



חדשות האגודה – אוקטובר 2018 The Israeli Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy

- **המועדון בירושלים:** יעסוק בספר "הטירה הנעה" מאת דיאנה וויין ג'ונס (כתר, 2005). מועדון חודש נובמבר בירושלים יעסוק בספר "מלבד הכלב" מאת קוני ויליס (כנרת זמורה ביתן, 1999). למעקב אחר מועדי מועדונים נוספים ניתן להצטרף לקבוצה **מועדון הקריאה הירושלמי של האגודה**. חסרי פייסבוק יכולים ליצור קשר במייל עם מרכזת המועדון בירושלים - **גלי אחיטוב**, ולהצטרף לקבוצת הוואטס'אפ של המועדון.

- **המועדון בת"א:** יעסוק בספר "המישה עשר מעגלי החיים הראשונים של הארי אוגוסט" מאת קלייר נורת' (יניב, 2016).

- **המועדון בחיפה:** יעסוק בספר "העיר והכוכבים" מאת ארתור סי קלארק (אודיסאה, 2003). המועדון יתקיים ביום חמישי 11:10 ב-19:00 בבית פרטי ברחוב אבא הלל סילבר, חיפה. מנחה: סטלה גנגרינוביץ'. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמות ולנרשמים למועדון, במייל של **טניה חייקין**.

- **המועדון הגליל מערבי בכרמיאל-משגב:** ביום רביעי, 24.10 יתקיים מפגש על הספר "בשורות טובות" מאת ניל גיימן וטרי פראצ'ט (אופוס, 1993). המפגשים יתקיימו בשעה 20:00, בבית פרטי במשגב. כתובת מדויקת תינתן לנרשמות ולנרשמים. מנחה: **קרן פיניץ**.

כל האירועים של האגודה מופיעים בלוח האירועים (שפע אירועים מעניינים, הרצאות, סדנאות, מפגשים ועוד)

או לדף האגודה בפייסבוק. לקבלת עדכונים שוטפים על מפגשי מועדון הקריאה ברחבי הארץ ניתן להצטרף ל**רשימת התפוצה**

Society information is available (in Hebrew) at the Society's site: <http://www.sf-f.org.il>

This month's roundup:

- Great news – Zion's Fiction was launched – more below
- Greater news – Thanks to the new contacts I made at the book launch we have stories coming in, with the first from Israeli SF writer Guy Hasson one of the contributors to the book
- Thanks Oleg Sverdlov (runs our official back-issue repository) for bringing back **GREEN** to the **CC dragon logo**
- A very brief note about the "Zion's Fiction" book launch (more in an upcoming issue)
- Also, an interesting "Sheer Science": *Sci-Fi Spaceships – Can They Really Fly?*

– As usual, interesting tidbits from various websites.

– Your editor, Leybl Botwinik

Freely Formatted Feedback:

Hi:

Just a quick note on a letter from John Purcell in CC, mid 2018. John was commenting on "Mystifying," the audience comments directed at a film (an awful **stf*** film) in his case at Mimicons in the late 70's and 1980. He suspects that Mystery Science Theater 3000 (or was it 2000) got the inspiration from the Mimicon feature.

Well, sir, I'm now 79 and we used to do this when I was a kid. At Saturday movie time (EVERY Saturday) the crime movie or the western was usually very bad: story, script, acting, scenery, direction, and editing. Just awful. The crowd, made up of 10-15 year olds would shout at the film characters and have a good time at these awful movies. If the character was coming cautiously through a doorway (with a villain hidden behind the door) there were shouts of "Don't go in!" and "Oh no, not again! Don't you ever learn?" and the like.

In a western, with a posse galloping across a field there was frequently anomalies, met with "Hey! Look at the truck on the highway behind them!." Or phone poles. Or an airplane going by. etc. This made the movie bearable.

This behavior became standard on some "horror" TV shows. We had a character on Philadelphia TV who would be shown as an insert into the movie doing something associated with what the movie was doing. If a couple of characters were whispering secrets about their doings, our host character would be shown wiping a table (or the like) while cocking his head in an attempt to hear what they were saying. Or, if they were saying there were afraid of going into a building, he would be shown in a kitchen, cutting up a chicken. (He wouldn't really cut it up ... it was rubber.)

My brother said there was a program like this in New York, too. This goes on today as well, but I don't watch such stuff any more. You see, I'm all grown up now and find it unfunny. Although, sometimes it was and probably still is.

I have heard, also, that the audiences at Shakespearian plays would often enter into dialog with the actors, and even THROW THINGS. So, this is a common enough event in theater that I don't think anyone can lay claim to originating it in our time. Sorry.

Gary L

LB: Thanks Gary – Wishing you good health and success)

Some fun from the Websites:

If I am not me – who am I?

We're Probably Living in a Simulation, Elon Musk Says

By Mike Wall, Space.com Senior Writer | September 7, 2018



The Andromeda galaxy and everything else in the known universe, including us, could be part of an advanced simulation. Indeed, this is the most probable scenario, SpaceX CEO Elon Musk said on comedian Joe Rogan's podcast on Sept. 7, 2018. Credit: S. Ozime

[Elon Musk](#) thinks we're all probably trapped in a "Matrix"-like pseudo existence.

[The universe](#) is 13.8 billion years old, so any civilizations that may have arisen throughout the cosmos have had loads and loads of time to hone their technological know-how, the SpaceX founder and CEO explained early this morning (Sept. 7) during a long, wide-ranging and very entertaining appearance on comedian Joe Rogan's popular podcast, "[The Joe Rogan Experience](#)."

"If you assume any rate of improvement at all, then games will be indistinguishable from reality, or civilization will end. One of those two things will occur," Musk said. "Therefore, we are most likely in a simulation, because we exist." [[13 Ways to Hunt Intelligent Aliens](#)]

To read more, see:

https://www.space.com/41749-elon-musk-living-in-simulation-rogan-podcast.html?utm_source=sd-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20180907-sdc

Now we're talking

The ray-gun is no longer science fiction

The idea of the ray-gun has been central to science-fiction for decades. Now it's science fact. Cathal O'Connell reports. Oct, 2018

"However it is done, it is certain that a beam of heat is the essence of the matter. Heat, and invisible, instead of visible, light. Whatever is combustible flashes into flame at its touch, lead runs like water, it softens iron, cracks and melts glass ..."

HG Wells, *The War of the Worlds*, 1897.



The turret emerges from the ship and pivots, following its target with its telescopic eye. Silently it fires, and two kilometres away, a small, glowing spot appears on the fuselage of an aircraft—the engine bursts into flames.

Not the Millennium Falcon. Not the USS Enterprise. But the USS Ponce, an American Navy vessel in 2015. The ray-gun is here.

In *War of the Worlds*, the invading Martians devastated Earth's forces with their 'heat-ray'. Variants of the ray-gun have been a mainstay of science fiction ever since, from the phasers of Star Trek to the blasters of Star Wars.

But though the US military pursued the idea for decades—culminating in Reagan's proposed Star Wars defence system for using satellites to blast missiles out of the sky—the research never bore fruit. Not, at least, until now.

To read more, see:

<https://cosmosmagazine.com/technology/the-ray-gun-is-here>

The Grand Launching of Zion's Fiction (25-Sep-2018)



Mark this date in Israeli SF/F history!

I was honoured to be at the book launching – but disappointed at the low turnout. It was probably to be expected, since it took place in the middle of one of Israel’s most exciting SF events: ICON 2018. Still... That having been said, the guests of honour who took the front ‘stage’ were the co-editors Sheldon Teitelbaum and Emanuel Lottem, and the book’s artist Avi Katz.

Since I just bought the book, I’ll leave a fuller report for next time. Only managed to get through the 2 intros, and will start with the actual stories, so by next month I’ll have a more solid review. However, the intros themselves are worth the price of the book (order via Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Zions-Fiction-Treasury-Speculative-Literature/dp/1942134525>). The first, by Robert Silverberg, and the second by the two co-editors (which is a pretty thorough overview of the development and growth of SF interest and authorship in Israel and the eventual making of this first collection of “Zion’s Fiction” – yes, plans are already in the works for Volume II).

So, more next time, but don’t wait for me, buy your own copy today!
- Leybl

Sheer* Science: Flights of Fantasy? How realistic are sci-fi spaceships? An expert ranks your favorites BY Chris Taylor – SEP 2018

(* In memory of Aharon Sheer (7"ד) – Founding Editor)

LB: Saw this fascinating article and felt it was a perfect fit for our (ir)regular science column. Go ahead and read the intro, and then go on to the rest of the article. It is part of Mashables’s ongoing series analyzing the scientific level of ... Sci-Fi:

This post is part of [Science of Sci-Fi](#), Mashable's ongoing series dissecting the science (or lack of science) in our favorite sci-fi movies, TV shows, and books.

At more than 60 years into the Space Age, fictional spaceships appear on our screens at a far greater frequency than the real things launch in real life.



But that doesn't mean they'll actually fly.

When it comes to imagining interstellar travel, the history of spaceflight up until now hasn't given science-fiction designers a whole lot to work with. All we've seen are basic rockets (useful for escaping Earth's gravity well), plane-like space shuttles (useful for re-entering it), Moon modules (the lunar lander), and modular orbital tubes (the International Space Station).

On the un-crewed side, we've got satellites, deep space probes and Martian rovers — all designed for a very narrow range of jobs just within our solar system.

When that job is transporting humans between stars, in theory, spacecraft will have fewer design constraints. But does that mean they'll appear in all the weird and wonderful shapes and styles we've seen them in science fiction on the big screen and TV?

To help us assess the realism of famous sci-fi vessels, we turned to Bobak Ferdowsi. (You may know him better as [@tweetsoutloud](#) or the "Mohawk guy," the engineer who became [internet famous the night he helped land the Curiosity Rover on Mars.](#))

Here's what he had to say on a variety of well-known spacecraft — starting with the most famous fictional spaceship of all: The USS Enterprise (original vs. Next Generation models)

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To read the rest of the article, see:

<https://mashable.com/article/spaceships-realistic-sci-fi-science/>

And now, introducing an original story by one of the authors in “Zion’s Fiction”:

THE ASSASSINATION

Written by Guy Hasson

He wears the story of his life on his face. That first second, looking at him in person, is a rehashing of everything I know about him: The hardships, the battles, the killings, the fight for freedom, the struggle against the British Mandate, the wars with the Arabs, and the cruel battles against the traitors within. I can see the 1930's and 40's and 50's on his face. Decisions and fates have been carved in the stone of his skin more than fifty years ago. So much of a person's face is not captured on a TV screen.

His eyes move past my face, scan the large mirror behind me, then come to rest on the conference table between us.

“My name is David Sanders,” I offer him my hand. “A pleasure to meet you, sir.”

“I'm sure,” he mutters, and rather than shake my hand, moves to sit down. A ninety-year-old body moves slowly, and it still takes me a couple of seconds to notice that although he did not deign to give the organization the respect of a handshake, he had seated himself in front of the mirror.

I sit opposite him, making sure I don't hide any part of him.

“You're recording this, I suppose.”

“Yes, sir.”

He shrugs and moves his head as if he's lived through this dozens of time before. “How many times do I have to be right,” his mouth curls up in a slight smile, “to be right?”

"This is the last time, sir."

Something in the way I say that makes him look at me. He scans me up and down.

"How old are you?" he says. "Twenty-six? Twenty-seven?"

"Twenty-six, sir."

He looks down and laughs. "I have grandchildren older than you."

"I know. They're two very beautiful women."

"Their children are even more beautiful."

"That's right, sir."

He nods. He's got five great-grandchildren, ten grandchildren, and three children – two boys and a girl, all born to the same woman, Dinah Shamgar, his devoted wife. She was the one who helped him dress before he came here, no doubt.

I had seen pictures of her when the two of them had met, two 23-year-olds in the middle of a war for freedom. Oh, she was something. The two had met by accident. The British intelligence had decided Aryeh Shamgar was the man responsible for the assassination of Colonel Tanner at the King David Hotel. Shamgar needed an apartment in which to hide out, and the Underground ordered him to hide at Dinah Gat's apartment. She was a bike messenger for the Lehi, the smallest and most militant of the resistance groups, passing notes from one commander to another, and, of course, ready to lay down her life for independence. Aryeh lived on the floor of her bathroom for six months, keeping quiet, lest the neighbors hear. When she was out, he would store his feces and piss in nylon bags in fear that someone might hear or smell the toilet. When it was dark, he would occasionally wander the streets of Jaffa with a false beard, dressed as an Orthodox Jew.

After the Nazis were beaten in '45, after the British partitioned and left 'Palestine' in '48, and after the Independence War was won in '49, they were married. They have been married, now, for 60 years.

"Would you like some tea, sir? Coffee? We have mineral water here for you."

"Just get it over with. I won't be here more than ten minutes."

"Yes, sir. For the record, this is October 16th, 2010. My name is David Sanders." As I talk, I see his eyes glaze over in impatience. "I am sitting here with Aryeh Shamgar in Tel Aviv. The hour is—"

"You're a liberal, aren't you?" he cuts me off.

"Sir? I don't know what that has—"

"You're a liberal," he states.

"My job here has nothing to do with—"

"Your job here is to find out the 'truth' about how we drove the occupying British forces out of our country, how evil we were and how good they and the Arabs were."

"My job is to find out the truth about what happened, sir."

"And you happen to be a liberal."

"That has nothing to do with—"

"Why afraid to admit to the truth? Show some guts, show some balls. This is what our meeting is all about, isn't it? Guts. Guts and truth. Come on, tell me the truth."

I look in his eyes. He's sharper than the hi-tech geniuses I work with. He put me on the defensive on something I shouldn't be defensive about. I'm here with facts.

“Yes, sir,” I say, not moving my gaze from his. “I’m a liberal.”

“And liberals like you have been coming after me since the Seventies. Every two years I’m invited to see another set of ‘facts’ or ‘papers’ that show that the assassination of Colonel Tanner was unjustified and cold-blooded. Every time they come cocky. And every time they are proven completely and utterly false.”

“Yes, sir. That’s right, sir.”

“And every last one of them is a liberal. Imagine that. When they try to undermine my heroic act, they are actually trying to undermine the footing and legitimacy of the fight for this county.”

“Yes, sir. And although I am a liberal, I would like nothing better than to realize that everything I learned about you in school was right. You are my hero, sir.”

He thinks of answering, but after a second closes his mouth and locks his arms around his chest.

He *is* my hero, and has been my hero since childhood. He has been a hero for more than sixty years. A hero of the country, given countless honors and medals, all because of his one assassination, the one that turned the tide of the British Mandate, the one that got the British public to decide they should relinquish their control over Palestine and leave it for the Arabs and the Jews. On the waves of his public adulation, he was a cabinet secretary for ten years, responsible for Israel’s military acquisitions. When he left that office, he had countless offers from lucrative business companies. The successes he had with the five he chose to run made sure he and his family would be set for generations.

This is the man whose life I have to crumble. This is the man whose heart may be too weak to withstand it.

“And like I said, sir,” I continue, my voice even, “this is the last time.”

His eyes watch me sharply, then, rather than be confrontational, he leans back calmly. “Dispense with formalities, then.”

“Ummm... all right, sir. This,” I put my hand on a folder, and spin it around so that he can read it, “contains information about our institute, Past Intelligence.” He no more than glances at it. He doesn’t have his reading glasses. “We are not a liberal organization. In fact, most of our work is done for military intelligence and the Mossad.” He raises an eyebrow with surprise and respect. “Though we *are* an independent foundation. This particular project, pertaining to you, is not military in any way and therefore whatever facts we discover are not subject to secrecy. The manner in which we uncover these facts, however, *is* subject to secrecy.”

I move the folder to his side of the table. “What we do is, we use new technology, developed at the Weizmann Institute, and available only in Israel so far.” He squints at me, trying to see where I am leading him. “The technology deals with... Well, receiving information through time, from... the past. Basically, what it means is, we can ‘hear’ things that happened in a small window between sixty-five and seventy years ago and record them on...” I almost say a fancy word, and I remember that I am talking to someone from a different age, “on tape.”

“You can *hear* things from the past?”

“Yes, sir. Basically, we have a spy satellite... into the past. But always sixty-five to seventy years ago.”

“And you... record those things?”

“Yes, sir. And everything’s real. We are sanctioned, as I said, by the government and the military and the—”

"Sixty-five to seventy?" he cuts me short again, leaning forward. "Sixty-eight years ago I assassinated Colonel Tanner."

"Yes, sir. And we have that recording. In fact, we have the recording of each and every conversation in the British military that led to the conclusion that it was you who was behind it and to the decision that you must be hunted down—"

"That can't be true," he says, but his eyes glisten with the memory of the past, a memory he has been living again and again every day, I'm sure, since it had happened. That long lost past is his present still. He lives it daily. He breathes it. He speaks of it and people speak to him about it. He is invited to other countries to speak of it. He makes headlines when 'liberals' like me try to discredit him. "You can't hear the past!" In this instant, I see in his eyes that the past I've listened to is his present.

"It is possible, sir, and we have put all the DVD's, uh... the *tapes*—"

"I know what a DVD is and I know how to work it!"

"Yes, sir. We put all the DVD's of all the recordings in the folder for you. You can listen to them at home. They also include all the conversations in the top echelons of the Lehi that led to your hiding away, and even the first time you met Dinah, at her apartment. We didn't know that that would be what we would hear, and we thought you would like it, so we put it in for you. We didn't listen to anything else with you two that came later."

He puts his finger on the folder, "All that is here?"

"Yes, sir."

"And this technology is real? This is not a joke?"

"No joke, sir. Latest technology. Only we have it. And I trust you to keep it a secret."

He nodded, for an instant a dutiful soldier again, serving the interests of his country, "Of course."

"Now... we also happened to record – and that is what we were actually looking for – everything that led up to the most famous assassination of a British soldier that the Lehi has ever carried out. We have the recording of the orders you were given."

His eyes widen. "You do?"

"Yes, sir."

There is a war in his eyes now. Something new appears there. It's as if he is fighting some urge. Then, in less than a second, it disappears, and age-old anger reappears, "If your recording does not match my version, word for word, then your entire institution is a sham!"

"No, sir. Our recording corroborates your version, word for word. It corroborates the version you've retold in dozens of documentaries and inquiries here and abroad about the orders you were given and how you carried them out. All that is now corroborated by unshakeable facts."

His anger abates slightly. "Good." Then a sparkle appears in his eyes, "Can I see it? Is it on the DVD?" That sparkle: It's young. It's like he's 23 years old again, talking to me with the energy of youth.

"Yes, sir. Of course we put it on the DVD."

He takes a breath, and that breath feels cleaner and fuller than all his previous breaths. "Excellent."

"In fact, I'd like to hear it right now, with you, if you don't mind."

"No, no, not at all."

I nod and take the remote into my hand. There is a big HD screen to my right and to his left. The HD is redundant, since there is nothing to look at. We only capture sounds, and so we only play sound.

I press 'PLAY' and the recording I have heard so many times before begins to play.

It begins with the sounds of the street. They aren't muffled by a closed window. This was the second floor in a stone building in Allenby street, the temporary hiding place of Nathan Shmuelevitch, one of the three Lehi leaders. The Tel Aviv weather was unbearably hot and humid, and this was in January of 1942. As Ben Gurion had said, we were fighting the Nazis alongside the British, as if there was no British occupation of our country, and we were fighting the British occupation, as if there was no world war with the Germans.

You can hear the market outside: chickens, a donkey, and the occasional car engine sounds – a sound that does not exist today.

His entire body perks up. "That sounds exactly like—" He looks at me. "You *do* have that technology?"

I nod and point to my ear, urging him to listen.

"Shamgar, come here," a man's voice urges.

Shamgar's mouth drops, and he slams his aged fist on the conference table. He had immediately recognized the voice of Nathan Shmuelevitch, his commander, the man who at that time led the military arm of the Lehi, and would later lead a great political movement that would change the country's history.

His voice doesn't sound like it was recorded sixty-eight years ago, because it wasn't. It sounds like the cleanest sound one can achieve with today's technology, because it was recorded only two months ago by us, as if we had the recording equipment in the room.

"Yes, commander, I'm here." This is Shamgar's voice. He sounds like a different person, his voice higher, his words faster, his rhythm different.

Shamgar doesn't react to this as powerfully as he did to his commander's voice. His body is frozen with intensity.

"Sit down, soldier."

"Yes, sir."

There is some scuffling of a wooden chair dragged on the floor tiles. Another car passes in the background.

"That's exactly what the street sounded like," Shamgar whispers, a tear in his eye. "I'd forgotten how much I remember."

I nod. The recording continues, "I have dire news and a great task, for which I need my best soldier."

"Yes, sir!"

"There is news from our intelligence about the latest plans of the Mandate."

"Yes, sir."

"Colonel Tanner has sent his recommendations to Churchill."

"That's exactly his voice," Abraham's voice is a whisper. I press 'PAUSE'. "How did you do that?"

"It's the technology, I told you. I—"

"Turn it back on," he raps his fingers on the wooden desk. "Continue!"

I press 'PLAY' and Shmuelevitch continues to talk, "Our intelligence has intercepted a copy of it. The Colonel believes a harder hand is required with the Jews. He requests a mandate that following any violent event on our part, he will have complete freedom to arrest any Jew, guilty or not, and let them rot in jail. Guilty ones will be sent to Africa. And the ones he deems most guilty will be executed."

Shamgar points at the screen. "Yes! That's right!" —I press 'PAUSE' immediately—"That's what he said! That's exactly what he said! I remember! That was it!"

I nod and wait.

He looks at me. "Did you stop it? Go on! Go on!"

I press 'PLAY'.

"But that goes against every principle the British claim they believe in." Shamgar's young voice booms. He was agitated and appalled.

"Yes, I would have said that!" the older Shamgar in front of me is riveted.

"Churchill would never approve!" The young Shamgar half shouts, sounding like a teenager whose voice was still changing.

"Yes," Nathan Shmuelevitch says. "These were my sentiments. But we have evidence, irrefutable evidence, that Churchill has sent word that Tanner's initiative is to be followed."

"What!" shouts the young Aryeh Shamgar.

The old Aryeh Shamgar nods. "That's right."

"Calm down, soldier."

"Yes, sir."

There was noise of a wooden chair moving on a stone surface. Shamgar had apparently jumped out of his chair and was now getting back into it.

"Churchill is busy with the Germans and has no patience for us anymore. Are you following me?"

"Yes, sir!"

I look at Shamgar's eyes. It is as if he is having an epiphany.

"Churchill's message is so sensitive, and he is so afraid that it will find its way to us, that it has been entrusted to one man alone, a confidante. In spite of Churchill's attempts, we have intercepted that message and have received it before Colonel Tanner. The confidante will deliver the message personally to Tanner. In fact, it will be delivered later today." There is a slight pause. I always assumed Shmuelevitch was letting Shamgar absorb the news. "We can stop this. It is up to you, Shamgar, to stop this. Colonel Tanner must be assassinated tonight. By you. Alone. Immediately after he receives the message. We will be sending a message to Churchill that the Jews can be even more trouble than they have been so far, and that this new policy is unacceptable.

"I need a brave, fearless soldier. I need someone who can walk into the King David Hotel, into a party filled with British soldiers, cool enough to appear as one of the help, cool enough not to be intimidated by the soldiers. I need someone brave enough to walk up to Colonel Sanders when he walks to the bathroom, put a bullet through his chest, then walk out calmly through a room filled with enemies. Are you that man, Shamgar?"

"Yes, sir!"

Every time I listen to this part of the recording, I keep thinking that the main difference between Shamgar's voice today and his voice then is that today you can hear the past, you can hear the battles, the decisions, and the decades with which he had to live with those

decisions. But back then, you couldn't hear any of that in his voice. His past was a child's past, a teenager's past, devoid of scars.

Shmuelevitch continues. "Am I making the right choice by letting you go on this mission on which the fate of our independence hangs?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Good man. Go to your house, then. Prepare. In an hour, a man will drop by with plans. Open them when you're alone. Read them, memorize them, then burn them."

"Yes, sir!"

"An hour later, another man will drop off your escape plans. Open them when you're alone. Read them, memorize them, know them by heart, then burn them. This mission will be just you... alone."

"Yes, sir!"

"Dismissed, soldier."

"Yes, sir!"

I press 'PAUSE'.

"Basically," I say. "That ends this part of the recording. There's some noises, and you leave the room."

Shamgar is looking at me. He can hardly breathe.

"That's it!" he says, his voice filled with air. "That's the proof right there! You have incontrovertible truth right there! That's just the way it happened!"

"Yes, sir."

He's looking around himself, trying to get a hold over his excitement, maybe even looking for more witnesses. "Every time I've claimed this was the reason we killed Tanner, the liberals and the British would say that that couldn't have been the case, that the British would never behave like that, that there was no such order. But there was and they did! They did! That's proof of everything I've been saying for decades!"

"Yes, sir." I want to add my 'but', but he continues...

"Oh... Oh... That is unbelievable. I can't believe... I was there again... I was there inside the room... This technology... I'm never going to have to need to prove the justice of my deeds again. I can go to my grave without a scandal hanging over me."

"Sir, I just—"

"You said I have recordings of all of this?"

"Yes, sir. This, and all other stages of the assassination and escape. Of you and your wife meeting. Of—"

"Amazing!" He is ecstatic. Suddenly, his entire life seems vindicated.

It hurts me that much more to bring him down from such a high to total abjection. "Sir, there is one more recording I need you to listen to."

"Yes, yes!" He is too excited. He is too happy. His guard is down.

"The following is a recording of events that took place thirty hours earlier, in Nathan Shmuelevitch's office. In this recording..." I am losing nerve. I phrase it as delicately as I can, letting the recording bear the brunt of the blame, "In this recording, we can hear Shmuelevitch make the decision to assassinate Colonel Tanner."

"All right," Shamgar is energized. "Play it!"

"Yes, sir." I switch to the next track on the DVD, and it begins to play.

The street noises are different. They're quieter. There is no hustle. A muezzin is heard in the background – a morning prayer from sixty-eight years ago. There is scuffling of a chair.

"Sit." It is Shmuelevitch's voice. His tone is friendly, not at all the commander-like tone used on Shamgar.

Another wooden chair moves on stone. The muezzin's prayer grows softer. A man is beginning to set up shop right underneath the window and call out orders to his lackeys.

"What have you found out?" Shmuelevitch asks.

"I followed the subject from yesterday afternoon until she went to sleep." This is another voice. Young – everyone was young in the Lehi – and serious and idealistic sounding.

Shamgar straightens at the sound of that voice. "I know him! Who's that?"

I don't press 'PAUSE'. The recording continues, "What did you find out?"

"The subject spent a routine day—"

"Yochi!" Shamgar shouts. I press 'PAUSE'. "Yochanan Sfard!"

That's right. Yochanan Sfard was tasked a year earlier with creating the Lehi's intelligence system out of nothing, a task he had done magnificently well, and would soon become one of the Lehi's legendary leaders. Sfard and Shamgar would be friends, though not close friends, for most of the fifties, until Sfard develops cancer and dies in 1962.

"Go on," Shamgar orders me. "This is unbelievable. Go on, go on!"

I rewind a bit, and press 'PLAY'.

"The subject spent a routine day in her home—" Sfard was saying.

"Don't call her 'the subject'," Shmuelevitch interrupts. "She's got a name, and this isn't about the resistance."

"Elizabeth," the young Sfard amends his statement, "was at her friend's house all day and all the previous night."

"'Elizabeth'?" Shamgar whispers to himself. It sounds familiar, but he hasn't put the pieces together yet.

"At six she began to dress for an auspicious occasion," Sfard continues to report.

"Yes?" Shmuelevitch said.

"What are they talking about?" Shamgar whispers to me.

"Listen!" I say.

"At seven she met with Colonel Tanner at Chaled's fish restaurant at the Jaffa pier."

"She met with him?" Shmuelevitch's voice was wound tight.

"They ate for an hour," Sfard continues the report. "They seemed... amicable. Smiling a lot. Intimate in nature."

"Yes?" It was as if Shmuelevitch was gritting his teeth.

"They left together, and took a long walk on the beach to his house."

"Colonel Tanner's house?"

"Right."

Shamgar squints and looks at me. "There were two Elizabeths?"

I shake my head and raise a finger, indicating there was only one.

“She stayed the night at his place... At their place.”

Shamgar touches his cheek. “Tanner’s wife was living at her friend’s house? Why were they following her?”

“Listen,” I say.

“At eight twenty seven p.m. I took a risk and looked through the window. They were in the middle of a... sexual act. Then I—”

“All right, all right,” the young Shmuelevitch interrupts him. “Thank you. We got the data we wanted.”

“We certainly did.”

There is silence for a long time, then a chair is pushed back on the floor quickly: Shmuelevitch had gotten up suddenly, no longer able to sit down, “She told me she was never coming back to him. She told me it was over. She said she felt revulsion when he was near her. I felt she was...”

Shamgar looks at me, horrified. “Are you saying they had an affair?”

“I’m not saying anything. What we’re hearing is what happened.”

Shamgar listens. “Why am I not hearing anything?”

“There’s quiet,” I said. “Listen.”

All we could hear was more and more vendors setting up shop in the street. The muezzin had finished his prayer. The silence lasts for more than a minute, in which I could see Shamgar’s impatience grow.

Then, finally, we heard Shmuelevitch’s voice. “Yochi, Yochi... I can’t let this happen. I can’t lose her. I can’t lose her to him. I can’t let her do that. I can’t think when she’s... I would die if she was...” And as if we could hear the wheels turning, one thought of death becomes another thought of death, “I’m going to kill him! He’s not going to take my woman from me!”

“No,” Shamgar says.

“You know I’ve always thought we should kill high-profile British soldiers,” Sfarid says. “And who’s more high-profile than Colonel Tanner? You’re too fearful of killing the British.”

“No no no,” Shamgar shakes his head.

“Yes... Yes...” Shmuelevitch says. “We *should* kill them. You’re right. It will send a message to the Brits!”

“It will.”

“That we’re powerful.”

“Yes.”

“No!” Shamgar shouts. His eyes were screaming.

The recording continues, “That we’re not ones to be messed with.”

“Yes.”

“All right. All right. Let me think. I need a devoted soldier, one willing to die for the cause. A brave soldier.”

“No! False! No! False!” Shamgar is shaking his head almost uncontrollably.

“I’ve got just the man for you. Aryeh Shamgar.”

“He’s young, isn’t he?”

"Not as much as the others. He's been around. He has nerves of steel. And he's been begging me for some real action. And... he's disposable."

"Lies! Lies! Lies! Lies!" Shamgar slams his open hands on the table, and then buries his face in them.

"Yes... Yes..." Shmuelevitch is excited. "All right. I'll start planning. I want Colonel Tanner's complete itinerary for the next few days. I need to know where and when would be the best place to strike."

"I'll have it for you in two hours."

"Excellent."

"We are not going to rest until that man is dead."

"No, we're not."

"No, we're not. Now go. You have a job to do."

There are noises of people walking on stone, and then a door closing. Shamgar is looking at me. I look down. The recording isn't over.

Without warning, we hear Shmuelevitch scream, "Whore! Whore! Whore! Whore!"

Shamgar's mouth opens in horror. "No! No! No!" And then Shamgar shouts at the screen, "What are you doing?!"

"Whore! Whore! Whore!" the screen shouts back, joined by the clear sound of furniture being thrown against the walls then kicked around. "Whore! Whore! Whore!"

I press 'PAUSE'. "That goes on for a while. Then there's a long silence. And then he begins to plan the pieces to allow for the assassination."

Shamgar's mouth is puckered tight, and he is shaking his head. He looks to the right. He looks to the left. His fingers begin to drum on the table. "It's a lie. It's a lie. It must be a lie. There is no way... You forged their voices somehow. You.."

"I assure you—"

He raises his hand to silence me. "I want to hear it again," he says.

His cheeks are red and puffy. I keep my calm. "All right."

I press a few buttons, and the recording is played again.

As he listens to it again, his eyes seem to sear through whatever they are focused at. I follow their gaze, but they are not focused on anything in the room. They are focused on the past. They are searing through to the past, just as our technology does.

"Again. I want to hear it again," he says once the recording has played through.

He listens again. And he listens again. And he listens again.

The more he listens, the more awake he seems. The more he listens, the shorter his breathing. The more he listens, the redder his cheeks. A vein in his neck I hadn't noticed before is making its presence known: His heartbeat is rising. I try to time it, in my head. Around 130 a minute. Not good. Not for a ninety-year-old man.

After five times, in the middle of the recording, he raises his hand and says, "That's enough."

Immediately, I fumble with the remote, find the button, and press 'PAUSE'.

He looks at me. His eyes are shaking. His body is shaking. His fingers are shaking.

He looks away from me, and at the table. He looks at his trembling hands. He reaches for his pocket. For a second, I think he's reaching for a gun. But of course he isn't. He takes

out his cell phone, opens it, is about to push a button – probably to call his wife – when he hesitates. Then he throws the cell phone at the wall. “Traitors! Fucking traitors!” he yells.

He looks down, gathering his breath.

Then he looks up, straight at me. His eyes are clear, not trembling, sharp – even sharper than when he had come in. Without moving his eyes, I can see that he is no longer looking at me but at the mirror behind me. “You’ve had your fun. You took your shot, got your blood, and now you have your victory. Do you really need to keep filming this?”

I look behind me, at the mirror, and get a chill. It’s true. Why do we need to film an old man lose his life purpose? What historical purpose does that serve?

“Cut the feed,” I say. “Stop the camera.”

I hear voices on the other side.

“Stop the camera,” I say.

A tiny red light, still seen through the one-way mirror, vanishes.

I turn to face him. “The camera is off.”

“I’m sorry, sir,” I tell him. “There was no reason to record this in the first place. I’ll make sure it never gets used.”

Shamgar looks at me with the eyes of a man who had lost. “It doesn’t matter. You won a battle. Take your victory lap, and enjoy the applause...” he looks down, and there is a tear in his eye when he says, more to himself than to me, “While it lasts.”

He puts his hands on the table and clearly is about to pull himself up.

“Wait,” I put my hand next to his, but do not touch. “Stay. You don’t have to go *immediately*.” He looks at me. “Please. I meant what I said earlier, and back then I knew what I was going to show you. You *are* my hero. You are still my hero. Take a couple of minutes to calm down. Drink some water. Have some coffee or tea. Breathe. Just... Stay a couple of minutes.”

For a long time, he just thinks. Then he says, “I’ll have some tea.”

Even before the tea arrives – Wissotzky, no sugar, just the way I know he drinks it – Shamgar closes his eyes, and sinks into his own world.

Within a minute, he begins to slam his open hand against the conference table in small baby slams. “The traitors...” – slam – “The traitors...” – slam – “The traitors...” – slam – “Such traitorous...” his fingers curl. “Such destructive... That something so filthy should be the cause for... The excuse!” He raises his voice on this last one. “Everyone who followed them... Everyone who believed them... For sex?! Sex! ... Such... traitors...”

Then he sinks into silence again, his eyes closed.

He drinks his tea in silence, his eyes far away from here. Suddenly, anger flares again. “He was my friend! My friend! For thirty years after we got our independence! For thirty years until he died! Lied to me, hugged me, told me how brave I was. Looked me in the eyes. And never... never... said... anything...”

He takes another sip of his tea. “The traitorous bastard. Traitorous bastard!”

He raises his cup, but his hands shake and the tea spills onto the table.

“I’m sorry.” He looks aside, ashamed.

"I can't believe it!" Five minutes later, he claps his hands together and gives me the look he had given me when we had met an hour ago. "I can't believe it! Not true! Fabricated! Great fabrication, but inconceivable."

"I assure you, the tech—"

"I don't need your words," he silences me. "Play it again. Then, after that, I want to hear something else. Play something else, something that can't be faked. I want to hear the time I met Dinah."

I nod. "All right."

I reach for the remote.

The original track begins to play.

"Louder," he says.

His old ears probably heard half of what I had heard.

I turn up the volume.

A few more words said by Shmuelevitch, and Shamgar cries again, "Louder!"

And a few seconds later, "Louder!"

"Louder!"

"Louder!"

Then, almost at max volume, he is content. And he listens to the conversation again, to its very end.

I was prepared to show him all the segments we had prepared, but it is his meeting with Dinah that brakes him. He listens to it, head bent over, reacting to every sound, then, once it was over, he raises his hand, and says, "Enough."

I look at the remote and press 'STOP'.

When I look back up at him, he is holding his chest and leaning back. "Ow. Ow."

I leap up and run to the other side of the table.

"Is everything all right?"

"Yes."

I grab his hand to feel his pulse, he shoves it away.

"Stay away from me!"

"Shall I call an ambulance?"

He shakes his head. Maybe he isn't able to speak. I reach for my cell phone.

He slaps it out of my hand.

"Enough," he says, still holding his chest. "Sit down."

I look at him. He looks straight into my eyes.

"Sit down. It's just pain. It will go away."

I freeze in place. I want to do what he says, but I am unable to move away.

He looks away, and takes a deep breath. With seeming effort, he lowers the hand that held his chest. I still don't move. He doesn't look at me.

His hand reaches down to his pocket, then up again. "I miss cigarettes," he says. His hand is at his pocket a second time, searching for something that hadn't been there in ten years. "I could use one right now."

Trembling, he brings his hand up. He leans forward, elbows on the desk. "This is a good time to start again." Without looking at me, he says, "Sit down."

Wary, I sit down.

His fingers are on his forehead. He is licking his lips. Fifteen minutes have passed, and he is still hungry for cigarettes.

He hasn't looked at me in a few minutes. That's all right. I'm here for him, not the other way around. I suddenly realize I was here to cut his jugular, the purpose of his life and soul, and that now I was watching his arterial spray, watching him bleed, hoping he comes out alive on the other side.

"We died for them..." he suddenly whispers, maybe forgetting I was there. "We bled for them. I killed for them..."

He stares into space. Then he sighs. "No. We died for the country. We bled for the country. We killed for the country. I killed for the country. I killed... the wrong man for the country."

A small, hollow laugh escapes him. "Ridiculous."

"You!" he aims an accusing finger at me. "You're probably happy. This fits so neatly into your political theories. We were all liars, weren't we? The entire country is based on lies... That's what you think!"

"No, I—"

"Our entire country is not based on lies. It's based on ideals and a need. There were a few bad apples... Some rotten, rotten apples. But they can't ruin it for the rest of us. The dream is just. The dream is true. And you can go to hell if you think that you can make a liberal out of me."

I shake my head. "No, no, I don't!"

"Rotten apples and that's it!" He growls through his teeth.

Music begins to play.

He looks immediately sideways, then I realize it's his cell phone, and then I remember it was on the floor, where he had thrown it.

He tries to bend down to reach it.

"I'll get it for you," I leap up.

I grab the phone and give it to him, not looking at the caller.

He answers without looking at who was calling him. "Yes, Dinah..."

I'm sitting back down, and a sigh escapes me when I hear the name. This will not be over for him when he leaves this place.

“Yes, I’m all right. It’s just taking too long... I promise, nothing bad... It might take a few hours, go to sleep. I’ll take a cab.”

“I’ll pay for a cab,” I say.

He shushes me with a finger. “I’m going to stay for a while, that’s all. ... Go to sleep. ... Great... Thanks... Yes, yes, I’m all right. ... Tell you all about it later. ... Good... Good night.”

He closes the cell phone, causing it to disconnect, and puts it on the desk.

His hand rests over it.

“Dinah...” he says softly, and looks at me with soulful, twenty-three-year-old eyes. “I never would have met her if I wasn’t on the run, if I hadn’t assassinated...”

He looks down. His fingers touch the cell phone softly, and I imagined how he had touched his wife when they were young and had just met.

“I met his daughter, you know,” he says after a ten minute silence. He had been drinking one cup of tea after another for the last three hours.

I look up, the question in my eyes.

“His wife wouldn’t meet with me. But I met his daughter.”

“Whose daughter?”

“Colonel Tanner’s,” he says. His eyes are elsewhere again. He’s reliving a meeting that had taken place decades ago. “He had a family, you know. A daughter. A wife. Which, apparently, was cheating on him. But a family, he had a family. I killed a man with a family for a cause, not for a...” he trails off.

“I met his daughter, you know,” he says again after a while. “Back in, uh, ’64. She was just getting married in her early twenties. I, uh... She wanted to meet me. I immediately agreed. There were concerns she would try to kill me. I said, No, don’t worry about it.” He stops for a while. This is where he would have taken a great inhale of smoke.

“How was she?” I say.

“You know... Young... She understood. ... She wanted to hear it from me... She wanted to hear the why... She wanted to know what I saw of him... how he was during those last minutes... She wanted a trace of her father.”

He trails off again, then continues. “I told her he was a great and honorable man. That is why he was a good target. I told her he died with honor. I told her I was sorry for her personal tragedy and that it wasn’t personal.”

When he trails off again and does not continue, I ask, “How did she take it?”

He shrugs. “All right. No anger there. She hardly even knew him. She just wanted to know.”

“She say anything important?”

He shrugs. “No. His wife, her mother, never agreed to meet me. That was all right. It’s understandable.”

“Yeah.”

“But, the thing is...”

“Yeah?”

"He had a family. A daughter who is now a grandmother. And a wife who remarried. He had a family. I destroyed his family... for my commander's shag in a bed. That's why his family was destroyed."

I nod. I didn't know what was appropriate to say now.

"Yeah," he says. "For a shag in the bed."

"Decades I spent on this. Decades."

"These last three decades, this is practically the only thing I did. Meetings like this. Invited to lectures and seminars. Answering hecklers and ill-wishers. ... The documentary film they did on me... following me around for a year... needs to be revised. Nothing is true. No reason for it anymore." He looks down, ashamed. "I was wrong... I was mistaken... My cause was unjust... No, my cause was just, my deeds were unjust..."

"You didn't know. As far as you were concerned, you had just cause to assassinate him and protect your people."

"A man is dead. A family is dead. Bystanders were hurt. What does that matter?"

"The tide of war turned because of that incident. The British Mandate began to leave."

"Yeah... That's good. It's good that it happened." He falls silent, no doubt thinking about that point. Then, after a while, he says, "The results were accidental, weren't they? It wasn't because..." He shrugs again and puts his fingers to his lips as if he is smoking. "Just a lucky accident."

His lips curl. "People think I'm brave."

I look up. He had been silent for something like twenty minutes.

"You are brave."

"Pfah. I'm not brave. I just like to think I'm brave. No, no, I am brave." He waves dismissively at his own thoughts. "I'm rambling."

After five minutes of silence, he starts again. "*Other* people think I'm brave."

I don't respond this time. He already knows I'm one of those people.

"Other people..." he holds his forefinger tight against the desk, and moves the rest of his hand this way and that way, like a seven year old. "Other people... they thought I was brave... I got a medal... Then another... Then another... Honored at this or that ceremony every year since... Ben Gurion made me a minister. Do you think he would have done that if not for the...?"

He looks down, like a child under punishment. "I'm sorry."

When he doesn't say anything for a few more minutes, I ask him, "What are you sorry for?"

He looks at me with doe eyes. "I should call her."

"Dinah?"

"His daughter. Tell her I'm sorry."

I think about that. "Maybe you shouldn't do that. It's bygones. It's history. We're just fixing history here, not people."

"I'm living it still, every day. She's living it still, every day."

He purses his lips and tears begin to form in his eyes. "No, I'm not brave. I just like to think I am."

He sighs, and in front of me he seems to deflate.

"I was a good minister, damn it!" He slams his fist on the table, suddenly enraged again. Slamming his fist on something is something he had been famous for doing during cabinet meetings. "I was a good minister!"

"Yes, sir. I—"

"I did good. I helped build the country! I fought for roads, hospitals, military acquisitions that saved us in wars..." When he trailed off, more light seemed to leave his eyes. "What does it matter?"

And in his chair, he seems to deflate even more.

"No one will remember anything of me. They won't remember the good I did. They won't remember I was an accomplished member of the Knesset. They won't remember I was a successful CEO of four companies."

"Five," I correct him.

He squints for a second, then nods. "Yes, five. I brought success to whatever I touched. Shmuelevitch took that away from me. At that moment in time, when I was twenty three, he handed me my future. But he also took away my future." His eyes begin to look here and there, as if searching for something. "He took that away from me."

He shuts his eyes and puts five fingers on his forehead. "I would never have met Dinah without this."

He opens his eyes, and he seems like a shy sixteen year old, suddenly. "I wonder if she would have liked me without... She stood by me all this time... She believed in what I did... She believed in me... Our entire lives... Together... Together..."

He wipes a tear from his left eye, then looks at me as if he had been caught stealing. I look away.

"Don't think that makes me a liberal," he isn't being aggressive now. It's four thirty in the morning. Most of the strength has left him. He is now completely deflated, and his voice is raw. And yet he sits there, unable to leave, running through thoughts in his mind, thoughts and scenarios I couldn't begin to guess.

"Hey!" he says, snapping me out of my own thoughts.

"Yeah?"

"You didn't make me a liberal, you know. Don't think it takes any of the emotional, intellectual, spiritual, historical basis on which we built this country, on which I built myself." I shake my head, about to tell him I didn't think that, when he looks down, and in an even weaker voice says, "What does it matter? It doesn't matter."

"I remember one of my first missions..."

It's been eight hours since he had learned the news. Neither of us has left the room. As he speaks, his eyes are floating, seeing a past that hasn't been there for more than seventy

years. "We were sitting behind one of the hills outside Jaffa's market..." He speaks softly, dreamingly. "We thought we were snipers... Our mission was to shoot Arabs and cause as big a mess as possible... I was the lookout. I wanted to be the sniper so much. ... I wanted to kill Arabs. ... I remember thinking that: I wanted to kill Arabs. ... But no Arab adults came when we were there, only children. ... Then we got a radio call, and were told the mission was aborted, and that we had to leave ... I wanted to kill so badly... We were children, playing children's games."

He looks at his right arm, deep in thought.

I'm afraid to move my hands or to even shift weight in my chair. He seems so fragile to me, so broken. Any movement on my part might cause him to snap out of it and leave. And then he would go through the rest of it on his own, at home.

I can't stop looking at him.

Suddenly, he mumbles, "Children's games... Children's games... I haven't been a child in..." and his eyes are suddenly infinitely fatigued, "...in so long."

"My father always said... When you grow up... You have to work. Work is food. Work is respect. A man who does not work has no respect... I kept true to that all my life... The minute the war was over, I had a job... Even during the Mandate, I was working for the freedom of the country. ... The Knesset... Making a new country, a good country, as a minister..."

Suddenly he squints. "Why did I think of that? Why this saying, of everything my father had told me? Why..." And then realization appeared in his eyes. And with it, almost immediately, was light. A spark of light, for the first time in hours. "Ah! I was going to be a gardener! When I was just a kid, that's what I wanted to do. Yes!" He smiles, sadly. "My mother learned about this, so she waited for my father to get home. She spoke to him, and then he came to speak to me. I needed a real job, he said. Being a gardener, that is not a real job." And as he speaks, the spark in his eyes grows slightly brighter. "I'd forgotten about that."

"I always had a green thumb when I was a kid. I had a small garden behind my family's apartment... I used to go in and look at it and take care of it every day. ... I figured out how much shade each flower needed... I figured out when to water the plants and when it was best to keep them thirsty a bit... I brought books upon books from the library, telling me about the different kinds of plants. And when my Dad came to me and explained I needed to be serious... I dropped everything about gardening... I never drew another book from a library. Can you imagine that? Not one book."

He looks at me and there seems to be a gleam in his eye.

For a second, I start to believe he was beginning to feel better. But it couldn't be. His world had collapsed.

He had been quiet for fifteen minutes, looking at his fingers, as they moved on the table. It looks to me like he is playing a very slow piano or as if his fingers are playing some sort of game. His gaze follows his fingers with mild fascination, as if surprised by their actions.

He breaks the silence, "I wanted a plant nursery... wall to wall with roses... daffodils... lilies..." his fingers are still playing on the table, and his mildly fascinated gaze follows them. "Persian alliums... the cyclamen, before they were protected, were fantastic... I love them to this day..."

He leans back, and I could swear that for a minute he was resting.

"I haven't touched flowers in decades..." He hadn't spoken about anything that had to do with the assassination in forty minutes. "I haven't looked at them... No, that's not true. I've looked. From afar, when I happened to come across... I never bothered thinking about it, but I remember my eyes getting stuck on the site of a beautiful garden, and every time that happened Dinah would ask me what's wrong, why am I dreaming..."

He smiles. And there is a longing in his smile. Is that longing not sadness about all that he had lost today? For a split second I thought it might be. But, no. I'm wrong about that.

He looks at me, and his eyes are as sharp as they had been when he had come in. But they are also different. They are sharp in thought, but not sharp in bite. "So what if gardening isn't a vocation?" his eyes look at me, sharp but not cutting. "I mean, so what? Who cares?"

I shake my head. I don't know what we're talking about anymore.

He leans back, and he seems taller and not as sickly-thin as when he had come in. "I loved my childhood, Mr. Sanders. I loved my childhood."

I don't understand what he's trying to say, but I have to say something. So I smile back at him and answer his words, "Me, too."

"Did you?" he says, smiling. But my own smile cracks.

He slams both hands on the table, not aggressively, but to help him get up. "Well," he said. "Time to go home."

I stand when he stands. "Are you sure?" It's six ten a.m.

He turns to face me with the briskness of a young man. "I'm sure. Thank you for your work, Mr. Sanders. And your honesty. And your understanding during this night."

He offers his hand, for the first time. I shake it heartily. "It was a pleasure to meet you, sir."

He shrugs it off. "If you say so." He doesn't care about that anymore.

I look at him as he exits the room. If I didn't know better, I would say by his walk, from behind, that the man was forty years old. He's tall, his back is straight, and he is no longer dragging his feet. He walks with energy and lightness of foot.

Right before he disappears, as he crosses the door, he looks back at me and nods. And I notice that all his wrinkles have disappeared.

--THE END

We'd love to hear your thoughts on the above topics and with your OK, we may publish them!

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