgetry. We'll want to monitor your incoming phone calls, so while in this building you should take all calls on your regular

line." He motioned to Sloane's desk. "If there's a call from the kidnappers, do the obvious thing-keep talking as long as possible, though nowadays calls can be traced much faster than they used to be, and criminals know that too."
"You realize our phones at home have unlisted numbers?"
"Yes, but I'm assuming the kidnappers have those numbers. Quite a few people are bound to know them." Havelock produced a notebook. "Now, Mr. Sloane, I need answers to some questions."
"Go ahead."
"Have you, or members of your family, received any threats that you remember? Think carefully, please."
"I'm not aware of any."
"Is there anything you might have reported on the news which could have caused special antagonism on the part of someone, or some group?"
Sloane threw up his hands. "Once a day, at least."

The FBI man nodded. "I guessed that, so two of my colleagues will view tapes of your broadcasts, working backward through the past two years, to see if ideas suggest themselves. How about antagonistic mail? You must get some."
"I never see it. People in network news are shielded from the mail. It's a management decision."
Havelock's eyebrows went up as Sloane continued, "Everything we broadcast generates a phenomenal amount of mail. Reading all those letters would take too much time. Then we'd probably want to respond, which would take more time still. Something else management believes is that we're better able to keep our sense of perspective and fairness if protected from individual reactions to the news." Sloane shrugged. "Some may disagree, but that's the way it is."
"So what happens to the mail?"
"It's handled by a department called Audience Services. All letters are answered and anything judged important is sent to the News Division president."
"I presume all incoming mail is kept."
"I believe so,"

Havelock made a note. "We'll assign people to go through that too."
During a pause, Chuck Insen knocked on the office door and came in.
"If I can interrupt As the other two nodded, the executive producer said, "Crawf, you know we all want to do the best we can-for you, for Jessica, Nicky
Sloane acknowledged, "Yes, I know."
"We feel you shouldn't do the news tonight. For one thing, it will be heavily about you. For another, even if you anchored the remainder, it would look too much like business as usual, almost as if the network wasn't caring, which of course isn't true."
Sloane considered, then said thoughtfully, "I suppose you're right."
"What we're wondering is if you'd feel up to being interviewed-live."
"Do you think I should?"
"Now that the story's out," Insen said, "I think the wider attention it gets, the better. There's always a chance that someone watching might come through with information."
"Then I'll do it."
Insen nodded, then continued, "You know the other networks and the press want to interview you. How do you feel about a press conference this

afternoon?"
Sloane made a gesture of helplessness, then conceded, "All right, yes."
Insen asked, "When you're through here, Crawf, can you join Les and me in my office? We'd like your views about some other plans."
Havelock intedected, "As much as possible, I'd like Mr. Sloane to stay in his office and be close to this telephone."
"I'll be close to it anyway," Sloane assured him.
Leslie Chippingharn had already telephoned Rita Abrams in Minnesota with the unhappy news that their planned lovers' weekend would have to be abandoned. There was no way, he

explained, that in the midst of this breaking story he could leave New York.
Rita, while disappointed, was understanding. People in TV news were used to unexpected events disrupting their lives, even their illicit affairs.
She had asked, "Do you need me on the story?"
He told her, "If we do, you'll hear soon enough."
It appeared that Special Agent Havelock, having attached himself to Crawford Sloane, intended to follow the anchorman into the meeting in Insen's office. But Insen blocked his way.
"We're going to discuss some private network business. You can have Mr. Sloane again as soon as we've finished. In the meantime, if there's anything urgent, feel free to barge in."
"If it's all the same to you," Havelock said, "I'll barge in now and see where Mr. Sloane will be." He eased determinedly past Insen and surveyed the room inside.
Behind Insen's desk were two doors. Havelock opened both. One was to a supplies closet; after looking inside, he closed it. Another opened onto a toilet and washroom. The FBI man stepped inside, looked around, then came out.
"Just wanted to be sure," he told Insen, "that there was no other way in or out of here."
"I could have told you there wasn't," Insen said.
Havelock smiled thinly. "Some things I prefer to check myself." He left the office and found himself a chair outside.
Leslie Chippingham was already seated in the office when the FBI agent made his inspection. Now, as Sloane and Insen joined him, he said, "Chuck, you spell it out for Crawf."
"The fact is," Insen said, looking at Sloane directly, "we do not have

confidence in government agencies and their ability to handle this situation. Now, Les and I don't want to depress you, but we all remember how long it took the FBI to find Patricia Hearst-more than a year and a half. And there's something else."
Insen reached among the papers on his desk and produced what Sloane recognized as a copy of his own book, The Camera and the Truth. Insen opened it at a page with a bookmark.

"You wrote, yourself, Crawf: 'We who live in the United States will not remain free from terrorism in our own backyard much longer. But neither mentally nor in other ways are we prepared for this pervasive, ruthless kind of warfare.' " Insen closed the book. "Les and I agree with that. Totally."
A silence followed. The reminder of his own words startled and shocked Sloane. In the privacy of his mind he had begun to wonder if some terrorist motive, perhaps relating to himself, could be behind the seizure of Jessica, Nicky and his father. Or was the idea too preposterous even to consider? Seemingly not, as the thinking of the other experienced newsmen was obviously moving in that direction.
At length he said, "Do you seriously think that terrorists . . ."
Insen responded, "It's a possibility, isn't it?"
"Yes." Sloane nodded slowly in agreement. "I've begun wondering too."
"Remember," Chippingham put in, "that at this point we've no idea who the people are who have taken your family, or what they want. It could turn out to be a conventional kidnapping with demands for ransom money and, god knows, that's bad enough. But we're also considering-because of who and what you are--other long-shot options."
Insen picked up the thread of what had been said earlier. "We mentioned the FBI. Again, we don't want to worry you, but if Jessica and the others are spirited out of this country in some way, which is a possibility, I'm afraid, then what government has to fall back on is the CIA. Well, in all the years that U.S. nationals have been prisoners in Lebanon, the CIA, with all its power and resources, spy satellites, intelligence and infiltration, has never been able to discover where a semiliterate, ragtag band of terrorists was holding them. And that in a tiny country only slightly larger than the state of Delaware. So who can say if the same old CIA would do any better in other parts of the world?"
It was the news president who offered a conclusion.
"So that's what we mean, Crawf," Chippingham said, "by saying we don't

have confidence in the government agencies.
The Evening News 151
But what we do believe is that we ourselves-an experienced news organization accustomed to investigative reporting-have a better than average chance to discover where your family has been taken."
For the first time that day, Sloane's spirits rose.
Chippingharn continued, "So what we've decided is to set up our own CBA News investigative task force. Our effort will be nationwide at first, then, if necessary, worldwide. We'll use all our resources plus investigative techniques that have worked in the past. As for people, we'll throw in the best talent we have, starting now,"
Sloane felt a surge of gratitude and relief. He started to say, "Les . . . Chuck . . ."
Chippingham stopped him with a gesture. "Don't say it. There's no need. Of course, some of this is because of you, but also it's our business."
Insen leaned forward. "There's one thing we want to ask you at this point, Crawf. The task force needs to be headed by an experienced correspondent or producer, someone who can take charge, who's good at investigative reporting and in whom you have confidence. Is there anyone you'd like to name?"
Crawford Sloane hesitated for the briefest moment, weighing his personal feelings against what was at stake. Then he said firmly, "I want Harry Partridge."
The kidnappers, like foxes returning to a hidden burrow, had gone to ground in their temporary headquarters, the rented property south of Hackensack, New Jersey.
It was a collection of old, decaying structure&-a main house and three outbuildings-which had been unused for several years until Miguel, after studying alternative locations and real estate advertisements, signed a one-year lease with full pay-
152 ARTHUR BAILEY
ment in advance. A year was the shortest rental period suggested by the agents. Miguel, not wishing to reveal that the place would be used for little more than a month, agreed to the terms without question.
The type of property and its location-a thinly occupied, run-down neighborhood-were ideal in numerous ways. The house was large, could accommodate all seven members of the Colombian gang, and its state of disrepair didn't matter. The outbuildings made it possible to keep six vehicles under cover and out of sight. No other occupied properties were

close by, and privacy was aided by surrounding trees and other foliage.
A further advantage was the nearness of Teterboro Airport, not much more than a mile away. Teterboro, used mainly by private aircraft, figured largely in the kidnappers' plans.
From the beginning of the conspiracy, Miguel foresaw that immediately after the victims' seizure a hue and cry would follow, with police roadblocks and intensive searches. He therefore decided that any immediate attempt to travel a long distance would be unsafe. On the other hand, there must be a temporary hideaway, well clear of the Larchmont area.
The Hackensack property was roughly twentyfive road miles from where the kidnapping had occurred. The ease with which they had returned here and the absence of pursuit proved that Miguel's planning had been effective-so far.
The three prisoners-Jessica, Nicholas and Angus Sloanewere now in the main house. Still drugged and unconscious, they had been carried to a large room on the second floor. Unlike other rooms in the dilapidated, mildewed house, this one had been thoroughly cleaned and repainted in white. Additional electric outlets and overhead fluorescent lights had been installed. There was new pale-green linoleum on the floor. The ex-doctor, Baudelio, had specified and overseen the changes which were carried out by the group's handyman-mechanic, Rafael.
Two hospital cots with side restraining rails now stood in the center of the room. Jessica was on one, the boy, Nicholas, on the other. Their arms and legs were secured by straps-a

precaution against their regaining consciousness, though for the time being that was not intended.
While anesthesiology was seldom an exact science, Baudelio was confident that his "patients"-as he now thought of them -would remain sedated for another half hour, perhaps longer.
Alongside the two cots was a narrow metal bed and mattress which had been hastily brought in and set up to accommodate Angus, whose presence had not been expected. As part of the improvisation, his limbs were secured with lengths of rope instead of straps. Even now, Miguel, watching from across the room, was unsure about what to do with the old man. Should he be killed and his body buried outside after dark? Or should he somehow be included in the original plan? A decision had to be made soon.
Baudelio was working around the three recumbent forms, setting up

intravenous stands, putting fluid bags in place. On a table covered with a green cotton cloth he had laid out instruments, drug packages and trays. Although intravenous catheters for entering veins through the skin were all that was likely to be needed, Baudelio had a long-established habit of having other equipment available for use in difficulty or emergencies. Assisting him was Socorro, the woman with ties to both the Medellin cartel and Sendero Luminoso; during her several undercover years in the United States she had qualified as a nursing aide.

With raven-dark hair twisted into a bun behind her head, Socorro had a shm, lithe body, olive skin, and features that might have been beautiful had she not worn a permanently sour expression. Although she did whatever was required of her and expected no favors because of her sex, Socorro seldom spoke and never revealed what went on within her mind. She had also rejected, with blunt profanity, sexual overtures from some of the men.

For these reasons Miguel had labeled Socorro mentally "the inscrutable one." While he was aware of her dual affiliation and that Sendero Luminoso had, in fact, insisted on Socorro's inclusion in the kidnap group, he had no reason to mistrust her. He occasionally wondered, though, if Socorro's long exposure to

the American scene had diluted her Colombian and Peruvian loyalties. The question was one Socorro herself would have had trouble answering. On the one hand, she had always been a revolutionary, initially finding an outlet for her fervor with the Colombian M-19 guerrillas, then more recently-and profitably-with the Medellin cartel and Sendero Luminoso. Her conviction about the Colombian and Peruvian governments was that she wanted the villainous ruling class killed and would happily join the slaughter.

At the same time she had been indoctrinated to consider the U.S. power structure as equally evil. Yet after three years of living in the United States and receiving friendly fairness where hostility and oppression would have been easier to handle, she found it difficult to continue despising and regarding as enemies America and its people.

Right now she was doing her best to hate these three captives-rico bourgeois scum, she assured herself-but not wholly succeeding . . . damnably not succeeding . . . because pity, in a revolutionary, was a contemptible emotionI

But once out of this perplexing country, as all of them would be very soon, Socorro was sure she could do better and be stronger, more consistent in

her hatreds.
From a tilted-back chair on the far side of the room, Miguel said to Baudelio, "Tell me what it is you are doing." His tone made clear it was an order.
"I am working quickly because the midazolam I administered will very soon wear off. When it does, I shall begin injections of propofol, an intravenous anesthetic, a longer-acting drug than the earlier one and more suitable for what is ahead."
As he moved and spoke, Baudelio seemed transformed from his normal gaunt and ghostlike self to the teacher and practicing anesthesiologist he had once been. The same effect, a stirring of long-discarded dignity, had occurred shortly before the kidnap. But he showed no concern, then or now, that his skills were being criminally debased or that the circumstances he was sharing were despicable.
He continued, "Propofol is a tricky drug to use. The opti-The Evening News 155 mum dose for each individual varies, and if too much accumulates in the bloodstream death can result. So initially there must be experimental doses, closely monitored."
Miguel asked, "Are you sure you can handle it?"
"If you have doubts," Baudelio said sarcastically, "you are free to get someone else."
When Miguel failed to answer, the ex-doctor went on, "Because these people will be unconscious when we transport them, we must be certain there is no vomiting and aspiration into the lungs. Therefore while we are waiting there will be a period of enforced starvation. However, they must not become dehydrated, so I shall give them fluids intravenously. Then at the end of two days, which you tell me is the time I have, we shall be ready to put them into those." With his head, Baudelio gestured to the wall behind him.
Propped upright against the wall were two open funeral caskets, solidly constructed and silk-lined. One was smaller than the other. The ornamented hinged lids for both had been removed and stood alongside. The caskets reminded Baudelio of a question. Pointing to Angus Sloane, he asked, "Do you want him prepared, or not?"
"If we take him, do you have the medical supplies to handle it?"
-Yes. There's a reserve of everything in case something goes wrong. But we'd need another His eyes returned to the caskets by the wall.
Miguel said irritably, "I do not need to be told that."
Still, he wondered. The original orders from Medellin and Sendero

Luminoso specified abduction of the woman and the boy and then, as soon as possible afterward, their transfer to Peru. The caskets were to be a covert means of transportation; a phony cover story had been devised to forestall an exit search by U.S. Customs. Once in Peru the prisoners would become prize hostages~-high-stakes bargaining chips against the fulfilment of unique demands by Sendeio Luminoso, their nature yet to be disclosed. But would the unexpected addition of Crawford Sloane's father be regarded as an added prize or, at this point, a needless risk and burden?

If there had been some way to do so, Miguel would have sought an answer from his superiors. But the only secure communication channel was not open to him at that moment, and to telephone on one of the cellular phones would leave the record of a call. Miguel had been emphatic with everyone in the Hackensack operating group that the phones were solely for vehicle-to-vehicle or vehicle-to-headquarters use. Positively no calls were to be made to other numbers. The few outside calls that were necessary had been made from public pay phones.

Therefore the decision was his alone. He must also consider that obtaining an extra casket meant taking additional risks. Was it wortli it?

Miguel reasoned that it was. From experience, he knew it was almost a certainty that after Sendero Luminoso's ransom demands were made known, one of the captives would have to be killed and the body dumped where it would be found--all to make the point that the kidnappers were serious. Possession of Angus Sloane would mean an extra body for that purpose, leaving either the woman or the boy to be executed later if it became necessary to make the same point twice. So in that sense the extra captive was a bonus.

Miguel told Baudelio, "Tes, the old man goes."

Baudelio nodded. Despite his outward assurance, he was nervous around Miguel today because, the night before, Baudeho had committed what he now recognized as a serious mistake, a possible breach of everyone's security. While he was alone, in a moment of profound loneliness and dejection, he had used one of the cellular phones to call Peru. It was a woman he had spoken to, his slatternly live-in companion and only friend, whose firequently drunken companionship he sorely missed.

It was because of Baudelio's continuing anxiety about that call that he was slow to react when suddenly, unexpectedly, a crisis confronted him.

Jessica, during the struggle outside the Larchmont supermarket, had had only a minute or two, first of shock, then horror, to grasp the enormity of what was happening. Even

after her screams had been silenced by the gag slapped over her mouth, she continued to struggle fiercely and desperately, aware that Nicky, too, had been seized by the unknown brutes around them and that Angus had been savagely struck down. But moments later, as the strong injected sedative circulated through her bloodstream, blackness supervened and she fell into deep unconsciousness.

But now, without knowing how long it had lasted, she was reviving, her memory returning. She became aware, dimly at first and then more clearly, of sounds around her. She tried to move, to speak, but found she could do neither. When she transferred the effort to her eyes, they would not open.

It was as if she were at the bottom of a well of darkness, attempting to do something, anything, but able to do nothing.

Then, as more moments passed, the voices became clearer, the awful memory of events at Larchmont sharpened.

At last Jessica's eyes opened.

Baudelio, Socorro and Miguel were all looking elsewhere and failed to see it happen.

Jessica was aware of feeling coming back into her body but could not understand why her arms and legs wouldn't move, except for the smallest distance. Then she saw that her nearer arm, the left, was constricted by a strap and realized she was on what looked like a hospital bed, and that her other arm and both legs were restricted in the same way.

She turned her head slightly and froze in horror at what she saw.

Nicky was on another bed, imprisoned like herself. Beyond him Angus, too, was tied down with ropes. And then-Oh, nol Oh, godl-she glimpsed the two open funeral caskets, one smaller than the other, clearly intended for herself and Nicky.

In a single instant she began to scream and struggle wildly. Somehow, in her demmted terror, she managed to get her left arm free.

Hearing the scream, the three conspirators swung toward her. For a moment Baudelio, who should have taken instant action, was too startled to move. By then Jessica had seen them all.

Still struggling wildly, she reached out with her left hand, trying

desperately to find something to use as a weapon to protect herself and Nicky. The table of instruments was beside her. As her fingers groped frantically, she seized what felt like a kitchen paring knife. It was a scalpel.

Now Baudelio, having collected his wits, raced toward her. Seeing Jessica's free arm, he tried to refasten it with Socorro's help.

But Jessica was faster. In her desperation she reached out with the metal object, slashing wildly, managing to gash Baudelio's face, then Socorro's hand. At first, thin red lines appeared on both. A moment later blood gushed out.

Baudelio ignored the pain and tried to secure that flailing arm. Miguel, hurrying forward, hit Jessica savagely with his fist, then helped Baudelio. With Baudelio's wound dripping blood onto Jessica and the cot, they managed to re-strap Jessica's arm.

Miguel retrieved the scalpel. Though Jessica still struggled, it was to no avail. Defeated and helpless, she broke down in tears.

Then, another complication. Nicky's sedation was also wearing off. Becoming aware of the shouting, and of his mother nearby, he returned to consciousness more quickly. He too began screaming, but despite his struggles couldn't free himself from the restraining straps.

Angus, who had been sedated later than the other two, did not stir.

By now the noise and confusion were overwhelming, but Baudelio and Socorro both knew their own wounds had to be treated ahead of anything else. Socorro, with the lesser injury, put a temporary adhesive dressing on her own cut hand, then turned to aid Baudelio. She taped gauze pads over his face, though they were quickly soaked with blood.

Recovering from initial shock, he nodded an acknowledgment, then pointed to the assembled equipment and murmured, 66 Help me."

Socorro tightened the strap above Jessica's left elbow. Then Baudelio inserted a hypodermic needle into a vein and injected

the propofol he had prepared earlier. Jessica, watching and screaming, fought against the drug's effect until her eyes closed and once more she was unconscious.

Baudelio and Socorro, moved on to Nicky and repeated the process. He, too, stopped his painful cries and slumped back, his brief period of awareness ended.

Then, rather than take a chance on the old man regaining consciousness and causing trouble, Angus was also given propofol.

Miguel, while not interfering in the latter stages, had been glowering. Now he accused Baudelio, "You incompetent asshole!" Eyes blazing, he stormed on, "iPinche cabr6nl You could ruin everything! Do you know what you are doing?"

"Yes, I know," Baudelio said. Despite the gauze pads, blood was streaming down his face. "I made an error of judgment. I promise it will not happen again."

Without replying, his face flushed with anger, Miguel stalked out.

When he had gone, Baudelio used a portable mirror to inspect his bloody wound. Immediately be knew two things. First, he would carry a scar, running the full length of his face, for the remainder of his life.

Second, and more important, the gaping, open cut needed to be closed and sutured at once. In present circumstances he could not go to a hospital or another doctor. Baudelio knew there was no other choice than to do it himself, however difficult and painful that might be. As best she could, Socorro would have to help.

During his early medical training, Baudelio, like any student, had learned to suture minor wounds. Later, as an anesthesiologist, he watched hundreds of incisions being stitched. Then, while working for the Medellin cartel, he had done some wound repairs himself and knew the procedures needed now.

Feeling weak, he sat himself in front of the mirror and told Socorro to bring his regular medical bag. From it he selected surgical needles, silk thread and a local anesthetic, lidocaine.

He explained to Socorro what, between them, they would do. As usual, she said little except an occasional "ISP" or "Iestd

bien!" Then, without further discussion, Baudelio began to inject lidocaine along the margins of his wound.

The whole procedure took almost two hours and, despite the local anesthetic, the pain was excruciating. Several times Baudelio came close to fainting. His hand shook frequently, which made the sutures uneven. Adding to his difficulties was the awkward, reverse effect of working with a mirror. Socorro passed him what he asked for and, once or twice when he was near collapse, supported him. In the end he managed to hold on and, though some clumsy sutures meant the residual scar would be worse than he had at first supposed, the gap in his cheek was closed and he knew the wound would heal.

Finally, knowing the most difficult part of his Medellin/ Sendero

assignment was still ahead and that he needed rest, Baudelio took two hundred milligrams of Seconal and slept.

3

At about 11:50 A.M., in the apartment at Port Credit, Harry Partridge had switched the living room TV to a Buffalo, New York, station-a CBA affiliate. All Buffalo TV stations, whose signals had only to travel an unobstructed sixty miles across Lake Ontario, were received clearly in the Toronto area. Vivien had gone out and would not be back until midafternoon.
Partridge hoped to learn, from the noon news, the latest developments following yesterday's Muskegon Airlines disaster at DallasFort Worth. Consequently at 11:55, when programming was interrupted by the CBA News Special Bulletin, Partridge was watching.
He was as shocked and horrified as everyone else. Could it really be true,, he wondered, or just some incredible snafu? But experience told him that CBA News would not have put out a bulletin without satisfying itself of the story's authenticity.
The Evening News 161
As he watched Don Kettering's face on the screen and heard the continuing report, he felt, more than anything, a personal concern for Jessica. And mixed with his emotions was a surge of camaraderie and pity for Crawford Sloane.
Partridge also knew, without even thinking about it, that his vacation, which had scarcely begun, was already over.
It was no surprise, then, to receive a phone call some fortyfive minutes later, asking him to come to CBA News headquarters in New York. What did surprise him was that it was a personal appeal from Crawford Sloane. Sloane's voice, Partridge discerned, was barely under control. After the preliminaries, Sloane said, "I desperately need you, Harry. Les and Chuck are setting up a special unit; it will work on two levels-daily reports on air and deep investigation. They asked me who I wanted in charge. I told them there's only one choice-you."
In all the years that he and Sloane had known each other, Partridge realized they had never been closer than at this moment. He responded, "Hang in there, Crawf. I'll be on the next flight."
"Thank you, Harry. Is there anyone you especially want to work with?
"Yes. Find Rita Abrams, wherever she is--in Minnesota sornewhere-and bring her in. The same for Minh Van Canh."
"If they're not waiting when you get here, they'll be with you soon

after. Anyone else?"
Thinking quickly, Partridge said, "I want Teddy Cooper from London."
"Cooper?" Sloane sounded puzzled, then remembered. "He's our bureau researcher, isn't he?"
"Right."
Teddy Cooper was an Englishman, a twentyfive-year-old product of what the British snobbishly called a red-brick university, and a cheerful Cockney who might have auditioned successfully for Me and My GirL He was also, in Partridge's opinion, a near-genius at turning ordinary research into detective work and following it up with shrewd deductions.
While working in Europe, Partridge had discovered

Cooper, who at the time held a minor librarian's job at the British Broadcasting Corporation. Partridge had been impressed with some inventive research work that Cooper had done for him. Later he was instrumental in having Cooper employed, with more money and better prospects, by CBA's London bureau.
"You've aot him," Sloane replied. "He'll be on the next Concorde out of England."
"If you feel up to it," Partridge said, "I'd like to ask some questions, so I have something to think about on the way down."
"Of course. Go ahead."
What followed was a near-replay of queries already put by FBI agent Havelock. Had there been threats? . . . Any special antagonism? . . . Unusual experiences? . . . Was there any notion, even the wildest, as to who . . . ? Was there anything known that had not been broadcast?
The asking was necessary, but the answers were all negative.
"Is there anything at all you can think of," Partridge persisted, "some little incident, perhaps, which you may have dismissed at the time or even hardly noticed, but which might relate to what has happened?"
"The answer's no at the moment," Sloane said. "But I'll think about it."
After they hung up, Partridge resumed his own preparations. Even before Sloane's call he had begun packing a suitcase that only an hour earlier he had unpacked.
He telephoned Air Canada, making a reservation on a flight leaving Toronto's Pearson International at 2:45 P.M. It was due into New York's La Guardia Airport at 4 P.m. Next, he called for a taxi to collect him in twenty minutes.
After his packing was finished, Partridge scribbled a goodbye note to

Vivien. He knew she would be disappointed at his abrupt departure, as he was himself Along with the note he left a generous check to cover the. apartment refurbishing they had discussed.
As he looked around for a place to leave the note and

check, a buzzer sounded in the apartment. It was the intercom from the lobby below. The taxi he ordered had arrived.
The last thing he saw before leaving was, on a sideboard, the tickets for the next day's Mozart concert. He reflected sadly that those-as well as other unused tickets and invitations in the past-represented, more than anything else, the uncertain pattern of a TV newsman's life.
The Air Canada flight was nonstop, a 727 with all-economy seating. A light passenger load enabled Partridge to have a three-seat section to himself. He had assured Sloane that he would apply his mind to the kidnapping while en route to New York and had intended to begin planning the direction he and the CBA News investigative group should take. But the information he had was sketchy, and obviously he needed more. So after a while he gave up and, sipping a vodka-tonic, allowed his thoughts to drift.
He considered, on a personal level, Jessica and himself.
Over the years since Vietnam he had grown accustomed to regarding Jessica as belonging only in the past, as someone he had once loved but who was no longer relevant to him and in any case far beyond his reach. To an extent, Partridge realized, his thinking had been an act of self-discipline, a safeguard against feeling sorry for himself, self-pity being something he abhorred.
But now, because Jessica was in danger, he admitted to himself that he cared as much about her as ever, and always had. Face it, you're still in love with her. Yes I am. And not with some shadowy memory, but with a person who was living, vital, real.
So whatever his role was to be in searching for Jessica-and Crawf himself had asked that it be a major one--Harry Partridge knew that his love for Jessica would drive and sustain him, even though he would hold that love secret, burning out of sight within himself
Then, with what he recognized as a characteristic touch of quirky humor, he asked himself, Am I being disloyal?
Disloyal to whom? Of course, to Gemma who was dead.

Ah, dearest Gemma! Earlier today, when he had remembered the one exception

to his apparent inability to cry, he had almost let memories about her crowd in. But he had pushed them away as being more than he could handle. But now thoughts of Gemma were flooding back. She will always come back he thought.

A few years after his duty tour in Vietnam and some other hard-living assignments, CBA News sent Partridge to be resident correspondent in Rome. He remained there almost five years.

Among all television networks, an assignment to a Rome bureau was considered a plum. The standard of living was high, living costs modest by comparison with big cities elsewhere, and though pressures and tensions were inevitably transmitted from New York, the local pace of life was leisurely and easy.

As well as reporting on area stories and sometimes roving far afield, Partridge covered the Vatican. Also, several times he traveled on papal airplanes, accompanying Pope John Paul 11 on the pontiffs international peregrinations.

It was on one of those papal journeys he met Gemma.

Partridge was often amused at the assumption by outsiders that a papal air journey was an exercise in decorum and restraint. In fact, it wasn't. In particular, in the press section at the rear of the airplane the reverse was true. Invariably there was muchpartying and drinking-the liquor unlimited and freeand during long overnight flights, sexual dalliance was not unknown.

Partridge once heard the papal airplane described by a fellow correspondent as having different levels, ranging--as in Dante's Inferno--all the wayfrom hell to heaven. (K'hile there was never any permanent aircraft earmarked for the Pope's flights, the special interior configuration for each journey was usually the same.)

At thefront of the airplane on every trip was a spacious cabin outfittedfor the Pope. It contained a bed and two large comfortable seats, sometimes three.

The next section back was for senior members of the Pope's entourage-his Secretary of State, some cardinals~ the Pope's doctor, secretary and valet. Then, behind another divider was a cabin for bishops and lower-ranking priests.

In between one of theforward cabins, and depending on the type of airplane was an open space where all the gifts the Pope received on hisjourney were stored. It was inevitably a large, rich pile.

Finally there was the last cabin in the plane-forjournalists. The seat con uration here was tourist, but with first-class ser-
Ifig vice, many flight attendants, and superb food and wine. There were generous gifts for journalists too, usually from the airline involved which, more often than not, was Alitalia. Airlines, astute in public relations, recognized a chance for good publicity when they saw one.

As to the journalists themselves, they were an average group from their profession, an international mixture of newspaper, television and radio reporters, the television people accompanied by technical crews-all with normal interests, normal skepticism, and a penchant at times for irreverent behavior.

While no TV network would ever admit it openly, they privately preferred that correspondents reporting on religious subjects, such as a papal journey, not be committed deeply to any faith. A religious adherent, they feared, would send in cloying reports. A healthy skepticism was preferred In that regard, Harry Partridge filled the bill

Some seven years after his own experiences on papalflights, Partridge greatly admired a 1987 TV news report by ABCs Judd Rose who was covering a visit by Pope John Paul II to Los Angeles. Rose successfully trod a hairline between hard news and pyrrhonism with his commentary.

For the media capital that is Hollywood, it's a media event that's heaven-sent. All the pomp of a royal wedding, all the hype of a Super Bowl-all this with a cast of thousands and a star straight from central casting . . . Space age technology and dramatic imagery-it's the sort of thing John Paul favors and the camera loves.

[The Pope is] carefully crafted and controlled. He speaks out often but is seldom spoken to. The only time reporters can ask questions is in brief sessions on his plane when he travels . . . Media coverage has been exhaustive. The papal trip has become an electronic extravaganza like Live Aid or Liberty Weekend, and some Catholics wonder if anyone will know the difference.

Theology and technology-it's a powerful union and John Paul's using it to preach his message as no Pope before him ever could. The world is watching, but the real test of the great communicator is whether we're listening too.

Rose was absolutely right, Partridge reminisced, about that brief opportunity to ask the Pope questions aboard the papal airplane. In fact,

if it had not been for one short question-andanswer exchange, what developed between himself and Gemma might never have . . .
It was one of Pbpe John Paul's longer journeys-to nearly a dozen countries in Central America and the Caribbean, and was on an Alitalia DC-10. There had been an overnight flight and early the next morning, about two hours before a scheduled landing, the Pope appeared unannounced in the rear press sec tion. He was in everyday attire --- a white cassock, a zucchetto on his head, and od his feet, brown loafers-which was norma4 except when specially dressed for a papal mass.
He stopped near Harry Partridge, appearing pensive. Within the press cabin, TV camera lights were coming on; several reporters had tape recorders running.
Partridge stood and, hoping to ease into a reportable conversation, inquired politely, "Your Holiness, did you sleep well?"
The Pope smiled and answered, "Very few."
Puzzled, Partridge asked, "Very few, your Holiness. Very few hours?"
There was no answer, only a slight shake of the head "ile John Paul was an accomplished linguist in several languages, sometimes his English was solecistic. Partridge could have con-

versed adequately in Italian, but wanted the Pope's words in the language of CBA viewers.
He decided to try a more newsworthy question. For several weeks there had been discussion and controversy about a possible papal visit to the Soviet Union. "Your Holiness, " Partridge asked, "do you want to go to Russia?"
This time there was a clear, "Yes. " Then the Pope added, "The Poles, the Russians, they are all slaves. But they are all my people. 11
Before anything else could be said, the Pope turned and walked away, returning to his private quarters in the airplane.
Among the reporters there was an instant hum, in several languagesp of questioning and speculation. The Alitalia flight attendants, who had been preparing breakfast, had stopped work and were listening intently.
Someone in the press group asked, "Did you hear what he said-slaves!"
Partridge glanced at his own cameraman and sound man. Both nodded. The sound man said, "We got it. "
Somebody else was playing back a tape recording. The word "slaves" was heard distinctly.

A reporter from a British news syndicate said doubtfully, "He m ea n t 'Sla vs. ' He's a Sla v h imself It figu res~ "
" 'Slaves' makes a helluva better story, " another voice rejoined.
And so it did. Partridge knew it too. A literal reporting of the "slaves" description would arouse worldwide interest and discussion, perhaps create an international incident, with accusations and exchanges between the Kremlin, Warsaw and the Vatican. There could be embarrassmentfor the Pope, marring his triumphaljourney.
Partridge was one of the older, more experienced hands aboard and was respected by his colleagues. Some of the others looked to him for a lead He considered briefly, It was a lively story, something seldom encountered on a papal trip. There might not be another. His inclination, as a skeptic, was to use it. And yet . . . skepticism did not override ordinary decency; andfor some in the business, journalistic ethics did exist.

Making up his mind, Partridge said clearly, so that everyone could hear. "He meant 'Slavs.'It's obvious that he did. I'm not going to use it. "
There was no discussion, no spoken consensus or agreement, but afterward it became clear that no one else used the incident either.
As the reporters and technical crews returned to their seats, the Alitalia flight attendants resumed work
When Partridge's breakfast tray came, it contained something extra, not served to the others--a small glass vase containing a single rose.
He looked up at the young stewardess who, smiling, in her smartly tailored green and black uniform, had brought the tray. He had noticed her several times before and heard other flight attendants call her Gemma. But now he was unexpectedly breathless at her closeness and, for an instant, tongue-tied
Forever after, especially at times of terrible loneliness, he remembered Gemma as she was at that magic moment--age twenty-three, beautiful, with long, dark, lustrous hair, brown and sparkling eyes, and joyous with life like a fragrant morning flower in fresh spring air on a green and sunlit hillside.
With unaccustomed awkwardness, he pointed to the rose. Later he would learn that she had goneforward andpurloined it from the Pope's own cabin. Now he asked, ""y this for me?"
She smiled down at him and, with a soft Italian accent, said, "I brought it because you are a good, sweet man. I like you. "

Even to himself his answer seemed inadequate and banal. "I like you, too." But banal or not, in those few moments his great and lasting love for Gemma had begun.

Partridge drew his thoughts back to the present shortly before the Air Canada flight landed in New York. He was first off the airplane and strode quickly through La Guardia terminal. With only hand baggage, he was able to leave the airport without delay, taking a taxi to CBA News headquarters. He headed for Chuck Insen's office, but found it unoccupied. A senior producer at the Horseshoe called across, "Hi,

Harry! Chuck's at a press conference that's been arranged for Crawf. The whole thing's being taped. You'll be able to see it."

Then, as Partridge walked toward the Horseshoe, the producer added, "Oh, in case no one's told you, Crawf's on the sidelines tonight. You'll be anchoring the news."

4

That evening, in the Medellin gang's hideaway at Hackensack, Miguel kept a radio tuned to an all-news station. With several of the others, he also watched a portable television, switching between news programs, all featuring reports on the Sloane family kidnap.

Despite the intense interest and speculation, it was evident that nothing had been learned so far about the kidnappers' identities or motivations. Nor did law enforcement authorities know the escape route taken or of any specific areas where the kidnappers and their victims might have gone to ground. Some reports suggested that by now they could be many miles from New York. Others revealed that suspicious vehicles had been stopped and detained at roadblocks as far away as Ohio, Virginia and the Canadian border. Several criminal arrests had resulted from the police activity, but none was connected to the Sloanes.

Descriptions of a Nissan passenger van believed to have been used by the kidnappers were still circulating. It meant that the van abandoned by Carlos at White Plains had not been found. Carlos had returned safely to the Hackensack house hours ago.

Among Miguel and the others there was a sense of relief, though everyone knew that police forces all over North America were looking for them and their safety was only temporary. Because of the dangers still ahead, Miguel had established a guard roster. Even now Luis and Julio were patrolling outside

with Beretta submachine guns, trying to stay in the shadows of the house and outbuildings.

Miguel knew that if their hideaway was discovered and the police moved in in force, there was little chance of any of them getting away. In that event, his original orders were clear: Neither of the kidnap victims was to be taken back alive. Now, the only thing that had changed was that the order applied to three instead of two.

Of the various TV news broadcasts Miguel watched, the one that interested him most was the National Evening News from CBA. It amused him that Crawford Sloane was not in his usual anchor position; the substitute was someone named Partridge whom Miguel remembered vaguely seeing before. Sloane, however, was interviewed on air and shown at a previously recorded

press conference.
The press conference had been well attended by print, television and radio reporters, along with camera and sound crews. It was held in another CBA building, a block away from news headquarters. On a sound stage, folding chairs had been hastily set up; all were occupied, with many participants standing.
There were no formal introductions and Crawford Sloane began with a brief statement. He expressed his shock and anxiety, then appealed to the news media and the public for any information which might help disclose where his wife, son and father had been taken, and by whom. He announced that a CBA phone center with a WATS line number had been set up to receive information. The center was already staffed by operators and a supervisor.
A voice injected, "You'll be swamped with crank calls."
Sloane responded, "We'll take our chances. All we need is one solid piece of knowledge. Someone, somewhere, has it."
Twice during his statement Sloane had to pause to control emotion in his voice. Each time there was a sympathetic silence. A Los Angeles Times report next day described him as "dignified and impressive in agonizing circumstances."
Sloane announced that he would answer questions.
At first the questioning was also sympathetic. But then,

inevitably, some in the press corps weighed in with tougher queries.
An Associated Press woman reporter asked, "Do you think it's possible, as some are already speculating, that your family may have been seized by foreign terrorists?"
Sloane shook his head. "It's too early even to think about that."
AP objected, "You're ducking the question. I asked if you thought it possible. "
Sloane conceded, "I suppose it's possible."
Someone from a local TV station asked the perennial question, "How do you feel about that?"
Someone else groaned and Sloane wanted to answer, How the hell would you feel? Instead he replied, "Obviously, I hope it isn't true."
A gray-haired former CBA correspondent, now with CNN, held up a copy of Sloane's book. "Do you continue to believe, as you wrote here, that 'hostages should be expendable,' and are you still opposed to paying ransom-as you put it, 'directly or indirectly, ever'?"
Sloane had anticipated the question and answered, "I don't believe that

anyone as emotionally involved as I am at this moment can be objective about that."
"Oh, come on, Crawf," the CNN man persisted. "If you were standing here instead of me, you wouldn't let anyone get away with that. I'll put the question another way: Do you regret having written those words?"
"At this moment," Sloane said, "I find myself wishing they weren't being quoted against me."
Another voice called out, "They're not being used against you and that's still no answer."
A woman reporter from an A_BC magazine program raised her penetrating voice. "I'm sure you're aware that your statement about American hostages being expendable caused a great deal of distress to families who have relatives still imprisoned in the Middle East. Do you have more sympathy for those families now?"
"I've always had sympathy," Sloane said, "but right now I

probably have a better understanding of those people's anguish."
"Are you telling us that what you wrote was wrong?"
"No," he said quietly, "I'm not saying that."
"So if a ransom is demanded, you'll say adamantly no?"
He raised his hands helplessly. "You're asking me to speculate on something that hasn't occurred. I won't do that."
While not enjoying what was happening, Sloane acknowledged mentally that at plenty of press conferences in the past he had played hardball as an interrogator himself.
An offbeat query came from Newsday. "Not much is known about your son Nicholas, Mr. Sloane."
"That's because we keep our family life private. In fact, my wife insists on it."
"It isn't private anymore," the reporter pointed out. "One thing I've been told is that Nicholas is a talented musician and might become a concert pianist one day. Is that true?"
Sloane knew that in other circumstances Jessica would object to the question as an intrusion. At this moment, though, he didn't see how he could avoid answering it.
"Our son does love music, always has, and his teachers say he's advanced for his age. As to his being a concert pianist or anything else, only time will tell."
At length, when the questions seemed to be winding down, Leslie Chippingham

stepped forward and declared the session at an end.
Sloane was immediately surrounded by some who wanted to shake his hand and wish him well. Then, as quickly as he could, he slipped away.
Miguel, having seen all the news he wanted, switched the television off and considered carefully what he had learned.
First, neither the Medellin cartel nor Sendero Luminoso was suspected of involvement in the kidnappings. At this point, that was helpful. Second, and equally helpful, was the fact that no descriptions existed of himself or the other six conspirators. If the authorities had somehow obtained descriptions, almost certainly they would have been made public by now.

All of which, Miguel reasoned, made slightly less dangerous what he proposed to do next.
He needed more money and, to get it, he must telephone tonight and arrange a meeting at, or near, the United Nations tomorrow.
From the beginning, getting sufficient money into the United States had been a problem. Sendero Luminoso, which was financing this operation, had plenty of money in Peru. The difficulty was in circumventing Peru's exchange control laws and transferring hard currency in U.S. dollars to New York, at the same time keeping the movement of money-its source, routing and destination-secret.
It had been done ingeniously, with help from a revolutionary sympathizer, a Sendero ally highly placed inside the Lima Peru, banking system. His accomplice in New York was a Peruvian diplomat, a senior aide to Peru's ambassador to the United Nations.
The amount of operating funds allocated during planning by Sendero and Medellin was $850,000. This included payments to personnel, their transportation and living expenses, leasing a secret headquarters, the purchase of six vehicles, medical supplies, the funeral caskets, payments in the Little Colombia district of Queens for covert aid and firearms, commissions in Peru and New York on money transfers, plus bribes to an American woman banker. There would also be the cost of flying the captives by private aircraft from the U.S. to Peru.
Almost all the money spent in New York had been drawn in cash by Miguel, through the United Nations source.
The way it worked was that the Lima banker surreptitiously converted the funds entrusted to him by Sendero Luminoso into U.S. dollars, $50,000 at a time. He then made transfers to a New York bank at Dag Hammarskj6ld Plaza near United Nations headquarters, where the money was placed in a special

sub-account of the Peruvian UN delegation. The account's existence was known only to Jos6 Antonio Salaverry, the UN ambassador's trusted aide, who had authority to sign checks, and to the bank's assistant manager, Helga Efferen. The woman banker personally took care of the special account.

Jos6 Antonio Salaverry was another secret supporter of Sendero, though not above taking a commission on the transferred funds. Helga was sleeping regularly with the duplicitous Salaverry and both were living a lavish New York lifestyle beyond their means, partying and keeping up with the free-spending United Nations diplomatic crowd. For that reason the extra money they made by secretly channeling the incoming funds was warmly welcomed.
Whenever Miguel had needed money he telephoned Salaverry and stated the amount. A meeting was then arranged for a day or two later, usually at UN headquarters, occasionally elsewhere. In the meantime Salaverry would obtain a briefcase full of cash. Miguel would walk away with it.
Only one thing bothered Miguel. On one occasion Salaverry let slip that while not knowing the money's specific purpose or where Miguel and the others from Medellin were hiding out, he had a pretty good idea of their objective. This, Miguel realized, could only mean there had been a security leak in Peru. At this point there was nothing he could do, but it made him wary of contacts with Jos6 Antonio Salaverry.
Miguel glanced at the cellular phone beside him. For a moment he was tempted to use it, but knew he shouldn't and must go out. In a caf6 eight blocks away was a pay phone he had used before. He checked his watch: 7:10 P.m. With luck, Salaverry would be in his midManhattan apartment.
Miguel put on a topcoat and walked quickly, keeping a lookout for any sign of unusual activity in the area. There was none.
During the walk he thought again about the televised press conference with Crawford Sloane. Miguel had been interested in the reference to a book by Sloane which apparently included statements about never paying ransom and that "hostages should be expendable." Miguel hadn't known about the book nor, he was sure, had others in the Medellin cartel or Sendero Luminoso.
He doubted, though, if the knowledge would have affected the decision to abduct Sloane's family; what someone wrote for publication and what they felt and did in private were often different. But either way, it made no difference now.

Something else of interest coming out of the press conference was the

description of the mocoso Sloane brat as a possible concert pianist. Without any clear notion of how he might use it, Miguel tucked the nugget of information away.
When he reached the cafe Miguel could see that only a few people were inside. Entering, he headed for the phone, which was at the rear, and dialed a number he had memorized. After three rings Salaverry answered. " 'Allo," he said with a strong Spanish accent.
Miguel tapped three times on the phone mouthpiece with a fingernail, a signal that identified him. Then he said, keeping his voice low, "Tomorrow morning. Fifty cases." A "case" was a thousand dollars.
He heard a quick gasp at the other end. The voice which came back sounded frightened. "jEstds locoZ phoning here tonight? Where are you? Can this call be traced?"
Miguel said contemptuously, "Do you think I am a pendejo?" At the same time he realized that Salaverry had connected him with today's events; therefore meeting him would be dangerous. Still, there was no alternative. He needed cash to purchase-among other things-the additional casket for Angus Sloane. Also, Miguel knew there was plenty left in the New York account and wanted some extra money for himself before leaving the country. He was certain that more than just commissions had stuck to Jos6 Antonio Salaverry's grubby fingcrs.
"We cannot meet tomorrow," Salaverry said. "It is too soon, and too short notice for the money. You must not . . ."
"jCdllate! Do not waste my time." Miguel gripped the phone tightly, controlling his anger, still speaking softly so others in the caf& would not hear. "I am giving you an order. Get the fifty cases early. I will come to you in the usual way, shortly before noon. If you fail, you know how furious our mutual friends will be, and their arm has a long reach."
"No, no! There is no need for their concern." There was a hasty, conciliatory change in Salaverry's voice. A threat of vengeance by the infamous Medellin cartel was not to be taken lightly. "I will do my best."

Miguel said curtly, "Do better than that. I will see you tomorrow." He hung up the phone and left the caf6.
Inside the Hackensack hideaway the three captives remained sedated under Socorro's watchful guard. Throughout the night she administered additional dosages of propofol as Baudelio had instructed; she monitored vital signs and kept a record. Shortly before daylight Baudelio awakened from his own

sedated sleep. After studying Socorro's medical log he nodded approval, then relieved her.

In the early morning Miguel, who had slept only fitfully, watched TV news again. The Sloane kidnapping was still the top item, though there were no reports of new leads.

Soon after, Miguel informed Luis that at eleven o'clock the two of them would be driving into Manhattan in the hearse.

The hearse was the group's sixth vehicle, a Cadillac in good condition, bought secondhand. So far they had only used it twice. The remainder of the time the hearse had stayed out of sight at the Hackensack house, where it was referred to by the others as el angel negro, the black angel. The vehicle's inside floor, where a casket normally rested, was of handsome rosewood; built-in rubber rollers ensured that a casket's passage would be smooth. Interior sides and roof were lined with dark blue velvet.

Miguel had originally planned to use the hearse only as a final means of transportation before the air journey to Peru, but now, clearly, it was their safest vehicle. The cars and the GMC truck had had too much exposure, especially during the Larchmont surveillance, and it was possible that descriptions of them had by this time been given to police and circulated.

The weather had changed to pouring rain, with fiercely blowing gusts, the sky a sullen gray.

With Luis driving, they took a circuitous route from Hackensack, several times changing direction and twice stopping to be sure they were not followed. Luis handled the hearse with extra care because of slick roads and poor forward visibility beyond the monotonously slapping windshield wipers. Having

gone south on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River as far as Weehawken, they entered the Lincoln Tunnel and emerged in Manhattan at 11:45 A.M. Both Miguel and Luis were wearing dark suits and ties, appropriate to their presence in a hearse.

After leaving the tunnel they headed east on Fortieth Street. The heavy rain made for bumper-to-bumper crosstown traffic and painfully slow progress. Miguel watched pedestrians moving slowly and uncomfortably on crowded sidewalks.

The paradox of riding through New York City in a hearse amused him. On one hand the vehicle was far too conspicuous for their purpose; on the other it commanded respect. At a previous intersection, a uniformed traffic agent-a "brownie," as New Yorkers called them-had even stopped other vehicles and

waved them by.
Miguel also noticed that many people who glanced at the hearse immediately looked away. He had observed the same thing before and wondered: Was it the reminder of death, the great oblivion, that disturbed them? He had never feared his own death, though he had no intention of making it easy for others to hasten its arrival.
But whatever the reason, it didn't matter. What did was that no one in the crowds around them was likely to consider that this particular hearse, so close that they could touch it, contained two of the most sought-after criminals in the country, perpetrators of a crime that was the nation's hottest news story. The thought intrigued Miguel. It was also reassuring.
They turned north onto Third Avenue, and a little short of Forty-fourth Street Luis pulled over to the curb and let Miguel out. Turning his collar up against the driving rain, Miguel walked the last two blocks east to United Nations headquarters. Despite his earlier thoughts about the hearse, arriving in it would court attention he didn't need. In the meantime Luis had instructions to keep moving and come back to the drop-off point in an hour. If Miguel did not appear, Luis would return every subsequent half hour.
On the corner of Forty-fourth, Miguel bought an umbrella from a street vendor but found it hard to handle in the wind. A

few minutes later he crossed First Avenue to the white-fronted UN General Assembly Building. Because of the rain, the many flagpoles stood forlornly bare, bereft of flags. Passing an irongrille fence and the delegates' entrance, he ascended steps to a wide platform where visitors were admitted. Miguel, emptyhanded, was quickly cleared through a checkpoint inside where others were having their handbags and packages opened for inspection.
In the large hall beyond, benches were filled with waiting visitors, their faces and clothes as diverse as the UN itself. A Bolivian woman in a bowler hat sat stoically. Beside her a small black child played with a stuffed white lamb. Nearby sat an old, weathered man wearing Afghan-type headgear. Two bearded Israelis argued over papers spread between them. And interspersed throughout the crowd were white-skinned Americans and British tourists.
Ignoring those waiting, Miguel walked toward a prominent "Guided Tours" sign at the far end of the hall. Beside it, holding an attach~ case, Jos6 Antonio Salaverry was waiting.
Just like a weasel, Miguel thought, as he took in Salaverry's narrow,

pinched face, receding hair and thin mustache. The Peruvian diplomat, usually exuding self importance, today appeared ill at ease.
They exchanged the slightest of nods, then Salaverry led the way to an information desk where, with a delegate's authority, he signed Miguel in, using a bogus name. Miguel received a visitor's pass.
As the two walked down an avenue flanked by pillars, a garden was visible through glass panels, and beyond it the East River. An escalator took them upward to the next floor where they entered the Indonesian Lounge, available only to diplomats and guests.
The large, impressive room, where heads of state were entertained, contained magnificent art including the curtain of the Holy Kaabe entry to Mecca, a black tapestry inlaid with gold and silver and presented by the Saudis. A deep green carpet complemented white leather sofas and chairs, the furnishings ingeniously arranged so that several meetings could take place

at once, with none intruding on another. Miguel and Salaverry seated themselves in a small private section.
As they faced each other, Jos6 Antonio Salaverry's thin lips twisted with displeasure. "I warned you it was dangerous to come here! There is already enough risk without creating more."
Miguel asked calmly, "Why is coming here a risk?" He needed to find out how much this weakling knew.
"You fool! You know why. The television, the newspapers, are full of what you have done, those people you have seized. The FBI, the police, are throwing everything into the search for you." Salaverry swallowed, then asked anxiously, "When are you going-all of you getting out of the country?"
"Assuming what you say is true, why do you want to know? What difference does it make to you?"
"Because Helga is frantic with anxiety. So am L"
So the loose-tongued idiot had shared what he knew with his whoring woman banker. It meant that the original breach of security had widened and was now an imminent danger which had to be erased. Though Salaverry had no means of knowing, his foolish admission had sealed the fate of his woman and himself.
"Before I answer," Miguel said, "give me the money."
Salaverry manipulated a combination lock on his attach6 case. From the case he removed a bulging pressboard wallet tied with tape, and passed it over.

Miguel opened the wallet, surveyed the money inside, then retied the tape.
Salaverry asked petulantly, "Don't you want to count it?"
Miguel shrugged. "You would not dare cheat me." He considered, then said with apparent casualness, "So you want to know when I and certain others will leave."
"Yes, I do."
"Where will you and the woman be tonight?"
"In my apartment. We are too upset to go out."
Miguel had been to the apartment and remembered the address. He told Salaverry, "Stay there. I cannot telephone because of reasons which will become clear. Therefore a messen-

ger will come to you tonight with the information you want. He will use the name Plato. When you hear that name, it is safe to let him in."
Salaverry nodded eagerly. He seemed relieved.
Miguel added, "I am doing you this service in return for your obtaining the money promptly." He touched the pressboard wallet.
"Thank you. You understand I have no wish to be unreasonable . . ."
"I understand. But stay home tonight."
"Oh, I will."
From the UN building, Miguel crossed First Avenue to the United Nations Plaza Hotel. On the main floor he went to a pay phone near the newsstand. He tapped out the memorized digits for a call to Queens. When a voice answered, he knew he was connected with a fortress-like private house in the Little Colombia distict of Jackson Heights. Miguel spoke briefly, avoiding use of names, gave the number of the pay phone from which he was calling and then hung up.
He waited patiently by the phone; on two occasions when other people approached, he pretended to be using it. After seven minutes it rang. A voice confirmed that it was speaking from another pay phone. The call would not be traced or overheard.
Speaking softly, Miguel stated his requirements. He was assured they could be met. A contract was arranged, a price of six thousand dollars agreed. Miguel gave Salaverry's apartment address and explained that the name "Plato" would ensure admittance. He emphasized, "It is to be done tonight and must appear to be a murder-suicide."
His instructions, he was promised, would be carried out precisely.
Miguel arrived at the Third Avenue rendezvous point a little less than an hour from the time he had left. Moments later Luis brought the hearse to

the curb.
The Evening News 181
Getting in, out of the rain, Miguel told Luis, "We go now to the funeral place-the same one as before. You remember?"
Luis nodded and, soon after, turned east toward the Queensboro Bridge.
At times, when news was quiet, a network news organization was like a slumbering giant.
It operated at considerably less than a hundred percent utilization and a substantial number of its talented people had what was referred to in the trade as "down time"-meaning they were not actively at work.
Which was why, when a major news event occurred, there were experienced hands who could be-as another trade phrase went-"grabbed and fired up."
On Friday morning, one day after the Sloane family kidnapping, the firing-up process had begun as the special task force headed by Harry Partridge, with Rita Abrams as senior producer, began assembling within CBA News headquarters.
Rita, who had reached New York from Minnesota late the night before, came in to the newly assigned task force offices at 8 A.m. Harry Partridge, having spent the night in a luxury suite provided by the network at the Inter-Continental Hotel, joined her soon after.
Wasting no time, he asked, "Any new developments?"
"Zilch on the kidnap," Rita answered. "But there's a mob scene outside Crawf's house."
"What kind of mob?"
The two were in what would be the group conference room and Rita leaned back in a swivel chair. Despite the brevity of her vacation, she seemed refreshed, her usual vitality and drive
182 ARTHUR HAILEY
restored. Nor had she lost the quirky cynicism which those who worked with her enjoyed.
"These days, everyone wants to touch the hem of an anchorman. Now that they've learned his address, Crawf's fans are pouring into Larchmont. Hundreds of them, maybe thousands. The police are having trouble coping and they're setting up road barriers."
"We have a camera crew on site?"
"Sure have. They camped out all night. I've told them to stay in place until Crawf leaves for work. By then, I'll have another crew out to replace them."
Partridge nodded his approval.

"It makes sense to assume the kidnappers, and therefore the action, have moved on from Larchmont," Rita said, "but I think we should protect ourselves by being around for a couple of days in case anything fresh breaks. That is, unless you have other ideas."
"Not yet," he said; then added, "you know we've been given pretty much a blank check where talent is concerned?"
"I was told last night. So I've asked for three producers to begin-Norman Jaeger, Iris Everly and Karl Owens. They'll be here soon. "
"Great choices." Partridge knew all three well. Their abilities were among the best in CBA News.
"Oh, I've allocated offices. Do you want to see yours?"
Rita led the way around five adjoining offices which would constitute the task force operating base. Network news departments were perpetually in a state of flux, with temporary projects being created and disbanded, so when need arose, required accommodation could usually be found.
Partridge would have an office to himself, as would Rita. Two other offices, already jammed with desks, would be shared by the additional producers, camera crews and support staff, some of whom were already moving in. Partridge and Rita exchanged greetings with them before returning to the fifth and largest office, the conference room, to continue planning.
"What I'd like," Partridge said, "is to have a meeting as soon as possible with everyone who'll be working with us. We

can aflocate responsibilities, then begin work on a spot for tonight's news."
Rita glanced at her watch: 8:45 A.M.
"I'll set it up for ten o'clock," she said. "Right now I want to find out more about what's happening at Larchmont."
"In all the years I've lived here," the Larchmont police sergeant said, "I've never seen anything like it."
He was speaking with FBI Special Agent Havelock who had emerged from the Sloane house a few minutes earlier to survey a throng of spectators outside. The crowd had been growing in size since dawn and now packed the sidewalks in front of the house. In some places they spilled onto the road where police officers were trying, not too successfully, to control the crowd and keep passing cars moving. Otis Havelock, having stayed in the house overnight, was concerned that Sloane, who was inside getting ready for work, might be mobbed on his way out.
Clustered by the front gate were television crews and other reporters.

As Havelock appeared, TV cameras swung toward him amid shouted questions:
"Have you heard from the kidnappers?"
"How's Sloane holding up?"
"Can we talk to Crawford?"
"Who are you?"
In response Havelock shook his head and waved his hands dismissingly. Beyond the press group, the crowd appeared orderly, though Havelock's appearance had increased the buzz of conversation.
The FBI man complained to the police sergeant, "Can't you people keep this street clear?"
"We're trying. The Chief has ordered barriers. We'll stop traffic and pedestrians, except for those who live on the street, then we'll try to clear these others out. It'll take at least an hour. The Chief doesn't want anyone hassled, not with all those cameras around."
"Any idea where these people are from?"

"I asked a few," the sergeant said. "They mostly drove in from outside Larchmont. I guess it's seeing all that excitement on TV, and wanting a glimpse of Mr. Sloane. The streets around are full of their cars."
Rain had begun to fall, but it didn't seem to discourage the watchers. Instead they put up umbrellas or huddled in their coats.
Havelock returned to the house. Inside he told Crawford Sloane, who looked tired and gaunt, "When we leave, it will be in two unmarked FBI cars. I want you in the second. Crouch down in the back and we'll drive away fast."
"No way," Sloane said. "There are media people out there. I'm one of them and I can't sail by as if I were the President."
"There may also be someone out there from the people who seized your wife and family." Havelock's voice sharpened. "Who knows what they might try, including shooting you? So don't be a damn fool, Mr. Sloane. And remember I'm responsible for your safety."
In the end they agreed to invite the camera crews and reporters into the hallway of the house for an impromptu press conference which Sloane would handle. As the journalists trooped in they looked around the luxurious home with curiosity, some with unconcealed envy. The questions and answers that followed were mostly repetitive of those the preceding day, the only new information being that there had been no communication from the kidnappers during the night.
"I can't tell you any more," Sloane said finally. "There simply isn't anything. I wish there were."

Havelock, while present and watchful, declined to participate in the exchanges and eventually the reporters, some of whom seemed resentful at the lack of news, left as they had come.
"Now, Mr. Sloane," Havelock said, "I want us to leave here in the way I described-with you in the back of the car, down low and out of sight." Reluctantly, Sloane agreed.
But in the execution of the plan, an unforeseen misfortune happened. Crawford Sloane entered the FBI car so quickly that it was

observed by only a few people in the crowd outside. However, those few promptly passed the word to others so that the message spread like fire--~'Sloane's in the second car." Within the same car Havelock and another FBI agent were in the backseat, with Sloane uncomfortably on his hands and knees between them. A third FBI agent was at the wheel. Two more FBI men were in the first car and both cars began moving immediately.
With the crowd now apprised of Sloane's departure, some at the rear pushed forward, impelling those at the front off the sidewalk and onto the road. At that point several things occurred in swift succession.
The lead car emerged from the Sloanes' driveway, waved out by a policeman. It was traveling fast, with the second car close behind. Then suddenly, as spectators opposite the driveway were pushed even farther onto the road, the first car's previously clear path was blocked. Its driver, shocked to see a hue of people facing him, jammed on his brakes. In other circumstances the lead car might have stopped in time. As it was, on a wet road surface slick from recent rain, it skidded sideways. To the sound of screeching tires followed by a series of horrifying thuds and human screams, the car plowed a path through the front ranks of spectators.
The occupants of the second car-excepting Sloane, who could not see-gasped in horror and braced for a similar collision. But as people scrambled hastily to the opposite side of the road, the crowd parted and Havelock, his face set grimly, ordered the driver, "Don't stopt Keep goingl" Afterward, Havelock would defend his apparently callous action by explaining, "It all happened so fast, I wasn't sure of anything and figured it could be an ambush."
Crawford Sloane, aware only that something unexpected was in progress, raised his head to peer out. At that precise moment, a TV camera already focused on the car caught Sloane's face in closeup, then stayed with the

car as it sped from the accident scene. Viewers who later saw the videotape on air had no means of knowing that Sloane was pleading to go

back, but Havelock insisted, "There are police right there. They'll do whatever's needed."

The Larchmont police did control the situation and several ambulances were rushed to the scene. When the toll was reekon~d, eight people had been injured-six with minor lacerations and bruises, two seriously. Of the seriously hurt, one man sustained a broken arm and crushed ribs while a young woman had a leg so badly mangled that it required amputation.

The accident, though tragic, in other circumstances would not have gained wide attention. Because of the association with the Sloane family kidnap, it received national coverage and some of the blame appeared, by implication, to attach to Crawford Sloane.

The researcher from CBA's London bureau, Teddy Cooper, had been flown in, as promised, on that morning's Concorde. He came directly to the task force offices, arriving shortly before 10 A.M., and reported first to Harry Partridge, then to Rita. The three went to the conference room where the group meeting was assembling.

On the way in, Cooper met Crawford Sloane who also had arrived a few minutes earlier, still shaken from his experience at Larchmont.

Cooper, a wiry slip of a man, radiated energy and confidence. His brown lank hair, worn longer than was now fashionable, framed a pale face that bore signs of adolescent acne. The effect was to make him seem even younger than his twentyfive years. Though a born-and-bred Londoner, he had been in the U.S. several times before and was familiar with New York.

To Crawford Sloane, he declared, "Sorry to hear about your missus and family, Mister S, but cheer up! I'm here now! I'll have those buggers before you know it. It's what I'm good atl"

Sloane, glancing at Partridge, raised his eyebrows inquiringly, as if to ask, Are you sure we want this bird?

Partridge said dryly, "Modesty has never been Teddy's problem. We'll give him some rope and see what happens." The exchange seemed not to bother Cooper in the least.

To Partridge, Cooper said, "First thing, Harry, is to check

out the reports. Then I'll suss out the scene of the crime. I want a word with the geezers who saw it happen-and I mean everyone. There's no point pissin' about. If I'm going to do this, I'm going to do it right."

"You do it your way." Partridge remembered previous occasions when he had witnessed Cooper at work. "You'll be in charge of research here, with two assistants."

T'he assistant researchers, a young man and woman who had been borrowed from another CBA project, were already in the conference room. While waiting for the meeting to begin, Partridge introduced them.

Cooper shook hands and said, "Working with me will be a great experience for you, kids. Don't be nervous, though-I'm very informal. Just call me 'your excellency,' and you need only salute first thing each morning."

The researchers seemed amused by Cooper and the trio began discussing a "Sequence of Events" board, already in place in the conference room and occupying an entire wall. A standard procedure in task force reporting, it would record every known detail about the Sloane kidnapping, in proper sequence. On another wall was a second large board, headed "Miscellaneous." This would contain incidental intelligence, some of it speculation or rumor, whose sequence was irrelevant or not known. From time to time, as "miscellaneous" items developed, they would be transferred to the other board-all of it a research responsibility.

The boards' purpose was twofold: first, to apprise everyone in the task force inner circle of all available information and new developments; second, to provide a focus for progress reviews and brainstorming sessions which could, and often did, provoke new ideas.

Punctually at ten o'clock, Rita Abrams raised her voice, cutting across the general buzz of conversation. "All right, everyone! Let's get to work."

She was seated at the head of a long table, Harry Partridge beside her. Leslie Chippingham arrived and took his place at

the table too. As he caught Rita's eye, they exchanged discreet smiles.

Crawford Sloane seated himself at the far end. He did not expect to contribute to the discussion at this point and had confided to Partridge, "I feel helpless right now, like a loose nut."

Also at the table were the three producers Rita had recruited. Norman Jaeger, oldest of the three, was a CBA veteran who had worked in every phase of news. Soft-spoken, imaginative and scholarly, he was a producer for the network's highly acclaimed magazine program, "Behind the Headlines." His abrupt temporary reassignment today pointed up the exceptional resources of the task force.

Next to Jaeger was Iris Everly, in her mid-twenties and a brightly shining star on the news production scene. Petite, pretty, a Columbia Journalism

School graduate, she had a shrewd mind which functioned at lightning speed. When working to pursue an elusive news story, her reputation for toughness and cunning matched Rasputin's.
Karl Owens, the third producer, was a workhorse who had gained his reputation through persistent, tireless plodding; sometimes his joint investigative work with correspondents succeeded after competitors had given up. Midway in age between Jaeger and Iris Everly and not as imaginative as either, Owens could be counted on for solidity and a thorough knowledge of his craft.
In other seats at the table and immediately behind were Teddy Cooper and the two assistant researchers, a staff writer borrowed from the National Evening News, Minh Van Canh, who would be senior cameraman, and a woman secretary, appointed unit manager.
"Okay, we all know why we're here," Rita said, opening the meeting with a businesslike tone. "What we'll discuss now is how to go about our work. First, I'll talk about organization. After that, Harry will direct us on the way we should march editorially."
Rita paused and looked the length of the table at Crawford Sloane. "Crawf, we won't make speeches here. I don't think

any of us could without becoming emotional, and you have enough distress to carry without our adding to that burden. But I want to tell you, very simply and from all of us-for your sake, your family's, and our own because we care-we're going to do our damnedestl"
From the other task force members there was an approving, sympathetic murmur.
Sloane nodded twice, then managed to utter, "Thank you," his voice choked.
"From here in," Rita said, "we shall operate on two levels -the longterm project and the daily breaking story. Norm," she continued, addressing the older producer, "you're to be in charge of long term."
"Right."
"Iris, you'll do the day-by-day, starting with a spot for the news tonight, which we'll discuss shortly."
Iris Everly said crisply, "Got it, and the first thing I'll want is the video of that melee this morning outside Crawf's house."
Sloane winced at the mention of the incident and glanced half pleadingly at Iris, though she took no notice.
"You'll get it," Rita told her. "The tape's on the way in."

To the third producer, Owens, Rita said, "Karl, you'll move between the two project sides as needed." She added, "And I'll be working closely with all three of you."
Her attention turned to Cooper. "Teddy, I understand you want to go to Larchmont."
Cooper looked up with a grin. "Yes, ma'am. To dig around and make like the famed Sherlock H." Turning his head, he added for the others, "At which I'm exceptionally good."
"Teddy," Partridge said, speaking for the first time, "everyone in this room is exceptionally good. It's why they're here."
Unabashed, Cooper beamed. "Then I oughta feel right at home."
"After we finish this meeting," Rita advised him, "Minh will go to Larchmont, heading two fresh camera crews. You'll go with him, Teddy, and meet Bert Fisher who's a stringer for our local affiliate station. I've arranged it. Fisher was first to

break the story yesterday. He'll drive you around and introduce you to whoever you want to sec."
"Wizard! I'll make a note o' that: Go fishing with Fisher."
Norm Jaeger said softly to Karl Owens, "Before this assignment's over I may strangle that Limey."
"Minh," Iris Everly said to the cameraman, "let's you and me talk, please, before you leave for Larchmont."
Minh Van Canh, his square dark face impassive as usual, nodded.
"For the time being that takes care of the nuts and bolts," Rita said. "Now, more important, there's editorial direction. Harry-over to you."
"Our first objective, as I see it," Partridge began, "is to find out more about the kidnappers. Who are they? Where are they from? What are they aiming for? Of course, very soon they may tell us that themselves; however, we won't wait for it to happen. At this point I can't tell you how we'll learn the answers to those questions, except that together we will focus our brains on everything that's occurred so far, plus each new piece of information that comes in. Today I want everyone here to study all the data that we have, memorizing details. The boards will help." He motioned to the "Sequence of Events" and "Miscellaneous" boards, adding, "Both will be up to date later this morning.
"After everyone has caught up I want us, separately and collectively, to keep picking over the pieces, worrying at them. If we do that, based on past experience something will come out. "

Around the table the group listened attentively as Partridge continued.
"One thing I'll tell you for sure. Somewhere, those peoplethe kidnappers-have left traces. Everybody leaves traces, no matter how carefully they try to hide them. The trick is to locate some." He nodded to Jaeger. "Concentrating on that will be your job, Norman."
"Got it," Jaeger said.
"Now the short term. Iris, about our spot for tonight's eve-The Evening News 191
ning news. I know you've been thinking. How do you see the bones? Do you have a framework?"
She answered crisply. "If there's no fresh dramatic news like communication from the kidnappers, after saying there isn't, we may go to the snafn this morning outside Crawf's house. Then, since this will be the first full day since the event, a recap of yesterday. I've watched the tape of last night; it was a mishmash. Tonight we can do better, be more orderly. Also I'd like re-interviews with witnesses at Larchmont"-Iris consulted notes-"especially the old lady, Priscilla Rhea, who's video-rich. She and the others may have remembered something new."
"What about reactions?" Jaeger asked. "As in Washington."
Partridge answered. "A short bite only, from the President, I think. Maybe some citizen interviews if we have time."
"But nothing from Capitol Hill?"
"Maybe tomorrow," Partridge said. "Maybe never. Everyone on the Hill will want to get in the act." He motioned for Iris to continue.
"To wrap up," she said, "we should do some analysis at the end n interview witb an authority on kidnapping."
Partridge asked, "Anyone in mind?"
"Not yet."
Karl Owens volunteered, "I know of a guy. Name's Ralph Salerno, an ex-New York cop, lives at Naples, Florida. He lectures about crime to police forces all over and has written books. Knows a lot about kidnap. I've seen him on air. He's
good."
"Let's get him," Iris said, glancing at Partridge who nodded his approval.
Les Chippingharn inte~ected, "Karl, we have an affiliate in the Naples area. Work through them if you can; otherwise fly Salerno to Miami."
"And either way," Iris added, "book satellite time for Harry to do the interview."
"I'll get onto it," Owens said, and made a note.

After another fifteen minutes of discussion, Rita tapped the

table. "That'll do," she announced. "The rap is over. Real work begins.,,
Amid the serious business, a marginal tempest.
For research purposes, Harry Partridge had decided to interview Crawford Sloane. Partridge believed that Sloane, like many people who became involved in a complex episode, knew more than he realized and that skilled, persistent questioning might bring out new facts. Sloane had already agreed to the session.
In the conference room after the meeting, as Partridge reminded Sloane of the arrangement, a voice behind them broke in, "If you don't mind, I'd like to sit in and listen. I may learn something too."
Surprised, they turned. Confronting them was Special Agent Otis Havelock who had walked in as the meeting broke UP.
"Well," Partridge said, "since you ask, I do mind."
Rita Abrams queried Havelock, "Aren't you Mr. FBIT'
He answered amiably, "You mean like 'Miss AmericaT My colleagues might not think so."
"What I really mean," Rita said, "is you shouldn't be in here at all. This area is off limits to anyone except those working here."
Havelock seemed surprised. "Part of my job is to protect Mr. Sloane. Besides, you're investigating the kidnapping. Right?"
"Yes."
"Then we have the same objective, to locate Mr. Sloane's family. So anything you people discover, such as what goes up there"-he gestured to the "Sequence of Events" board-"the FBI needs to know as well."
Several others in the room, among them Leslie Chippingham, had fallen silent.
"In that case," Rita said, "it should be a two-way deal. Can I send a correspondent, right now, over to the FBI's New York office to examine all your reports that have come in?"

Havelock shook his head. "I'm afraid that isn't possible. Some are confidential."
"Exactly!"
"Look, folks." Havelock, aware of the growing attention around the room, was clearly trying to be restrained. "I'm not sure you fully understand that we're dealing with a crime. Anyone with knowledge has a legal obligation to pass it on, in this instance to the FBI. Failing to do so

could be a criminal offense."
Rita, seldom long on patience, objected, "For chrissakes, we're not children! We do investigations all the time and know the score."
Partridge added, "I should tell you, Mr. Havelock, that I've worked close to the FBI on several stories and your people are notorious for taking all the information they can get and giving back nothing."
Havelock snapped, "The FBI isn't obliged to give anything back." His earlier restraint was gone. "We're a government agency with the power of the President and Congress behind us. What you people seem to be doing here is setting yourself up as competitors. Well, let me advise you that if anyone impedes the official investigation by withholding information, they're likely to face serious charges."
Chippingham decided it was time to intervene.
"Mr. Havelock," the news president said, "I assure you we are not people who break the law. However, we are free to do all the investigating we want and sometimes we're more successful at it than what you call the 'official investigation.'
"What's really involved here," Chippingharn continued, "is something called 'reporter privilege.' While I admit there are some gray areas, what's important is that reporters can investigate, then protect their sources unless a court rules otherwise. So you see, it would be an infringement on our freedom if we allowed you to have instant, total access to whatever comes in. Therefore I must tell you that while we're glad to have you here, there's a limit to your clearance and a line you may not cross-right there." He pointed to the conference-room doorway.

"Well, sir," Havelock said, "I'm not sure I buy all that, and you won't mind if I discuss the whole matter with the Bureau."
"Not in the least. I'm sure they'll tell you we're acting within our rights."
What Chippingham did not say was that CBA, like any news organization, would make its own decisions about what to reveal and when, even if it meant ruffling some FBI feathers. He knew that most others in the News Division felt the same way. As to possible consequences, the network would have to deal with those as and if they happened.
After Havelock had left to make a phone call, Chippingham told Rita, "Call the building superintendent. Ask for some keys to these offices and keep them locked."
In the privacy of Partridge's office, he and Sloane began their interview

with a tape recorder running. Partridge covered the now familiar ground, repeating earlier questions in more detailed ways, but nothing new emerged. At length, Partridge asked, "Is there anything in your mind, Crawf, even down in your subconscious that you might have to search for, something that could vaguely relate to what has happened? Is there the smallest incident you might have wondered about, then dismissed?"
"You asked me that yesterday," Sloane answered thoughtfully. His attitude to Partridge had changed noticeably over the past twentyfour hours. In one sense it was friendlier. In another, Sloane was less wary of Partridge, even relying on him mentally in a way he never had before. Strangely, Sloane was almost deferential, as if seeing in Harry Partridge his greatest hope of getting Jessica, Nicky and his father back.
"I know I did," Partridge said, "and you promised to think about it."
"Well, I thought last night and maybe there is something, though I can't be sure, and it's only the vaguest feeling." Sloane spoke awkwardly. He was never comfortable with hazy, unformed ideas.
Partridge urged, "Keep talking."
"I think, before this happened, I might have had a feeling of

being followed. Of course, it could be I'm thinking this way after discovering there was a watch on the house . . ."
"Forget that. So you think you were followed. Where and when?"
"That's the trouble. It's so hazy I could have made it up, maybe feeling I had to find something."
"Do you think you made it up?"
Sloane hesitated. "No, I don't."
"Give me more details."
"I've a feeling I might have been followed sometimes while driving home. Also I have an instinct, and it's damned elusive, that someone may have been observing me here, inside CBA News~-someone who should not have been here."
"All this over how long a period?"
"Maybe a month?" Sloane threw up his hands. "I simply can't be sure I'm not inventing. In any case, what difference does it make?"
"I don't know," Partridge said. "But I'll talk it over with the others."
Afterward, Partridge typed out a summary of the Sloane interview and pinned it on the conference room "Miscellaneous" board. Then, back in his office, he began the procedure known to all journalists as "working the phones."

Open in front of him was his private "blue book"-a catalog of people he knew worldwide who had been useful before and might be again. It also included others he had helped by supplying information when they, in turn, needed it. The news business was full of debits and credits; at times like this, credits were called in. Also helpful was that most people were flattered to be sought after by TV news.

The night before, referring to the blue book, Partridge had made a list of those he would call today. The names beside him now included contacts in the Justice Department, White House, State Department, CIA, Immigration, Congress, several foreign embassies, New York's Police Department, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Ottawa, Mexico's Judicial Police, an author of real-life crime books, and a lawyer with organized crime clients.

The ensuing phone conversations were mostly low-key and began, "Hi, this is Harry Partridge. We haven't been in touch for a while. Just called to see how life is treating you." The personal mode continued with inquiries about wives or husbands, lovers, children--Partridge kept notes of those names too-then eased into the current scene. "I'm working on the Sloane kidnapping. I wonder if you've heard any rumbles, or have ideas of your own."

Sometimes the questions were more specific. Have you heard speculation on who might be responsible? Do you think terrorist involvement is a possibility,- if so, from where? Are any rumors floating, even wild ones? Will you ask around and call me back if you hear anything?

It was standard practice, at times tedious and always requiring patience. Sometimes it produced results, occasionally delayed ones, often none. From today's telephoning nothing specific emerged, though the most interesting conversation, Partridge decided afterward, was with the organized crime lawyer.

A year ago Partridge had done him a favor--or so the lawyer thought. The man's daughter, on a college trip to Venezuela, had been part of a messy drug orgy that made U.S. national news. Eight students were involved; two had died. Through a Caracas agency, CBA News had obtained exclusive on-the-spot pictures, with closeups of participants-the lawyer's daughter among them-being arrested by police. Partridge, who was in Argentina, flew north to cover the story.

In New York, the girl's father somehow learned about the coverage, also the pictures, and tracked Partridge down by phone. He pleaded with Partridge

not to use his daughter's name or image, arguing she was the youngest of the group, had never been in trouble before, and national exposure would ruin her life.
Partridge had by that time seen the pictures; he knew about the girl and had decided not to use her in his story. Ever. so, keeping his options open, he merely promised to do the best he could.
Later, when it became clear that CBA had made no direct

reference to the girl, the lawyer sent Partridge a check for a thousand dollars. Partridge returned the check with a polite note, and since then the two had not communicated.
Today, aftei listening to Partridge's casual opener, the lawyer responded bluntly, "I owe you. Now you want something. Tell me what it is."
Partridge explained.
"I haven't heard anything, except on TV," the lawyer said, "and I'm sure as I can be that none of my clients are involved. It isn't the kind of thing they'd touch. Sometimes, though, they get to hear about things that others don't. Over the next few days I'll do some discreet asking around. If I find out anything I'll call you."
Partridge had a feeling that he would.
At the end of an hour, when he had covered half the names on his list, Partridge took a break and went to the conference room to pour himself coffee. Returning, he did what almost everyone in TV news did daily-went through the New York Times and Washington Post. It always surprised visitors to TV news centers to see how many copies of those newspapers were around. The fact was, despite TV's own news achievements, a subtle, ingrained attitude persisted that nothing was really news until printed in the Times or Post.
The strong voice of Chuck Insen broke into Partridge's reading.
"I bring tonight's lineup, Harry," the executive producer said, entering the office. "The word is, we'll do a split-anchor news. You're to be half the horse."
"Rear end or front?"
Insen smiled faintly. "Which of us ever knows? Anyway, from tonight on, you'll anchor anything to do with the Sloane family kidnap which-unless the President gets shot before air time-will be our lead again. Crawf will anchor the rest of the news as usual, the point being that all of us feel we're damned if a bunch of thugs, whoever they are, are going to dictate how life goes on at CBA."

"Fine with me," Partridge said. "I presume it is with Crawf."

"Frankly, it was Crawf's idea. Like any king he feels insecure if off his throne too long. Besides which, his staying invisible would achieve nothing. Oh, another thing-right at the end of the news, Crawf will say a few spontaneous words thanking those who've sent messages about his family, or otherwise care."
"Spontaneous?"
"Of course. We have. three writers toiling over them now."
Amused, despite the circurnstances, Partridge said, "You two are managing to agree for the time being."
Insen nodded. "We've declared an unspoken armistice until all this is over."
"And afterward?"
"Let's wait and see."
Almost a rncrith earlier, soon after Miguel hz-0, entered the United States illegally, he had attempted to buy funeral caskets to be used for aansporing his two intended kidpap victims to Peru. The plan had been developed well before his arrival on the scene and Miguel assumed their purchast could he accomplished quickly and quictly-a simple matter. He discovered it was not.
He had gone to a funeral home in Brooklyn, wanting to spread out his activities rather than confine them to the Little Colombia area of Queens, his operating center at the time. The establishment he chosc was near Prospect Park-an elegant white building labeled "Field's," with a spacious parking lot.
Miguel entered through heavy oak doors which opened onto a 1cbby with golden-beige carpeting, tall potted plants and paintings of peaceful landscapes. Inside he was greeted by a decorous middle-aged man wearing a black jacket with a white

carnation, black-and-graystriped trousers, white shirt and a dark tie.
"Good morning, sir," the sartorial paragon said. "I am Mr. Field. How can I be of service?"
Miguel had rehearsed what he would say. "I have two elderly parents who wish certain planning to be done about their eventual . . . er, passing."
With an inclination of his head, Field conveyed approval and sympathy. "I understand, sir. Many older people, at the sunset of their years, wish to be comfortable and assured about their future."

"Exactly. Now, what my parents would like
"Excuse me, sir. It might be more suitable if we stepped into my office."
"Very well."
Field led the way. Perhaps intentionally, they passed several salon-type rooms with settees and armchairs, one with rows of chairs prepared for a service. In each room was a corpse, gilded with cosmetics and propped on a frilly pillow in its open casket. Miguel noticed a few visitors, but some rooms were empty.
The office was at the end of a corridor, discreetly hidden. On the walls were framed diplomas, much as in a doctor's office, except that one was for "beautification" of dead bodies (it was adorned with purple ribbons), and another for embalming. At Field's gesture, Miguel took a chair.
"May I ask your name, sir."
"Novack," Miguel lied.
"Well, Mr. Novack, to begin we should discuss the overall arrangements. Do you or your parents have a cemetery plot chosen and obtained?"
"Well, no."
"Then that must be our first consideration. We ought to get that for you right away because it's becoming difficult to obtain a plot, especially a choice one. Unless, of course, you are considering cremation."
Miguel, curbing his impatience, shook his head. "No. But what I really want to talk about . . . 11
"Then there's the question of your parents' religion. What

service will be required? And there are other decisions to be made. Perhaps you would care to study this."
Field passed over what resembled an elaborate restaurant menu. It included a long list of separate items and costs such as, "Bathing, disinfecting, handling and cosmetizing of deceased-$250," "Special care for autopsied cases-$125" and "Clerical assistance in the completion of various forms-$ 100. " A "full traditional service" at $5,900 included, among other things, a $30 crucifix placed in the deceased's hands. A casket was extra, ranging up to $20,600.
"It's the caskets I came to discuss," Miguel said.
"Certainly." Field stood up. "Please come with me."
This time he led the way down a stairway to a basement. They entered a display room where the carpeting was red and Field went first to the $20,600 casket. "This is our very best. It's of 18-gauge steel, has three covers-glass, brass and quilted brass-and will last and last and last."

Elaborate ornaments adorned the casket's exterior. The inside was lined with lavender velvet.
"Maybe something a little simpler," Miguel told him.
They settled on two caskets, one smaller than the other, priced at $2,300 and $1,900. "My mother is a tiny lady," Miguel explained. About the size of an eleven-year-old boy, he thought.
Miguel's curiosity had been piqued by several plain, simple boxes. When asked about them, Field explained, "They are for religious Jews who require simplicity. The boxes have two holes in the bottom, the theory being 'earth to earth.' You are not Jewish?" When Miguel shook his head, Field confided, "Frankly, that is not the kind of repository I would choose for my own loved ones."
They went back to the office where Field said, "Now I suggest we go over the other matters. The burial plot first."
"That's not necessary," Miguel said. "What I would like to do is pay for the caskets and take them."
Field looked shocked. "That isn't possible."
"Why not?"
"It simply isn't done that way."

"Perhaps I should have explained." Miguel was beginning to see that this might not be as simple as expected. "What my parents would like is to have their caskets now, in their present home, placing them where they can be seen each day. That way they can get used, so to speak, to their future accommodation."
Field appeared devastated. "We couldn't possibly do that. What we arrange here is-if I may use that word-a 'package.' It would be possible for your parents to come to view the caskets they will eventually rest in. But after that we would insist on keeping them until the need arose."
"Couldn't you . . ."
"No~ sir, absolutely not."
Miguel had sensed the other man losing interest, even possibly becoming suspicious.
"Very well. I'll think about it and perhaps come back."
Field escorted Miguel out. Miguel had not the slightest intention of coming back. As it was, he knew he'd already left too strong an impression.
The next day he tried two more funeral homes farther afield, making his inquiries shorter. But the response was the same. No one would sell him

caskets separate from "the package.,,
At that point Miguel decided the attempt to move away from his operating center had been a mistake and he returned to Queens and his Little Colombia contacts. After a few days' delay they sent him to a small, drab funeral home in Astoria, not far from Jackson Heights. There he met Alberto Godoy.
In terms of funeral establishments, Godoy's was to Field's what K mart was to Tiffany-geared to a down-scale clientele. Not only that, but shabbiness prevailed, extending to the proprietor himself.
Godoy was obese, bald, with nicotine-stained fingers and the bloated features of a heavy drinker. Food stains were conspicuous on his undertaker's uniform of black coat and graystriped pants. His voice was raspy and punctuated by a smoker's cough. During the meeting with Miguel, which began in Godoy's tiny, cluttered office, he smoked three cigarettes, lighting one from another.

"My name is Novack, and I've come for information," Miguel had said.
Godoy nodded, "Yes, I know."
"I have two elderly parents
"Oh, is that the line?"
Miguel persisted, repeating his earlier story while Godoy listened with a mixture of boredom and disbelief. At the end his only question was, "How will you pay?"
"Cash.,,
Godoy became a shade more friendly. "This way."
Once more a basement provided the setting for sample caskets, though here the carpeting was dull brown and worn, with the choices fewer than at Field's. Expeditiously Miguel found two suitable caskets, one of average size, the other smaller.
Godoy announced, "For the regular size, three thousand dollars. For the child's, twentyfive hundred."
Though the "child" reference ran counter to his story and was dangerously near the truth, Miguel ignored it. Also, while convinced the $5,500 total was at least twice the normal price, he agreed to it without discussion.
He had brought cash and paid in hundred-dollar bills. Godoy asked for another $454 for New York City sales tax which Miguel added, though he doubted that the city's coffers would ever see the money.
Miguel backed his recently acquired GMC truck to a loading dock where, under Godoy's watchful supervision, the caskets were wheeled aboard. Miguel

then took them to the safe house where they were stored until their later transfer to Hackensack.
Now, almost a month later, he had returned to Alberto Godoy's establishment in search of one more casket.
Miguel was uneasy about going back because of the risks involved. He remembered Godoy's offhand reference to the second casket being for a child. So was there a chance, Miguel wondered, that Godoy had connected yesterday's kidnapping of a woman and boy with the earlier purchase of the caskets? It wasn't likely, but one reason Miguel had survived so long as a terrorist was by weighing every possibility. However, having

decided to transport the third captive to Peru, at this point there was no alternative to Godoy. The risk had to be taken.
Slightly more than an hour after leaving the United Nations, Miguel instructed Luis to park their hearse a block from the Godoy Funeral Home. Again Miguel used his umbrella in the pouring rain.
Inside the funeral home a woman receptionist spoke to Godoy via an intercom, then directed Miguel to the proprietor's office.
From behind a cloud of cigarette smoke the fat man regarded Miguel warily. "So it's you again. Your friends didn't tell me you were coming."
"No one knew.!'
"What do you want?" Whatever Godoy's motivations in doing business with Miguel in the first place, it was clear he now had reservations.
"I've been asked to do a favor for an elderly friend. He's seen the caskets I bought for my parents, likes the idea, and asked if I would . . ."
"Aw, cut it out!" An old-fashioned cuspidor was beside Godoy's desk. Removing his cigarette, he spat into it. "Listen, mister, don't waste time with what both of us know is a potful of crap. I said what is it you want?9'
"One casket. To be paid for as before."
Godoy peered forward through shifty eyes. "I run a business here. Sure, sometimes I oblige your friends; they do the same for me. But what I want to know from you is: Am I setting myself up to land in some shit?"
"There'll be no shit. Not if you cooperate." Miguel let his own voice take on menace and it had an effect.
"All right, you got it," Godoy said, his tone more moderate. "But since last time the price has gone up. For that same adult model, four thousand."
Without speaking, Miguel opened the pressboard wallet Jos6 Antonio Salaverry had given him and began counting hundred-dollar bills. He handed

forty to Godoy who said, "Plus two hundred 'n' fifty New York tax."
Re-tying the tape of the the pressboard wallet, Miguel told

Godoy, "You and New York go fuck yourselves." Then: "I have transport outside. Get the casket to your loading dock."
On the dock, Godoy was mildly surprised to see a hearse appear. The two previous caskets, he remembered, had been taken away in a truck. Still suspicious of his visitor, Godoy memorized the numbers and letters on the hearse's New York license plate and, when back in his office, wrote them down, though not really knowing why. He pushed the piece of scratch paper into a drawer and promptly forgot it.
Despite a belief that he had been involved in something it would be safer not to know more about, Godoy smiled as he put away the four thousand dollars in an office safe. Some of the previous cash his recent visitor had paid a month ago was also in the safe, and not only did Godoy have no intention of paying New York sales tax on either transaction, he did not intend to declare it on his tax returns either. Juggling his business inventory to make the three caskets disappear from his books would be easy. The thought so cheered him that he decided to do what he often did-go to a nearby bar for a drink.
Several of Godoy's cronies at the bar welcomed him. A short time later, mellowed by three Jack Daniel's whiskeys, he related to the group how some punk had bought two caskets and put them-so he said-in his parents' home, ready for the old folks to croak, and then come back for another casket, all of it like he was buying chairs or saucepans.
As the others roared with laughter, Godoy further confided that he'd outsmarted the dumb punk by charging three times the caskets' regular price. At that, one of his friends added a cheer to the laughter, prompting Godoy-all his worry now dissipated-to order another round.
Among those at the bar was a former Colombian, now a U.S. resident, who wrote a column for an obscure Spanishlanguage weekly published in Queens. On the back of an envelope, using a stub of pencil, the man wrote the gist of Godoy's story, translating it to Spanish as he did. It would make a good little item, he thought, for next week's column.
The Evening News 205
At CBA News it had been a frantic day, especially for the Sloane kidnap task force.
Producing a comprehensive report on the kidnapping for the National Evening News continued to be the focus of activity, though other events, some

major, were happening elsewhere in the world.
The kidnap story had been allotted five and a half minutes -an extraordinary duration in a business where fifteen-second segments were fiercely fought over. As a result, almost the entire effort of the task force was devoted to that day's production, leaving virtually no time for longer-term planning or reflection.
With Harry Partridge anchoring the opening portion of the news, the evening broadcast began:
"After thirty-six hours of agonized waiting there is no fresh news about the family of CBA anchorman Crawford Sloane, whose wife, young son and father were kidnapped yesterday morning in Larchmont, New York The where-abouts of Mrs. Jessica Sloane, eleven-year-old Nicholas, and Mr. Angus Sloane remain unknown. "
As each name was mentioned, a still photo appeared over Partridge's shoulder.
"Also unknown are the identities, objectives, or affiliations of the kidnappers.
A fast cut to Crawford Sloane's troubled face filling the screen. Sloane's distraught voice pleaded, ""oever you are,

wherever you are, for god's sake make yourse~f knownl Let us hearfrom youl"
Partridge's voice returned over an exterior shot of FBI headquarters, the J. Edgar Hoover Building in Washington. ""ile the FBI, now in charge of the investigation, is withholding comment . . - "
Briefly the scene changed to the FBI press office and a spokesman saying, "At this moment it would not be helpful to make any statement. "
Partridge again:privately, FBI officials admit no progress has been made.
"Since yesterday an outpouring of concern and anger have come from highest levels - - - "
A dissolve to the White House press room, the President speaking: "Such evil has no place in America. The criminals will be hounded down and punished. "
Partridge: ". . . and in humbler places
From Pittsburgh, a hard-hatted black steelworker, his face shining in the light from a fiery furnace: "I'm ashamed something like this could happen in my country. "
In a bright Topeka kitchen, a white housewife: "I cannot understand why no one foresaw what's happened and took precautions. My heart goes out to

Crawford. " Gesturing to a TV set: "In this house he's like family. "
Seated at her classroom desk in California, a young, softvoiced Eurasian girl: "I'm worried about Nicholas Sloane. It isn't fair they took him. "
During the day, camera crews of CBA and affiliated stations across the country had sought public reactions. The network had viewed fifty and selected those three.
The scene shifted to the Sloane house at Larchmont that morning in the rain-a long shot of the waiting crowd in the street, then, moving in close, a pan across their faces. Over the image, Partridge's voice: "In part because of intense public interest, today new tragedy intruded. "
The voice-over continued, alternating with natural sound,

more pictures: emergence of the two unmarked FBI cars from the driveway . . . the surge of onlookers into the first car's path . . . the first car braking, then out of control and sliding a shriek of tires followed by screams from the injured . . . others frantically scrambling clear of the second car, which then continued on . . . a closeup of Crawford Sloane's bewildered face . . . the second car speeding away.
During editing, some objections had been raised about including the shots of Sloane's face and the disappearing car. Sloane himself claimed, "It gives a wrong impression."
But Iris Everly, who put most of the spot together, working through the day with one of CBA's best tape editors, Bob Watson, argued for its inclusion and won. "Whether Crawf likes it or not." she pointed out, "it's news and we should stay objective. Also, we're looking at the only piece of action since yesterday." Rita and Partridge had supported Iris.
The tempo changed to a skillful recap of the previous day. It began with Priscilla Rhea, the frail and elderly ex-schoolteacher, again describing the brutal seizure of Jessica, Nicky and. Angus Sloane outside the Larchmont supermarket.
Minh Van Canh had used his camera creatively, going in for an extreme closeup of Miss Rhea's face. It showed the deep lines of age with every wrinkle in sharp relief, but also brought out her intelligence and sturdy character. Minh had coaxed her with geride questions, an occasionally used procedure. When no correspondent was present, experienced camera people sometirnes asked questions of those they were photographing. The questions were erased later from the audio recording, but the answers remained for use as statements.
After describing the struggle on the parking lot and the Nissan van's

departure, Miss Rhea said of the kidnappers, her voice rising, "They were brutal men, beasts, savagesl"
Next, the Larehmont police chief confirmed that there had been no breakthrough in the case and the kidnappers had not been heard from.

Following the recap was an interview with the criminologist, Ralph Salerno. With Salerno in a Miami studio and Harry Partridge in New York, the interview had been recorded via satellite late that afternoon. The recommendation by Karl Owens proved a good one and Salerno, an authoritative figure, was eloquent and well informed. He so impressed Rita Abrams that she arranged for him to be available exclusively to CBA for the duration of the crisis. He would be paid $1,000 for each broadcast appearance, with a minimum guarantee of four.
Although TV networks claimed not to pay for news interviews-a statement not always true-a consultant fee was different and acceptable.
"The progress of investigation after any efficiently executed kidnap, " Ralph Salerno declared, "depends on hearing from the kidnappers. Unless and until that happens, there is usually a stalemate. "
Answering a question by Partridge, he continued: "The FBI has a high success ratio in kidnappings; they solve ninety-two percent of cases. But ifyou look carefully at who was caught and how, you'llfind most solutions depended on first hearingfrom the kidnappers, then trapping them during negotiations or payment of a ransom. "
Partridge prompted, "So the likelihood is that not much will happen until these kidnappers are heardfrom.
"Exactly. 11
A final statement in the special news segment was made by CBA's corporate president, Margot Lloyd-Mason.
It had been Leslie Chippingham's idea to include Margot. Soon after breaking into the network with the kidnap bulletin yesterday, he reported to her by telephone and did so again this morning. Her reaction had, on the whole, been sympathetic and after their first conversation she telephoned Crawford Sloane, expressing hope that his family would be recovered

quickly. While speaking with the news president, though, she added two caveats.
"Part of the reason something like this happens is that networks have misguidedly let anchor people become larger than life, so the public thinks of them as something extra-special, almost gods." She did not elaborate on

how a network could control public concepts, even if it wished, and for his part, Chippingharn saw no point in arguing the obvious.
The other proviso concerned the kidnap task force.
"I don't want anyone-and that principally means you," Margot Lloyd-Mason asserted, "going wild about spending money. You should be able to do whatever is necessary within the existing news budget."
Chippingham said doubtfully, "I'm not so sure of that."
"Then I'll give you a firm ruling. No activity exceeding budget is to be embarked on without my advance approval. Is that clear?"
Chippingham wondered whether the woman had blood in her veins or ice? Aloud, he answered, "Yes, Margot, it's clear, though I'll remind you that our ratings for the National Evening News shot up last night and I expect that to continue while this crisis lasts."
"Which merely goes to show," she answered coolly, "that unfortunate events can be turned to profit."
While involving the corporate president in this evening's broadcast seemed appropriate, Chippingham also hoped it might soften her attitude toward some special expenditures which, in his view, would be needed.
On air, Margot spoke with authority, using words scripted for her but with revisions of her own.
"I am speaking for all the people of this network and our parent company, Globanic Industries, " Margot said, "when I declare that our total resources are available in the search for the missing members of the Sloane family. For all of us, in fact, it is a family affair.
"We deplore what has happened. We urge law enforce-210 ARTHUR HAILEY ment agencies to continue their strongest efforts to bring the criminals to justice. We hope to see our friend and colleague, Crawford Sloane, united with his wife, son andfather in the shortest possible time. "
In the original draft there had been no reference to Globanic Industries. When Margot proposed it while reviewing her script in the privacy of Chippingham's office, he advised, "I wouldn't do that. The public has an image of CBA as an entity, a piece of Americana. Bringing in Globanic's name makes that image cloudy, to no one's advantage."
"What you'd like to pretend," Margot retorted, "is that CBA is some kind of crown jewel, and independent. Well, it's neither. Over at Globanic they're more apt to think of CBA as a pimple on their ass. The reference stays in. What you can take out, d propos Sloane, are those words, 'our friend and colleague.' Kidnap or not, I might choke on them."

Chippingham suggested dryly, "How about a trade-off? I'll promise to love Globanic if, for one broadcast, you'll be Crawford's friend."
For once, Margot laughed aloud. "Shit, yes."
The lack of progress after a frantic first day for the task force did not surprise Harry Partridge. He had been involved in similar projects in the past and knew it took members of any new team at least a day to orient themselves. Just the same, it was imperative there be no more delay in formulating plans.
"Let's have a working dinner," he told Rita during the afternoon.
She then arranged for the six principals in the task forcePartridge, Rita, Jaeger, Iris, Owens, Cooper-to meet for Chinese food immediately after the National Evening News. Rita chose Shun Lee West on West Sixty-fifth, near Lincoln Center, a favorite with TV news folk. In making the reservation she told the maltre d', Andy Yeung, "Don't bother us with menus. You order a good meal and give us a table out of the mainstream, where we can talk."
The Evening News 211
During a commercial that followed the five-minute kidnap report at the top of the National Evening News, Partridge eased out of the anchor desk chair and Crawford Sloane moved in. As he did, Sloane gripped Partridge's arm and murmured, "Thank you, Harry-for everything."
"Some of us will be working tonight," Partridge assured him, "trying to come up with ideas."
"I know. I'm grateful." Routinely, Sloane skimmed through the scripts an assistant placed in front of him and, watching, Partridge was shocked by the other man's appearance. Not even makeup could conceal ravages the past day and a half had wrought. Sloane's cheeks appeared hollow, there were bags beneath his eyes, which were red-rimmed; perhaps, Partridge thought, he had been crying in private.
"Are you okay?" he whispered. "Sure you want to do this?"
Sloane nodded. "Those bastards won't put me out of action."
The studio floor manager called out, "Fifteen seconds."
Partridge moved from camera range, then quietly left the news studio. Outside he watched a monitor until satisfied that Sloane would make it through to the end of the news. Then he left by taxi for Shun Lee West.
Their table was at the rear of the restaurant in a relatively quiet comer. Near the end of the first course-a steaming, delicately flavored winter melon soup-Partridge addressed Cooper. The young Englishman had spent most of the day in Larchmont, talking with everyone who had knowledge of the

kidnapping, including the local police. He had returned to task force headquarters in the late afternoon.
"Teddy, let's hear your impressions so far, and any ideas on where we go from here?"
Cooper pushed his empty soup dish away and wiped his lips. He opened a well-worn exercise book and answered, "Okay, impressions first."
The pages in front of him were crowded with scribbled notes.

"First off, it was a pro job all the way. The blokes who put this together didn't muck about. They planned it like a railway timetable and made sure they left no evidence behind. Secondly, these were pros who had lotsa money."
Norman Jaeger asked, "How do you know?"
"Hopin' you'd ask." Cooper grinned as he looked around the table. "For one thing, everything suggests that whoever did the snatch kept a close eye on the house for a long time before they made their move. You've beard about the neighbors who now say they saw the motors outside the Sloane house, and once or twice vans, and thought the people in 'em were protecting Mr. S, not spying on him? Well, five people've reported that since yesterday; today I talked to four. They all said they saw those motors on and off for three weeks, maybe a month. Then we've got to consider Mr. S, who now believes he was followed. "
Cooper glanced at Partridge. "Harry, I read your notes on the info board and I believe Mr. S was right; he was trailed. I've a theory about that."
While they were talking, fresh dishes had appearedsaut6ed shrimp with peppers, fried prawns, snow peas, fried rice. There was a pause to enjoy the hot food, then Rita urged, "How about that theory, Teddy?"
"Okay. Mr. S is a big TV star; he's used to being a public figure, watched wherever he goes, and that becomes a way of life. So as a sort of counterbalance he builds up a subconscious feeling of invisibility. He's not going to let stares from strangers, the turning heads or pointing fingers bother him. That's why he may have screened out the notion of being followedwhich I reckon he was, because it fits in with full-blown reconnaissance of the whole Sloane family."
"Even if that's true," Karl Owens asked, "where does it get us?"
Partridge said, "It helps us build a picture of the kidnappers. Keep going, Teddy."
"Okay, so it cost the snatchers to take all that time and do all that spying. The same thing goes for all those motors they used; also a van,

maybe two, and the Nissan van yesterday-a

regular fleet. And there's something special about those motors."
Cooper turned a notebook page. "The Larchmont cops let me see those motor reports. Some interesting things come out.
"Now, when somebody sees a car, they may not remember much about it, but one thing most of us do remember is the color. Well, those people who reported seeing the motors described eight different colorx So I asked myself. Did the gang really have eight different cars?"
"They could have," Iris Everly said, "if they were rental cars.,,
Cooper shook his head. "Not our lads; they'd be too cagey. They'd know that renting motors means identification--drivers' licenses, credit cards. Also, rental cars have license plates which can be traced."
"So you've another theory," Iris prompted. "Right?"
"Right. What I think happened is the snatchers most probably had three motors and resprayed them, say once a week, hoping to lessen the chances of being noticed. Okay, it worked. Only thing was, in the respraying these blokes made a stupid mistake."
More food had arrived-two heaped platters of Peking duck. The others reached out with chopsticks and ate hungrily while Cooper continued.
"Let's go back a mo. One of those Larchmont neighbors noticed more than the others about these motors. That's because he's in the motor insurance business, knows makes and models."
Jaeger interrupted. "All this is interesting, my British friend, but if you want any of this delicious duck you'd best dive in before us greedy Yanks finish it."
"International duck!" Cooper joined with relish in the eating, then resumed.
"Anyway, this insurance geezer noticed the makes and models of the motors and he says he saw three, no more-a Ford Tempo, a Chevy Celebrity and a Plymouth Reliant, all this year's models, and he remembers some of the colors."
Partridge asked, "So how do you figure the repainting?"

"This afternoon," Cooper said, "your mate, Bert Fisher, phoned some car dealers for me. What came out was that some of the colors people say they saw aren't available for those models. For instance, the insurance geezer, he said he saw a yellow Ford Tempo, but there's no such color made. Same goes for a blue Plymouth Reliant. Someone else described a

green motor, yet not one of those three makes comes in green."
Owens said thoughtfully, "You may be on to something. It's possible, of course, that one car could have been in an accident and repainted, but not likely three."
"Something else about that," Jaeger put in, "is that when auto body shops repaint cars, they mostly do it in manufacturer's colors. Unless somebody asks for an offbeat shade."
"Which wouldn't be likely," Iris contributed, "remembering what Teddy said just now about the people we're looking for being savvy. They'd want to be inconspicuous, not the other way."
"All of which I agree with, folks," Cooper said, "and it leads to the thought that the mob we're looking for did the spray jobs themselves, not giving much thought to current colors, perhaps riot even knowing about them."
Partridge said doubtfully, "That's moving pretty far into supposition country."
It was Rita who asked, "But is it? Let me remind you of what Teddy pointed out earlier. That the people we're talking about practically ran a fleet of vehicles-at least three cars, one truck and maybe two, a Nissan passenger van for the kidnap . . . Anyway, five we know of. Now, it makes sense that they'd want to keep them together in one place, which would have to be sizable. So isn't it likely it would be somewhere big enough to include a paint shop?"
"An operating headquarters is what you mean," Jaeger said. He turned to Teddy; an increasing respect had replaced the older man's skepticism of the morning. "Isn't that what you're talking about? Where you're leading us?"
"Yep." Cooper beamed. "Sure am."
Their meal--eventually to include eight courses-had continued. Now before the group was saut6ed lobster with ginger

and scallions. They reached for portions thoughtfully, concentrating on what had just been said.
"An operating center," Rita mused. "Maybe for the people involved, whoever they are, as well as vehicles. We know from the old lady's description there were either four or five men at the kidnap scene. There could be others offstage. Wouldn't it make sense for everything to ic together?"
"Including the hostages," Jaeger added.
"If we assume all that," Partridge said, "and okay, let's do it for the

moment, obviously the next question is where?"
"We don't know, of course," Cooper said, "but some hard thinking might suggest the kind of place it could be; also, maybe, how far it was--or is-from Larchmont."
With amusement, Iris queried, "Hard thinking you've already done?"
"Well," Cooper said, "since you ask
"Quit showing off, Teddy," Partridge said sharply. "Get to the point."
Cooper responded, unperturbed, "I tried to think the way a snatcher would plan. So I asked the question: After the snatch, when I'd grabbed what I wanted, what would I want next?"
"How's this for an answer?" Rita said. "To be safe from pursuit; therefore go like hell and get under cover quickly."
Cooper smacked his palms together. "Bleedin' right! And where better to be under cover than at that HQ hangout?"
Owens asked, "Am I reading you right? You're suggesting the HQ wasn't far away?"
"Here's how I see it," Cooper said. "First off, it needs to be well clear of Larchmont; staying anywhere in the area would be too risky. But, second, it shouldn't be too far. The snatchers would know that in the shortest time, maybe minutes, there'd be an alarm and police crawling all over the place. Therefore they'd have calculated how much time they'd got."
Rita asked, "If you're still inside their minds, how much time?"
"Guessing, I'd say half an hour. Even that long would be a bit iffy, but they'd have to chance it to get far enough away."

Owens said slowly, "Translating that to milesremem beringthearea . . . I'dsaytwenty-five."
"Just what I figured." Cooper produced a folded New York area map and opened it. On the map, taking Larchmont as the center, he had drawn a crayon circle. He prodded within the circle with a finger.
"Twentyfive-mile radius. I reckon the headquarters is somewhere inside here."
At 8:40 P.m. on Friday evening, while the CBA News group was still dining at Shun Lee West, a buzzer sounded in the midManhattan apartment of the Peruvian diplomat, Jos6 Antonio Salaverry. It signaled a visitor.
The apartment, on Forty-eighth Street near Park Avenue, was part of a twenty-floor complex. Although a doorman was stationed on the main floor, visitors used an outside intercom system to announce their arrival, then were admitted directly by the building's tenants.

Salaverry had been edgy since his meeting with Miguel that morning at United Nations headquarters and was anxious to hear that the Medellin/Sendero Luminoso group was safely out of the country. Their departure, he thought, would end his own association with the frightening matter that had filled his mind since yesterday.

He and his banker friend, Helga Efferen, had been drinking vodka-tonics in front of a fireplace for more than an hour, neither of them feeling inclined to go to the kitchen to prepare food or to telephone and order it sent in. While the liquor had relaxed them physically, it had removed none of their anxiety.

They were an oddly matched pair-Salaverry, small and weasely; Helga, whom the single word "ample" best described. She was big-boned, abundantly fleshed, with cornucopian breasts, and a natural blonde. Nature, however, had stopped

short of making her beautiful; there was a harshness to her face and an acidic manner that repelled some men, though not Salaverry. From their first meeting in the bank he had been drawn to Helga, perhaps seeing in her a reflection of himself and sensing, too, her hidden but strong sexuality.

If so, he had been right on both counts. They shared the same points of view, which were based mainly on pragmatism, selfishness and avarice. As to sex, during their frequent fornicating an aroused Helga became a frenzied whale to Jos6 Antonio's Jonah, surrounding and almost swallowing him. He loved it. Helga was also given to crying out loudly, sometimes screaming, at her climax, which made him feel macho and-in every way-bigger than he was.

A rare exception to this erogenous enjoyment had occurred earlier that evening. They had begun copulating, hoping to erase, even temporarily, their great worry. But it didn't happen and after a while they both realized that they didn't have their hearts in the enterprise and gave up.

The mental empathy, though, remained intact and was typified by their attitude to the Sloane family kidnapping.

Both were aware that they possessed important knowledge about a sensational crime which dominated the news and whose victims and perpetrators were being sought by almost every law enforcement agency in the country. Worse, they had aided and abetted the financing of the kidnap gang.

However, it was not the safety of the kidnap victims that troubled Jos~ Antonio and Helga. It was their own. Salaverry knew that if his involvement were exposed, not even his diplomatic immunity would save him from exceedingly unpleasant consequences, including expulsion from the UN and the United States, the extinction of his career and, more than probably, the vengeance of Sendero Luminoso back in Peru. Helga, with no diplomatic protection, could be sent to prison for criminally withholding information and also, perhaps, for accepting bribes to channel funds secretly in the bank she worked for.

Those thoughts were running through her mind when the buzzer sounded and her paramour jumped up, hurrying to the

wall-mounted intercom connected with the main floor entrance. Pressing a button, he queried, "Yes?"

A voice, made metallic by the system, announced, "This is Plato."

With relief, Salaverry informed Helga, "It's him." Then into the intercom, "Come up, please." He pressed a button which would release an entrance lock downstairs.

Seventeen floors below, the man who had been speaking with Salaverry entered the apartment building through a heavy plate-glass door. He was of average build, thin-faced and swarthy, with deep-set, brooding eyes and glossy dark hair. His age could have been anywhere from thirty-eight to fifty-five. He wore a trench coat, unbuttoned at the front, over an unremarkable brown suit. He had come in wearing lightweight gloves and despite the building's warmth did not remove them.

A uniformed doorman who had seen the man arrive and use the intercom waved him to an elevator. Three other people already waiting in the lobby entered the elevator too. The man in the trench coat ignored them. After pressing a button for the eighteenth floor, he stood expressionless, looking straight ahead. By the time the elevator reached his floor, the other occupants had left.

He followed an arrow to the apartment he sought, carefully noting there were three other apartments on the floor and an emergency stairway to the right. He did not expect to use the information, but memorizing escape routes was a habit, At the apartment doorway he pressed a button and heard a soft chime inside. Almost at once the door opened.

The man asked, "Mr. Salaverry?" His voice was soft, with a Latin accent.

"Yes, yes. Come in. Let me take your coat?"

"No. I will not be staying." The visitor looked swiftly around. Seeing

Helga, he inquired, "This woman is the banker?"
It seemed an ungracious way of putting it, but Salaverry answered, "Yes, Miss Efferen. And your name?"

"Plato will do." Nodding to the area in front of the fire, "Can we go there?"
"Of course." Salaverry noticed that the man kept his gloves on. Maybe, he thought, it was a personal fetish or perhaps the fellow had a deformity.
They were now in front of the fireplace. After the slightest of nods to Helga, the man asked, "Is anyone else here?"
Salaverry shook his head. "We are alone. You may speak freely.,,
"I have a message," the man said, reaching into his trench coat. When his hand emerged, it was holding a nine-millimeter Browning pistol with a silencer on the muzzle.
The liquor he had drunk slowed Salaverry's reactions, though even had they been normal it was unlikely he could have done anything to change what happened next. While the Peruvian froze in amazement, and before he could move, the man put the gun against Salaverry's forehead and squeezed the trigger. In his last brief moment of life the victim's mouth hung open in surprise and disbelief.
The wound was small where the bullet entered-a neat red circle surrounded by a powder bum. But the exit wound at the rear of the head was large and messy as bone fragments, brain tissue and blood splattered out. In an instant before the body fell, the man in the raincoat had time to notice the powder bum, an effect he had intended. Then he turned to the woman.
Helga, too, had been riveted by shock. By now, however, surprise had turned to terror. She began to scream, and at the same time attempted to run.
In both efforts she was too late. The man, an accurate marksman, put one bullet through her heart. She fell and died, her blood pouring onto the rug where she had fallen.
The hit man, who was Miguel's paid assassin dispatched from Little Colombia, paused to listen carefully. The silencer on the Browning had effectively muffled the sound of both shots, but he took no chances, waiting for possible intervention from outside. If there had been any noise from neighbors or other signs of curiosity, he would have left immediately. As it

was, the silence continued and he proceeded, swiftly and efficiently, with the remaining things he had been instructed to do.

First, he removed the silencer from the pistol and pocketed it. He put the pistol down temporarily near Salaverry's body. Then, from another pocket of his coat, he produced a small can of spray paint. Crossing to a wall of the apartment, he sprayed across it in large black letters the word CORNUDO.

Returning to Salaverry, he allowed some of the black paint to drip onto the dead man's right hand, then wrapped the limp fingers around the can and pressed them, so Salaverry's fingerprints were on the can. The hit man stood the can on a nearby table, then picked up the gun and placed it in the dead man's hand, again squeezing the fingers so that Salaverry's prints were on the gun. He arranged the gun and the hand so it would appear Salaverry had shot himself, then fallen to the floor.

The hit man did nothing to the woman's body, leaving it where it had fallen.

Next, the intruder took a folded sheet of stationery from his pocket on which were typed words. They read:

So you would not believe me when I told you she is a nymphomaniac whore, unworthy ofyou. You think she loves you when all she feels for you is con tempt. You trusted her, ga ve her a key to your apartment. What she did with it was take other men therefor vile sexual acm Here are photographs to prove it. She brought the man and allowed his photographer friend to take pictures. Her nymphomania extends to collecting such pictures for herseo' Surely, her use of your home so monstrously is the ultimate insult to a machismo man such as you.

-Your Former (and True) Friend

Moving from the living room, the hit man entered what obviously had been Salaverry's bedroom. He crumpled the typed sheet into a ball and threw it into a wastebasket. When the apartment was searched by police, as it would be, the paper was certain to be found. The probability was strong that it

would be regarded as a sernianonymous letter, the authorship known only to Salaverry when he was alive.

A final touch was an envelope, also produced by the hit man, containing some fragments of black-and-white glossy photos, each fragment burned at the edges. Entering a bathroom that adjoined the bedroom, he emptied the envelope's contents into the toilet bowl, leaving the pieces floating.

The pieces were too small to be identified. However, a reasonable assumption would be that Salaverry, after receiving the accusatory letter, had burned the accompanying photos and flushed the ashes down the toilet,

though a few unburned portions still remained. Then, having learned of his apparent betrayal by his beloved Helga, in a jealous rage he shot and killed her.

Salaverry would then have sprayed the single word on the wall, a pathetic message describing what he felt himself to be. (If the investigating police officers did not speak Spanish, someone would quickly enlighten them that the English version of the word was "cuckold.")

There was even a touch of artistry in that crudely printed parting cry. While not, perhaps, the kind of thing an AngloSaxon or native American might do, it bespoke the volatile frenzy of a Latin lover.

A final assumption: In despair, unwilling to face the consequences of his act, Salaverry killed himself, the powder bum on his forehead being typical of a self-inflicted head wound.

As the experienced planners of the scene well knew, in New York City where unsolved homicides were commonplace and the police detective force severely overburdened, little time and effort would be spent investigating a crime where the circumstances and solution were so plainly in view.

The hit man surveyed the apartment living room, making a final check, then quietly left. When he walked out of the building unhindered, he had been inside less than fifteen minutes. A few blocks away, he peeled off his gloves and threw them into a sidewalk trash can.

9

Norman Jaeger asked, "Do you think Teddy Cooper will come up with something?"
"It wouldn't surprise me," Partridge said. "He has before."
It was after 10:30 and they were walking south on Broadway, near Central Park. The dinner meeting at Shun Lee West had broken up a quarter of an hour earlier, shortly after Cooper's declared opinion that the kidnap gang's headquarters was within a twentyfive-mile radius of Larchmont. He had followed the first opinion with a second.
The kidnappers and their victims, he believed, were at that operating center now, the gang members lying low until the initial searching eased up and police roadblocks were decreased or abandoned-both of which would inevitably happen soon. Then the gang and prisoners would move to some more distant location, perhaps in the United States, possibly elsewhere.
Cooper's reasoning had been considered seriously by the others. As Rita Abrams put it, "It makes as much sense as anything so far."
But Karl Owens pointed out, "That's an enormous area you're talking about, densely populated, and there's no way of searching it effectively, even with an army." He added, needling Cooper, "That is, unless you have another brilliant idea breezing up behind."
"Not right now," Cooper had answered. "I need a good night's kip. Then maybe I'll come up with-as you so kindly put it-something 'brilliant' in the morning."
They ended the discussion there, and though the next day was Saturday, Partridge had summoned another task force meeting for 10 A.m. For tonight, most of the group went their separate ways by taxi, though Partridge and Jaeger, enjoying the night air, decided to walk to their hotels.
The Evening News 223
"Where did you latch on to this guy Cooper?" Jaeger asked. Partridge told him about discovering Teddy at the BBC, being impressed with his work and, soon after, finding him a better job with CBA.
"One of the first things he did for us ir London," Partridge continued, "was in 1984, at the time the Red Sea was being mined. A lot of ships were getting blown up and sunk all over the place, but no one knew who the hell was laying the mines. Remember?"
"Sure I remember," Jaeger said. "Iran and Libya were prime suspects, but

nothing more. Obviously a ship was doing the filthy work, but no one knew what ship, or whose it was."
Partridge nodded. "Well, Teddy started researching and spent days and days at Lloyds of London, patiently going through their records of ship movements. He began by befieving that whatever ship had done the minelaying had passed through the Suez Canal. So he made lists of all the ships that had gone through Suez since just before the mine Einkings started-and that was a helluva lot of ships.
"Then he went through more records and traced the subsequent movernents of each ship he'd listed as it went from port to port, comparing those movements with the dates of mine sinkings in particular areas. Finally-and I mean after a long, long search-he came up with the name of one ship, the Ghat. It had been everywhere where other ships had struck mines, and in each case just a day or two before. Talk about a 'smoking gun. Teddy found it."
Partridge went on, "As we know now, the ship was Libyan and once the name was in the open, it didn't take long to put proof together that Qaddafi was behinL_' it all."
"I knew we were ahead of others on the story," Jaeger said. "But I didn*t know the rest of the yarn behind it."
"Isn't that usually the way?" Partridge grinned. "We correspondents get credit for work that guys like you and Teddy do."
"I'm not complaining," Jaeger said. "And I'll tell you one thing, Harry-I wouldn't change places with you, especially at my age." He ruminated, then went on. "Cooper's just a kid.

They're all kids. This has become a kids' business. They have the energy and the smarts. Do you have days like me when you get to feeling old?"
Partridge grimaced. "Just lately, all too often."
They had reached Columbus Circle. To their left was the formidable darkness of Central Park where few New Yorkers ventured at night. Immediately ahead lay West Fifty-ninth Street, beyond it the brighter lights of midManhattan. Partridge and Jaeger carefully crossed the confluence of thoroughfares as traffic swirled about them.
"You and I have seen a lot of changes in this business," Jaeger said. "I guess, with luck, we'll be around for more."
Partridge asked, "What do you think's ahead?"
Jaeger considered before answering. "I'll tell you first what I don't see happening, and that's network news disappearing or even changing much,

despite some dire predictions. Maybe CNN will move into top rank-it has the distribution; all that's needed is network quality. But the important thing is, there's an enormous appetite out there for news, more than ever before in history, and in every country."
"Television did it."
"Damn right! TV's the twentieth-century equivalent of Gutenberg and Caxton. What's more, for all of television's failings, its news has made people hungry to know more. It's why newspapers are stronger and will stay that way."
"I doubt they'll give us credit," Partridge said
"They may not give credit, but they give attention. Don Hewitt at CBS has pointed out that the New York Times has four times as many people assigned full-time to television as they have reporters covering the United Nations. And a lot of that writing is about us-TV news, its people, what we do.
"Turn it around, though," Jaeger continued. "When was there anything important enough about the Times to be featured on TV? All of that applies to the rest of the print press, and so you ask yourself, which is being acknowledged as the more important medium?"
Partridge chuckled. "Color me important."
"Color!" Jaeger seized the word. "That's something else TV

has changed. Newspapers are looking more like television screens-sornething USA Today began. You and 1, Harry, will live to see four colors on the New York Times front page. The public will demand it and the old gray Times will heed the writing on the tube."
"You're full of homespun tonight," Partridge said. "What else do you foresee?"
"I see the weekly newsmagazines disappearing. They're dinosaurs. When Time and Newsweek get to subscribers, much of what's inside is a week to ten days old, and nowadays who wants to read stale news? Incidentally, the way I hear it, advertisers are asking the same question."
Jaeger went on, "So despite their dishonest cover dates and classy writing, eventually the weekly newsies will go the way of Collier's, Look and the Saturday Evening Post. Incidentally, most kids working in news nowadays have never heard of those. "
They had come to the Parker-Meridien on West Fifty-seventh, where Jaeger was staying. Partridge had preferred what he thought of as the more cozy Inter-Continental on East Forty-eighth.

"We're a couple of old war-horses, Harry," Jaeger said. "See you in the morning." They shook hands and said good night.
A half hour later, in bed and surrounded by several newspapers he had bought on the way to his hotel, Partridge began reading. But before long the newsprint blurred and be pushed the papers aside. He would go through them in the morning along with fresh editions which would arrive with breakfast.
Still, sleep did not come easily. Too much had happened in the preceding thirty-six hours. His mind was full-a kaleidoscope of events, ideas, responsibilities, all of them intertwined with thoughts of Jessica, the past, the present memories revived . . .
Where was Jessica now? Was Teddy right about a twentyfive-mile radius? Was there a chance that somehow he, Harry the Seasoned Warrior, like some medieval knight in shining

armor, could successfully lead a crusade to find and free his former love?
Cut the whimsyl Save thoughts about Jessica and the others for tomorrow.
He tried to clear his mind to rest, or at least to think of something else. Inevitably, that something else became Gemnia . . . the other great love of his life.
Yesterday, during the journey from Toronto, he had relived that memorable papal flight: The Alitalia DC-10 . . . the press section and an encounter with the Pope . . . Partridge's decision not to use the pontiffs "slaves" remark, rewarded by a rose from Gemma . . . the beginning of their mutual passion and commitment . . .
No longer avoiding thoughts of Gemma, as he had for so long, he resumed in memory where he had ended the day before.
That papal tour, through Central America and the Caribbean, was long and arduous~ It was one of the most ambitious undertaken by the Pope. The itinerary included eight countries and longflights, with some at night.
From the moment of their initial encounter, Partridge decided he wanted to know Gemma better, but his CBA reporting duties allowed him little time to see her during stops. Yet they became increasingly aware of each other and sometimes in the air, when Gemma wasn't busy, she came to sit beside him. Soon they began holding hands and once, before leaving, she leaned over and they kissed.
When it happened, his already strong desire for her increased
They talked as often as they could and he began to learn about her background

Gemma was born in Tuscany, the youngest of three sisters, in a small mountain resort town, Vallombrosa, not far from Florence. "It is not a fashionable place where the rich go, Harry caro, but very beautiful " Vallombrosa, she told him, was a haven of the Italian middle class, who stayed there during summers. A mile away was Il

Paradisino where John Milton once lived and, legend claimed, found the inspiration for Paradise Lost.
Gemma'sfather was a talented artist who made a good living restoring paintings and frescoes; he often worked in Florence. Her mother was a music teacher. Art and music were an integral part of the family's life and continued to be part of Gemma`s~
She had joined A litalia three years earlier. "I wanted to see the world. There was no other way I could afford it. "
Partridge asked, "This way, have you seen very much?"
"Some pieces. Not as many as I would like, and I am growing tired of being a carneriera del cielo."
He laughed. "You're much more than a waitress in the sky. But you must have met many people. " With a jealous twinge, he added, "A lot of men?"
Gemma shrugged "Most I would not want to meet again outside an airplane. "
"But there were others?"
She smiled, thatflashing sweet smile, so much a part of her. "There has been no one I have liked as much as you. "
It was said simply and Partridge, the professional skeptic, wondered if he was being nalve andfoolish in believing her. Then he thought, Why shouldn't I believe when Ifeel exactly the same way, when no other woman since Jessica has had the same effect on me as Gemma?
Both of them, he sensed, felt the journey was going too quickly. So little time remained At the end of it they would probably walk away, never seeing each other again.
Perhaps because of that sense of time running out, one memorable night when the cabin lights were turned low and most others were asleep, Gemma curled up beside him and, under a blanket, they made love. In the confines of a tourist three-seat section, they should have been uncomfortable but somehow weren't, and he remembered it always as among the more beautiful experiences of his life.
It was immediately after their lovemaking-on impulse, and reminded that he had lost Jessica through indecision-he whispered, "Gemma, will you

marry me?"
She had whispered back, "Oh, arnor mio, of course I will.

The next stop would be Panama. In a low voice, Partridge asked questions and made plans while Gemma, laughing softly, mischievously in the semidarkness, agreed to everything.
In daylight they landed at Panama's Tocumen Airport. The Alitalia DC-10 taxied in. The Pope disembarked and, like the trained actor he had once been, smoothly kissed the ground as a multitude of cameras zoomed in. After that, the standard formalities began.
Before the landing, Partridge had talked with his field producer and camera crew, asking them to cover the Pope's activities during the nextfew hours without him. He wouldjoin them later in narrating and helping edit the regular National Evening News report. Panama, which did not have daylight saving time, was only an hour behind New York so there would be sufficient time.
"ile clearly curious, the other CBA staffers asked no questions, though Partridge knew it was unlikely that his and Gemma's growing attachment had passed unnoticed.
He also approached the New York Times reporter on the flight, who happened to be Graham Broderick, asking if he would share his notes for that day with Partridge. Broderick, while raising his eyebrows quizzically, agreed. Workingjournalists often made such trades, never knowing when they might need help themselves.
K%en the others disembarked, Partridge held back. He had no idea what explanation Gemma gave to her chief the senior purser, but she joined him and they left the DC-10 together. Gemma, still in Alitalia uniform, began explaining she had no means of changing into other clothes. But he stopped her and said, "I love you as you are. "
She turned to face him, her expression serious. "Do you truly, Harry?"
He nodded slowly. "Truly."
They looked into each other's eyes and each seemed satisfied with what they saw.
Inside the airport terminal, Partridge left Gemma briefly. Going to a tourist booth, he asked several questions of a pimply youth behind a counter. The young man, smirking, told him he

must go with the sefiora to Las B6vedas, part of the Old City wall in the Plaza de Francia. There he would find the Juzgado Municipal.

Partridge and Gemma took a taxi to the Old City. They got out near a towering obelisk topped by a chanticleer, the crowing rooster commemorating French canal builders, among them the famed Ferdinand de Lesseps.
Some twenty minutes later, inside the old wall and standing before a juez in an ornate office that had once been a prison cell, Harry Partridge and Gemma Baccelli became husband and wife. During afive-minute ceremony thejudge, casually dressed in a cotton guayabera, signed an Acta Matrimonial which cost twentyfive dollars and Partridge paid twenty dollars each to two stenographers who served as witnesses.
The bride and groom were informed that the additionalformality of registering their marriage was optional and, in fact, unnecessary until they came back for a divorce.
"We will register, " Partridge said, "and we will not be back
At the end, without great conviction, the juez wished them, 'IlQue vivan los novios!" They had the feeling he had said it many times before.
Both then and later, Partridge wondered how Gemma, who unhesitatingly agreed to a civil ceremony, reconciled it with her religion. She had been born Catholic and her early education, she had told him, was at a Sacrg Coeur school. But each time he asked, she merely shrugged and said, "God will understand. " It was, he supposed, typical of a casualness many Italians had about religion. He had once heard someone say that Italians always assumed God to be Italian too.
Inevitably, aboard the papal airplane the news of the marriage spread---as the London Times correspondent put it, quoting Revelation, faster than "the four winds of the earth. " In the press section, after takeofffrom Panama, a celebratory party was held with great quantities of champagne, liquor and caviar. As much as their duties allowed, the pursers and cabin crew joined in and told Gemma there would be no work for her through the remainder of that day. Even the Alitalia captain left the flight deck briefly to come back with congratulations.

Amid the revelry and good wishes, Partridge sensed strong doubts by some that the marriage would last, but also among the men, a feeling of envy. Notably, but not surprisingly, there was no representation at the partyfrom the ecclesiastics, andfor the remainder of the trip Partridge was aware of their coolness and disapproval Whether or not the Pope was ever informed of what had happened was something none of the journalists learned, despite inquiries. However, on thatjourney the Pope did not visit the press section again.

In the limited time they were able to spend together, Partridge and Gemma began planningfor theirfuture.

In a New York hotel room . . . slowly, sadly . . . the image of Gemma faded. The present replaced the past. At last, exhausted, Harry Partridge slept.

10

In the kidnappers' Hackensack base Miguel received a message by telephone at 7:30 Saturday morning. He took the call in a small room on the first floor of the main building, which he had kept for himself as an office and for sleeping.

Of the six portable cellular phones the group had used, one was earmarked to receive special calls, the number known only to those with authority to make them. Miguel always kept that phone close to him.

The caller, following orders, was using a public pay phone so the call could not be traced, in or out.

I Miguel, alert and waiting, had been expecting the call for the past hour. He picked up the handset on the first ring and answered, "ISP"

The caller then challenged him with a prearranged code word, "jTiempo?" to which Miguel responded, "Reldmpago. "

The Evening News 231

There was an alternative reply. If Miguel's answer to the query "weather?" had been "thunder" instead of "lightning," it would have meant that, for whatever reason, his group required a twentyfour hours' delay.

As it was, "rel6mpago" conveyed: "We are ready to go. Name place and time."

The crucial message followed: "Sombrero profundo sur twenty hundred." Sombrero was Teterboro Airport, slightly more than a mile away, profundo sur the airport's southern end gate. The words "twenty hundred" indicated the time-2000 hours or 8 P.m.when the kidnap victims and those to accompany them would board a Colombia-registered Learjet 55LR which would he there, waiting. The 55, as Miguel already knew, was a larger model with a more spacious interior than the familiar 20 and 30 series Lears. The LR signified Long Range.

Miguel acknowledged curtly, "Lo comprendo, " and the conversation ended.

The caller had been another diplomat, this time attached to the Colombian Consulate General in New York; he had been a conduit for messages since Miguel's arTival in the United States a month earlier. Both the Peruvian and Colombian diplomatic corps were riddled with defectors, either Sendero Luminoso sympathizers or on the Medellin cartel payroll, sometimes both, and performing their double-crosses for the large amounts of money which Latin American drug lords paid.

After receiving the call, Miguel walked through the house and buildings and informed the others, though preparations for departure were already in hand and each group member knew what was required. Those to travel on the Learjet, accompanying the kidnap victims in their caskets, were Miguel, Baudelio, Socorro and Rafael. Julio would remain behind in the United States, resuming his previous identity and becoming, once more, a Medellin cartel sleeping agent. Carlos and Luis would quietly leave the country within the next few days, flying separately to Colombia.
Julio, Carlos and Luis, though, had a concluding duty after the Learjet had gone: to disperse the remaining vehicles and abandon them.

Miguel had given considerable thought about what to do with the Hackensack hideaway. He had considered, as a final act, burning the whole place down, vehicles with it. The collection of buildings was old and would go up like a furnace, especially with the help of gasoline.
But a fire would draw attention and, if investigated, the ashes might yield clues. While in some ways it wouldn't matter since everyone would be gone, it went against reason to make things easier for the American law agencies. So the idea of a fire was out.
If they simply vacated the building, leaving it as it was, their use of the place as a kidnap way station might not be discovered for weeks or months, perhaps never. But that required the disposition of the vehicles-driving them all in different directions for a good distance and then abandoning them. True, there were risks involved, speciflcally for those who would drive the three cars, the GMC truck and the hearse, but Miguel believed they weren't great. In any case it was what he had decided on.
He encountered Rafael first and told him, "We leave here this evening at 7:40."
The burly handyman-mechanic, who was in the outbuilding they used as a paint shop, grunted and nodded, seeming more interested in the GMC truck, which he had repainted the day before. The former white truck with the legend "Superbread" had been transformed to an almost totally black one with the name "Serene Funeral Homes" in discreet gold lettering on both sides.
Miguel bad ordered the change himself. Satisfied, he told Rafael, "jBien hechol A pity it will only be used once."
The big man swung around, clearly pleased, a slight smile on his scarred and brutish face. It was strange, Miguel thought, that Rafael who could be so savage in action, taking demoniac delight in inflicting suffering or

killing, at other moments behaved like a child in need of approval.
Miguel pointed to the truck's New Jersey license plates. "These are fresh ones?"
The Evening News 233
Again Rafael nodded. "From the last set. Ain't been used yet, an' I switched the others."
It meant that all five remaining vehicles now had license plates which could not have been seen during the Larchmont surveillance, so that driving and abandoning them would be that much safer.
Miguel went outside to where, within a cluster of trees, Julio and Luis were digging a deep hole. The ground was wet from yesterday's rain and the work heavy going. Julio was using his spade to sever a rugged tree root and, seeing Miguel, he stopped, wiped his swarthy, sweating face with a sleeve, and cursed.
"j-Pinche drboll This is shit work-for oxen, not men."
On the point of snapping back an obscenity, Miguel checked himself. The ugly knifing scar on Julio's face was turning crimson, a signal of the man's foul temper and that he was spoiling for a fight.
"Take a rest," Miguel said curtly. "There's time. We all leave at 7:40."
Brawling in these last few hours would be a stupid waste. Besides, Miguel needed the men to finish digging the hole in which they would bury all the cellular phones and some medical equipment Baudelio would leave behind.
Burying the phones, in particular, was not an ideal arrangement and Miguel would have preferred to dump them somewhere in deep water. But while there was plenty of water in the New Jersey-New York area, the chances of doing something like that without being observed were not good-at least in the short time available.
Later that day, when the hole was refilled, Julio and Luis should be able to rake leaves over the surface, leaving no trace of what was beneath.
Carlos, to whom Miguel went next, was in another of the outbuildings, burning papers in an iron stove. Carlos, young and well educated, had organized the month-long surveillance records and photos of visitors to the Sloane house, all of which was now feeding the fire.
When Miguel told him about the evening departure, Carlos
234 ARTHUR HAILEY
seemed relieved. His thin lips twitched and he said, "iQue buenol" Then his eyes resumed their normal hardness.
Miguel had been aware of the strain of the past forty-eight hours on

everyone, Carlos especially, perhaps because of his youth. But commendably the younger man had kept himself under control and Miguel foresaw a command terrorism role for Carlos before too long.
A small pile of what appeared to be Rafael's clothing was beside the stove. Miguel, Rafael and Baudelio would all wear dark suits during the departure process by air when, to anticipate a possible U.S. Government inspection, they would pose as mourners, using a carefully designed cover story. Everything else would be left behind.
Miguel pointed to the clothes, "Don't bum those-too much smoke. Go through the pockets, take everything out and remove any labels. Then bury the rest." He gestured in the direction of the digging outside. "Tell the others."
"Okay." When he had attended to the fire again, Carlos said, "We should have flowers."
"Flowers?"
"Some on the casket that goes in the hearse, maybe on the others. It's what a family would do."
Miguel hesitated. He knew Carlos was right and it was something he hadn't thought of himself in planning their exit from the U.S., first via Teterboro, then aboard the Leaijet to Opa Locka. Airport, Florida, from where they would fly directly to Peru,
Originally, when Miguel had expected only two unconscious captive%, he had planned to make two journeys with the hearse between the Hackensack house and Teterboro Airport, conveying one casket at a time, which was all the hearse would hold. But three journeys with three caskets were too many and would entail too great a risk; therefore Miguel had devised a new plan.
One casket-Baudelio would decide which-would be transported to Teterboro in the hearse. The repainted GMC truck of "Serene Funeral Homes" would carry the other two.
The Lear 55LR, Miguel knew, was configured with a cargo

door that allowed plenty of room for loading two caskets. Getting a third in might be difficult, but he was sure it could be done.
Still weighing Carlos's suggestion, he thought: The addition of flowers would make their cover story more convincing. At Teterboro they would have to pass through airport security. Probably, too, there would be supplemental police because of the kidnap alert, and questions were almost certain to be asked about the caskets and their contents. Some tense moments were likely and Teterboro, as Miguel saw it, was the key to their

safe departure. At Opa Locka, from where they would actually leave the U.S., he anticipated no problems.
Miguel decided to take a small risk now to help offset the large one later.
He nodded. "Yes, flowers."
"I'll take one of the cars," Carlos said. "I know where to go in Hackensack. I'll be careful."
"Use the Plymouth." It had been repainted dark blue and had license plates not previously used, as Rafael had pointed out.
After leaving Carlos, Miguel sought out Baudelio. He found him, with Socorro, in the large room on the second floor of the main house which by this time resembled a hospital ward. Baudelio, appearing like a patient himself, had dressings over the right side of his face, covering the stitches he had put in following Jessica's wild slashing during her brief consciousness.
Normally Baudelio appeared gaunt, pallid and older than he was, but today the effect was intensified. His face was sickly white and his movements clearly required an effort. But he was continuing with preparations for departure and after Carlos informed him of the 7:40 P.m. time, Baudelio acknowledged, "We will be ready."
Under prompting from Miguel, the ex-doctor confirmed that his day and a half of experimenting with the drug propofol had shown him how much should be administered to each of the three captives to achieve deep unconsciousness for specific periods. This knowledge was necessary for the times when each "patient" would be left unattended and unmonitored in one of the sealed caskets.

Also, the enforced starvation period for all three-which would be fifty-six hours by departure time-was satisfactory. There should be no vomiting or aspiration into the lungs, though as extra precautions against choking and suffocation, Baudelio added, an airway tube would be placed in each throat and the bodies turned on their sides before the caskets were closed.
Meanwhile, the intravenous injection of fluids had prevented dehydration. From transparent bags of glucose, on stands beside each of the unconscious trio, drip tubes led to catheters in their arms.
Miguel paused, looking down at the three bodies. They appeared peaceful, their faces untroubled. The woman had a certain beauty, he thought; later, if opportunity arose, he might make use of her sexually. The man looked dignified, like an old soldier at rest which, according to news reports, he was. The boy seemed frail, his face thin; perhaps the enforced

starvation had left him weak, which didn't matter as long as he was alive on arrival in Peru, as had been promised to Sendero Luminoso. All three were pale with only a little color in their cheeks,,but were breathing evenly. Satisfied, Miguel turned away.
The funeral caskets into which Angus, Jessica and Nicky would be moved shortly before the general exodus to Teterboro Airport were horizontal on trestles. Miguel was aware, because he had watched Rafael do it under guidance from Baudelio, that a series of tiny vent holes had been drilled into each. Almost invisible, they would admit fresh air.
"What is that?" Miguel pointed to a jar of crystals next to the caskets.
"Soda lime granules," Baudelio answered. "They're spread around inside to counter carbon dioxide from exhaled breath. There'll also be an oxygen cylinder, controllable from outside."
Mindful that during the difficult hours ahead Baudelio's medical skills would be vital to them all, Miguel queried, "What else?"
The ex-doctor motioned to Socorro. "Tell him. You'll be doing it with me."
Socorro had been watching and listening, her face inscrutable as always.
Miguel still had questions in his mind about the

woman's total commitment, but today was distracted by her provocative body, its sensuous movements, her blatant sexuality. As if she read his thoughts, there was a hint of taunting in her voice.
"If any of them needs to piss, even unconscious, they might move and make noise. So before closing those"-Socorro pointed to the caskets-"we'll insert catheters. That's tubes in the men's cocks and the bitch's cunt. ~Entiendes?"
Miguel said testily, "I know about catheterization." On the point of telling her his father was a doctor, he checked himself. A moment's weakness, the influence of a woman, had almost led him to reveal a detail of his background, something he never did.
Instead he asked Socorro, "When we need it, can you cry?"
As part of the planned tableau, she also would be a grieving mourner.
'Isf. 11
Baudelio added, with the professional pride which occasionally surfaced, "I will place a grain of pepper beneath each of her lower eyelids. The same for mine. The tears are then copious and will not stop until the pepper is out." He regarded Miguel. "I will do the same for you if you wish."
"We'll see."

Baudelio completed his strategy catalog. "Finally, in all three caskets will be tiny monitors to record breathing and depth of sedation. I'll have a connection to read them from outside. The propofol infusion can be adjusted from outside too."

Reviewing their exchange, and despite earlier misgivings, Miguel felt satisfied that Baudelio knew what he was doing. Socorro too.

Now it was simply a question of waiting through the day. The hours ahead seemed interminable.

11

At CBA News headquarters on Saturday morning, the special task force meeting called for 10 A.m. had scarcely begun when it was abruptly interrupted. Harry Partridge, seated at the head of the conference table, had opened a discussion when a speakerphone broke in-an announcement from the main newsroom. Partridge paused as he and the six others at the table listened.

"Assignment desk. Richardson. This bulletin just in from UPI . . .

"White Plains, New York-A passenger van, believed to be the vehicle used in Thursday's kidnap of the Crawford Sloane family, exploded violently a few minutes ago. At least three persons are dead, others injured. Police were on their way to inspect the van when the explosion occurred in a parking building adjoining Center City shopping mall. It happened as many weekend shoppers were arriving in their cars. The building is extensively damaged. Firefighters, rescue crews and ambulances are on the scene which a witness describes as 'like a nightmare from Beirut.'"

Even as the bulletin was continuing, chairs in the conference room were being pushed back, the task force members scrambling to their feet. As the speakerphone fell silent, Partridge was first out, on the run, hurrying to the newsroom one floor below, with Rita Abrams close behind.

Saturday morning in any network news department was a relatively informal time. Most of the Monday-to-Friday staff stayed home. The few on weekend duty, while sometimes under pressure, were aware of the absence of the high command. For

this reason dress was casual, jeans predominating, and men showed up without ties.

The main CBA newsroom was eerily quiet, with barely a third of the desks occupied and that day's assignment manager, Orv Richardson, covering for the national desk as well. Young, fresh-faced and eager, Richardson had recently come to the network from a regional bureau. While not unhappy to be in charge, the important breaking story from White Plains made him slightly nervous. He wanted to be sure of doing the right thing.

It was with some relief, therefore, that he saw a Big Foot correspondent, Harry Partridge, and a senior producer, Abrams, burst into the newsroom and hurry his way.

While Partridge skimmed a printout of the United Press bulletin and read

a follow-up story feeding in on a computer monitor, Rita told Richardson, "We should go on air immediately. Who has authority?"
"I have a number." With a phone tucked into his shoulder and consulting a note, the assignment manager tapped out digits for a CBA News vice president available at home. When the man answered, Richardson explained the situation and asked for authorization to take air with a special bulletin. The vice president shot back, "You have it. Go!"
What followed was a near-replay of Thursday's intrusion into the network when the kidnap news broke shortly before noon. The differences were the nature of today's report and the cast involved. Partridge was in the flash facility studio, occupying the correspondent's hot seat, Rita was acting executive producer, and in the control room a different director appeared, having come hastily from another section of the building after hearing a "special bulletin" call.
CBA was on air within four minutes after receiving the UPI bulletin. The other networks---observed from control room monitors-broke into their own programming at almost the same time.
Harry Partridge was, as always, collected and articulate, the ultimate professional. There was no time to write a script or

use a Teleprompter. Partridge simply memorized the contents of the wire reports and ad-libbed.
The special broadcast was over in two minutes. There were the bare facts only, few details, and no on-scene picturesmerely hastily gathered stills, projected over Partridge's shoulder, of the Sloane family, their Larchmont home and the Grand Union store where the Thursday kidnap had taken place. A fuller report with pictures from White Plains, Partridge promised viewers, would be aired later on CBA's Saturday National Evening News.
As soon as the red camera lights went out in the flash studio, Partridge phoned Rita in the control room. "I'm going to White Plains," he told her. "Will you set it up?"
"I have already. Iris, Minh and I are going as well. Iris will produce a piece for tonight. You can do a standup there and cut a sound track later. There's a car and driver waiting."
The city of White Plains had a long history going back to 1661 when it was an encampment of the Siwanoy Indians who called it Quarropas-which means white plains, or white balsam-after the trees that grew there. In the eighteenth century it was an important iron-mining center and a transportation crossroads. In 1776, during the American Revolution, a

battle on nearby Chatterton Hill forced Washington's retreat, but in the same year a Provincial Congress in White Plains approved the Declaration of Independence and the creation of New York State. There were other milestones, good and bad, though none exceeded in infamy the explosion engineered by the Medellin cartel and Sendero Luminoso in the Center City Mall parking building.

There was, it became clear later, a certain inevitability to the cycle of events.

During the preceding night a patrolling security guard had recorded the license numbers and makers' names of vehicles left there overnight-a normal procedure and a precaution against cheating by drivers who might claim to have lost their parking stub and to have parked for one day only.

The presence of a Nissan passenger van with New York

plates had also been noted the night before which, again, was not unusual. Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, vehicles were left parked for a week or more. But during the second night a different and more alert security guard wondered if the Nissan van could be the one he had heard about as being sought in connection with the Sloane family kidnapping.

He wrote a query to that effect on his report and the maintenance supervisor, on reading it next morning, promptly called the White Plains Police who ordered a patrol car to investigate. The time, according to police records, was 9:50 A.M.

The maintenance supervisor, however, did not wait for the police arrival. Instead he went to the Nissan van, taking along a large bunch of car keys he had accumulated over the years. It was a source of pride with him that there were few locked vehicles which, aided by his key collection, he could not open.

All of this was at a time when Saturday shoppers, in their cars, were beginning to stream into the parking building.

Quite quickly the supervisor found a key that fitted the Nissan van and opened the driver's door. It was his final act in the few remaining seconds of his life.

With a roar which someone later described as "like fifty thunderstorms," the Nissan van disintegrated in an intense, engulfing ball of flame. So did a substantial part of the building and several cars nearby, fortunately unoccupied, though what was left of them burned fiercely. The explosion punched wide holes in the parking building above and below where the Nissan van had been and caused flaming cars to cascade through the holes to the

lower floors.
Nor was the effect confined to the parking building. The Center City Mall itself sustained structural damage and, in the mall and beyond, windows and glass doors were shattered. Other debris, initially blown upward, descended on adjoining streets, traflic and people.
The shock effect was total. When the initial roar subsided, apart from the quieter sound of fires and falling objects, there was a measurable silence. Then the screams began, followed by incoherent shouts and curses, hysterical pleas for help, unintel-

ligible orders and, soon after, sirens approaching from all directions.
In the end it seemed extraordinary that the human toll, when added up, was no greater than it was. In addition to the maintenance supervisor's instant death, two others died soon after from their injuries and four more victims were critically hurt and hovering between life and death. Twenty-two more, including a halfdozen children, were injured and hospitalized.
Overall, the reference to Beirut in the UPI bulletin did not seem inappropriate.
Afterward there would be debate, focusing on the question: Would the explosion have happened if the maintenance supervisor had awaited the arrival of police? The police said no, claiming they would have called the FBI whose forensic experts would have examined the van, discovered the explosive material, and then disarmed it. But others were skeptical, believing the police would have opened the van anyway, either themselves or using the maintenance man's keys. Eventually, though, the discussion was seen as pointless and petered out.
One thing became self-evident. The destroyed Nissan van had indeed been used by the kidnappers of the Sloane family members two days earlier. The proximity to Larchmont, the van's recorded appearance in the Center City parking building Thursday and the fact that it was booby-trapped all pointed to that conclusion. So did the license number which, when checked against motor vehicle records, was shown as belonging to a 1983 Oldsmobile sedan. However, the owner name, address and insurance data in official files were quickly discovered to be phony; also the registration and insurance fees had been paid in cash, the payer leaving no true identity behind.
What it all meant was that the Oldsmobile had disappeared, probably junked, but its registration was kept alive for illicit use. Thus the license plates on the Nissan were illegal, though not on any police "hot list."

A question was raised because a witness at Larchmont had described the Nissan van as having New Jersey plates, whereas those seen in the White Plains parking building were New York's. But, as investigators later pointed out, it was normal for

criminals to switch license plat~2s immediately after a crime was committed.
One other conclusion was expressed by the White Plains police chief at the explosion scene. He told reporters grimly, "This was clearly the work of hardened terrorists."
When asked if, extending that reasoning, it was foreign terrorists who had abducted the Sloane family trio, the chief answered, "That didn't happen on my turf, but I would think so."
"Let's make that foreign terrorist theory our main focus for this evening's news," Harry Partridge told Rita and Iris Everly when he heard about the police chief's comment.
The CBA contingent had arrived a few minutes ago in two vehicles-the camera crew aboard a Jeep Wagoneer, Partridge, Rita, Iris and Teddy Cooper in a Chevrolet sedan driven by a network courier-both having covered the twentyfive miles from midManhattan in a sizzling thirty minutes. As well as an assemblage of news people at the scene, a growing crowd of spectators was being herded behind police barriers. Minh Van Canh and the sound man, Ken O'Hara, were already getting videotape and natural sound of the wrecked building, the injured who continued to be removed, and of piles of twisted, tortured vehicles, some still burning. They had also joined an impromptu press conference in time to tape the police chief's statement.
After making a general assessment of the situation, Partridge summoned Minh and O'Hara and began conducting oncamera interviews with some of those involved in rescue efforts as well as several spectators who had witnessed the explosion. It was work that could have been performed by the camera crew alone or with a producer. But it gave Partridge a sense of involvement, being in action, of touching the story directly for the first time.
Touching an ongoing news story was psychologically essential to a correspondent, no matter how well informed he or she might be about that story's background. Partridge had been working on the Sloane family kidnap for some forty-two hours, but until now without direct contact with any of its elements.

At moments he had felt caged, with only a desk, a telephone and a computer

monitor connecting him with the reality outside. Going to White Plains, tragic as the circumstances were, fulfilled a need. He knew the same applied to Rita.
The thought of her caused him to seek Rita out and ask, "Has anyone talked with Crawf?"
"I just phoned him at home," she said. "He was about to come here, but I pleaded with him not to. For one thing, he'd be mobbed. For another, seeing what those bastards are capable of would upset him terribly."
"Still, he'll see the pictures."
"He wants to. He'll meet us at the network, so will Les, and I have what's been shot already." Rita was holding several tape cassettes. She added, "I think you and I should go. Iris and Minh can stay a while longer."
Partridge nodded. "Okay, but give me a minute."
They were on the third floor of the parking garage. Leaving Rita, he walked to an unoccupied, undamaged comer. It provided a view of White Plains and the city going about its regular business. In the distance was the highway to New England and, beyond, the green hills of Westchester-all scenes of normalcy in contrast to the devastation close at hand.
He had walked away from that chaos, wanting a quiet moment to think, to ask and answer a tormenting question: Having accepted a commitment to somehow find and perhaps free Jessica, her son and Crawford's father, was there any hope . . . the slightest hope . . . of his succeeding? At this moment Partridge feared the answer would be no.
What had happened here today, observing what his adversaries were capable of, had been a chastening encounter. It raised still more questions:
Could such merciless savagery be matched? Now that a terrorist connection was virtually confirmed, were any civilized resources capable of tracking and outwitting so evil an enemy? And even if the answer happened to be yes, and despite initial optimism at CBA News headquarters, wasn't it an empty conceit to believe that an unarmed news reporting cadre could succeed where police, governments, intelligence and military so often failed?

As to himself, Partridge thought, this was no open battle, the kind of warfare which, perversely or not, excited him and set his juices flowing. This was furtive and filthy, the enemy unknown, the victims innocent, the contest sickening . . .

But personal feelings aside, should he advise for pragmatic reasons the abandonment of active engagement by CBA, advocate their return to a standard role of news observing or, failing that, at least pass on responsibility to someone else?
He was conscious of movement behind him. Turning, he saw that it was Rita. She asked, "Can I help?"
He told her, "We've never had one quite like this before, with so much depending not just on what we report, but what we do."
"I know," she said. "Were you thinking of turning it in, handing the burden back?"
Rita had surprised him before with her perceptiveness. He nodded. "Yes, I was."
"Don't do it, Harry," she urged. "Don't give up! Because if you do, there isn't anyone else that's half as good as you."
Partridge, Rita and Teddy Cooper rode back to Manhattan together-at a pace considerably less frantic than their drive out. Partridge was in the front seat with the network driver, Teddy and Rita in the rear.
Cooper, whose decision to go to White Plains had been made at the last moment, had stayed in the background there, observing; then and now he appeared preoccupied, as if concentrating on a problem. Partridge and Rita, too, at first seemed disinclined to talk. For both, this morning's experience had been portentous. While they had witnessed, many times, the effects of terrorism overseas, to observe its invasion of American suburbia was traumatic. It was as if barbarian madness had

at last arrived, poisoning an environment which, if not calm, had until now possessed a base of reason. The erosion of that base begun today, they suspected, would be extensive and perhaps irreversible.
After a while Partridge turned in his seat, facing the other two, and said, "The British were convinced that imported terrorism couldn't happen in their country, but it did. A good many believed the same thing here."
"They were wrong from the beginning," Rita said. "It was always inevitable, never if but when?"
Both assumed with some certainty-acknowledged by the White Plains police chief-that the Sloane kidnapping had been a foreign terrorist act.
"So who the hell are they?" Partridge pounded a fist into his palm. "That's what we must concentrate on. Who?"
It was clear to Rita that Harry had put behind him the notion of abdicating the leadership of CBA's task force. She answered, "It's natural to think

first of the Mideast-Iran, Lebanon, Libya . . . the religious lineup: Hezbollah, Amal, Shiites, Islamic Jihad, FARL, PLO, you name it."
Partridge acknowledged, "I've been thinking that way too. Then I ask myself, "y would they? Why would they bother extending their reach so far, taking the risks of operating here, with so many easier targets close to home?"
"To make an impression, perhaps. To convince the 'great Satan' there's no safety anywhere."
Partridge nodded slowly. "You might be right." He looked at Cooper. "Teddy, should we consider the IRA as possibles?"
The researcher snapped out of his reverie. "I don't think so. The IRA are scum who'll do anything, though not in America because there are still idiot Irish-Americans who feed them money. If they went active here, they'd cut that payola off."
"Any other thoughts?"
"I agree with what you say, Harry, about the Mideast mob. Maybe you should be looking south."
"Latin America," Rita said. "It makes sense. Nicaragua's the most likely, Honduras or Mexico possibilities, even Colombia."

They continued to theorize but had reached no conclusion when Partridge said to Teddy, "I know something's at work in that convoluted mind of yours. Are you ready to share it with us?"
"I guess so." Cooper considered, then began, "I reckon they've left this country."
"The kidnappers?"
The researcher nodded. "And taken Mr. S's family. What happened back there this morning"-he inclined his head toward White Plains-"was like a signature. To let us know the kind of people they are, how rough they play. It's a reminder for later on, for anyone who has to deal with them."
"Let's be sure I read you," Partridge said. "You believe they estimated how long it would take for the van to be discovered and blow up, and planned to have it happen after they had gone?"
"That's the size of it."
Partridge objected, "You're simply guessing. You could be wrong."
Cooper shook his head. "Better than guessing-say an intelligent assessment. Which is probably dead right."
Rita asked, "Supposing you are right, where does that leave us?"

"It leaves us," Cooper said, "having to decide if we want to make a big expensive effort to find their hideaway, even though it's empty when we get there."
"Why would we care about that if, as you assume, the birds have flown?"
"Because of what Harry said yesterday: Everybody leaves traces. No matter how careful they've been, these blokes will have too."
Their network car was nearing Manhattan. They were on the Major Deegan Expressway, the Third Avenue Bridge ahead, and the driver slowed in increased traffic. Partridge looked out, confirmed his bearings, then returned his attention to the other two.
"Last night," he reminded Cooper, "you told us you'd try

for an idea to locate the gang's headquarters. Is that 'big expensive effort' part of it?"
"It would be. It would also be a long shot."
Rita said, "Let's hear about that."
Cooper consulted a notebook and began, "What I figured on first was the kind of a place this mob would need to do all those things we discussed last night-park at least five vehicles, most likely out of sight, set up a workshop big enough to spray those motors, then have enough living, sleeping and eating quarters for four people and probably a couple more for good measure. They'd want space for storage, then somewhere safe to lock up the three Sloanes after they'd snatched 'em, and-for that size of operation-an office of some kind. So it wouldn't be anything small, especially not some ordinary house with nosey parker neighbors around."
"Okay," Partridge agreed, "I'll buy that for starters."
"So what kind of place would it be?" Cooper continued. "Well, the way I see it, it would most likely be one of three things---either a small disused factory, or an empty warehouse, or a big house with outbuildings. But whichever, it would need to be somewhere with not much going on around-isolated, lonely-and as we've already agreed, it shouldn't be more than twentyfive miles from Larchmont."
"You've already agreed," Rita pointed out. "The rest of us have gone along because we couldn't think of anything better."
"The trouble is," Partridge objected, "even in that twentyfive-mile radius there could be twenty thousand places answering that description."
Cooper shook his head. "Not that many. After our dinner last night, I talked with some of the others and what we reckoned, when you include the lonely part, was maybe one to three thousand."

"Even then, how in hell would we find the one we want?"
"I already said it would be a long shot, but there might just be a way."
As Partridge and Rita listened, Cooper described his plan.
"Start out by mulling this over: When those snatchers got here, wherever they came from, they had to set up base close to

Larchmont, but not too close-just the way we said. So how would they most likely find one? First, pick a general area. After that, do what anyone else would, 'specially when they're short of time-look through the newspaper property ads, and the kind of place they'd need to lease or rent would be in the classifieds. Of course we can't be certain, but there's a good chance that's how they got the setup they used."
"Sure it's a possibility," Partridge said. "It's also a possibility they had local advance help, with the base set up before they got here."
Cooper sighed. "Too bloody true! But when all you have to work with is possibles, you go for those you can put your hands on. 11
"So I'm being a devil's advocate, Teddy. Keep going."
"Okay, moving on . . . What we should do now is study the estate agents' ads in every paper, regional and local, published over the last three months inside that twentyfive-mile radius, with Larchmont as the center. Going through those papers, we'd look for ads of certain types-for the kinds of buildings we just talked about--.especially any ad that ran for a while, then suddenly stopped."
Rita gasped. "Have you any idea how many papers, dailies and weeklies, and how many people-"
Partridge told her, "I'm thinking the same way, but let him finish."
Cooper shrugged. "Do I know the number of papers? No, not exactly, except it's a bleedin' lot. But what we'd do is hire people-bright young kids-to go around and look through them all. I'm told there's a book , . ."
Cooper paused to check his notes. "Editor and Publisher International Year Book, which lists every paper, big and small. We'd start with that. From there we'd go to libraries which have files of newspapers, some on microfilm. For the others we'd go direct to the papers and ask to look through their back numbers. It'll take a lot of bodies, and it has to be done fast, before the trail gets cold."
Partridge said, "And you figure three months of advertising would cover - . ."
"Look, we know these people were snooping on the Sloanes

for about a month and, when it started, you can bet they had their pad set up. So three months is a sane spread."
"What happens when we find some advertising that fits the kind of place we're searching for?"
"There should be a big number of 'possibles,' " Cooper said. "We'd sort them into priorities, then have some of the same people we hired to check the newspapers do the follow-up too. First, by contacting the advertisers and asking the odd question. After that, according to the answers, we'd decide which places we should take a look at." Cooper shrugged. "Most of the look-sees would be goose eggs, but some might not. I'd expect to do some of the follow-up myself."
There was a silence as Partridge and Rita weighed what they had heard. Partridge announced his judgment first. "I salute you for an original idea, Teddy, but you said it was a long shot and it sure as hell is. A long, long shot. Right at this moment, I just can't see it working."
"Frankly," Rita said, "I think what you'd be trying to do is impossible. First, because of the number of papers involvedthere's a multitude! Second, the amount of help you'd need would cost a fortune."
"Wouldn't it be worth it," Cooper asked her, "to get Mr. S's family back?"
"Of course it would. But what you're suggesting wouldn't get them back. At best it might produce some information and even that's unlikely."
"Either way," Partridge ruled, "we're not making a decision here. Because of the money, Les Chippingharn will do that. When we meet with him later today, Teddy, you can spell out your idea again."
The two-and-a-half-minute spot produced by Iris Everly for the Saturday National Evening News was dramatic, shocking and-as the jargon went-video-rich. At White Plains, Minh Van Canh had, as always, employed his camera creatively. Iris, back at CBA News headquarters and working again with the

tape editor, Bob Watson, had fashioned a small masterpiece of news theater. The process began with Iris and Partridge joining Watson in a tiny editing room--one of a half dozen side by side and in constant use as air time neared. There the three viewed all available videotapes while Iris made rough logs of the contents of each cassette. A late tape certain to be used showed the arrival of FBI agents at the White Plains explosion scene. Asked if there had been any communication from the kidnappers, the senior FBI man gestured around him and said, grimfaced, "Just this."
Other tapes included scenes of devastation and Partridge's on-scene

interviews.
When they had finished viewing, Iris said, "I think we should begin with that pile of burning cars, show where those floors of the building were torn apart, then cut to the dead and injured being carried out." Partridge agreed and, with more discussion, they crafted a general plan.
Next, still in the editing booth, Partridge recorded an audio track, the correspondent's commentary over which pictures would be superimposed. Reading from a hastily typed script, he began, "Today, any remaining doubt that the kidnappers of the Crawford Sloane family are full-fledged terrorists was savagely dispelled . . . 11
That evening, Partridge's participation in the broadcast would differ from the two preceding days when, on Thursday, he had anchored the news, then the following evening been coanchor with Crawford Sloane. Tonight he would be in his normal role as a correspondent, since CBA's Saturday news had its own regular anchor person, Teresa Toy, a charming and popular Chinese-American. Teresa had initially discussed with Partridge and Iris the general line their report would take. From then on, aware that she was dealing with two of the network's top professionals, she wisely left them alone.
When Partridge finished the audio track, he left to do other things. After that it took Iris and Watson another three hours to complete the painstaking editing process, a facet of TV news

seldom understood by viewers who watched the polished end result.
Externally, Bob Watson seemed an unlikely candidate for the meticulous, patient work his editing job required. He was chunky and simian, with stubby fingers. Though he shaved each morning, by midafternoon he looked as if he had a threeday growth of beard. And he chain-smoked fat, pungent cigars which those obliged to work with him in his tiny cubicle repeatedly complained about. However, he told them, "If I cain't smoke, I don't think so good, then you get a piss-poor piece." Producers like Iris Everly suffered the smoke because of Watson's skill.
The video and sound editing of TV news reports was done in network headquarters, distant bureaus around the world, or could even be on the spot near some breaking news scene. The news served up daily by the networks consisted of all three.
The standard tools of a TV editor, which Watson faced with the petite, strong-willed Iris seated beside him, were two machines, each an elaborate video recorder with precise controls and meters. Linked to the

recorders and displayed above them was an array of TV monitors and speakers. Alongside and behind the editor, racks contained dozens of tape cassettes received from network cameramen, the network's tape library or affiliate stations.

The objective was to transfer to a master tape, inserted in the left recorder, snippets of scenes and sounds from a multitude of other tapes which were reviewed and rereviewed in the recorder on the right. Transferring a scene, seldom more than three seconds long, from a right-hand tape to the master required artistic and news judgment, infinite patience and a watchmaker's delicacy of touch. In the end, the contents of the master tape would be broadcast on air.

Watson began putting together the opening sequence already agreed on-the burning cars and shattered building. With the speed of a mail sorter, he plucked cassettes from racks, inserted one into the right-hand video machine and, using fast forward, found the required scene. Dissatisfied, he fiddled with rewind, went back and forth, stopped at another shot,

returned to the first. "No," he said, "somewhere there's a wide shot from the opposite angle that's better." He switched cassettes, viewed and discarded a second, then chose a third and found what he sought. "We should start with this, then go to the first for a closeup."

Iris agreed and Watson transferred images and sound to the master tape. Dissatisfied with his first and second tries, he wiped them out, then was happy with the third.

Sometime later, Iris said, "Let's see that stock shot of a Nissan." They viewed it for a second time; it showed a new and spotless Nissan passenger van moving in sunshine down a leafy country lane. "Idyllic," she commented. "What do you think of using it, then cutting to what's left of the kidnap van after the explosion?"

"It'll work." After several experiments, Watson combined the two with maximum shock value.

"Beautiful!" Iris murmured.

"You ain't so dumb yourself, kid." The tape editor picked up his cigar and emitted a cloud of smoke.

Ideas and exchanges continued flowing back and forth. The working alliance of a line producer and tape editor had been described as a duet. It often was.

Within the process, though, the possibilities for prejudice and distortion were infinite. Individuals could be shown doing things out of sequence. A

political candidate, for example, might be seen laughing at the sight of homeless people when in reality he had wept, the laughter having occurred earlier and been directed at something else. Using a technique known as "slipping audio," sound or speech could be transposed from one scene to another, with only an editor and producer knowing of the change. When such things were about to be done, a correspondent who happened to be in an editing room was asked to leave. The correspondent might guess what was intended but prefer not to know.

Officially such practices were frowned on, though they happened at all networks.

Iris had once asked Bob Watson if he ever let his political prejudices-known to be strongly socialist-influence his edit-

ing. He answered, "Sure, at election times if I think I can get away with it. It ain't hard to make someone look good, bad or downright ridiculous, providing the producer goes along."

"Don't ever try it with me," Iris had said, "or you'll be in trouble."

Watson had touched his forehead in mock salute.

Now, continuing with the White Plains report, Iris suggested, "Try that shot with the doughnut effect."

"It's better--Oh, goddamn that inconsiderate schmuck!" The head of a still photographer had popped up, ruining the video shot, a reminder of a perpetual war between press photographers and TV camera crews.

At one point, pictures on the master tape didn't fit the sound track.

Watson said, "We need Harry to change some words."

"He will. Let's finish our stuff first."

Watson chafed over limiting to three seconds the length of several shots. "In British TV news they let their shots run five; you can build a mood that way, use sound to help. Did you know the Brits have a longer attention span than we do?"

"I've heard people say so."

"Over here, if you use five-second shots more than occasionally, twenty million assholes'll get bored and change channels."

When they took a few minutes' break for coffee and Watson had a fresh cigar going, Iris asked him, "How did you get into this?"

He chuckled. "If I told you, you wouldn't believe."

"Try me.,,

"I lived in Miami, was the night janitor for a local TV station. One of the young news guys who was on at night saw I was interested and showed me how

the edit machines worked; that was back when they were using film, not tape. After that, I'd work like hell to get the cleaning work done fast, Come three or four in the morning, I'd be in an edit room splicing yesterday's outtakes they'd thrown away, putting stories together. After a while I guess I got good."
"So what happened."

"One time in Miami, while I was still a janitor, there was a race riot. It was at night. Everything was going wild, a lot of the black area, Liberty City, burning up. The TV station I worked for had called in all its people, but some had trouble getting through. They didn't have a film editor, needed one real bad."
Iris said, "So you volunteered."
"At first, nobody'd believe I could do it. Then they got desperate and let me try. Right away, my stuff was going on air. They sent some to the network. The network used it all next day. I stayed on the job ten hours. Then the station manager came in and fired me."
"Fired you!"
"As a janitor. Said I was goofing off, didn't have my mind on my work." Watson laughed. "Then he hired me as an editor. Haven't looked back since."
"That's a lovely story," Iris said. "When I write my book someday, I'll use it."
Soon after, at Watson and Iris's suggestion, Partridge changed some words of commentary to match the editing and Watson slipped the rerecording in. Partridge also recorded a final standup for the piece, facing a camera on the street outside the CBA News building.
Since returning from White Plains, Partridge had thought deeply, at moments agonized, about what he would say. If this had been a normal news story a summation would have been easy. What made this story different was Crawford Sloane's involvement. Some of the words he had considered using would, Partridge knew, bring anguish to Crawf. So should he soften them, waffle just a little, or be the hard-nosed newsman with a single standard--objectivity?
In the end, the decision simply happened. Outside the CBA News building, with a camera crew waiting and curious pedestrians watching, Partridge scribbled the sense of what he would say, then, memorizing the notes, ad-libbed.
"The events in White Plains today--a monstrous trag

edyfor that city's innocent victims-is also the worst of news
256 ARTHUR BAILEY
for my friend and colleague, Crawford Sloane. It means, without doubt, that his wife, young son andfather are in the hands of savage, merciless outlaws, their identities and origins unknown. The only thing clear is that whatever their motives, they will stop at nothing to achieve them.
"The nature and timing of the crime at White Plains also raise a question which many are now asking: Have the kidnap victims by this time been removed from the United -States and conveyed to some distant place, wherever that may be?
"Harry Partridge, CBA News, New York

13

Teddy Cooper was wrong. The kidnappers and their victims had not left the United States. However, according to present plans, a few more hours would see them gone.

For the Medellin group still holed up at Hackensack on Saturday afternoon, tension was at a peak, nerves stretched to their limit. The immediate cause for concern was radio and TV reports about that morning's events at White Plains.

Miguel, restless and anxious, snapped back answers to questions from the others, several times swearing at those who asked them. When Carlos, usually the mildest of the five Colombian men, suggested angrily that booby-trapping the Nissan van with explosives had been una idea imb6ci4 Miguel snatched up a knife. Then, gaining control of himself, he put it down.

In truth, Miguel knew that booby-trapping the passenger van at White Plains had been a bad mistake. The intention was to provide a harsh warning about the kidnappers' seriousness, after they had gone.

After was the operative word.

Miguel had been confident that because of changes in the van's appearance made following the kidnap---eliminating the

dark windows and switching from New Jersey to New York license plates-it would remain unnoticed in the White Plains parking garage for five or six days, perhaps much longer.

Clearly, his judgment had been wrong. Worse, that morning's explosion and aftermath had refocused national attention on the Sloane family's kidnappers and raised police and public alertness to a peak, just when they were ready to steal quietly out of the country.

Neither Miguel nor the others cared in the least about the deaths and general mayhem at White Plains. In other circumstances they would have been amused. They cared only to the extent that they themselves were now in greater peril and it need not have occurred.

The conspirators at Hackensack batted questions back and forth: Would police roadblocks, which according to news reports had eased since Thursday, be reinstated? If so, would there be one or more between the hideaway and Teterboro Airport? And what about the airport? Would

security be tighter because of the new alert? And even if the four who were going, plus captives, managed to leave Teterboro safely in the private Learjet, what of the stop at Florida's Opa Locka Airport? How great was the danger there?

No one, including Miguel, had any answers. All they knew for sure was that they were committed to going; the machinery of their transfer was in motion and they must take their chances.

Another reason for tension, perhaps inevitable, was the increasing disenchantment of the conspirators with one another. Having been in close confinement for more than a month with only the most limited outside contacts, some personal irritations became magnified into something close to hatred.

Particularly obnoxious to the others was Rafael's habit of coughing up mucus, then spitting it out wherever he found himself, including at the meal table. At one mealtime Carlos was so offended that he called Rafael jun bruto odiosol, prompting Rafael to grab Carlos by the shoulders, throw him against a wall, then pummel him with hamlike fists. Only Miguel's inter-

vention saved Carlos from injury. Since then, Rafael had not changed his habit though Carlos seethed.

Luis and Julio had also become antagonists. The week before, Julio had accused Luis of cheating at cards. A fistfight ensued which neither won, but next day they had swollen faces and the two had scarcely spoken since.

Now, Socorro was another source of friction. Despite her earlier rejection of sexual overtures, last night she had bedded with Carlos. The animal noises had aroused envy in the other men and intense jealousy in Rafael, who had wanted Socorro for himself and reminded her this morning. But, she told him in front of the others during breakfast, "You will have to change your filthy manners before you stick your Yerga in me."

That situation was complicated by Miguel's own strong desire for Socorro. But as the group's leader he continually reminded himself that he could not afford to join in the competition over her.

His leadership role, he realized, had had other eflects as well. Looking in his shaving mirror recently, he realized he was shedding his unremarkable "everyman" appearance. Less and less did he resemble an innocuous clerk or minor manager, which had once been his natural camouflage. Age and responsibility were giving him the look of what he

was-a seasoned, strong commander.
Well, he thought today, all commanders made mistakes and White Plains clearly had been one of his.
Thus, for everyone's varying reasons, it was a big relief as 7:40 P.m. neared and final pullout procedures got underway.
Julio would drive the hearse, Luis the "Serene Funeral Homes" truck. Both vehicles were loaded and ready.
The hearse contained a single casket in which Jessica lay, under deep sedation. Angus and Nicholas, also unconscious and in closed caskets, were in the truck. On top of each casket Carlos had placed a garland of white chrysanthemums and pink carnations, the flowers he had obtained that morning.
Strangely, the sight of the caskets and flowers subdued the conspirators, as if the roles they had rehearsed in their minds

and were about to act out had somehow become easier to assume.
Only Baudelio, fussing around the three caskets, taking lastminute readings with his external equipment, remained solely attuned to immediate concerns, this being one of several times during the next few hours when the success of the enterprise would depend totally on his prior judgments. If one of the captives should regain consciousness and struggle or cry out while the group was en route, especially while being questioned, all could be lost. Even a suspicion that the caskets were in any way unusual could result in their being opened and the entire plan foiled-as happened at Britain's Stansted Airport in 1984. On that occasion a Nigerian, Dr. Umaru Dikko, having been kidnapped and drugged, was about to be flown to Lagos in a sealed crate. Airport workers reported a strong "medicine-type smell" and British Customs officers insisted that the crate be opened. The victim was discovered, unconscious but alive.
Miguel and Baudelio both knew of that 1984 incident and wanted no repetition.
As the moment to leave for Teterboro approached, Socorro had appeared, strikingly seductive in a black linen dress with matching jacket trimmed with braid. Her hair was tucked under a black cloche and she wore gold earrings and a thin gold necklace. She was crying copiously, the result of Baudelio's prescription of a grain of pepper beneath each lower eyelid. She now gave the same treatment to Rafael; at first he had objected, but Miguel insisted and the big man gave in. Soon after Rafael adjusted to the mild discomfort, his tears rolled out too.

Rafael, Miguel and Baudelio, each wearing their dark suits and ties, looked suitably cast as mourners. If questions were asked, Rafael and Socorro would pose as brother and sister of a dead Colombian woman, killed in a fiery auto accident while visiting the U.S., whose remains were being flown home for burial. And since the woman's young son-so the cover story went-was one of two others killed in the same accident, Rafael and Socorro would be Nicky's sorrowful uncle and aunt. The third "dead" person, Angus, would be described as an

older distant relative who had been traveling with the other two.
Baudelio would be a supportive member of the bereaved family, Miguel a close family friend.
Elaborate documentation corroborated the cover storyfake death certificates from Pennsylvania where the fatal accident supposedly occurred, graphic photos of a turnpike traffic disaster scene, and even press clippings purportedly from the Philadelphia Inquirer, but in fact printed on a private press. The documents had included new passports for Miguel, Rafael, Socorro and Baudelio and two spare death certificates, one of which had since been used for Angus. The document "package" had been obtained through another of Miguel's Little Colombia contacts and cost more than twenty thousand dollars.
Included in the cover story and false news reports was a critical feature: All three bodies were so badly mangled and burned that they were unrecognizable. Miguel counted on that to deter any opening of the caskets during their removal from the United States.
The hearse and truck now had their engines running and behind them was the Plymouth Reliant, with Carlos in the driver's seat. He would follow the other vehicles at a distance, though ready to intervene in case of trouble. With the exception of Baudelio, they were all armed.
The immediate plan was to proceed directly to the airport, which should take about ten minutes, fifteen at the most.
In the courtyard of the Hackensack house, Miguel checked his watch. 7:35 P.m. He instructed the others, "Everyone aboard."
Alone he made a final inspection of the house and outbuildings, satisfying himself that no significant traces of their occupancy remained. Only one thing troubled him. The ground where the hole had been dug to bury the cellular phones and other equipment was uneven compared with the area surrounding it. Julio and Luis had done their best to level the earth and spread leaves, but signs of disturbance remained. Miguel supposed it didn't

matter greatly and at this point nothing could be done.
The Evening News 261
Returning to the hearse, he climbed into the front seat and told Julio tersely, "Go!"
Dusk had settled in, with the last traces of sunset on their right as they headed for Teterboro.
Luis was first to see the flashing police lights ahead. He swore softly as he braked. From the passenger side of the hearse, Miguel saw the lights too, then craned to survey their own position in relation to other traffic. Socorro was in the middle, seated between the two men.
They were on State Highway 17 headed south, with the elevated Passaic Expressway a mile behind. Traffic both ways on 17 was heavy. Between themselves and the flashing lights there was no turnoff to the right, and central dividers made a U-turn out of the question. Miguel, beginning to sweat, tightened his hold on himself and instructed Luis, "Keep going."
He checked to make sure the "Serene Funeral Homes" truck was immediately behind.
Carlos in the Plymouth would be farther back, though it was impossible to see him.
Now they could see that the traffic ahead was being funneled into two right-hand lanes by several state troopers. Between the lanes was some kind of portable structure like a tollbooth and additional troopers appeared to be speaking with drivers as they stopped. Off to the right were more state police vehicles and flashing lights.
Miguel told the other two, "Stay cool. Leave any talking to me.,,
They inched forward for another ten minutes before gaining a better view of the head of the line. Even then it was not clear exactly what was happening; by now it was dark, the many lights confusing. It appeared, though, that after exchanges between the police and each vehicle's occupants, some cars and trucks were being directed to the side for closer examination, others waved on.
Miguel checked his watch. Almost 8 P.m. There was no way they could make the Learjet rendezvous on time.
Despite warning the others to stay cool, Miguel's own ten-262 ARTHUR DAILEY
sion was mounting. After their remarkable success so far, was this to be the end of the line, resulting in capture or death in a shoot-out with police?
Of the two, Miguel knew he would prefer death. The chances of bluffing their way out of this present jeopardy seemed slight. He wondered: Was it best to

make a run for it now, at least put up a fight, or should they continue sitting here, letting the minutes tick away, with their only hope the unlikely gamble of getting through?
Luis muttered, "The fuckers are looking for us!" Reaching under his coat, he produced a Walther P38 pistol and laid it on the seat beside him.
Miguel snarled, "Keep that out of sight!"
Luis covered the gun with a newspaper.
Beside him, Miguel felt Socorro tremble. He put a hand on her arm and the movement stopped. He saw her looking steadily ahead, her eyes on an approaching state trooper.
The uniformed figure appeared to be alone, unattached to the group at the head of the line. He was glancing into stopped cars as he passed, pausing occasionally, apparently responding to questions. When the officer was a few yards away Miguel decided to take the initiative. He depressed the switch which lowered the electric window beside him.
"Officer," Miguel called out, "can you please tell me what this is about?"
The state trooper, who seemed little more than a youth, came closer. A name tag identified him as "Quiles."
"It's just a driver sobriety check, sir, in the interest of public safety," he said with a smile that seemed forced.
Miguel didn't believe him.
Then, as the trooper took in the hearse and its contents, he added, "I hope you haven't all come from a wake where there was a big booze-up."
It was a feeble lunge at humor which came out clumsily, but Miguel saw his chance and grabbed it. Riveting Trooper Quiles with a glare, he said sternly, "If that was meant as a joke, officer, it was in extremely poor taste."
The young trooper's expression changed instantly. He said, chagrined, "I'm sorry . . .'9
The Evening News 263
As if he hadn't heard, Miguel pressed on, "The lady beside me has been visiting this country with her sister. That is her beloved sister in the casket behind us-tragically killed in a traffic accident, along with two others in the funeral van behind. Their bodies are being flown from here to be buried in their own land. We have an airplane waiting at Teterboro and we appreciate neither your humor nor the delay."
Taking her cue, Socorro turned her head so the trooper could see tears streaming down her face.
Quiles said penitently, "I said I was sorry, sir and madam. It just slipped

out. I do apologize."
"We accept your apology, officer," Miguel said with dignity. "Now, I wonder if you could help us proceed on our way."
"Hold on, please." The trooper walked quickly forward to the head of the line where he consulted a sergeant. The sergeant listened, looked their way, then nodded. The young officer returned.
He told Miguel, "I'm afraid we're all a bit on edge, sir." Then lowering his voice in confidence, "The truth is, what's happening here is a cover and we're really looking for those kidnappers. Did you hear what they did in White Plains today?"
"Yes, I did," Miguel answered gravely. "It was terrible."
The car immediately ahead had moved forward, leaving a gap.
"Both of your drivers can pass around to the left, sir. Just follow me to the barrier, then join the onward traffic. Again, I'm sorry for what I said."
The trooper motioned the hearse and GMC truck out of line, at the same time signaling a car behind to continue forward. Glancing back, Miguel could still see no sign of the Plymouth Reliant. Well, he reasoned, Carlos would have to take care of himself.
The trooper preceded them on foot until they were level with the portable booth they had seen from a distance, then waved them by. The road ahead was clear.
As the hearse passed him, Trooper Quiles snapped a smart salute, holding it until both vehicles were gone.

Put to its first test, Miguel thought, their cover story had worked. With the challenge of Teterboro still to come, he wondered: Would it work again? During the weeks they had been at Hackensack, Miguel had visited Teterboro Airport twice to study the layout.
It was a busy airport used exclusively by private planes. During an average twentyfour hours some four hundred flights might land and take off, many of them at night. About a hundred aircraft made Teterboro their base and were parked along the northeast perimeter. Along the northwest perimeter were the headquarters buildings of six companies which provided operating services for visiting and resident aircraft. Each company had a private entrance to the airport and handled its own security.
Of Teterboro's six service companies, the largest was Brunswick Aviation, the one which, at Miguel's suggestion, the incoming Leatjet 55LR from Colombia would use.

During one of his visits Miguel masqueraded as the owner of a private plane and met with Brunswick's general manager as well as the managers of two other companies. From those meetings it became evident that, for the purpose of loading an aircraft, certain areas of the airport were more secluded and private than others. The least private and most popular arrival and parking area was known as the Table, centrally located near the operators' buildings.

The least-used parking area, regarded as inconvenient, was at the south end. Requests for space there were granted gladly since it relieved pressure at the Table. Also nearby was a locked gate, opened on request by any of the Teterboro operating companies.

Armed with this knowledge, Miguel had sent a message to Bogoti through his contact at New York's Colombian consulate, advising that the incoming Leaijet should request space at the south end near the gate. Then today, making one final use of a cellular phone, he had called Brunswick Aviation requesting that the south gate be opened from 7:45 to 8:15 P.m.

Miguel knew from his earlier conversations at Teterboro

that such a request was not unusual. Owners of private aircraft often had business they preferred others not to know about and the airport's operators had a reputation for discretion. One of the airport managers had even described to Miguel an incident concerning an incoming load of marijuana.

After observing suspicious-looking bales being moved from an airplane to a truck, the manager had telephoned police, prompting the drug traffickers' arrest. But afterward the aircraft owner, a regular Teterboro user, complained bitterly about invasion of his privacy when, as he put it, "This is supposed to be a discreet, dependable airport."

Now, as the hearse and truck neared Teterboro, Miguel directed Luis toward the south gate. Though he did not expect to avoid security attention entirely, he was gambling on its being more informal there than at a main entrance.

There had been a stressful silence in the hearse since the encounter with the State Police. But with tensions easing, Socorro told Miguel, "Back there you were imagnificol"

"Yeah," Luis added.

Miguel shrugged. "Don't relax. There may be more to come."

As they neared the airport fence, he checked his watch: 8:25. They were already a half hour late, also ten minutes after the time he had asked

for the south gate to stay open.
When the headlights of the hearse lit up the gate, it was closed and locked. Beyond was darkness-no one in sight. Frustrated, Miguel slammed a fist onto the dashboard, exclaiming, ",Mierdal"
Luis got out of the hearse to inspect the lock. From the truck behind, Rafael joined him, then walked back to the hearse. "I can blow that mother open with one bullet," he told Miguel.
Miguel shook his head, wondering why one of the Learjet pilots had not met them here. In the darkness he could make out several parked aircraft inside the fence, but no lights or activity. Could the flight have been delayed? Whatever the answer, he knew they must use the Brunswick Aviation main entrance.

He told Luis and Rafael, "Get back in."
As they turned away from the south gate, the Plymouth Reliant fell in behind. Obviously, Carlos had come safely through the police roadblock. His instructions were to follow as far as the airport entrance, then wait outside until the hearse and truck returned.
Approaching the brightly lit Brunswick building, they saw that another gate blocked their way. Beside it, at the doorway to a guard post, stood a uniformed security man. Next to him a tall, balding man in civilian clothes was peering intently at the oncoming hearse. A police detective? Once more Miguel felt a tightening of his gut.
The second man stepped forward. Probably in his early fifties, he moved with authority. Luis lowered his window and the man asked, "Do you have an uncommon shipment for Seftor Pizarro?"
A wave of relief swept over Miguel. It was a coded question, prearranged. He used an answering code he had memorized, "The consignment is ready for transfer and all papers are in order."
The newcomer nodded. "I'm your pilot. Name's Underhill." His accent was American. "Goddamn, you're late!"
"We had problems."
"Don't bother me with them. I've filed a flight plan. Let's get going." As he went around to the passenger side, Underhill motioned to the guard and the gate swung open.
Clearly, there was to be no security check, no police inspection. Their cover story, so painstakingly prepared, was not needed. Miguel found he didn't mind at all.
It was a squeeze with four on the hearse front seat, but they managed to

close the door. The pilot directed Luis as the hearse moved onto a taxi strip between blue lights and headed for the airport's south side. The GMC truck was behind.
Several aircraft loomed ahead. The pilot pointed to the largest, a Learjet 55LR. From its shadows a figure emerged.
Underhill said tersely, "Faulkner. Copilot."
On the Learjet's left side a clamshell door was open; the

lower half included steps from the fuselage to the ground. The copilot had gone inside and lights were coming on.
Luis maneuvered the back of the hearse close to the Lear's steps for unloading. The truck stopped a short distance away and from it, Julio, Rafael and Baudelio jumped down.
With everyone assembled around the Leadet doorway, Underhill asked, "How many live ones are flying?"
"Four," Miguel answered.
"I need those names for the manifest," the pilot said, "also the names of the dead. Apart from that, Faulkner and I don't want to,know anything about you or your business. We're providing a contract charter flight. Nothing else."
Miguel nodded. He had no doubt both pilots would earn golden pay for this journey tonight. The Latin America-U.S. air routes were loaded with air crews, Americans and others, who flirted with the law, taking high risks for big money. As for these two, Miguel didn't care one way or the other about their wish to distance themselves from what was happening. He doubted, though, that it would make any difference if they fell into real trouble. The pilots would share it too.
With the copilot supervising and Rafael, Julio, Luis and Miguel lifting, the first casket containing Jessica was transferred from the hearse to the jet. Making the turn through the fuselage doorway was difficult, with barely an inch to spare. Inside, the right-side seats had been removed. Straps to hold cargo in place-in this instance the caskets-were attached to tracks on the floor and other fittings overhead.
By the time the first casket was loaded, the hearse had been moved away and the truck backed in. The other two caskets followed speedily, after which Miguel, Baudelio, Socorro and Rafael boarded and the clamshell door was closed. No one bothered with goodbyes. As Miguel seated himself and looked through a window, the lights of the two vehicles were already receding.

With the copilot still fastening straps around the caskets, the pilot flipped switches in the cockpit and the whine of engines began. The copilot went forward and the radio crackled

as tower clearance was asked for and received. Moments later they were taxiing.
Reaching over from his seat, Baudelio began connecting external monitoring equipment to the caskets. He continued to work at it as the Lea~et took off, climbed swiftly through the darkness and headed south for Florida.
On the ground, some unfinished business remained.
As the hearse and GMC truck emerged from the airport, Carlos, waiting outside, put the Plymouth in gear and followed the hearse to Paterson, some ten miles west. There Luis drove the hearse to a modest funeral home which had been randomly selected in advance and parked on the establishment's lot. He left the keys inside, walked quickly to the Plymouth and drove away with Carlos.
Perhaps, in the morning, the funeral home owner would wrestle with his conscience about calling police or waiting to see what happened, if anything, about an apparent gift of a valuable hearse. Whatever the outcome, Carlos, Luis and the others would be far away.
From Paterson, Carlos and Luis traveled six miles north to Ridgewood where Julio had, by this time, driven the GMC truck. He left it outside the premises of a used-truck dealership which had closed for the night. It seemed possible that an unclaimed, almost-new truck might eventually be absorbed, its presence never reported.
The other two picked up Julio at a prearranged point nearby, then the trio returned to the Hackensack hideaway for the last time. There, Julio and Luis switched to the Chevrolet Celebrity and Ford Tempo. Without further delay, they and Carlos dispersed.
They would leave the cars at widely divergent points, with the doors unlocked and ignition keys in place-the last in the hope that someone would steal the cars, thus making any connection with the Sloane family kidnapping highly improbable.

14
AIMMUNOW
It was not until after the first-feed Saturday National Evening News that the special task force meeting, interrupted by that morning's harrowing events at White Plains, resumed at CDA News headquarters. By then it was

7:10 P.m. and the task force members had resignedly canceled any weekend plans. It was often said of TV news people that their irregular working hours, long absences from home and the impossibility of leading any predictable social life produced one of the highest occupational divorce rates.

Seated once more at the head of the conference-room table, Harry Partridge surveyed the others-Rita, Norman Jaeger, Iris Everly, Karl Owens, Teddy Cooper. Most looked tired; Iris, for once, was less than immaculate, her hair awry and white blouse ink-stained. Jaeger, in shirtsleeves, had his chair tilted back, feet up on the table.

The room itself was messy, with waste containers overflowing, ash trays full, dirty coffee cups abounding and discarded newspapers littering the floor. A price paid for keeping the task force offices locked was that cleaners had been unable to get in. Rita reminded herself to arrange for the place to be spruced up before Monday morning.

The "Sequence of Events" and "Miscellaneous" boards had been added to considerably. The most recent contribution was a summary of that morning's White Plains havoc, typed by Partridge. Frustratingly, though, there was still nothing conclusive on the boards about the kidnappers' identities or their victims' whereabouts.

"Reports, anyone?" Partridge asked.

Jaeger, who had lowered his feet and propelled his chair to the table, raised a hand.

"Go ahead, Norm."

The veteran producer spoke in his quiet, scholarly fashion. "For most of today I've been telephoning Europe and the Middle East--our bureau chiefs, correspondents, stringers, fixersasking questions: What have they heard that is fresh or unusual about terrorist activity? Are there signs of peculiar movements of terrorism people? Have any terrorists, especially groups, disappeared from sight recently? If they have, is it possible they could be in the United States? And so on."

Jaeger paused, shuffling notes, then continued, "There are some sernipositive answers. A whole group of Hezbollah disappeared from Beirut a month ago and haven't surfaced. But rumor puts them in Turkey, planning a new attack on Jews, and there's confirmation from Ankara that the Turkish police are searching for them. No proof, though. They could be anywhere.

"The FARL-Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Factionsare said to have people

on the move, but three separate reports, including one from Paris, say that they're in France. Again no proof. Abu Nidal has disappeared from Syria and is believed to be in Italy where there are rumbles that he, the Islamic Jihad and Red Brigades are plotting something vicious." Jaeger threw up his hands. "All these hoodlums are like slippery shadows, though the sources I've used have been reliable in the past."

Leslie Chippingham entered the conference room, followed a moment later by Crawford Sloane. They joined the others at the table. As the meeting fell silent, the news president urged, "Carry on, please."

As Jaeger continued, Partridge observed Sloane and thought the anchorman looked ghastly, even more pale and gaunt than yesterday, though it was not surprising with the growing strain.

Jaeger said, "The intelligence grapevine reports some more individual terrorist movements. I won't bother you with details except to say they're apparently confined to Europe and the Middle East. More important, the people I talked to don't believe there's been any terrorist exodus, certainly not in sizable numbers, to the U.S. or Canada. If there were, they say it's

unlikely there'd be no word at all. But I've told everybody to keep looking, listening and reporting."

"Thanks, Norm." Partridge turned to Karl Owens. "I know you've been inquiring southward, Karl. Any results?"

"Nothing really positive." The younger producer had no need to shuffle notes from his day of telephoning. Typical of his precise methodology, he had each phone call summarized on a four-by-six card, the handwriting neat, the cards sorted into order.

"I've talked with the same kind of contacts as Norm, asking similar questions-mine in Managua, San Salvador, Havana, La Paz, Buenos Aires, Tegucigalpa, Lima, Santiago, BogotA, Brasilia, Mexico City. As always, there's terrorist activity in most of those places, also reports about terrorists changing countries, crossing borders like commuters switching trains. But nothing in the intelligence mill fits a group movement of the kind we're looking for. I did stumble on one thing. I'm still working on it . . ."

"Tell us," Partridge said. "We'll take it raw."

"Well, it's something from Colombia. About a guy called Ulises Rodriguez."

"A particularly nasty terrorist," Rita said. "I've heard him referred to as the Abu Nidal of Latin America."

"He's all of that," Owens agreed, "and he's also believed to have been involved in several Colombian kidnappings. They don't get reported much here, but they happen all the time. Well, three months ago Rodriguez was reported as being in Bogotd, then he simply disappeared. Those who should know are convinced he's active somewhere. There was a rumor he might have gone to London, but wherever he is, he's stayed successfully out of sight since June."
Owens paused, referring to a card. "Now something else: On a hunch I called a Washington contact in U.S. Immigration and floated Rodriguez's name. Later, my source called me back and said that three months ago, which is about the time Rodriguez dropped out of sight, Immigration was warned by the CIA that he might attempt a U.S. entry through Miami.

There's a federal arrest warrant out for him and Miami Immigration and Customs went on red alert. But he didn't show."
"Or managed to get through undetected," Iris Everly added.
"That's possible. Or he could have come in through a different doorway-from London, perhaps, if the rumor I mentioned was right. That's something else about him. Rodriguez studied English at Berkeley and speaks it without an accent-or, rather, with an American accent. What I'm saying is, he can blend in."
"This gets interesting," Rita said. "Is there anything more?"
Owens nodded. "A little."
The others around the table were listening intently and Partridge reflected that only those in the news business understood just how much information could be assembled through contacts and persistent telephoning.
"The little that's on record about Rodriguez," Owens said, "includes what I've just told you and that be graduated from Berkeley with the class of '72."
Partridge asked, "Are there pictures of him?"
Owens shook his head. "I asked Immigration and came up nil. They say no one has a photo, which includes the CIA. Rodriguez has been careful. However, on that score we may have got lucky."
"For chrissakes, Karl!" Rita complained. "If you must act like a novelist, get on with the story!"
Owens smiled. Patient plodding was his personal style. It worked and he had no intention of changing it for Abrams or anyone else.
"After learning about Rodriguez I called our San Francisco bureau and

asked to have someone sent over to Berkeley to do some checking." He glanced at Chippingham. "I invoked your name, Les. Said you'd authorized zip priority."
The news president nodded as Owens continued.
"They sent Fiona Gowan who happens to be a Berkeley graduate, knows her way around. Fiona got lucky, especially on Saturday and-if you'll believe it-located an English De-

partment faculty member who actually remembers Rodriguez from the Class of '72."
Rita sighed. "We believe it." Her tone said: Get on!
"Rodriguez, it seems, was a loner, had no close friends. Something else the faculty guy recalled was that Rodriguez was camera-shy, would never let anyone take his picture. The Daily Cal, the student newspaper, wanted to feature him in a group of foreign students; he turned them down. Eventually it got to be a joke, so a classmate who was a pretty good artist did a charcoal sketch of Rodriguez without his knowing. When the artist showed it around, Rodriguez flew into a rage. Then he offered to buy the picture and did, paying more than it was worth. The Catch-22 was that the artist had already made a dozen copies which he doled out to his friends. Rodriguez never knew that."
"Those copies Partridge began.
"We're on to it, Harry." Owens smiled, still refusing to be hurried. "Fiona's back in San Francisco, been working the phones all afternoon. It was a big job because the Berkeley English class of '72 had three hundred and eighty-eight members. Anyway she managed to scrape up names and some alumni home numbers, one leading to another. Just before this meeting she called me to say she's located one of the copy sketches and will have it by tomorrow. Soon as it's in, San Fran bureau will transmit it to us."
There was an approving murmur around the table. "Nice staff work," Chippingham said. "Thank Fiona for me."
"We should keep a sense of proportion, though," Owens pointed out. "At the moment we've nothing more than coincidence and it's only a guess that Rodriguez might be involved with our kidnap. Also, that charcoal drawing is twenty years old."
"People don't change all that much, even in twenty years," Partridge said. "What we can do is show the picture around Larchmont and ask if anyone remembers seeing him. Anything else?'9

"Washington bureau checked in," Rita said. "They say the FBI has nothing new. Their forensic people are working on

what was left of the Nissan van at White Plains, but they're not hopeful. Just as Salerno said on Friday's broadcast, the FBI in kidnap cases depend on the kidnappers making contact."
Partridge looked down the table toward Sloane. "I'm sorry, Crawf, but that seems to be all we have."
Rita reminded him, "Except for Teddy's idea."
Sloane said sharply, "What idea? I haven't heard it."
"Best let Teddy explain," Partridge said. He nodded to the young Englishman, also seated at the table, and Cooper brightened as attention focused on him.
"It's a possible way to find out where the snatchers had their hideout, Mr. S. Even though by now I'm sure they've scarpered."
Chippinghain asked, "If they've gone, what good would that do us?"
Sloane gestured impatiently. "Never mind that. I want to hear the idea."
Despite the intervention, Cooper answered Chippingham first. "Traces, Mr. C. There's always a chance people leave traces, showing who they are, where they came from, maybe even where they've gone."
Including the others in his remarks, Cooper repeated the proposal made to Partridge and Rita earlier that day . . . described the kind of property and location he visualized as the kidnappers' headquarters . . . his belief the kidnappers could have obtained their base by responding to newspaper advertising . . . the plan to examine classified ads appearing over the past three months in newspapers within twentyfive miles of Larchmont . . . Objective of the search: to match the theoretical HQ description . . . The detail work, in libraries and newspaper offices, to be done by bright young people hired especially . . . Later, the same group, under supervision, would investigate possible locations the search produced . . .
Cooper ended, "It's a long shot, I admit."
"I wouldn't even put it that high," Chippingham said. He had been frowning during the recital, his frown deepening as the hiring suggestion emerged. "How many people are we talking?"

Rita said, "I've done some checking. In the area we're speaking of, there are approximately a hundred and sixty newspapers, including dailies and weeklies. Libraries don't carry back numbers of more than a few of those,

so mostly it would mean going to publication offices and searching through files. Doing that, reading back through three months of ads and making notes, would be a monumental job. But if it's to be of value, it will need to be done fast . . ."
Chippingham cut in. "Will someone please answer my question. How many people?"
"I estimate sixty," Rita told him. "On top of that, some supervision."
Chippingham turned to Partridge. "Harry, are you seriously recommending this?" His tone conveyed, You couldn't be that crazyl
Partridge hesitated. He shared Chippingham's doubts. This morning, during the drive back from White Plains, he had mentally labeled Teddy's notion a harebrained scheme; nothing since then had changed his mind. Then he reasoned: Sometimes taking a stand was a good idea, even with a long shot.
"Yes, Les," he said, "I'm recommending it. It's my opinion that we ought to try everything. Right now, we aren't overburdened with leads or fresh ideas."
Chippingham was unhappy with the answer. He felt apprehensive at the thought of employing sixty extra people, plus their travel and other expenses, for what could turn out to be several weeks-to say nothing of the supervisory help Rita had mentioned. That kind of hiring always added up to horrendous sums. Of course, in the old free-spending days of TV news he wouldn't have thought twice about it. No one did. But now, Margot Lloyd-Mason's edict about the kidnap task force echoed in his mind: "I don't want anyone . . . going wild about spending money . , . No activity exceeding budget is to be embarked on without my advance approval. "
Well, Chippingham thought, as much as anyone else he wanted to find out where Jessica, the Sloane kid and the old man had been taken and, if he had to, he'd go to bat with Margot on the money crunch. But it would have to be on behalf

of something he believed in and not this piece of idiot shit from the arrogant Limey.
"Harry, I'm going to veto that one, at least for the time being," Chippingham said. "I simply don't think it has enough possibility to justify the effort." Even now, he supposed, if the others knew the part of his thinking that included Margot, they would call him craven. Well, never mind, he had problemsincluding hanging on to his own job-they didn't know about.

Jaeger began, "I would have thought, Les . . ."
Before he could finish, Crawford Sloane said, "Norm, let me." As Jaeger subsided, the anchorman's voice sharpened. "When you talk about not justifying the effort, Les, aren't you really saying you won't spend the money?"
"That's a factor; you know it always is. But mostly it's a judgment call. What's been suggested isn't a good idea."
"Perhaps you have a better one,"
"Not at this moment."
Sloane said icily, "Then I have a question and I'd like an honest answer. Has Margot Lloyd-Mason put a spending freeze on?"
Chippingham said uneasily, "We've discussed budget, that's all." He added, "Can you and I talk privately?"
"No!" Sloane roared, jumping to his feet, glaring at Chippingham. "No goddamn privacy for that cold-hearted bitch! You answered my question. There is a money freeze."
"It's not significant. For anything worthwhile, I'll simply call Stonehenge . . ."
Sloane stormed, "And what I'll call is a press conferenceright here, tonight! To tell the world that while my family is suffering in some hellhole, god knows where, this wealthy network is huddling with accountants, reviewing budgets, haggling over pennies . . ."
Chippingham protested, "No one's haggling! Crawf, this isn't necessary. I'm sorry."
"And what the hell good does that do?"
The others around the table could scarcely believe what they were hearing: In the first place, that a spending freeze had been applied secretly to their own project, and second, in the

present desperate situation, not to try all possibilities was inconceivable.
Something else was equally incredible: That CBA should so offend its most illustrious citizen, the senior anchorman. Margot Lloyd-Mason had been mentioned; therefore it could only be concluded she represented the ax-wielding hand of Globanic Industries.
Norman Jaeger stood up too, the simplest form of protest. He said quietly, "Harry thinks we should give Teddy's idea a chance. So do L"
Karl Owens joined him. "Me too."
"Add me to the list." Iris Everly.

Rita, a touch reluctantly, caring about Chippingham, said, "I guess you'd better count me in."
"Okay, okay, let's cut the histrionics," Chippingham said. He realized he had been guilty of misjudgment, knew that either way he was the loser, and silently cursed Margot. "I reverse myself. Maybe I was wrong. Crawf, we'll go ahead."
But he wouldn't, Chippingham, decided, go to Margot and ask for approval; he knew too well, had known from the beginning, what her response would be. He would authorize the expense and take his chances.
Rita, practical as always and seeking to defuse the scene, said, "If we're moving on this, we can't afford to lose time. We should have researchers working by Monday. So where do we begin?"
"We'll call in Uncle Arthur," Chippingham said. "I'll speak to him at home tonight and have him here tomorrow to begin recruiting."
Crawford Sloane brightened. "A good idea."
Teddy Cooper, seated beside Jaeger, whispered, "Who the hell is Uncle Arthur?"
Jaeger chuckled. "You haven't met Uncle Arthurl Tomorrow, my young friend, you are in for a unique experience."
"The drinks are on me," Chippingham said. Mentally he added, I brought you all here to bind up any minor wound&
He and the others had adjourned to Sfuzzi, a restaurant and

bar near Lincoln Center with a nouveau-Ancient Roman d6cor. It was a regular rendezvous for TV news people. Though Sfuzzi's was crowded on a Saturday night, they managed to squeeze around a table supplemented by extra chairs.
Chippingham had invited everyone who had been at the task force meeting, including Sloane, but the anchorman declined, deciding to go home to Larchmont with his FBI escort, Otis Havelock. There they would wait through another night for the hoped-for telephone message from the kidnappers.
When everyone had their drinks and with tensions eased, Partridge said, "Les, there's something I think needs saying. At the best of times, I wouldn't want your job. But especially right now, I'm certain that none of us here could juggle the priorities and people that you're having to-at least, not any better."
Chippingham looked at Partridge gratefully and nodded. It was a testament of understanding from someone Chippingham. respected and was a reminder

from Partridge to the others that not all issues were straightforward or decisions easy.
"Harry," the news president said, "I know the way you work, and that you get a 'feel' for situations quickly. Has that happened with this story?"
"I think so, yes." Partridge glanced toward Teddy Cooper. "Teddy believes our birds have flown the country; I've come to that conclusion too. But something else I have an instinct about is that we're close to a breakthrough---either through our doing or it will happen. Then we'll know about the kidnappers: who and where."
"And when we do?"
"When it happens," Partridge said. "I'll be on my way. Wherever the break leads, I want to be there fast and first."
"You shall be," Chippingharn said. "And I promise you'll get all the support you need."
Partridge laughed and looked around the table. "Remember that, everybody. You all heard."
"We sure did," Jaeger said. "Les, if we have to, we'll remind you of those words."
Chippingharn shook his head. "That won't be needed."
The talk continued. While it did, Rita appeared to be

searching in her bag, though what she was doing was scribbling on a piece of paper. Discreetly, under the table, she put it into Chippingham's hands.
He waited until attention was directed away from him, then looked down. The note read: Les, feel like getting laid? Let's get out of here.

15

They went to Rita's. Her apartment was on West Seventy-second, only a short taxi ride from Sfuzzi's. Chippingham was living farther uptown in the Eighties while his and Stasia's divorce was being fought over, but the apartment was small, cheap for New York, and he wasn't proud of it. He missed the plush Sutton Place co-op he and Stasia had shared for a decade before their breakup. The co-op was forbidden territory to him now, a lost utopia. Stasia's lawyers had seen to that.

Anyway, right now he and Rita wanted the nearest private place. Their hands were busy in the taxi until he told her, "If you keep doing that, I'll explode like Vesuvius and it may be months before the volcano's in business again."

She laughed and said, "Not you!" but desisted just the same.

On the way, Chippingham had the cab driver stop at a newsstand. He left the taxi and returned burdened with the early Sunday editions of the New York Times, Daily News, and Post.

"At least I know where I rate in your priorities," Rita observed. "I only hope you're not planning to read those before . . . "

"Later," he assured her. "Much, much later."

Even as he spoke, Chippingham wondered if he would ever grow up where women were concerned. Probably not, or at least not until his libido burned lower. Some men, he knew,

would envy his virility which, with his fiftieth birthday only a few months away, was almost as good as when he was half that age. On the other hand, a permanent hominess had its penalties.

While Rita excited him now, as she had on earlier occasions, and he knew there was pleasure ahead for them both, he knew also that in an hour or two he would ask himself. Was it worth all the trouble? Along the same lines, he often wondered: Had his sexual dalliances been worth losing a wife he genuinely cared about and, at the same time, putting his entire career in jeopardy-the last a reality made clear by Margot Lloyd-Mason during their recent meeting at Stonehenge?

Why did he do it? In part, because he could never resist a carnal romp when opportunity arose and, in the news business, such openings were legion. Then there was the thrill of the chase, which never lessened, and finally

the invasion and physical fulfillment-getting and giving, both equally important.
Les Chippingham kept a notebook, carefully hidden, recording his sexual conquests-a list of names in a special code that only he could decipher. All the names were women he had liked and some who, for a while, he truly loved.
Rita's name, recently added to his book, was the one hundred and twenty-seventh entry. Chippingham tried not to think of the list as a scorecard, though in a way it was.
Some people who led quieter or more innocent lives might find that figure excessive, perhaps difficult to believe. But those employed in television or working in any other creative fieldartists, actors, writers-would have no trouble believing it at all.
He doubted if Stasia had any idea of the number of his side excursions-which brought to mind another recurring question: Was there any way to repair their marriage, a chance of returning to the closeness he and Stasia had enjoyed even while she knew of his philandering? He wished the answer could be yes, but knew it was too late. Stasia's bitterness and hurt were overwhelming now. A few weeks ago he had tried writing her a letter with a tentative approach. Stasia's lawyer had replied,

warning Chippingham not to communicate directly with his client again.
Well, he reflected, even if that particular ball game was lost, nothing would hinder the pleasure of the next hour or two with Rita.
Rita, too, had been considering relationships, though on a simpler level. She had never married, never having met an available man to whom she wanted to tie herself permanently. As to her current affair with Les, she knew there was no longterm future. Having known and watched him for a long time, she believed Les incapable of fidelity. He moved from one woman to the next with the casualness that other men changed underwear. What he did have, though, was that big, long body with accessories to match, so that a sexual escapade with him was a euphoric, joyous, heavenly dream, As they arrived at her apartment building and Les paid off the taxi, she was dreaming of it now.
Rita shut and bolted her apartment door and a moment later they were kissing. Then, wasting no more time, she led the way to her bedroom as Les followed, dropping his jacket, tossing his tie aside, unbuttoning his shirt.
The bedroom was typical Rita-organized, yet in a casual, comfortable way

with pastel-colored chintzes, and cushions everywhere. Deftly, she pulled back and roughly folded the bedspread, throwing it onto a nearby armchair. She undressed quickly, flinging her clothes in all directions, an instinctive lover's gesture of shedding inhibitions too. As each garment flew she smiled across at Les. He in turn appraised her as he slipped out of his undershorts, sending them sailing after Rita's panties and brassiere.

As he had before, he liked what he saw.

Rita, a natural brunette, began dying her hair in her early thirties when a few gray strands appeared. But after changing her job and image from correspondent to producer, she let nature have its way and now her hair was an attractive mixture of dark brown and silver. Her figure, too, had matured and she carried an extra ten pounds over an earlier sleek hundred and

twenty. "You could say," she told Les on the first occasion he had viewed her nude, "that I went from Aphrodite to a comfortable Venus."

"I'll take your Venus," he had said.

Either way, Rita's five-foot-six body was in excellent shape, the hips well rounded, breasts high and firm.

As her eyes dropped, she knew Les needed no further arousal. Yet he came to her slowly, bending down to kiss her forehead, her eyelids and her mouth. Then, gently cupping his hands around her breasts, he drew the nipples, each in turn, into his mouth. A quiver of bliss ran through her as she felt them harden.

Breathing deeply, each movement of her body a growing delight, Rita's hands reached down to Les's groin, moving her fingers gently, slowly, her touch feather-light, experienced. She felt his whole body stiffen, heard the sharp intake of his breath and a soft low sigh of pleasure.

Gently, Chippingham. pushed her down on the bed, his hands and tongue continuing to explore the sweet, warm wetness of her body. When neither could wait any longer, he slid inside her. Rita cried out, then moments later soared to a final, glorious peak.

Rita floated for a while, savoring the lazy moments until her ever-active mind posed questions. Each time, their lovemaking was so smooth, so perfect, so experienced, that she wondered: Was it always like this for the women who had sex with Les? She supposed it must be. He had a way of handling a woman's body that had given Rita-and probably all the others -an undiluted ecstasy. And Rita's own excitement undoubtedly enhanced his

own. Only after her exquisite climax-and how wonderful not to have to fake or strain toward it!--did he, too, explode within her.
Later, bodies damp, sweat mingling in its own sweet union, they lay side by side breathing deeply, evenly.
"Leslie Chippingham," Rita said, "has anyone told you you're the world's most perfect lover?"
He laughed, then kissed her. "Loving is poetry. Poetry feeds on inspiration. At this moment, you are mine."

"You're good with words, too," she told him. "Maybe you should be in the news business."
After a while they slept, then, awakening, made love again.
Eventually, inevitably, Chippingham and Rita turned from sex to the pile of Sunday papers which Les had stopped to buy. They spread them on the bed and he started with the Times, Rita the Post.
Both devoured the latest developments from the Sloane family kidnap, emphasis being on Saturday morning's explosion at White Plains in the vehicle the kidnappers had used, and the resulting devastation. From a professional viewpoint, Rita was pleased to see that CBA News had missed nothing major in its Saturday evening coverage. While the print press had longer stories with more reactions, the essentials were the same.
From the kidnap, Rita and Les moved on to major national and international stories to which they had paid less than usual attention in the past few days. Neither spent any time reading, and scarcely noticed, a single-column report appearing only in the Post and buried on an inside page.
UN DIPLOMAT
SLAYS LOVER, SELF
IN JEALOUS RAGE
A United Nations diplomat, Joso~ Antonio Salaverry, and his woman friend, Helga Efferen, were found shot dead Saturday in Salaverry's 48th St. apartment. Police describe the shootings as "a jealous lover's murder-suicide. "
Salaverry was a member of the Peruvian delegation to the UN. Efferen, an American citizen, formerly a Lebanese immigrant, was employed by the American-Amazonas Bank at its Dag Hammarskjd1d Plaza branch.
The bodies of the dead couple were discovered early Saturday by a janitor. A medical examiner fixed the time of death between 8 and 11 P.m. the previous day. Substantial

evidence, police say, points to the discovery by Salaverry that Efferen was using his apartment as a base for her sexual affairs with other men. Enraged, he shot her, then himself

16

With the grace of a gull the Learjet 55LR descended through the night, its powerful engines momentarily curbed. It settled toward two parallel strands of lights ahead, marking runway one-eight of Opa Locka Airport. Beyond the airport were the myriad lights of Greater Miami, their reflection a vast halo in the sky.

From his seat in the passenger cabin Miguel peered through a window, hoping that America's lights and all they represented would be behind him soon.

He checked his watch. 11: 18 P.m. The flight from Teterboro had taken slightly more than two and a quarter hours.

Rafael, in the seat ahead, was watching the approaching lights. Socorro, beside him, appeared to be dozing.

Miguel turned his head toward Baudelio who, a few feet away, was continuing to monitor the three caskets, using the external equipment he had fastened to them. Baudelio nodded, indicating all was well, and Miguel turned his mind to another potential problem which had just arisen.

A few minutes earlier he had gone forward to the flight deck and asked, "At Opa Locka, how quickly can you do what's needed and get us on our way?"

"Shouldn't take more than half an hour," the pilot, Underhill, had said. "All we have to do is refuel and file a flight plan." He hesitated, then added, "Though if Customs decide to take a look at us, it could be longer."

Miguel said sharply, "We don't have to clear Customs here."

The pilot nodded. "Normally true; they don't bother with

outgoing flights. Lately, though, I've heard they've been making occasional checks, sometimes at night." Though attempting to sound casual, his voice betrayed concern.

Miguel was jolted by the information. His own and the Medellin cartel's intelligence about the rules and habits of U.S. Customs was the reason Opa Locka had been chosen as the airport of departure.

Like Teterboro, Florida's Opa Locka was used by private aircraft only. Because of incoming flights from overseas, it had a U.S. Customs

office--a small, makeshift affair housed in a trailer, with a correspondingly small staff. Compared with Customs departments at important international airports like Miami, New York, Los Angeles or San Francisco, Opa Locka was a poor relation, obliged to use less exacting procedures than elsewhere. Usually no more than two Customs officers were on duty, and even then only from 11 A.M. to 7 P.m. on weekdays and 10 A.M. to 6 P.m. Sundays. The present Lea~et journey had been scheduled on the assumption that by this late hour Customs would be closed, the staff long gone.

Underhill added, "If anyone's in Customs and their airport radio is on, they'll hear us talking with the tower. After that, they may be interested in us, maybe not."

Miguel realized there was nothing he could do except go back to his seat and wait. When he was there he mentally ran over possibilities.

If they did encounter U.S. Customs tonight, unlikely as it seemed, the cover story was in place and they could use it. Socorro, Rafael and Baudelio would play their parts, Miguel his. Baudelio could quickly disconnect his controls connected to the caskets. No, the problem was not with the cover story and all that supported it, but with the rules a Customs inspector was supposed to follow when a dead body left the country.

Miguel had studied the official regulations and knew them by heart. Specific papers were required for each body-a death certificate, a permit of disposition from a county health department, an entry permit from the country of destination. The dead person's passport was not needed, but-most critically-a

casket must be opened, its contents inspected by a Customs officer, then the casket sealed.

With careful foresight Miguel had obtained all the needed documents; they were forgeries, but good ones. Supplementary were the gory traffic accident photographs, unidentified but fitting the general story, also the bogus press clippings, the latter stating that the bodies were so badly burned and mangled as to be unrecognizable.

So if a Customs man was on duty at Opa Locka and came their way, all papers were in order, but would he insist on looking into the caskets? Equally to the point, having read the descriptions, would he want to?

Once more Miguel felt himself tense as the Leajet landed smoothly and taxied in to Hangar One.

Customs Inspector Wally Amsler figured that some gameplan-happy bureaucrat in Washington must have dreamed up Operation Egress. Whoever it was, he (or maybe she) was probably in bed and asleep by now, which was where Wally would prefer to be instead of wandering around this godforsaken Opa Locka Airport, which was off the beaten track in daytime and lonely as hell at night. It was half an hour before midnight and there were two more hours after that before he and the other two Customs guys on special duty here could put Egress behind them and go home.
The grouchiness was unusual for Arnsler who was basically cheerful and friendly, except to those who broke the laws he upheld. Then he could be cool and tough, his sense of duty inflexible. Mostly he liked his work, though he had never cared for night duty and avoided it whenever possible. But a week ago he had had a bout with flu and still didn't feel good; earlier tonight he had considered calling in sick, though he decided not to. And something else had been distressing him lately-his status in the Customs Service.
Despite doing his job conscientiously for more than twenty years, he hadn't advanced to where he believed he should have been by his present age, a few months short of fifty. His status was Inspector, GS-9, which was really a journeyman grade, no

more. There were plenty of others younger than himself and with far less experience who were already Senior Inspectors, GS-11. Arnsler took orders from them.
He had always assumed that someday he would move up to Senior Inspector but now, being realistic, he knew his chances were remote. Was that fair? He wasn't sure. His record was good and he had always put duty to the Service above other considerations, including some personal ones. At the same time, he had never pushed hard to become a leader and nothing he had done in line of duty was spectacular; perhaps that had been the problem.
Of course, even as a GS-9, the pay wasn't bad. With overtime, working a six-day week, he earned about $50,000 a year and there would be a good pension in another fifteen years.
But pay and pension weren't, by themselves, enough. He needed to activate his life, to do something by which, even in a modest way, he would be remembered. He wished it would happen and he felt he deserved it. But at Opa Locka, late at night and working Operation Egress, it wasn't likely to.
Egress was a program involving the random inspection of aircraft about

to depart the United States for other countries. There was no way all of them could be checked; Customs didn't have the staff. So a blitz-type operation was used in which a team of inspectors descended on an airport unannounced and for the next several hours boarded foreign-destined flights-mostly private planes. The program was often in effect at night. Officially the objective was to search for high-tech equipment being exported illegally. Unofficially, Customs was also looking for currency in excess of authorized amounts, particularly large sums of drug money. The latter motive had to be unofficial because legally, under the Fourth Amendment, there could be no search for money without "probable cause." However, if a lot of money was discovered during another type of search, Customs had the right to deal with it.

Sometimes Egress produced results-occasionally sensational. But nothing of that kind had happened when Arnsler was around, a reason he wasn't enthusiastic about the program.

Just the same, Egress was why he and two other inspectors were at Opa Locka tonight, though outbound foreign flights had been fewer than usual and it seemed unlikely there would be many more.

One of the few was preparing to leave shortly-a Learjet that had arrived from Teterboro and, a few minutes ago, filed a flight plan for Bogoti, Colombia. Arnsler was now on his way to Hangar One to take a look at it.

In contrast to most of southern Florida, the small town of Opa Locka was an unattractive place. Its name derived from a Seminole Indian word, opatishawockalocka, meaning "high, dry hummock." The description fitted, as did a more recent one by author T. D. Allman who described Opa Locka as an impoverished "ghetto" appearing like "a long-abandoned and vandalized amusement park." The adjoining airport, though busy, had few buildings, and the area's overall dry flatness--on top of that natural hummock--conveyed the impression of a desert.

Amid that desert, Hangar One was an oasis.

It was a modem, attractive white building, only part of which was a hangar, the whole comprising a luxury terminal catering to private aircraft, their passengers and pilots.

Seventy people worked at Hangar One, their duties ranging from vacuuming incoming planes' interiors and disposing of their trash, through restocking galleys with meals and beverages, to mechanical maintenance-minor repairs or a major overhaul. Other staffers tended to VIP lounges, showers, and a conference room equipped with audiovisual,

fax, telex and copying aids.
Across an almost but not quite invisible dividing line, similar facilities existed for pilots, plus a comprehensive flight planning area. It was in that area that Customs Inspector Wally Arnsler approached the Learjet pilot, Underhill, who was studying a printout of weather data.
"Good evening, Captain. I believe you're scheduled out for Bogotd."

Underhill looked up, not entirely surprised at the sight of the uniform. "That's right."
In fact, both his answer and the flight plan were lies. The Learjet's destination was a dirt landing strip in the Andes near Sion in Peru and the flight there would be nonstop. But the exacting instructions Underhill had been given, and for which the pay would be munificent, specified that his departure data should show Bogotd. In any case, it didn't matter. As soon as he had shed U.S. Air Traffic Control, shortly after takeoff, he could fly anywhere he chose and no one would check or care.
"If you don't mind," Arnsler said politely, "I'd like to inspect your ship and your people aboard."
Underhill did mind, but knew it would do no good to say so. He only hoped that his oddball quartet of passengers could satisfy this Customs guy sufficiently to have him clear the airplane and let the flight get on its way. He was uneasy, all the same, not for the passengers but about his own potential involvement with whatever was going on.
There was something unusual, possibly illegal, about those caskets, Denis Underhill suspected. His best guess was that either they contained items other than bodies, being smuggled out of the country, or, if bodies, they were victims of some kind of Colombian-Peruvian gang war and were being removed before U.S. authorities realized it. Not for a moment did he believe the story told to him at the time the charter was arranged in Bogotd, about accident victims and a grieving family. If that was true, why all the cloak-and-dagger secrecy? Added to that, Underhill was sure at least two of those people aboard the Lear were armed. Why, also, the obvious attempt to avoid what had now happened-an encounter with U.S. Customs?
Though Underhill didn't own the Learjet-it belonged to a wealthy Colombian investor and was registered in that country -he managed it, and along with salary and expenses received a generous share of profits. He was certain his employer knew that comers were sometimes cut with

charters that were either downright illegal or on the borderline, but the man trusted Underhill to handle such situations and keep his investment and his airplane out of jeopardy.

Remembering that trust and his own vested interest, Underhill decided to use the accident victims yarn now, thereby putting himself on the record and, he hoped, the Learjet in the clear whatever else might happen.
"It's a sad situation," he told the Customs man and went on to describe the tale he had been told in BogotA, which-though Underhill didn't know it-tallied with the documents in Miguel's possession.
Arnsler listened noncommittally, then said, "Let's go, Captain.,,
He had encountered Underhill's type before and was not impressed. Arnsler assessed the pilot as a soldier of fortune who for the right kind of money would fly anywhere with any cargo, then later, if trouble erupted, depict himself as an innocent victim deceived by his hirers. All too often, in Arnsler's opinion, such people were flagrant lawbreakers who got away with it.
They walked together from the Hangar One main building to the Learjet 55LR, parked under an overhead canopy. The Lear's clarnshell door was open and Underhill preceded Inspector Arnsler up the steps into the passenger cabin. He announced, "Lady and gentlemen, we have a friendly visit from United States Customs."
During the preceding fifteen minutes, since landing and taxiing in, the four Medellin group members had remained aboard the Learjet on Miguel's orders. Then, after the engines were shut down and both pilots left-Underhill to file a flight plan, Faulkner to supervise refueling-Miguel talked seriously to the other three.
He warned them of the possibility of a Customs inspection and that they must be prepared to play their rehearsed roles. There was a sense of tension, clearly some anxiety, but all indicated they were ready.
Socorro, using the mirror in a makeup compact, slipped a grain or two of pepper beneath each lower eyelid. Almost at once her eyes filled with tears. Rafael this time said no to the pepper and tears; Miguel didn't argue. Baudelio had already disconnected his exterior equipment from

the three caskets, after making sure their occupants were still deeply sedated and would not stir for an hour or more if left unattended.
Miguel made clear he would be principal spokesman. The others would respond to his prompting.

Consequently it was not a total shock when Underhill made his announcement and a Customs officer appeared.
"Good evening, folks." Amsler used the same polite tone he had with Underhill. At the same time he looked around, taking in the caskets secured on one side of the cabin and the passengers on the other-three of them seated, Miguel standing.
Miguel answered, "Good evening, officer." He was holding a sheaf of documents and four passports. He proffered the passports first.
Amsler accepted them but didn't look down. Instead he asked, "Where are you all going and what is the purpose of this flight?"
Having seen the flight plan, Amsler already knew the declared destination and Underhill had described to him the journey's motive. But a Customs and Immigration technique was to start people talking; sometimes their manner, plus any sign of nervousness, revealed more than actual answers.
"This is a tragic journey, officer, and a once happy family is now overwhelmed with grief."
"And you, sir. What is your name?"
"I am Pedro Palacios, not a member of the bereaved family but a close friend who has come to this country to give help in time of need." Miguel was using a new alias for which he had a matching Colombian passport. The passport was real and the picture inside was of himself, but the name and other details, including a U.S. entry visa dated a few days earlier, were skillful fakes. He added, "My friends have asked me to speak for them because they are not proficient in English."
Amsler looked at the passports in his hand, located Miguel's and, glancing up, compared the photo with the face in front of him. "You speak English very well, Seftor Palacios."
Miguel thought quickly, then answered with assurance, "Part of my education was at Berkeley. I love this country

dearly. If it were for some reason other than the present one, I would be happy to be here."
Opening the remaining passports, Amsler compared the photos in them with the other three people, then addressed Socorro. "Madam, have you understood what we have been saying?"
Socorro raised her tear-streaked face. Her heart was beating fast. Haltingly, forsaking her normal fluent English, she answered, "Yes . . . a little."
Nodding, Arnsler returned to Miguel. "Tell me about those." He gestured

to the caskets.
"I have all the required documents
"I'll look at them later. Tell me first."
Miguel let his voice become choked. "There was a terrible accident. This lady's sister, her sister's young son, an older gentleman also of the family, were on vacation in America. They had reached Philadelphia and were driving . . . A truck, out of control, crossed the turnpike at great speed . . . It struck the family's car head-on, killing everyone. Traffic was heavy . . . eight more vehicles crashed into the wreckage, with other deaths . . . a fierce fire burned and the bodiesOh, my god, the bodiesl"
At the mention of bodies, Socorro wailed and sobbed. Rafael had his head down in his hands, his shoulders shaking; Miguel conceded mentally that it was more convincing than the tears. Baudelio simply looked wan and sad.
While speaking, Miguel had watched the Customs inspector carefully. But the man revealed nothing and simply stood waiting, listening, his expression inscrutable. Now Miguel thrust the remaining documents forward. "It is all here. Please, officer, I ask you-read for yourself."
This time Amsler took the papers and leafed through them. The death certificates appeared to be in order; so did the body disposition permits and the entry permissions for Colombia. He went on to read the press clippings, and at the words "bodies burned . . . mutilated beyond recognition," his stomach turned. The photographs were next. One glance was enough and he covered them quickly. He was reminded that earlier

tonight he had considered calling in sick. Why in hell hadn't he? At this moment he felt physically nauseated, and sicker still at the thought of what he had to do next.
Miguel, facing the Customs inspector, had no idea that the other man was worrying as well, but for a different reason.
Wally Amster believed what had been told to him. The documentation was okay, the other material supportive and nobody, he decided, could fake the kind of grief he had witnessed in the past few minutes. A decent family man himself, Amster's sympathy went out to these people and he wished he could send them on their way right now. But he couldn't. By law the caskets had to be opened for inspection and that was the cause of his own distress.
For Wally had a quirk. He could not bear to see dead bodies and was filled with horror at the thought of seeing the mutilated remains

described, first by Palacios, then in the news clippings he had read.
The problem had started when Wally, at age eight, had been forced to kiss his dead grandmother lying in a coffin. The memory of waxen, lifeless flesh against his lips while he struggled and screamed in protest still caused him to shudder, so that for the rest of his life Wally never wanted to see a dead person again. As an adult he teamed that psychiatry had a name for what he felt-necrophobia. WaJly didn't care about that. All he asked was that the dead be kept away from him.
Only once before in his many years as a Customs inspector had he viewed a dead body in line of duty. That was when the corpse of an American arrived late at night from overseas when Amster was at work alone. An accompanying passport showed the deceased's weight as a hundred and fifty pounds, yet the shipment weight was three hundred pounds. Even allowing for a coffin and container, the difference seemed suspicious and Amster reluctantly ordered the coffin opened. The result was horrible.
The dead man inside was gross, having put on tremendous weight since issuance of the passport. Even worse, death and a botched embalming job had horribly bloated the body, causing it to putrefy and produce an unbelievably offensive stench. As

Amsler breathed the disgusting air, he frantically motioned for the coffin to be closed. Then he ran outside and was violently sick. The sense of sickness and that awful smell remained with him for days afterward and the memory, never eclipsed, came back to him now.
Yet stronger than memory, stronger than his fears, was that inflexible sense of duty. He told Miguel, "I'm truly sorry, but regulations require that the caskets be opened for inspection."
It was what Miguel had most feared. He made one last attempt to win by reason. "Oh, please, officer. I beg of you! There has been so much anguish, so much pain. We are friends of America. Surely, for compassion's sake, an exception can be made."
He spoke in Spanish to Socorro, "El hombre quiere abrir los ata~des. "
She screamed in horror, "iAy, nol iMadre de Dios, nol"
Rafael joined in. 'Ee suplicarnos, sehor. iEn el nombre de decencia, Porfavor, nol"
Baudelio, his face ashen, whispered, "lPorfavor, no lo haga, sefior! iNo lo hagal"
Without knowing all the words, Arnsler grasped the essentials of what was being said. He told Miguel, "Please inform your friends that I did not

write the regulations. Sometimes I have no pleasure in enforcing them, but it is my job, my duty."
Miguel didn't bother. There was no point in prolonging this charade. A moment of decision had arrived.
The Customs idiot was prattling on. "I suggest the caskets be taken from the airplane to somewhere private. Your pilot can arrange it. He will get help from Hangar One."
Miguel knew he could not allow it. The caskets must not leave the plane. Therefore only one recourse remained-armed force. They had not come this far to be defeated by a single Customs cabr6n, and he would either kill the man here in the airplane or take him prisoner and execute him later in Peru. The next few seconds would decide. The pilots, too, must be held at gunpoint; otherwise, fearful of later consequences, they would refuse to take off. Miguel's hand slipped under his coat. He felt the Makarov nine-millimeter pistol he was carrying and

slid off the safety. Glancing at Rafael, he saw the big man nod. Socorro had reached into her handbag.
"No," Miguel said, "the caskets will not be moved." He shifted position slightly, placing himself between the Customs man, both pilots and the clamshell door. His fingers tightened on the gun. This was the moment. Nowl
In that same instant, a new voice spoke. "Echo one-seventwo. Sector."
It startled everyone except Wally Arnsler, who was used to hearing the walkie-talkie he carried on his belt. Unaware that anything had changed, he lifted the radio to his lips. "Sector, this is Echo one-seven-two."
"Echo one-seven-two," the male voice rasped back, "Alpha two-six-eight requests you terminate present assignment and contact him immediately by landline at four-six-seven twentyfour twentyfour. Do not, repeat do not, use radio."
"Sector. Ten-four. This is Echo one-seven-two out." Transmitting the acknowledgment, Amsler found it hard to keep elation from his voice. At this very last moment before removing the caskets he had received an honorable reprieve-a clear order he could not disobey. Alpha two-six-eight was the code number of his sector boss for the Miami area and "immediately," in his superior's parlance, meant "move your ass!" Amsler also recognized the phone number given; it was in the cargo section at Miami International.
What the message most likely meant was that an intelligence tip had been

received about an incoming flight carrying contraband-most big Customs breaks came that way-and Amsler was needed to assist. A need to protect the intelligence would be the reason for using landline instead of radio. He must get to a phone fast.

"I have been summoned away, Sefior Palacios," he said. "Therefore I will clear your flight now and you may leave."

Scribbling to complete the needed paper work, Amsler was unaware of the suddenly lowered tension and relief, not only of the passengers but of the pilots. Underhill and Miguel exchanged glances. The pilot, who had sensed that guns were about to be produced, wondered if he should demand that they

be turned over to him before takeoff. Then, assessing Miguel and those glacial eyes, he decided to leave well enough alone. There had already been delay and complication. They would take their clearance and go.

Moments later, as Amsler hurried toward the interior of Hangar One and a phone, he heard the Lea~et's clamshell door close and the engines turning over. He was glad to have that minor episode behind him and wondered what was ahead at Miami International. Would it be the big, important opportunity he had waited for so long?

The Learjet 55LR, clear of United States air space and on course for Sion, Peru, climbed . . . upward, upward . . . through the night.

P A B T

THBEE

Within CBA News, Arthur Nalesworth-urbane, dignified and nowadays known to everyone as Uncle Arthur-had, in his younger years, been a very big wheel. During three decades at the network he worked his way to a series of top appointments, among them vice president of world news coverage, executive producer of the National Evening News,. and executive vice president of the entire News Division. Then his luck changed and, like many before and since, he was shunted to the sidelines at age fifty-six, informed that his days of big responsibility were over and given the choice of early retirement or a minor, makework post.

Most people faced with those alternatives chose retirement out of pride. Arthur Nalesworth, not consumed by self-importance but with a great deal of eclectic philosophy, chose to keep a job-any job. The network, not having expected that decision, then had to find him something to do. First they made it known he would have the title of vice president.

As Uncle Arthur himself was apt to tell it later, "Around here we have

three kinds of vice presidents-working veeps who do honest, productive jobs and earn their keep; headquarters-bureaucrat vice presidents who are nonproducing but positioned to take the blame for those above them if anything goes wrong; and 'has-been' vice presidents, now in charge of paper clips, and I am one of those."

Then, if encouraged, he would confide still further, "One thing those of us who achieve some success in this business

should all prepare for, but most don't, is the day we cease to be important. Near the top of the greasy pole we ought to remind ourselves that sooner than we think we'll be discarded, quickly forgotten, replaced by someone younger and probably better. Of course" . . . and here Uncle Arthur liked to quote Tennyson's Ulysses . . . "Death closes alk but something ere the end, Some work of noble note, may yet be done . . . "

Unexpectedly, after his high-flying days ended, and surprising both the network and himself, Uncle Arthur found his own "work of noble note." It involved young people, candidates for jobs.

TV executives found it a nuisance and sometimes a dilemma when asked an almost identical question by a succession of people-friends, relatives, business contacts, politicos, doctors, dentists, optometrists, stockbrokers, guests at parties, a list ad infinitum. The question was: "Will you help my son/daughter/ nephew/niece/godchild/pupil/prot6g6 get a job in television news?"

There were days, especially at college graduation time, when it seemed to those already in the business that an entire generation of young people was attempting to batter down the gates and enter.

As to their would-be sponsors, some could be brushed off easily by the TV executives so approached, but by no means all. Among the non-brushables were important advertisers or their agencies, members of CBA's board of directors, Washingtonians having clout at the White House or on Capitol Hill, other politicians whom it would be foolish to offend, important news sources, and many more.

In BUA days-the initials signifying "Before Uncle Arthur"-CBA executives would spend more time than they should making phone calls to one another about vacancies, then attempting to placate those whose sons/daughters, et al, simply could not be accommodated.

But not anymore. Arthur Nalesworth's assignment, created partly out of desperation by CBA News management, saved his colleagues all of that trouble.

Now, when confronted by a job applicant's sponsor, a CBA

big shot could say, "Certainly I'll help. We have a special vice president to deal with bright young people. Tell your candidate to call this number, mention my name, and he (or she) will be given an appointment for an interview."

The interview was always given, because Arthur Nalesworth, in the tiny, windowless office he had been assigned, interviewed everybody. There had never been so many job applicant interviews before and all were lengthy, lasting an hour, sometimes more. During the interview wide-ranging questions were asked and answered, confidences exchanged. At the end, the interviewee left feeling good about CBA even if no job resulted-as was mostly the case-and Nalesworth was left with a perceptive insight into the personality and potential of the young person he had faced across his desk.

At first the number of interviews and the time they took became a news department joke, with sardonic references to "time filling" and "empire building." Also, because of Nalesworth's sympathetic encouragement of every applicant, promising or not, the description "Uncle Arthur" was coined and stuck.

But gradually a grudging respect replaced the skepticism. It evolved still further when Uncle Arthur strongly urged employing certain young people who, when hired, moved quickly and successfully into the news department's mainstream. In time it became a source of pride, like possessing a diploma, to have been an Uncle Arthur choice.

Now, with Uncle Arthur in his sixty-fifth year and normal retirement only five months away, there was talk among the News Division brass of pleading with him not to go. Suddenly, to everyone's surprise, Arthur Nalesworth was important once again.

Thus, on a Sunday morning in the third week of September, Uncle Arthur arrived at CBA News headquarters to play his part in the search for Jessica, Nicholas and Angus Sloane. As instructed by Les Chippingham. on the telephone the night before, he came to the special task force conference room where Partridge, Rita and Teddy Cooper were on hand to greet him.

The man they met was broad-shouldered and stocky, of

medium height, with a cherubic face and a full head of carefully brushed and parted silver hair. He had an assured, easy manner. Acknowledging that

it was not a regular working day, instead of his usual dark suit Uncle Arthur wore a brown Harris tweed jacket, light gray slacks with a knife-edge crease, a bolo tie and highly polished brogues.
When Uncle Arthur spoke it was with a sonorous, almostChurchillian delivery. A former colleague once remarked that any opinion Arthur Nalesworth expressed was as if engraved on tablets of stone.
After shaking hands with Partridge and Rita and being introduced to Cooper, Uncle Arthur said, "I understand you need sixty of my brightest and best-if I can assemble that many at short notice. First, though, I suggest you tell me what's in the wind."
"Teddy will do that," Partridge said. He motioned to Cooper to begin.
Uncle Arthur listened while the British researcher described the attempts to identify the kidnappers and the apparent dead end now reached. Cooper then outlined his idea of searching through newspaper real estate advertising in an attempt to locate the headquarters the kidnappers might have used, based on his theory of their renting space within a twentyfive-mile radius of the crime scene.
Partridge added, "We know it's a long shot, Arthur, but at the moment it's the best we have."
"My own experience," Uncle Arthur replied, "is that when you have nothing whatever to proceed on, long shots are the way to go."
"I'm glad you think so, sir," Cooper said.
Uncle Arthur nodded. "A thing about long shots is that while you seldom find exactly what you're looking for, you're likely to stumble over something else that will help you in a different way." He added, speaking to Cooper directly, "You'll also find, young man, that among the young people I'm about to call, some are dynamos, very much like yourself."
Cooper accompanied Uncle Arthur to his small office where the older man spread files and index cards around until they

covered the surface of his desk. He then began telephoning-a steady procession of calls having a common pattern, though each sounding personal and as if a familiar friend were on the line.
". . . Well, Ian, you said you wanted an opportunity to get into this business, no matter how modest, and one has just come up." . . . "No, Bernard, I cannot guarantee that two weeks' work will lead to something permanent, but why not take a chance? .. . . Quite so, Pamela, I agree this temporary job isn't much for a journalism major. Remember, though, that some of broadcasting's biggest names began as gofers." . .

. "Yes, Howard, you're right in saying five dollars fifty cents an hour is not a bountiful wage. But if money's your main concern, forget a news career and head for Wall Street." . . . "Felix, I do understand the timing may not be convenient; it seldom is. If you wish to be a TV news person you'll have to walk out, if necessary, on your wife's birthday party ... . . . "Don't lose sight of the fact, Erskine, that you'll be able to put on your r6sum6 you did a special job for CBA."

At the end of an hour Uncle Arthur had made twelve calls resulting in seven "sures" who would report for work the following day, plus one probable. He continued to work patiently through his lists.

One call made outside his lists by Uncle Arthur was to his longtime friend Professor Kenneth K. Goldstein, associate dean of the Columbia School of Journalism. When the CBA network problem was explained, the educator was instantly sympathetic and helpful.

While both men knew that heavy scholastic pressures made the involvement of undergraduate students impossible, some graduate students working on master's degrees in journalism would likely be interested and available. So might other recent graduates who had not yet found employment.

"What we'll do here," the associate dean said, "is rate this an emergency. I'll do my best to come up with a dozen or so names and will be back to you later."

"Columbia forever!" Uncle Arthur affirmed, then continued with other phoning.

Teddy Cooper, meanwhile, returned to the conference room to prepare a task plan for the temporary workers who would arrive the next day. His two assistant researchers had come in to help and together they pored over Editor and Publisher International Year Book, local maps and phone directories, selecting libraries and newspaper offices to be visited and routes and schedules to be followed.

At the same time Cooper drew up specifications to guide the young recruits who would sift through three months of classified advertising in some one hundred and sixty newspapers. What would they look for? As well as the proviso of being within twentyfive miles of Larchmont, Cooper envisaged: