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The Radiant

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THE RADIANT

by

Ron Felber

A Novel with Preface Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Loyola University of Chicago
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts

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VITA

The author, Ron Felber, is the son of Michael and Florence (Skibiak) Felber. He was born June 12, 1951, in Newark, New Jersey.

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PREFACE

In researching this paper, there was one element predominant among critical definitions of the novel: that is, a novel must concern itself with reality. Congreve as early as 1692 in his Preface to Incognita draws a careful distinction between Novels and Romances:

...Novels are of a more familiar nature, come near us and represent to us intrigues in practice, delight us with accidents and odd events, but not such as are wholly unusual or unprecedented, such which not being so distant from our belief bring also pleasure nearer to us.¹

Anthony Burgess echoes a similar belief nearly three hundred years later when he writes with regard to the nouveau roman:

But I think that, if we take away plot, dialogue, even characters, we shall be left with something that is common to the most traditional and the most avant-garde novelist -- a concern with interpreting, through the imagination, the flux of ordinary life; an attempt to demonstrate, though not with the cold deliberation of a scientist, the nature of the external world and the mind that surveys it.²

The relationship between the novel and reality was, perhaps, expressed most succinctly by Henry James when he wrote, "The only reason for the existence of the novel is that it does attempt to represent life."³

Indeed, the evolution of the novel has been a history of authors attempting to convey the essential reality of life, yet what is 'real'? What is the nature of the external world? The issue of truth and its relation to art has been

expounded upon since the Phaedrus, in which Plato defined the highest class of artist as "the soul that had the amplest vision" and the lowest as "a poet or imitative artist".⁴ Implicit in this distinction is the existence of two types of art: that which is created by the "non-imitative imitator" and that which is created by the "imitative imitator".⁵ In truth, both are imitators for both seek to imitate the world around them. This practice which we know as art or the creation of literature can only be accomplished through the use of artistic techniques or "illusions", as E. H. Gombrich chooses to term them.⁶ The evolution of the novel must begin, then, at a point where "shapes and marks" begin to signify and suggest other things beyond themselves.⁷ If it is to be a success, the novel must end not with transient reality captured, but with the perfection of illusion. Assuming, as did Cervantes, that reality has "such a violent temper that it does not tolerate the ideal even when reality itself is realized",⁸ what is the best that an artist can hope to accomplish? Can, at least, the illusion of reality be perfected? The answer must necessarily be 'no' owing to the arbitrary nature of language and the subjectivity of human perception.

St. Augustine in his Confessions has much to say about the first of these artistic obstructions. With regard to the limitations of language, he argues that it is only by common consent that letters and sounds signify anything at all. Further, since reality is eternal, the true nature of

existence could never be adequately expressed by a language which is itself only a reflection of the temporal:

What moment? Even as I utter syllables, if I must utter two of them, the second does not sound until the other is no longer. And even within this syllable, if there are two letters, the second does not sound until the first is no longer. What, then, is our place in those years?⁹

Frank Kermode raises the identical issue when he addresses the problem of time and the novel. The ticking of a clock can be understood when it is written tick-tock, but time has no form other than the one the writer assigns it. In this case, the two sounds tick-tock humanize time by creating the illusory organization of shape and rhythm:

The fact that we call the second of the two related sounds tock is evidence that we use fictions to enable the end to confer organization and form on the temporal structure. The interval between the two sounds, between tick and tock, is now charged with significant duration.¹⁰

Kermode goes on to compare this arbitrary representation of time to the plot of a novel. It is an organization of events that humanize reality by giving it form. The analogy is clear. The true nature of time -- an exclusively human concept at that -- cannot be adequately communicated by the sounds tick-tock. Equally as certain is the fact that the true nature of existence could never be perfectly represented by the novel given the limitations of language.

The second obstruction to the perfection of artistic illusion has to do with the subjectivity of human perception. Even if language had the power to convey the illusion of reality, one would be forced to ask, which reality? For certainly it is true that individuals perceive things in

different ways. Gombrich, in his book Art and Illusion raises this issue when he discusses a drawing which can be seen either as a rabbit or a duck:

The shape on the paper resembles neither very closely. And yet there is no doubt that the shape transforms itself in some subtle way when the duck's beak becomes the rabbit's ears and brings an otherwise neglected spot into prominence as the rabbit's mouth.¹¹

This very simple illustration is elaborated upon by Merleau-Ponty when he writes:

I will never know how you see red, and you will never know how I see it; but this separation of consciousness is recognized only after a failure of communication, and our first moment is to believe in an understanding between us.¹²

Analogous to these examples is the author who perceives "reality" and then writes about it in a novel. Supposing that the subject of his novels is rabbits, how does the reader reconcile his belief in the reality of rabbits when upon viewing the identical "reality" he sees ducks? Clearly, then, a necessary framework of conventions must be established if communication is to go on at all. This framework must include language and form, for all of their limitations, but more true art must be founded upon what Plato calls "becoming" and St. Augustine equates with the objective truth that lies within all men:

If one man merely looks at them (external realities) and another not only looks but asks his questions, they do not appear one thing to one man, and a different thing to the other. They look just the same to both, but to one man they say nothing and to the other they speak. Or it would be truer to say that they speak to everyone, but are only understood by those who compare the voice which comes to them from outside with the truth that is within.¹³

In his chapter "Psychology and the Riddle of Style", E. H. Gombrich wonders why different nations represent the visible world in such different ways throughout the centuries.¹⁴ That is, why is it that millenniums later archaeologists can excavate carvings, drawings and tomes, then identify the period and culture with near absolute assurance? The perception of a nude, for example, should be the same in the year 200 B.C. as it will be in the year 2000 A.D. Yet, a work of art is unmistakably earmarked not only by the culture from which it derived, but by the epoch during which it was created. This also holds true for literature. There would be something unmistakably ancient and Greek about the writings of Homer; something unmistakably modern and American about the novels of Norman Mailer even if they were to recreate the same fictional episode. Gombrich suggests this has more to do with convention than reality. Since the written word is woefully inadequate to represent the largeness and transience of life, an unconscious pact is struck between reader and writer whereupon certain symbols are agreed upon to represent otherwise ineffable concepts. As Kermode points out, the two words tick-tock are meaningless in and of themselves. It is only by virtue of an understanding between the reader and writer operating within the same culture that they represent the ticking of a clock and therefore the passage of time. This assertion anticipates Gombrich's second inquiry: will the paintings we accept as true to life appear as unconvincing to future generations

as Egyptian paintings look to us?¹⁵ The answer is "yes"! No painting and no novel from any age, drawn or written by any artist, is objectively convincing. Neither the realist novels of Flaubert nor the nouveau roman novels of Robbe-Grillet will ever truly represent French society particularly or life generally whether that is their aim or not. However, as long as they are using language as their medium, written symbols will prevail, and regardless of the literary techniques they accept or reject, their work will be like that of the Egyptian artists before them: a bobbing cork subject to the ebb and flow of mimesis.

In the eyes of the realist or naturalist, man is a "simple force, of the same order as other creatures, receiving from circumstance his degree and direction".¹⁶ This view was first popularized by Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893), often called the philosopher of the realistic literary movement. In Taine's view all knowledge derived from experience and notions of the intellectual apprehension of essences were intolerable. The influence of his works, The History of English Literature and On Intelligence, on the novels of Zola and Balzac was profound and had the effect of taking the abstract man of the Romantics and placing him squarely in the physical world:

The naturalist has scarcely any concern for purity or grace; to his eyes a toad is as important as a butterfly; a bat interests him as much as a nightingale. If you are delicate, do not open his book; he will describe things to you as they are. That is, very ugly -- crudely, without softening or embellishing anything; if he does embellish, it is in a strange manner; since he likes natural forces,

and likes only them, he exhibits the grandiose deformities, the maladies, and the monstrosities which those forces produce when they are stepped up.¹⁷

This lack of an artistic ideal is evident in the novels of Balzac. His descriptive passages are analytical and often encumber the progress of his plot. There is no attempt at illuminating the interior mind so that his characters are defined through a detailed listing of their external, physical traits and possessions. In keeping with the philosophy of Taine, the reader must be content to observe Père Goriot, for example, from an objective, strictly exterior point of view:

Goriot brought with him a splendid wardrobe, the magnificent outfit of a man who, retiring from business, denies himself nothing. Madame Vanquer admired his eighteen shirts with cambric fronts, whose fineness of texture was the more extraordinary since Goriot wore on his frill two pins each with a large diamond and connected by a chain. His usual costume was a blue coat, with every day a fresh vest of white pique, beneath which his huge paunch swelled out and tossed back and forth a heavy gold chain with trinkets.¹⁸

Twenty-two years after the appearance of Père Goriot came the publication of Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert, a work which Guy de Maupassant described as "revolutionary in literature. . .life itself making an appearance".¹⁹ While de Maupassant's praise is overstated, most critics concur that Flaubert's masterpiece greatly influenced the novel as an art form. Wayne Booth, writing in The Rhetoric of Fiction, explains:

Since Flaubert, many authors and critics have been convinced that "objective" or "impersonal" or "dramatic" modes of narration are naturally superior to any mode that

allows for direct appearances by the author or his reliable spokesman. The complex issues of this shift have been reduced to a convenient distinction between "showing" which is artistic, and "telling", which is inartistic.²⁰

Flaubert in Madame Bovary brought a new and precise language to the realistic novel. He rendered with grace and fluidity the detailed description of Balzac. More important, he brought to his reader an interior, even psychological, insight into his characters while maintaining rigid objectivity. As Booth suggests, Flaubert believed that an author must withdraw from his work, that he must dramatize, or show, rather than preach. The art of fiction does not begin until the novelist thinks of his novel as a matter to be shown, to be exhibited that it will tell itself.²¹

While arguments for authorial objectivity have merit, one must remember that artifice is unmistakably present whenever an author tells his reader what no one in so-called real life could know. Yet, Flaubert minimized such intrusions choosing to let his readers eavesdrop on his characters, allowing them to witness their words and actions without his interference:

...Madame Bovary contains nothing from life. It is a completely invented story. I have put into it nothing of my feelings or of my experience. The illusion (if there is one) comes on the contrary, from the impersonality of the work. It is one of my principles that you must not write yourself. The artist ought to be in his work like God in creation, invisible and omnipotent. He should be felt everywhere but not seen.²²

Compare the sophistication of language and sense of motion in the following descriptive passage from Madame

Bovary to the static, listing of detail witnessed in Père Goriot:

From early morning, one side of the square was taken up with a row of carts -- all tipped up on end, with their shafts in the air, stretching along the house fronts from the church to the hotel. On the other side were canvas booths for the sale of cotton goods, woolen blankets and stockings, horse halters, and rolls of blue ribbon whose ends fluttered in the wind.²³

Perhaps it was Flaubert's willingness to divorce himself from the plot of Madame Bovary that allowed him to delve into the minds of his characters. An example of this is Emma's reverie about the vicomte's silk cigar case. She opens it, then sniffs its tobacco. The fragrance stimulates her fancy and at that moment the point of view shifts from the impersonal observer to the interior of Emma's mind:

Whose was it? The vicomte's. A present from his mistress perhaps. It had been embroidered on some rosewood frame, a charming little piece of furniture kept hidden from prying eyes, over which a pensive girl had bent for hours and hours, her soft curls brushing its surface... And then one morning the Vicomte had taken it away with him. What words had they exchanged as he stood leaning his elbow on one of those elaborate mantelpieces decked with vases of flowers and Rococo clocks? She was in Tostes. Whereas he, now, was in Paris -- in Paris! The very name had such vastness about it!²⁴

The fluidity of Emma's thoughts running from the sensory stimulation provided by the tobacco, to the vicomte, his imagined mistress and finally to Paris is striking. Certainly, nothing like this can be found in the novels of realists prior to Madame Bovary. Flaubert has taken the detailed narrative technique of Balzac, then impersonalized and stylized it. Even more extraordinary, he has taken his reader inside the mind of his characters giving them thoughts

and idiosyncrasies, ideals and internal motivations. Yet, even in success the novel is doomed to ultimate failure for as Augustine proved Madame Bovary could never be real life, nor as Ponty demonstrated could it be a truly objective representation of it. Millenniums from now, it is doubtful that archaeologists will be nonplussed about the culture or period from which Madame Bovary derived, for the evolution here is both dramatic and subtle. Flaubert has not gone beyond the natural limitations of the novel, no artist could, but what he has done is to create a more convincing illusion. He has sharpened the artistic convention. He has strengthened the pact between author and symbols and reader.

The Flaubertian model was a literary breakthrough which had a profound effect upon the work of nearly all of the naturalists to follow. No doubt Dostoyevsky recognized the benefit of his techniques, for twenty years later in Crime and Punishment he delves into the diseased mind of Raskolnikov through the use of dreams and delirium:

Then a strange idea entered his head; that, perhaps, all his clothes were covered with blood, that, perhaps, there were a great many stains, but that he did not see them, did not notice them because his perceptions were failing, were going to pieces... His reason was clouded... Suddenly he remembered that there had been blood on the purse too. 'Ah! Then there must be blood on the pocket too, for I put the wet purse in my pocket!'²⁵

Significant is Dostoyevsky's use of physical objects -- bloody rags -- to accomplish the transition from authorial observation to his character's thought process. This is the same "cigar box" technique employed by Flaubert to take

his reader into the mind of Emma. Still, while Dostoyevsky borrows from Flaubert in the area of cerebral exposition, he lacks the Frenchman's economy of style and lapses frequently into the "inartistic" habit of authorial intervention:

There are chance meetings with strangers that interest us from the first moment, before a word is spoken. Such was the impression made on Raskolnikov by the person sitting a little distance from him, who looked like a retired clerk.²⁶

The influence of Flaubert's novelistic theories is still apparent in the work of many contemporary authors and provided the foundation for the novel's great innovator, James Joyce. "Ulysses", wrote Ezra Pound in his Dial review of 1922, "is presumably, as unrepeatable as Tristram Shandy; I mean you cannot duplicate it; you cannot use it as a 'model', as you could take Bovary; but it does complete something begun by Bouvard and it does definitely add to the international shore of literary technique."²⁷ Oddly, while much scholarly attention has been given to Flaubert and Joyce individually, relatively little has been written about their literary kinship. Frank Budgen, Joyce's confidant and chronicler, has written that "of all the great nineteenth century masters of fiction Joyce held Flaubert in highest esteem", having read every line of his work and committed whole pages of them to memory.²⁸ That Joyce understood the achievement of Madame Bovary cannot be doubted, for the first element they share is their debt to Hippolyte Taine and his philosophy of naturalism. Both authors are realists in the mold of Balzac before them, obsessed with literal fidelity. Richard

Cross, in his book Flaubert and Joyce, documents Joyce's fastidiousness citing letters written to his aunt, Mrs. William Murray, in an effort to verify factual points concerning Dublin life. More than this, however, Joyce learned from Flaubert the lesson, unknown to Balzac and unheeded by Dostoyevsky, of artistic description. Ulysses contains none of the lists of detail which encumber the flow of Père Goriot, nor the authorial intrusions of Crime and Punishment. Instead, Joyce brings life to his descriptive passages through an artistic engendering of motion. Detail is never allowed to stand static. It is never listed.

"Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed. A yellow dressing gown, ungirdled, was sustained gently behind him by the mild morning air."²⁹

Noteworthy is the fact that Mulligan is walking. Further, Joyce deftly adds solid detail to the image by calling his reader's attention to the "bowl of lather" he carries and the "mirror and razor" inside. The description is made even more compelling once Joyce points out the configuration which the mirror and razor form -- a cross. The final image he leaves his reader lingers in the mind with the piquancy of a well-executed impressionist painting. The sense of motion begun in the first line continues. The reader watches, entranced, as the "yellow dressing gown, ungirdled," passes before his mind's eye "...sustained by the mild morning air."³⁰

Joyce shared with Flaubert a near fanatical concern for artistic technique, but his achievement went far beyond mimicry. Rather, he used the legacy of Flaubert as a springboard from which to launch his own innovations. The most prominent example of this is a revolutionary technique for sustained, interior probing of a character's mental life called "stream-of-consciousness" or "interior monologue". In this connection, the publication of Ulysses had an impact on the literary world comparable to that of Madame Bovary sixty-five years earlier, one which represented a development of major proportions in the evolution of the novel as an art form.

Earlier Flaubert's shift from impersonal observer to the interior mind of Emma Bovary was demonstrated. In accomplishing this transition, Flaubert used a physical object (cigar box) and its non-physical properties (aroma) to take his reader effectively into Emma's fantasy world. In Crime and Punishment, Dostoyevsky employs a similar technique (blood-soaked rags) as a transitional device to take his reader into the reeling mind of Raskolnikov. In both of these instances, there is a sense of authorial distance, but only a sense of it. True, the reader is made privy to the fantasies of Emma and the mental anguish of Raskolnikov, but not the way they occur to them. The presence of Flaubert and Dostoyevsky makes itself known because it is the author's voice we are hearing, written in his language and in his prose style. Neither Emma nor Raskolnikov would realistically

think the way their creators write, yet this is what both Flaubert and Dostoyevsky present as real.

In Ulysses, the reader is rendered the mind of Joyce's characters totally. It is their language. These are their thoughts as they are forming:

A point, live dog, grew into sight running across the sweep of sand. Lord, is he going to attack me? Respect his liberty. You will not be master of others or their slave. From farther away, walking shoreward across from the crested tide, figures, two. The two Maries. They have tucked it safe among the bulrushes. Peekaboo. I see you. No, the dog. He is running back to them. Who?³¹

An analysis of this excerpt reveals that Joyce has plunged his reader into the world of Stephen Dedalus, beyond his thoughts, as might be interpreted by Flaubert or Dostoyevsky, and into his thought process. Here, deep within this inner sanctum, more intimate than physical gestures, more meaningful than words, the reader can witness the deliberation of Stephen's mind. Paradoxically, it was this daring effort to move forward the naturalistic fiction of Flaubert that paved the way for what some critics have seen as a reaction to the realistic novel: modernism.

There was no doubt something extremely alluring about what Joyce had achieved to those who found the artifice of the naturalists unconvincing. In Ulysses Joyce had rendered his reader the unconscious mind of Stephen Dedalus, an area devoid of "time" and the external "realities" which to them had turned the art of fiction into a carnival of device. The modernists rejected the science and positivist philosophy of Hippolyte Taine in favor of a more subjective and

internalized fiction. Robbe-Grillet in New Novel, New Man complains:

...Far from dictating rules, theories, laws, either for others or for ourselves, we have, on the contrary, come together in a struggle against laws that are too rigid. There was, there still is, particularly in France, a theory of the novel implicitly recognized by everyone or nearly everyone, a theory that is thrown up like a wall against all the books we have published.³²

St. Augustine in his Confessions draws a distinction between chronos, passing time, and kairos, the season, which bears on this issue. The naturalistic novel operates chronologically. As critic Frank Kermode expressed it, the artifact "tick-tock" coincides with the progression of plot and character in linear fashion (chronos). The modernist novel is unconcerned with chronology, choosing instead to operate in a period unrelated to any exterior norm of time (kairos). This is a view of time defined not by "the illusory organizations of shape and rhythm,"³³ but by "the soul's necessary self-exertion before and after the critical moment upon which man reflects."³⁴

The relationship between chronos and the novel is represented in the following passage written by Ernest Hemingway, a modern proponent of the naturalist novel:

The train stopped for half an hour at Bordeaux... Afterward we passed through the Landes and watched the sun set. There were wide fire-gaps cut through the pines, and you could look up them like avenues and see wooded hills way off. About seven-thirty we had dinner and watched the country through the open window in the diner... There were little clearings with houses in them, and once in a while we passed a sawmill. It got dark and we could feel the country hot and sandy and dark outside of the window, and about nine o'clock we got into Bayonne.³⁵

The relationship between kairos, and the novel is represented in this excerpt from The Trial by Franz Kafka:

Almost involuntarily, simply to make an end of it, he put his finger on the button which rang the bell in the waiting room. While he pressed it, he glanced at the clock... He had wasted two hours in dreaming, a long stretch of precious time, and he was of course, still wearier than he had been before. Yet the time had not quite been lost, he had come to decisions which might prove valuable. The attendants brought in several letters and two cards from the gentlemen who had been waiting for a considerable time... Why had they come at such an unsuitable hour? -- And why, they might be asking in their turn, behind the door, did the assiduous K. allow his private affairs to usurp the best time of the day?³⁶

In this brief passage, Kafka makes nearly a dozen references to "time" or "waiting", yet with each the concept becomes less meaningful. His story takes place in an unknown country, during an unknown period, with a character known only as Joseph K. as its protagonist. Antithetically, Hemingway's novel is a period piece set between the First and Second World War in Spain with a carefully drawn set of characters who live in a world governed by the clock. Kafka ignores the entire concept of a plot based on chronology. Gone is the ticking of the clock. Gone are the deliberate actions of Jake Barnes concretely anchored in space and time. What the reader is presented instead is a parable which floats in all of space and all of time. The modernist novel operates in the period known as kairos, the season, where the unconscious mind takes precedence over the conscious.

Similarly, while the novels of Balzac are crammed with furnishings, costumes and long lists of his characters' physical features, the novels of Sartre are laden with subjective

perceptions: feelings, ideas and free associations. The modernist novel gives its reader none of the gratification to be had from the illusion of temporality, causality and external description. Instead, he is challenged to enter a world which has no beginning and no end, where a nightmare goblin is given the same weight as a policeman directing traffic during rush hour.

A passage from Nausea illustrates the purposely unnaturalistic approach of modernist descriptive technique:

Bluish objects pass the windows. In stiff jerks all stiff and brittle; people, walls; a house offers me its black heart through open windows; and the windows pale, all that is black becomes blue, blue this great yellow brick house and waving uncertainly, trembling suddenly stopping and taking a nose dive. A man gets on and sits down opposite to me. The yellow house starts up again, it leaps against the windows, it is so close that you can only see part of it, it is obscured.³⁷

In the truest sense, Sartre has returned us to E. H. Gombrich's riddle of the rabbit and the duck. It is as if Gombrich has confronted the modernist with the problem of identifying the correct animal depicted and he has answered: "it looks like neither a rabbit nor a duck. It is a piece of beaten, emulsified pulp, dried and pressed flat with patterned, lead markings scribbled upon it." Again, the question arises, "what is real?", but the modernists have answered in another way entirely.

Robbe-Grillet, in his essay "From Realism to Reality," addresses this issue:

All writers believe they are realists. None ever calls himself abstract, illusionistic, chimerical, fantastic,

falsitical. Realism is not a theory, defined without ambiguity, which would permit us to counter certain writers by certain others; it is, on the contrary, a flag under which the enormous majority -- if not all -- of today's novelists enlist. And no doubt we must believe them all, on this point. It is the real world which interests them; each one attempts as best as can be to create "the real".³⁸

The role of character in the modernist novel, too, has shifted. Absent are the characters of Dickens whose exteriors are familiar to everyone and whose souls are revealed through their actions and dialogue. In place of these, the reader is offered characters who signify ideas, philosophical concepts or the primal forces of nature.

Northrop Frye, in his Anatomy of Criticism, suggests that the modernists' rejection of naturalist technique represents a return to the literature of myth:

The world of mythological imagery is usually represented by the concept of Heaven or Paradise in religion, and it is apocalyptic, a world of total metaphor, in which everything is potentially identical with everything else, as though it were all inside a single infinite body. ...Myth, then, is one extreme of literary design; naturalism is the other.³⁹

The fiction of Thomas Pynchon would seem to confirm Frye's observations. In Pynchon's novels, Gravity's Rainbow, V and The Crying of Lot 49, the plots take place in mythological worlds where the external analogy for life has been abandoned in favor of abstract, fictive designs. More than this, his characters -- as Kafka's Joseph K. anticipates -- are no longer individualized personalities operating within a novel, but archetypical figures existing within a mythological episode. They are the idea, the model from which all

others like them derive.

Oedipa in The Crying of Lot 49 is an archetypal figure. Like Oedipus, she is engaged in a search, but instead of ancestral background she is attempting to trace the roots of a conspiracy begun by the Tristeros. Her search is strewn with riddles, misleading signs and contradictions. It is a journey into the heart of American society, where she must penetrate one smoke screen after another. Oedipa's trek introduces her to the Inamorati Anonymous Society, those committed to non-love; W.A.S.T.E., "We Await Silent Tristero's Empire" and The Greek Way, where she meets Dr. Hilarius, a Nazi psychotherapist, whose advice leads her into even more ambiguity.

The author never gives his reader a physical description of Oedipa except in bits and pieces that make her appear more of a flattened caricature than a character: "She wore dark green bubble shades;"⁴⁰ "Her lovely hair turned, through some sinister sorcery, into a great unanchored wig;"⁴¹ "She made the mistake of looking at herself in the full-length mirror and saw a beach ball with feet."⁴² Pynchon's goal and that of other modernists is not to create a character who appeals to our emotions, but to our intellect. The character of Oedipa is, then, an archetype in that she is representative of modern man generally, struggling to find identity in a complex technological world.

In what direction is the novel headed? Goran Hermeron in his book Influence in Art and Literature writes that

"works of art are not produced in a vacuum."⁴³ Clearly, this is true, for as Plato reminds us literature, like the other arts, is always an imitation of some reality outside itself.⁴⁴ Yet, the realm of mimesis in literature goes beyond imitation. An author is born and raised in a particular geographical locale during a specific time in history. He is raised by parents who adhere to certain philosophical principles or, perhaps, he is orphaned. He reads and emulates one author, yet eschews and consciously rebels against the work of another. All of these and more are factors in the field of influence which helps to shape a literary endeavor.

In this paper, both the naturalist and modernist movements have been explored along with the works of authors ranging from Balzac to Pynchon. The artistic philosophies of Hippolyte Taine have been touched upon as have the sometimes brashly stated theories of Alain Robbe-Grillet. Through it all, it is striking to note that the focal point of each of the views considered hinges upon the relationship of the novel to that ever-evasive concept, "reality". Truly, it would appear that this preoccupation, this obsession, will continue for as long as authors choose to go on writing, but equally as true is the inevitability of failure. Frank Kermode has called the history of the novel "a history of forms neglected".⁴⁵ And so it must be, for as Gombrich observed the philosophical premise of the novel is a falsity. Reality cannot be captured by any art form, nor can it be faithfully represented.⁴⁶ At best, the artist will improve

upon the conventions of the novel to better communicate the illusion of life, but it is a poor illusion based more on contrivance than reality and successful in gaining the sympathy rather than the faith of its audience.

Where, then, is the greatness of the novel? What is its aim? Of what value is it?

The aim of the serious author once the mirrors and phantasms have been put aside is now and always has been "truth". Unmistakably, there is a paradox in the telling of a lie to gain truth, but life leading to death is, itself, a paradox and it is in the exploration of the meaning of life that literature achieves greatness. The novel is, at its best, transcendence. Its failure has never been its inability to duplicate reality. The artifice of Flaubert, the interior monologue of Joyce and the archetypical figures of Pynchon are literary conventions which may or may not be failures. But the true success of these authors lies in the dignity of their motivations and in those mystical moments when man sees the work of an artist, then compares it to the reality of his soul within to recognize: this is Truth.

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The Radiant

by

Ron Felber

Prologue

Stark. Cold. Voracious. These were the impressions that shot through the mind of Jason Garvey as the Sky View shuttle soared through space at a speed of 18,000 miles per hour. True, he had seen it all during simulations at Marshal Space Flight Center in Huntsville, but today it seemed disturbingly different. Everything was gray: the sky, the shuttle, even the massive external fuel tank that extended from the belly of their craft.

An electrical impulse dashed across the skin of the black astronaut. They were nearly 400 miles up and just below the perilous Inner Van Allen Belt. He wondered if the bio-instrumentation taped to his moistening skin registered his anxiety. Had one of the scientists in the Mission Control Room just taken note of a sudden elevation in heartbeat and respiration?

The voice of the Capcom came blaring over the squawk box.

Capcom: Mike, this is Houston. I'd say it's time to discharge ET. Do you copy?

Royce: Posigrade rocket ignition confirmed. External Tank will disengage in plus five seconds. Over.

The three astronauts looked to one another in anticipation of the muffled explosion. The mini-thrusters fired.

A confident smile tugged at the corners of Mike Royce's lips.

"How you feelin' there, Jason?"

"Never better," Garvey answered grinning broadly as they watched the huge cylinder float eerily away from the cargo bay area of the sleek shuttle.

Capcom: Tell us, Zeke, can you read the shaft and trunnion angle off the counters.

The flight engineer studied his instruments momentarily.

Clayton: Shaft, 331.2. Trunnion, 35.85."

An eternity below, scientists at the Mission Control Center fed the shuttle's coordinates into the bank of IBM 1560 computers. The three man crew waited in rapt silence.

Capcom: Roger, Sky View. Fire Service Propulsion Motor. Roll 223.2, pitch 272.1, yaw 360, then proceed with docking. Over.

That was him, Garvey thought reflexively. He felt an icy trickle of perspiration run down the small of his back. The main motor at the rear of the shuttle fired for three seconds as their craft arched behind the massive ET cylinder. Next, it was his job to make the space station "operational". That meant nearly six hours of EVA, extra vehicular activity, outside the shuttle connecting solar

panels, multiple disc antennae and exterior telescopes. When it was over, the United States would have its first permanently orbiting space station, complete with laboratory and living quarters for three.

He swallowed hard. It was a long way from a southside Chicago tenement to become one of the handful of black astronauts in the NASA space program. Many lifetimes away, he pondered, as the shuttle sidled up to the 153.68 foot long ET. The docking module was extended, the hatch fastened, then airlocked.

Capcom: What kind of pressure reading do we have up there, Mike?

Royce: We're looking good, Houston. ET purged. Pressure at 4.5 and rising.

Garvey activated the air quality monitoring device to check for remnants of liquid oxygen, hydrogen, RP-1 kerosene or hydrazine. The reading was negligible.

"Air quality acceptable," he chimed in a precise, military cadence that surprised even him.

The flight commander nodded.

Royce: Docking maneuver complete. Air quality at acceptable levels. Pressure 5 pounds and stable. Over.

Mike Royce turned to his project engineer. "You ready, Jason?"

Garvey half-rose. His plastic helmet was intact.

His life-support system, attached to the back of his white space suit, was functional.

"Let's do it."

He moved around to the vacant cargo bay where the docking module attached to the ET like an umbilical cord. He climbed into the transfer tunnel, then slid through the steel re-enforced plastic slowly at first, then with more confidence. Again, he envisioned a team of scientists some 750,000 meters below monitoring every wrinkle in the body graph the silver chloride electrodes transmitted. Did they know he was scared to death? Did they realize that in his most intimate moments he questioned the very sanity of what he was about to do? The outer lip of the transfer tunnel came into view.

Royce: Jason, have you reached the ET docking hatch?

Garvey: Approaching now, Mike. No problems so far. I'm stepping into the ET.

Jason Garvey extended his hands to the edge of the tunnel. He pulled himself forward, then hopped down. His weighted shoes made a hollow, clanking sound as they struck the steel floor. The osmium searchlight atop his helmet cut swathes of white light into the dense darkness. Its brilliance probed the distant corners of the cavernous tank, then shattered like glass against the walls and ceiling.

Garvey: I'm in now, Mike. You may as well have Zeke put through the lighting equipment. Zeke?

Clayton: Yeah, Jason. The lighting bank is attached. You can pull it through any time you want. I'll be right behind.

Once the lights had arrived and the electrical contacts made, Garvey felt better. The 2,000 cubic foot tank was illuminated. Its outer hatch made visible. Moments later, Zeke Clayton emerged from the mouth of the transfer tunnel. Garvey strode to him, then helped pull him through. He stepped down onto the floor, but jumped up again as quickly to test the sensation of one-fifth gravity.

Capcom: We've been enjoying the show down here Sky View. Looks like fun.

Clayton: That's an affirmative, Houston.

Capcom: Okay, guys. If there are no hang-ups from from your end, we will proceed with Phase II.

This was it, thought Garvey, a tinge of the ominous seeping up from the pit of his stomach like something vaguely sweet. EVA. While Clayton arranged the interior of the spacelab, he would be working outside the unit as they maintained a low earth orbit below Van Ellen's Belt. The Inner Belt was considered a danger zone. Since it was not concentric with the earth's surface, it ranged from 918 miles high over Australia to just

285 miles over Brazil. A single day in the Inner Belt would shoot the radiation dose for a man outside his craft above the tolerable daily limit as its lowest region. Sky View was somewhere in the middle.

Garvey: That's an affirmative, Houston. All systems 'go'.

Zeke Clayton helped him undo the steel hatch. He watched as Garvey climbed the four step ladder, then entered the depressurized Transition Chamber. Garvey nodded. The flight engineer winked from behind the glass shield of his space helmet. Garvey pulled the hatch closed. It clanged shut, then locked behind him like the door to a prison. The outer panel slid open mechanically. He stepped outside the unit.

Capcom: This is Houston. Can you read us?

Garvey: I copy, Houston. Support Truss engaged. I'm stepping out onto the ET. Over.

Capcom: Roger. We've got you on our monitor now. You may proceed with inspection of heat shields.

He loped across the north side of the huge cylinder. Above him, the exterior telescopes and intricate web of multiple disc antennae had already been extended. They rose to the height of a five story building.

Royce: Command Module here, Jason. I have you on my monitor. How did those shields hold up?

Garvey inspected the long, metallic slabs which

were designed to negotiate heat and take the impact of colliding meteoroids. Without them, NASA estimated the 1/8 inch thick skin of the unit would be punctured every three weeks.

Garvey: Shields intact and undamaged. No signs of perforation or scoring. I'm going upstairs to take a look at telescopes and solar panels.

Capcom: Roger. What does it look like from up there. Over.

Garvey: It's beautiful, Houston. A scene of magnificent desolation. I can see the earth below staring up at me like a giant, pale eye.

Garvey walked up the ladder that stretched from the spacelab to the second level of the unit. He took the first ten steps, then stepped off at the steel grid platform that marked Level Two. A garbled, static sound passed over his receiver. He reached to his helmet to adjust the equalizer, but it did no good. No good at all.

Garvey: Experiencing a loss of signal, Houston. Command Module, do you read me?

The astronaut awaited a response. There was none. Just the static which continued with progressive severity. He glanced down to the dosimeter which was inlaid into the belt of his space suit. The radiation level around him had risen beyond the Radiological Protection Limit

of 5 REM!

Garvey: Repeat, Houston - Command Module. I am experiencing an LOS. Do you read me, Mike?

A cacophony of noises rang wild in his ears. The piercing, high-pitched shriek set his head spinning. Oh my God, Garvey agonized, can this really be happening to me? Again, he attempted to adjust his receiver. Through the dissonance, he could discern the garbled, distant voice of the Flight Commander.

Royce: Experiencing severe electrical disturbances. Will attempt frequency correction. Repeat. Command Module will now attempt a frequency correction.

Garvey switched his audio receiver from UHF to S-Band OMNI frequency. When he looked again to the dosimeter, his heart swelled like a balloon inside of his chest. The radiation level had climbed to 50 REM! He could hear his heartbeat like a throbbing drum; feel his pulse as it resonated through his entire body.

Royce: Garvey, this is Command Module. Are you hearing us? Repeat. Do you copy?

Garvey: I copy. But poorly.

Royce: We've lost you on the monitor, Jason. There's some kind of nuclear activity going on out there. A solar flare or sunspots.

A red light began flashing on the dosimeter. The warning buzzer was triggered at 70 REM!

Capcom: Radiation levels rising. Suggest you re-enter ET immediately. Repeat. Situation 'red.'
Re-enter ET immediately.

Garvey moved toward the steel ladder. He put the sole of his lead-lined boot upon its first rung, then froze mid-step. Perhaps thirty yards due north of the unit, he observed a growing cluster of red and green lights. They gathered into an elongated mass infused with amorphous matter and what appeared to be galactic dust.

Garvey: Am witnessing some sort of atmospheric phenomenon, Houston. Please identify.

There was a drawn silence during which the Mission Control Center frantically checked, then rechecked the IBM data bank for verification of a communications satellite out of orbit or an experimental Soviet craft in the area. There were none.

Capcom: We cannot identify. Suggest you re-enter ET immediately. Telemetry shows a marked increase in pulse rate and respiration. Blood pressure at 167 over 100; tracaynea at 30 per minute!

The lights crackled and shimmered like a live electrical wire suspended in blackest space. Garvey was frozen; paralyzed. The warning buzzer of the dosimeter whined. Its red warning light flashed the urgency of his situation. The reading had elevated to 85 REM! But all he could do was watch. Like a starstruck child,

he stood with one foot on the ladder, the other on the grid platform, seized by a strange and pervasive euphoria. The cluster was getting closer!

Royce: Garvey, this is Command Module. Get the hell out of there; do you read me? Situation 'red'. This is no exercise!

Capcom: Command Module, we don't like the reading we're getting from bio-sensors. Blood pressure at 185 over 100! Tachynea at 35 per minute!

Garvey: I am seeing objects of some sort. Cannot determine whether they're composed of physical matter, gases or both. They're shining, sir. Glowing like a corona ---

Royce: Abandon Level Two! Zeke, this is Royce. Open exterior hatch and depressurize Transition Chamber for re-entry. Godamit, Jason, you've got to get in here!

Garvey: It's moving nearer. More like a cloud now that I can see it up close ---

Capcom: Pupils dilated. Breathing erratic. Skin warm and moist. Blood pressure at 200 over 120 and rising. Mike, this man is on the verge of cardiac arrest!

Garvey: It's almost on top of me! I feel the energy. It's drawing me to it --- it's ---

The astronaut's voice trailed off. He was speechless.

Incapable of organizing the thoughts and physical responses necessary for speech. He looked to his boots. Then to his ankles. Then to his legs. Then to his lower and upper torso. He extended his right hand and was mesmerized by what he saw. His entire body was electric; shimmering like some obscure plankton amid the deepest, densest regions of space!

Then, like the most violent and pervasive of storms, it ended, leaving behind a dead and cold silence unsettling in its stillness. Its meaning was understood by everyone despite the vast distances that separated the tiny space craft from the Mission Control Center. Something terrible had happened.

Royce: Houston, this is Command Module. We seem to be regaining some of our audio and visual contact on both UHF and S-Band. Over.

The reply came back after a long hesitation.

Capcom: Suggest emergency recovery operation. Pattern 3. Radiation level at 10 REMS and declining. Please verify. Over.

Royce: Affirmative, Houston. Current status verified and declining.

Capcom: Zeke, are you hearing all of this?

Clayton: Yes, sir, Houston. Protective element in place. Await directive.

Royce: Recovery operation active. Pattern 3 verified. Zeke, go get him and let's pray to god he's all right.

Zeke Clayton climbed the short ladder that extended down from the interior hatch. He opened it, then entered the Transition Chamber. The exterior hatch remained open like the door to a vault. He exited the ET unit. He strode as fast as his bulky equipment, weighted shoes and protective gear would allow then began retracing the steps of his friend and fellow astronaut, Jason Garvey.

Royce: How are you doing out there, Zeke? I've got a dosimeter reading of 7 REM. Audio contact restored. Video clearing.

Clayton: I'm approaching north side of ET.

Royce: Do you see anything unusual?

Clayton: Negative, Mike. I'm heading upstairs.

Capcom: Sky View, we're still clocking him down here. Vital signs regressing within normal limits.

Respiration steady. Blood pressure at 130 over 90.

Clayton took each rung of the ladder carefully and with deliberation. Above him, on the Level Two grid platform, he could see the outline of Garvey's space suit.

Royce: Have you made contact with Garvey? Do you see him?

Clayton: That's affirmative, Command Module.

Capcom: Is he ambulatory, Zeke? Can he walk?

Clayton quickened his pace. His stricken compatriot was just three rungs overhead. He climbed the remaining steps, then stood beside Garvey in stunned silence.

Royce: What is his condition? Is he all right?

Clayton was numb. He fumbled for the right words.

Clayton: Garvey is up here on Level Two platform.

Royce: Yeah? What is his condition? For Chrissake, Zeke, what do you see??

Clayton: Garvey is hysterical, sir. He's, he's on his knees crying. Sobbing like a baby ---

Capcom: Are there any traces of atmospheric phenomenon? Please respond.

Clayton: No, sir. Nothing whatsoever. Not a solitary thing.

* * * *

The conference room of NASA headquarters at Cape Canaveral was furious with speculation as the ad hoc committee of nine top-level scientists met in a private, emergency meeting. The sparse furnishings and stark construction of the tiny chamber gave it the air of a classroom. There was, in fact, a blackboard, lecturn and portable slide viewer set to the anterior. It was here that the panel of seven men and two women sat in round table fashion.

A blanket of silence fell over the group as Martin Erlichman, NASA's senior scientist stepped to the front of the room. The tall, balding aero-space engineer made no pretense of amenities. Everyone knew what they had been summoned to discuss: something had gone very wrong during the Sky View mission. It was their job to decide what to do about it.

Erlichman stood stoutly, his jutting jaw locked in defiance of his own shy nature, until the room became totally quiescent.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the reason we're here today is no secret. Three days ago the NASA space program experienced a set-back which leaves us with problems; serious problems that must be solved.

Each person in this room today is an expert in sciences ranging from medicine to astronomy. The knowledge you possess will help to determine the crucial course of action NASA will be taking in the days to come. I would like to begin our discussion by inviting Dr. Gordon McCord, an expert in the field of cosmic radiation, to explain some of the fundamental facts of the situation we're facing."

McCord did not bother to rise. His low, sonorous voice rumbled through the room like an earth tremor as he began reading from a stack of handwritten notes.

"The possibility of a solar explosion occurring during space flight was first brought to our attention by Jim Van Allen after the flight of Explorer I. At that time it was theorized that two belts existed in space, both infused with radioactive particles of a solar origin. Peak radiation levels according to statistics retrieved by Pioneer III correspond to about 10 REM per hour; not taking into account solar flares like the one experienced during the Sky View mission." McCord's sleepy blue eyes searched the room significantly. "A large solar flare can emit five million protons per second traveling at the

speed of light into a square centimeter of the earth's atmosphere. They can be dangerous, even deadly, to astronauts while in space and so the Solar Flare Patrol was formed in 1959. Its job is to alert NASA of any predictable explosions on the sun's surface which could result in hazardous emissions of cosmic rays, protons or heavy nuclear particles. Yet, here we are with three men in quarantine, one of them having been exposed to nearly 130 REM of radiation." He looked grimly to the seven men and two women. "Unfortunately, not all solar flares are predictable."

Lisa Ellison, one of the two aero-space engineers present, raised her hand.

"How many of these explosions occur in a year? What is their intensity?"

McCord's flaccid countenance puckered to form a mask of sobriety. He looked to his notes cursorily, then back to the engineer.

"In the International Geophysical Year of 1981, thirty were detected during and shortly after IGY. Six of them generated beams of particles with enough energy density to kill anyone in a space suit."

The response elicited no follow-up questions. It needed no explanation for only now could NASA's great miscalculation be fully appreciated: for decades now they had been gambling with the safety of their astronauts. This time they had lost.

Erlichman stood to introduce Dr. Teturo Kusani, a Japanese-American physician who specialized in cases of radiation exposure resulting from the Second World War.

Kusani walked to the front of the room. He was a young man in his mid-thirties with jet black hair and a broad, protruding forehead that seemed to suggest his serious, brooding nature. He placed a Carousel cassette atop the portable slide viewer.

"Some of the photographs I am about to show may be shocking," he apologized, "but I believe they are necessary to fully appreciate the effects of high radiation exposures on humans. As Dr. McCord has already stated, one of the Sky View astronauts suffered a whole body exposure for a period of seven minutes to 130 REM. This would generally be considered in the low to moderate range."

The doctor flicked on the viewer. Its 1 by 1-1/2 foot screen was illuminated. His first slide was marked, Victim Hiroshima, 2.3 Km. From Hypocenter. It was of a man suffering from thermal burns which had blackened the back, buttocks and dorsal portion of the thigh. His right arm had been incendiary to the elbow; a charred section of the upper portion remained attached to his shoulder.

"The effects of severe whole body exposure at 400 REMS and above are well known to us: massive destruction of tissue, subcutaneous hemorrhaging, purpura and a vast

decline in white blood cell counts. Death is often instantaneous though victims such as this man have been known to linger for up to five days."

The snap of the sequential switch seemed to jar the members of the forum from the throes of their reverie as a second slide came into focus. It was marked, Victim Nagasaki, 4 Km. From Hypocenter. It depicted the face of a woman dotted with internal sores visible through the skin as small red, black and green maculas. Radiation burns from the atomic flash had seared her eyeballs so that neither retina nor cornea was present. Second degree burns covered one-third of her anatomy.

"The effects of moderate to high whole body exposure ranging from 200 to 360 REMS is far less pronounced: death seldom results though symptoms are often severe and genetically communicable. There are often mild thermal burns, subcutaneous and rectal bleeding, hair loss and devastation of the DNA chain. The resulting mutation can lead to mental and physical abnormalities and still-birth."

Kusani moved on to the third slide. It was marked, Victim Low To Moderate Radiation, Sky View Mission, 130 REM. The viewer illuminated a transparency composed of a front and back view of Jason Garvey's naked body.

The doctor swept a skein of perspiration from his broad forehead with the side of his hand.

"As we now know, this astronaut recently endured a low to moderate dose of cosmic radiation. Since he has been quarantined for the past seventy-two hours, we have been able to determine some vital facts, though not all of them. We know, for example, that Mr. Garvey has suffered from nausea and vomiting accompanied by polydipsia or abnormal thirst. This is quite common among victims of irradiation. Members of the military in Los Alamos exposed during nuclear testing all complained of such symptoms. It is generally unremarkable." The doctor's voice rose suddenly. "However, as you can see from these pictures, there are no external burns, no subcutaneous hemorrhaging or purpura." He forwarded a final slide marked, Blood Analysis, Jason Garvey, NASA Sky View Mission. It was a crude graph charting the astronaut's blood level count vis a vis that of an unexposed individual. "Beyond this, it is apparent that little internal physical damage has been inflicted despite a radiation dose previously considered harmful. His red cell count is 4.00, hemoglobin ranges between 90-10 and white blood cell count is steady at 7,200. Finally, the subject's bone marrow nucleated cell count of 250 seems to bear

out the hypothesis that there is little danger of any residual effects." Dr. Teturo Kusani bowed politely. "These have been my findings. This is the information I ask you to consider for the time being."

A rumble of speculation followed the physician's closing remarks.

"How is Garvey being treated now?" asked Alex Simon another of the radiation specialists present.

Kusani's eyes shifted to his senior colleague, Leon Matheson, of John's Hopkins University.

"I'll take that!" Matheson acknowledged.

The doctor watched Kusani retire to his place midway around the table, then leaned his squat, bulldog frame forward.

"To answer your question", he replied in a gruff, aggressive voice, "we are taking the most prudent precautions. Garvey has been quarantined and an aseptic technique is being employed by all those who come in contact with him. Otherwise, we have been treating the patient symptomatically. Claforan, a general antibiotic, has been administered to supplement his ability to combat infection, along with an increase in fluid intake to compensate for the vomiting he experienced early along."

"And that's the extent of it?"

"That is all that's proven necessary," retorted Matheson with a tight, satisfied smile.

Erlichman stood once again, this time to introduce Dr. Darius Stone, one of the team of psychiatrists already treating Garvey.

Stone rose ponderously. He walked slowly, engrossed by the empirical and theoretical possibilities that this, his most puzzling case afforded. The young doctor had the look of an intense and hungry student. Sullen, ponderous, questioning as if suffering from some untreatable malaise of the soul. His tone was redolent with cynicism.

"I wish that I could be as optimistic as Dr. Matheson," he began, "but I can't. You see, I've met with Jason Garvey on three separate occasions and each time I've come away with a strange, unsettling feeling about his condition." Stone's cool, gray eyes honed down upon his fellow scientists. "Perhaps even more terrifying than the effects of radiation that Dr. Kusani has described is the annihilation of an ego; but this is what's happened to the subject I've examined. The trauma of the accident, perhaps even the elements he was exposed to for those short seven minutes have left him psychologically altered. Call it delusion. Call it a demonstrable reality. The

point is that Garvey believes that whatever he encountered in space three days ago has left him someone or something other than what he was before he left the earth's atmosphere."

"You talk about a loss of identity, Stone. In what sense, specifically?" barked Matheson.

"The patient is convinced that he is no longer Jason Garvey, the NASA astronaut. When questioned as to why he maintains this, he speaks about some vague chemical and spiritual evolution. His thoughts are idealized though tightly organized. He suffers from bizzare hallucinations, often of a religious nature."

"For example?"

Stone swallowed hard.

"He claims to have communicated with Gautama Buddha, Muhammad and Jesus Christ." The doctor raised his palms fending off the onslaught of objections that he knew would materialize before him. "Now, I am aware of the effects of shock and trauma. I am also aware of the hysterical reaction patterns which sometimes accompany them, and for this reason I administered two anti-psychotic drugs, haldol and mellaril. Neither had any appreciable effect. The patient's perceptions remained unaltered; his convictions were deliberate and abiding."

Lisa Ellison waved a hand in the psychiatrist's direction.

"Dr. Stone, if I'm understanding this, you're suggesting that our astronaut is psychologically incapacitated. More, that his illness could be the result of a physical and not a psychological reaction to his exposure."

"It's possible. Of course we have very little to go on in these matters, but it is a fact that after both the Hiroshima and Nagasaki experiences many of the victims made similar claims. In fact Dr. Kusani, in his book Death Among The Living, has recorded interviews with a handful of them. Teturo, would you like to follow-up on that?"

Kusani squirmed uncomfortably in his seat at the reference. His sad, round eyes seemed to glaze over with a studied professionalism.

"Yes, it is true that some of the early survivors of the blasts spoke of themselves as new people. There is a Japanese word to describe them, hibakusha, which means literally A-Bomb Man. Most of them were terminal cases with only days or weeks to live, but they adamantly maintained that they were not the same men and women who existed prior to their high-level radiation exposures. My parents," he said with a mixture of anger and devastation "were both hibakusha. During the final days of their

lives they became part of a cult which focused around this belief. It became a kind of grotesque religion in which many of them actually worshiped the bomb as a god. Whether it was a physical or psychological reaction no one can know for certain."

"I'm no psychologist," Matheson blurted "but I'm here to tell you I've seen men and women in the aftermath of violent trauma. Delusions! Hallucinations of all kinds are basic, symptomatic manifestations of the condition!"

"This is not a case of dissociation or hysteria nervosa, Leon," retorted Stone. "The episodes are too systematized; too pervasive to have been brought on by external stimuli." His attention diverted to the full group. "Now, all I'm suggesting is that we first establish exactly what did happen to Jason Garvey during his so-called space accident. What was he exposed to? What types of chemical and physiological changes did his body undergo while in space? Until these facts are known, we have absolutely no chance of implementing any meaningful treatment!"

"Ridiculous!" sputtered Matheson.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," Erlichman temporized.

"Dr. Mainguy would like to address some of the issues raised here. His experience in the field of atmospheric phenomenology dates back to Van Allen's early theories

on cosmic radiation and space flight."

Mainguy, a thin, excitable man with a French accent, was eager to respond. He half-rose from his chair even as he began speaking.

"Dr. Stone, if I could only give you some idea concerning the complexity of the problem we're facing here. Since nothing like this has ever happened before, we cannot know what Jason Garvey experienced and perhaps never will." He slowly descended back into his chair. "There is no question that this man was exposed to some electrical and nuclear phenomenon. No-one is attempting to deny that fact. However, to give you some idea, some feel for our situation, it was less than one decade ago that science discovered the existence of mesonic particles: invisible, high-energy radiation that saturates space and derives from god knows where. Cosmic rays, black holes, the destruction of supernovas and the barrage of energy they spew throughout the solar system; all relative unknowns. So here we have Jason Garvey, an astronaut caught outside his spacecraft during a massive solar explosion. Chances are he was bombarded by a thousand different elements we don't even know exist. How did this exposure affect him? Why is he the way he is? We simply do not know."

Stone held his ground. His encounter with Matheson had left his young blood hot and uninhibited.

"Well, one thing is certain; something happened up there. We sent a sound man into space. A classic 'fit' to the astronaut profile. The man you brought back is not any of those things." His dark, intense eyes reached out, then seized each member of the panel. "Why?"

I: Miracles

3 Years After

The "Sky View" Accident

Chapter One.

Kim Buckley was a nervous wreck. She glanced at her Bulova wristwatch. It was 12:15 and she was already late for her lunch with Joyce. Rats! Wasn't it just like her senior editor, Jack Limpert, to call one of his "sessions" so late, then run it past noon? She raced through the maze of carpeted aisles that cut through the cubicles and partitions that comprised the sixteenth floor of the Time magazine offices. She didn't stop to pause at the front desk.

"Be back at one!" she sang out to Mona, the "People In The News" secretary.

Mona's large, hazel eyes barely raised. She shook her head with practiced indifference. 'So everybody's in a hurry.'

Kim entered the corridor, then boarded the waiting elevator. It was filled with a dozen of the magazine's five hundred employees. They ranged from a handful of executives dressed in Yves St.Laurent business suits to the more prevalent staff writers who wore Levis and looked more like college kids from Columbia or N.Y.U. than journalists. Many of them were brown-bagging it; trying to catch the final rays of September's warmth at streetlevel in the plaza below.

She exited the elevator in the lobby along with the others. To her right was the huge plate glass window that looked out onto the east facade. Kim hurried along. She passed through the revolving door and into the cool, sunny afternoon air. Her eyes scanned the sunken plaza. Employees sat on the low wall that separated them from pedestrians eating sandwiches and drinking diet Coke as if it was a long, concrete bench. Street vendors hawked Italian ices, soft pretzels, hot dogs and cold drinks. Young couples necked at the base of Crovello's "Cubed Curve" sculpture while others sunbathed on cement banks laden with summer lilies and chrysanthemums. It was all as it should be except that her long time friend and former college roommate was nowhere in sight. Again, she looked to her wristwatch. 12:20. It was no wonder. She'd probably tired of waiting and already gone along to Pepe's.

Kim pivoted to leave, but stopped short at the sight of an old derelict who stood before her. He was long-haired and unshaven. His left foot was wrapped in a dirty bandage that partially concealed his ankle, scabbed and covered with running sores.

"Got ninety cents bus fare?" he asked with a smile that revealed his missing teeth. "Gotta get back to my wife in Chelsea."

He extended his hand. She backed off unconsciously.

"No," she answered turning from him.

She felt a tug at the sleeve of her turtleneck.

"Hey, sweetie ..."

She stared at him a little frightened. He smiled a hideous grin.

"Messiah's comin! You don't gimme ninety cent you'll go to hell sure."

Kim's eyes darted nervously around her. No one noticed. No one cared. She fumbled through her handbag, then plucked a one dollar bill from her purse. She handed it over. 'Just go away now,' she was thinking as he pocketed the money, then hopped up and down with a saytr's glee.

"He's comin'! He's comin'! Quiet like a cloud," he cackled. "Calm as the sun! White like the light of Heaven, He's gonna shine his grace on all a you bastards!"

Kim swung around a final time. She hurried away back toward the revolving door. Still, as she entered she could hear the shrieks of the old madman. It was grating, scary. Why did building security let people panhandle right out in the open like that? she wondered.

Kim walked across the lobby, then left through the building's northside exit. She crossed Sixth Avenue headed for the RCA Building where she navigated the crowds that swarmed Rockefeller Center during lunch hour. She passed through the channel leading to the Lower Plaza. Already maintenance men were working on the ice skating rink observed by the eighteen foot bronze statue of Prometheus.

His pedestal was encircled by the signs of the zodiac, she noticed for the first time, with the inscription, "Prometheus brought the fire that hath proved to mortals a means to mighty ends." The Greek god gazed down upon them all as Kim took the short flight of stairs. Her eyes searched the terrace of the outdoor restaurant. Where was Joyce?

She approached the maitre d'.

"Excuse me, I'm looking for a friend of mine. We have a reservation ..."

Just then she saw her old college chum. She was sitting at a small table to the back waving to get her attention.

"Thanks anyway," Kim fumbled, "but I think I see her."

She excused herself, then hustled toward her. Even from a distance she could see that Joyce Malmin had prospered during the past five years. Her long black hair was fashionably coiffed. Her face just lean enough to accentuate her high cheekbones the way that a model's might. She was wearing a loose-fitting, linen dress; probably a Kenzo with her luck. Then Kim thought of herself. Thrown together in the hassled confusion of getting to work this morning, she wore a pair of Sasson jeans and a turtleneck. She hadn't even taken time to redo her make-up before leaving the office! Oh, Sweet Jesus, she fretted until she heard Joyce call her name, standing with arms outstretched to greet her. It was then that her anxieties lifted. This was Joyce, her oldest and dearest friend. If she couldn't

look like a frump in front of her, who could she look so awful in front of?

She ran to her. They embraced. Kim's tight, pink pullover pressed up against the white cotton of her sleeveless dress.

"Joyce," she said laughing for joy. "It's so good to see you!" She stepped back. "You're really looking well!"

"And so are you! You haven't changed one bit since college. Still, the young, fresh coed! When are you going to age like the rest of us?"

Kim's face reddened. She brushed back the bangs of her sandy blonde, page boy hairdo.

"Sit down. Come on," Joyce urged. "It hasn't been that long."

She took a seat at the tiny table.

"Five years."

Joyce giggled.

"Does it seem that long?"

Kim thought for a moment.

"Yes. I've really missed you moving out to D.C. like you did."

Joyce demurred.

"I ordered us a bottle of champagne to celebrate the occasion. Mums, 1980, do you mind?"

Kim's bright eyes twinkled.

"No. Of course not."

She poured two glasses. They sat in silence for a moment as each took a long sip as much to ease the tension of their shrivelled correspondence as to revel in their renewed friendship.

Joyce looked across the table as she drank. A smile and a laugh shot across the table and into the champagne.

"So, how have you been?"

She hedged.

"Good, I think."

"And John?"

"John and I have split."

"Oh, I'm so ..."

"No, you shouldn't feel bad about it. The divorce was coming. It was the best thing for both of us."

"Any kids?"

"No. None."

Their eyes met.

"Well one, almost." Kim fidgeted nervously. "I decided against it once things really started to fall apart." Her blue eyes dropped to the tabletop. When she looked up again, the twinkle was back if slightly subdued. "How about you and David?"

"We're doing well. His practice has grown considerably since we moved. As for me, I'm still at the Pentagon punching keys and feeding the industrial military complex enough

facts and figures to keep ahead of the bad guys."

"You mean like the CIA?"

"No, no, nothing so dramatic. It's just a joke that circulates through the office every so often. Next to David, the love of my life is 'Ben', one of two dozen IBM 370/85 computers. The researchers just keep clipping articles from the papers and information from the Foreign Service Department and we faithfully punch it into good ol' Ben."

"Sounds very technical."

"Not really. The operating systems there are not so different from a home computer. A lot bigger and with one hell of a baud rate, but still just data banks loaded with whatever facts and bytes you put into them."

"What are 'bauds' and 'bytes'?"

"Do you really want to know?"

Kim took another sip of her champagne. She was feeling better.

"No. I guess not," she chuckled. "Tell me about Christaan instead."

"He's seven now and in the second grade at a private school in Georgetown." She looked to Kim appraisingly.

"Would you like to see a picture?"

"Sure!"

Joyce reached into her handbag to retrieve a wallet photo. She handed it across the table.

"Handsome," she said a fond smile curling the corners of her thin lips. "He was just two the last time I saw him." She hesitated. "Do you think he'd remember me?"

Joyce smiled warmly. "I'm sure that he would; his favorite Aunt Kim."

Neither said a word as she passed the wallet back.

"How's work?" asked Joyce beginning freshly.

Kim poured some more champagne for the both of them.

"Work is ... work. I'm doing the "People" column for Time now. I keep waiting for them to make me a Contributing Editor, but the journalism racket," she caught herself, "business is not what it should be. Overcrowded; competitive with newspapers and television. Well, anyway, that's what they keep telling me."

"It must be glamorous, though, interviewing all those celebrities. I read that section every week, Kim. Millions of people do!"

She shrugged.

"But that isn't why I got into journalism. I mean, how many times can you write about Henry Kissinger and Eric Estrada?"

Joyce peered across the table; a hint of her old college self resurfacing.

"Many, many times," she answered staring over her glass with lethal seriousness.

"No, I mean it, Joyce! I've been searching for

something more, something that will take me out of this genre business and into hard news. That's what I really want."

"Made any progress?"

"Not yet, though I am starting a new feature. A follow-up on people involved in major stories from the past."

"Like a 'whatever happened to Eddie Haskell' kind of thing?"

"No. Not at all. You see, that's my angle. By using this format I can slip in people who aren't celebrities and entertainers."

"For example?"

Kim's reply was more a probe than an answer.

"My first column will be on Jason Garvey."

"The astronaut?"

She nodded.

"Do people really care about someone like that? I haven't heard the name in years; not since his rocket crashed or whatever it was that happened. How is he, anyway?"

Kim's eyes lit.

"See what I mean! You do care. It's just that no one has followed-up on what was a headline story just three years ago!"

Joyce was philosophical.

"Maybe. Maybe there is something to that, though I'm certainly not the one to judge." She paused. "How's it coming?"

"Slow. NASA doesn't like to dwell on its failures. Since the Sky View disaster, they've been pretty quiet on the subject of Jason Garvey."

Joyce took a thoughtful sip from her glass of champagne.

"You know, I may be able to help you with that."

"How do you mean?"

"With your research. Garvey was a government employee at the time, wasn't he?"

"Sure. Employed by NASA just like all of the astronauts."

"Then, he's still drawing a government check of some kind. He has to be. They couldn't just sever him from their payroll after his accident."

"So?"

"So, if that's the case, we have a disk on him."

"You mean like a dossier?"

"No. Just more computer talk. A hard disk drive stores information. 'Ben' has hundreds of them. Data on everything from the median temperature in Bangalore to the summer tidal flow in Guantānāmo Bay. If I can tap into the disk containing Garvey's file, you'll have all the information you could ever want."

"Including his current whereabouts?"

"You mean you don't even know where he's living?"

Kim chortled.

"That's the mystery, Joyce. No one seems to know. No one seems to know what's become of Jason Garvey."

"Well, then, your troubles are over, my dear, because that is my bailiwick. I'll run a query on him as soon as I get back to D.C."

"Sure it's no trouble?"

"On the contrary, it'll be good for my ego. Keep me from playing computer chess. No one ever beats 'Ben' anyway."

They toasted.

"To a forever friendship," Kim proposed as their glasses touched and the waiter arrived at the table.

The two women were famished. They took their lunch in the lower promenade al fresco, along with a second glass of Mums.

Kim felt purged as she exited the elevator on the sixteenth floor. It seemed like light years since she'd talked with Joyce Malmin and despite the vast changes they'd both been through there remained an enduring bond between them. That knowledge contented Kim; put to rest the rustlings of remorse and subtle fears of inadequacy that seemed to plague her of late. In many ways it was as if no time at all had passed and they were meeting once again for a sandwich and a bottle of wine between classes in Washington Park. She smiled inwardly before swinging open the glass

paneled door that led into the editorial offices.

Mona stared at her with a deadpan suggestive of Pat Benatar.

"You look wasted."

"Thanks. Anything come in while I was at lunch?"

"Just that material you ordered up from research."

Fan-tastic! That was just the news she'd been waiting to hear. Kim walked sprightly toward her office. She stopped briefly at the VDT monitor where a continuous line of telecommunications passed via satellite from UPI, AP, TASS, INS and AFP, the French wire service. It was the usual: a bombing in Tel Aviv, rebel attacks on government installations in El Salvador, three Catholic nuns raped and mutilated at a missionary outpost in Zaire. She stared blindly at the video display terminal still feeling the effects of the champagne. It seemed such a shame that these horrible things went on every day. But what could she do about it? What could anyone actually do about it?

Kim entered the tiny, 7'x 10' cubicle that served as her office. On her brown formica desktop lay the microfilm cassette put together by the staffers in Research. In theory, it consisted of every news item printed on Jason Garvey world-wide running back to his induction as an astronaut into the NASA space program. Kim inserted the cartridge into the microfilm reader beside her. She flicked the 'on' switch, then viewed the compilation.

It began with several dozen pre-flight informational bulletins, followed by the obvious reports concerning Garvey's breakdown and hospitalization. There were nearly twenty-seven hundred accounts, both national and international. She depressed the 'forward fast' button. Everyone knew about the accident. It was what had occurred afterward that piqued her curiosity. Jason Garvey had not been heard from since his release from a psychiatric facility in Arizona two years earlier. During that time, according to NASA, he had faded into oblivion, travelling to distant regions of the world in an attempt to regain his health. But what countries had he visited? And where was he now?

Kim hit the 'hold' button. The tape froze on a small article appearing in the Phoenix Chronicle. It read:

EX-ASTRONAUT
LEAVES HOSPITAL

Gila, Ariz. - After nearly one year of psychiatric treatment former NASA astronaut Jason Garvey was released from Grissom Air Force Hospital this afternoon at 3:00 p.m. CPT. Officials will not comment on the ex-astronaut's condition other than to announce that he is in "good spirits" and "ready for outpatient treatment." Garvey, himself, claimed to be "recovered". He has taken up temporary residence in the town of Gila Bend where he will continue to undergo out-patient therapy.

That was it? thought Kim. Just like that? An American astronaut is put in a hospital for twelve months, then discharged simply as a man "ready for outpatient treatment"? Was it possible for such a story to be buried in a more obscure paper than this?

Kim pressed the 'forward' button. The cassette moved ahead slowly. The next article appeared three months later. It was printed in the Yuma Gazette with a Vicksburg deadline:

Vicksburg, Ariz. - In a quiet ceremony held at Yuma Marine Corp Station in Somerton, former astronaut Jason Garvey officially retired from the U.S. Air Force. Two dozen people attended the function including Major Edward Cooper, commander of the base, who awarded Garvey a much belated Distinguished Service Medal on behalf of the President. The ex-astronaut had been involved in one of NASA's first radiation accidents in space where he absorbed nearly twenty times the maximum allowable dosage according to NASA officials. Mr. Garvey had been undergoing therapy at Grissom Air Force Hospital in Yuma on an outpatient basis. Treatment was discontinued and labelled a "success" by medical doctors there three weeks earlier.

Again, Kim's imagination was sent reeling. Who had ever heard of a man receiving a Distinguished Service

Medal fifteen months after the fact? What's more, what did such pat phrases as 'success' and 'retirement' mean except that Garvey was still incapacitated, making his presence in the news an embarrassment to both NASA and the Air Force?

Kim watched the monitor as the microfilm moved forward. After the Vicksburg article all information regarding Jason Garvey's physical health and psychological condition ceased. Instead, she was amazed to see scores of international accounts crop-up among the recent domestic reports of his whereabouts. Most were small fillers that simply noted the ex-astronaut's presence, until her eyes focused on one emanating from TASS, the Soviet news agency.

Again, she stopped the cassette. Her brows knit as she scrutinized the bizarre incident the news-clipping related:

WOMAN CURED
OF CANCER

Chuvash, A.S.S.R. - Dr. Vladimir Andrei of the People's Hospital has announced the cure of a female patient suffering from cancer. Anna Voraski, a forty-seven year old woman from Buryat, had been diagnosed as suffering from carcinomata of the lymph glands. Her condition was listed as terminal. After treatment labelled 'unexceptional' by Dr. Andrei, based primarily on chemotherapy,

the Chuvash physician proclaimed his patient totally cured today. Present at the medical conference was J. Garvey, an American scientist, to whom Andrei attributed much of the success in gaining his patient's extraordinary recovery.

How strange, Kim pondered, that Garvey would be in Russia. Stranger still that he would be involved in the medical treatment of a cancer patient! Her adrenalin began to flow. She stared at the monitor intently as the microfilm moved forward. More than a machine, the device seemed to her now something magical; a crystal ball of sorts that allowed her to peer into the darkest recesses of Jason Garvey's existence. She was not disappointed. Article after article reported his presence in such far-off locales as Africa, China and the Middle East, often at religious and diplomatic functions.

She hit the 'hold' button suddenly. Once again, the cassette stopped, this time at a somewhat longer piece reported by the SNS wire service covering Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

En Nahud, Sudan - A remarkable event was reported yesterday by a group of farmers in Talodi, Sudan. After suffering the effects of an unusually severe drought, an American calling himself Garvey was said to have caused water to flow from a dry bed of rocks. Four men and two women were reported to have witnessed the event. All of them

claimed that a stream present at the location now was formed as a result of this technically unverifiable phenomenon.

Kim ran the remainder of the tape through to its conclusion, these two stories burned white-hot and searing on her mind. What did they mean? A cancer cure in Russia. A miraculous occurrence in Sudan. Could they be a coincidence? Surely, the Soviets were anything but religious zealots; and despite the fact that TASS had disseminated its share of propaganda over the years, the agency was generally considered reliable. And what of this near biblical tale of water springing from a dry bed of rocks? Again, it was probably true that peasant farmers in an emerging African nation were predisposed toward superstition, but why should they lie? And if this wierd event actually did take place, was this man calling himself 'Garvey' the same Jason Garvey involved in the Sky View accident three years ago? Certainly, her investigation so far had left more questions than answers, thought Kim as she ejected the cassette from the microfilm reader, then strode toward the exit. The Research Department was located two floors below.

Jack Murdock, Time's head information analyst, sat before a lit CRT screen monitoring the electronic transmissions which recorded the more than 600,000 words and 5,000 photographs that poured in weekly to the New York Cable Desk.

Kim pulled a chair up beside him.

"Jack, do you have a minute?"

The veteran of twenty-three years could anticipate a come-on even before it happened. As overseer of the copy filed by correspondents, stringers and photographers for 34 news bureaus around the world, he was wise to all of the ten thousand ways staff writers could ask a favor.

His white head bobbed up.

"What do you want?"

She placed the cassette on his desktop.

"Your department put this together for me on Jason Garvey, the astronaut."

"So?"

"Well, it's very good. They did a great job," she hastened to explain, "but"

He finished the sentence for her.

".... but now you need more."

She shot a finger in his direction.

"I knew you'd understand!"

Murdock flicked the 'central systems' switch that severed his tie-in to the main trunk line of information flow.

"Okay," he said turning in his swivel chair. "I was just playing with myself here anyway. What can I do for you?"

Kim's expression turned serious.

"Jack, this tape is a composite of everything written about Jason Garvey in the past three years, am I right?"

"If that's what you asked for, that's what you got. But you should know that it includes only those articles where your man was named as the subject." He motioned her closer. "Look here," he said swinging back to the CRT unit. "The library has two basic kinds of folders. One is 'subject'. The other is 'biographical'. You want everything written on Garvey. Okay. I hit the key 'biographical'. The computer asks: who? I punch in the name: Jason Garvey. The computer asks: when? I punch in a period of time: three years. The computer asks: what category?" Murdock peered over his shoulder. "That can be business, sports, science. Any one of a hundred different categories. So what category you want?"

Kim thought for a moment.

"All of them."

The researcher nodded.

"Okay. So I key in: total scan."

In a fraction of a second, the monitor showed the number 2700.

He looked to her again.

"You see, your man appeared as the subject of twenty-seven hundred reports in newspapers, magazines and journals throughout the world during the past three years.

Is that what you got?"

She nodded.

"How about 'subject'?"

"Okay. What subject you want?"

Kim's mind raced as she considered the possibilities.

"Try 'cures' using the same time frame."

His fingertips hit the keys. The letters C-U-R-E-S passed onto the screen. A moment later a number came back. It was 15,000.

Murdock's eyes raised in solicitation.

"Okay, okay," she stammered. "Try another subject. This time try 'miracles'."

He typed the new classification. The letters M-I-R-A-C-L-E-S came onto the CRT screen. Once again a number appeared. It was 1163.

Better, Kim reflected, but there had to be a way to narrow it further.

"Jack, can the 'biographical' and 'subject' folders be combined? I mean, can the computer take let's say two 'subject' folders and one 'biographical' folder at the same time."

He frowned.

"Kimmy, sweetheart, this baby can do anything I ask her. So which ones you want?"

"Try 'Jason Garvey' for the biographical folder along with 'cures' and 'miracles' for the category folders during the same time frame."

Murdock hit the keys: G-A-R-V-E-Y / C-U-R-E-S / M-I-R-A-C-L-E-S. The computer which could handle better than 1,000,000 calculations per second arrived at a total figure. The number which appeared on the CRT screen was 4.

Kim smiled broadly. Murdock looked over his shoulder beaming satisfaction.

"Now. How do we get those articles?"

He hit a key marked 'Teleprinter'.

"Easy."

There was a moment's hesitation as Murdock sat back in his chair and Kim's eyes focused on the mini-computer. Within seconds, a correspondence-quality sheet rolled from the Dot Matrix printer. Kim took it into her hands. It contained the two articles she had already uncovered plus reports of two additional incidents.

"Thanks. Thanks so much, Jack," she uttered, stepping slowly from him.

She looked them over, but could not believe what she was seeing. One had occurred in Columbia, South America. The other in San Luis, Mexico.

She read the caption:

WOMAN CURED OF BLINDNESS

Then, the other:

SAN LUIS BOY RAISED
FROM THE DEAD

A tingle of excitement crawled up from the base of Kim's spine as she returned to her office. She had uncovered something extraordinary here and she knew it. Perhaps even the 'big' story she'd been after since coming to Time five years ago. Her chance to be recognized as someone other than the magazine's air-headed gossip columnist. An opportunity to investigate a subject that might really mean something. The adrenaline was flowing, she realized immediately. Now. Where to begin? The question resounded. Yet, already a strategy was emerging. It derived from her earliest training as a journalist. 'Begin at the source'. That was the axiom. She would attempt to contact the newspapers that had first reported the events to gather what facts they could supply, then move on from there. She began with the most dramatic of the four reports concerning the boy Garvey had allegedly retrieved from Death's own dominion. She examined the news release. It emanated from El Terro, a newspaper in Saltillo, Mexico.

Kim plucked a copy of the Time-Life World Atlas from the row of books that lined her desktop. She paged through it. The city of Saltillo had a population of 190,000. It was located in the state of Coahuila. She lifted the telephone

from its cradle still eyeing the map. She dialed '0'.

"I'd like to place a call to El Terro. It's a newspaper in the city of Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico."

Next, she was connected to an international operator. Then, to one in the state of Coahuila. Moments later, Kim was conversing with Domingo Sanchez, an assistant to the editor who claimed to understand English. She spoke slowly; deliberately.

"My name is Kim Buckley. I work for Time magazine in New York."

"Si, si ..."

"Mr. Sanchez, I am calling about a story your newspaper reported nine months ago. It concerned Luis Pinada. Do you remember it?"

"No, no ..."

"The article states that Luis Pinada was raised from the dead by a man named Garvey. Do you remember it now?"

"Ah, yes, yes," the man recalled with a chesty laugh. "The Lazarus story!"

"Yes, I suppose that's the one. A version of it was carried to the U.S. by the Inter American Press Association."

"Si, si, I remember it now."

"This happened in the town of San Luis del Cordero, is that correct?"

"Si. It happened there in front of three people. The local priest, the boy's mother and, of course, Garvey."

Again, the man chuckled. Kim could sense a knot of frustration welling within her.

"Mr. Sanchez, you laugh when you say that. Do you believe the story to be true?"

There came a silence at the other end of the line. She heard him clear his throat.

"Miss Kim Buckley, I will tell you this. There was a report such as the one you have described. It came to our attention because the boy's mother called us. You see, we are the only major press in the area. This is all that I know."

"And the priest?"

"His name is Father Durante. He runs a small mission in San Luis. He is an elderly man. I could not vouch for his honesty, but it is his belief that the boy had drowned while swimming in a water shed. Perhaps, Luis Pinada was only in a coma. Perhaps, Father Durante had been drinking. I could not say."

"But El Terro reported he was dead."

"Miss Buckley, you must sell your magazine. We must sell our newspaper. People are very religious here. They like stories about the Virgin Mary and Jesus. We printed the account as it was told to us. Unfortunately, that is all I can tell you about this latest 'miracle'."

Kim was about to end the conversation when a final thought occurred to her.

"Mr. Sanchez, the wire service made no mention of how Garvey revived the boy. Was that information included in your Lazarus story?"

Again, the pause. He cleared his throat.

"No, the mother did not say and so those details were not reported." She could sense that he was searching his memory. "But if you are so interested, let me suggest that you contact the priest, Durante. There is probably no telephone, but a letter perhaps? In the meantime, I will let him know of your inquiry."

Kim's enthusiasm had withered. It registered in her voice.

"Thanks."

"You are welcome, Miss Buckley," he concluded. "I am sorry if this news has left you disappointed."

She hung up the phone. It just didn't make sense. None of it. Okay, she thought, suppose the circumstances surrounding this cure were unscientific; unverifiable even. There were still three others just like it. Didn't the total here add up to more than the sum of the individual incidents? Didn't it point to a pattern that proved something?

Kim spread the four reports before her on the desktop: a cancer cure in the Chuvash province of Russia, the resuscitation of a boy thought to be dead by drowning in

Mexico, a desert camp where water was said to have flowed from a dry bed of rock in Sudan and a woman in Columbia, S.A. who claimed to have been cured of glaucoma. What did they have in common? she pondered. Each took place in an obscure region of the world. Jason Garvey was the catalyst in every case.

Kim considered the UFO sightings that always seemed to occur in secluded swamplands, desolate farm fields and unmapped country roads. Why there and not in Washington, D.C., New York or Los Angeles? skeptics would inevitably ask. And no one could answer except to point out that once investigated the overwhelming majority turned out to be hallucinations or hoaxes perpetrated with the aid of trick photography. Yet, Kim reasoned, what if a doctor in the Soviet Union claimed a sighting and offered some physical evidence derived from the event: a scorch mark on the ground, for instance? What if a group of peasant farmers in Africa claimed to have witnessed a similar sighting and offered a detailed description of the craft? Then, a member of the clergy in Mexico swore that he had seen the same thing and actually been inside it? And finally, a woman separated from them all by thousands of miles offered a foreign object taken from the vessel as evidence that she had been in contact with its pilot? True, if these incidents had occurred over the course

of decades they could be attributed to bizarre coincidence. But what if they took place within a short period of time with each witness maintaining that the space craft still existed; that it could still be seen, touched and examined? This, Kim thought, more closely fit the Garvey phenomenon. For hadn't physical changes actually occurred in the people and things he had come in contact with? And wasn't Jason Garvey still alive in some area of the world to be interviewed, reasoned with and examined??

The twenty-seven year old reporter jotted down the names of the principals involved in the accounts. There was only one way to discern truth from fiction and that was to contact each of them. She drafted ten cables: Four of them to the news agencies reporting the stories; the others to the individuals involved or named as witnesses to the so-called miracles. When they were completed, she brought them to Mona.

"I need these out right away," she said stacking the scrawlings in a neat pile.

"Who's the lucky celeb this week, Paul Newman?"

Kim shook her head in the negative.

The plump, red-haired secretary was disappointed.

"You know who you should write about?"

Kim stared back at her deadpan.

"Who?"

"John Travolta."

She nodded with conviction.

"You're right as usual, Mona. But this time I've really decided to shock the world. I'm doing a feature on Christie Brinkley!"

The secretary considered the prospect.

"Naw. I don't think so, Miss Buckley. The girl's a nimrod. Good looks. No brains. Otherwise, she wouldna broke-up with Billy Joel."

Kim stared at her for a drawn moment. She was about to respond, but thought better of it.

"Good-night, Mona."

"Say, Kim!" she called after her. "Where will you be in case there's a direct response?"

"The New York Public Library," she answered without turning. "After that, I'll be at home; sleeping."

* * *

Early the next morning, Kim sat at a desk in the small, stark Greenwich Village apartment where she'd been living since her separation. Stacked before her were three piles of books, each five high. Among them were Explorations In Awareness by Samuel Bois, The Unseen World by Julius Andrae, Faith Healing by L. Nelson Bell and the works on hypnotic cures for psychosomatic diseases by Marcel Charcot. The apartment building was soundless. The tiny room where she sat had become a vacuum where she pored over information

about the "laying on" of hands as practiced by American Baptists and the bizarre healing rituals carried on among African and South American voodoo cults. The hair on the back of her hands stood up as she read about the famous faith healer Zē Arigo who awed a panel of journalists and physicians by conducting delicate surgery on a patient using tweezers and a pair of scissors kept in a tin can. His speciality was an eye operation in which he would extract the eyeball, remove the affliction with a kitchen knife, then set the eyeball back in its socket.

Experiments involving the unconscious mind conducted in France and the United States by the psychologists Pierre Janet and Morton Prince seemed no less macabre. In his Back Bay home in Boston, Prince was said to have made a cripple walk in the year 1906. Janet, using a similar hypnotic technique, claimed to have caused and cured blindness, deafness and paralysis of the limbs in a patient where none of the conditions previously existed!

A chill passed through Kim as she read Prince's account of Christine Beauchamp, a twenty year old Radcliffe student, who suffered from delusions of persecution. In dreams and daytime fugues, she envisioned horrible creatures piercing her flesh with nails and steel pins, until she was raw and bleeding. When she awakened, her body would indeed manifest the external wounds she had imagined. It was Prince's belief that her unconscious mind had brought on

the physical manifestations by convincing the brain that she had, in fact, been tortured. The brain, then, triggered a response in the automatic nervous system thus causing the issuance of blood from the epidermal cells of her arms, legs, back and chest. Miss Beauchamp's affliction was compared by Prince to the religious phenomenon of stigmata. The condition was reversed through hypnotic suggestion after bouts which brought his patient to the very brink of both mental and physical collapse. The process took nearly six years.

Kim considered the mysteries of both physical and psychological "healing". It gave her an odd feeling like prying open the gates to some gothic burial vault or the tomb of an ancient pharaoh. Her heart raced as she read a summary paragraph concerning the relationship between the body and that part of the mind responsible for psychosomatic and organic diseases. We know too little at present about the relations between the cortical mechanisms active in thinking and the hypothalamic and other systems on which they act to explain how these disturbances are produced.

What did it all mean? she asked herself as the exhaustion of the past twenty-four hours crept upon her. More, if this strange limbo of existence really did exist, where did Jason Garvey fit into it all?

Kim rested her head on the medical text Mind, Body and Behavior as an uneasy slumber cast its shadow over her. Her eyes closed, but her mind remained vibrant. Images of Garvey, his space accident and the most obscure regions of the mind laced her dreams. Beneath it all, running like a dark, fathomless stream, was the gnarled and festering image that seemed to recur whenever she closed her eyes: it was of an operating room with large, shining orbs overhead. A doctor and two nurses stood around her as she lay there. Her legs were spread. Her bare feet straddled the cold, steel stirrups on either side of the table. A spinning, screw-shaped apparatus was placed inside her. She could feel it sucking. Sucking like the whirlpool in a drain as the fetus was ground up, then extracted from her uterus.

The telephone sounded three sharp rings beside her resting head. Kim awakened with a start. She glanced to her alarm clock. It was 3:00 a.m.

"Hello?"

It was a bad connection.

"Hello?"

"This is Father Durante," the voice rasped.

"I am calling to tell you this and you must believe me:

Luis Pinada was drowned. Dead! I had already performed
the sacrament of Extreme Unction when Jason Garvey
breathed on him; breathed on him and gave him back
his life!

Chapter Two

The office was bristling with activity when Kim arrived the next morning. It was Thursday. One day before deadline. The period of refinement when staff writers met their editors and lay-out artists to argue the finer points of journalism, art and audience market share. It was no secret that Time and the electronic media were locked in mortal combat over those precious leisure hours when the average American sat down to relax with a cup of coffee or a cocktail. It was also no secret they were losing. Then, there was Time's perennial competition, the newspapers. What will it be this morning on the bus or commuter train, New York Times, Daily News, or this week's issue of Time magazine? These, not to mention Newsweek, Self, People and the scores of special interest magazines that flooded the newstands each week.

Kim felt like she was floating on some magic carpet of potential as she smiled to Mona, then entered her cubicle. There had been issues, sometimes printed as late as Monday just hours before distribution, when they had beaten all of them to the punch. She recalled Ford's pardon of Nixon and the Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel. Despite the fact that both were announced on a Sunday, the correspondents had delivered the scoop and the weekend skeleton staff had put cover stories together while the bad guys were still awaiting official announcements.

Well, then, Kim beamed inwardly, maybe it was her turn to show them all what the girl from Indiana could do. Perhaps, she had stumbled on to something bigger than anyone had imagined possible!

Kim collected the sparse documentation she had so far gathered, then braced herself for a private meeting with Jack Limpert, her Senior Editor. So long Candy Bergen and Mick Jagger! Adios Richard Pryor, Rod Stewart, Cheryl Tiegs and Brooke Shield! She was ready for hard news and would prove it this bright, Thursday morning!

The door to Jack's office was slightly ajar as she approached, then tapped lightly upon it. She peeked her head inside. Limpert was tall and lean with salt and pepper hair. Despite the rigors of giving the "back-of-the book" sections a fresh look each week, in private moments he appeared a fragile sort. His face was thin and long, not wolfish like the other editors. It was a look that left one with the impression of a failed artist. He fiddled with some papers on his desk for appearance sake, then gulped from a cardboard container of coffee.

"Morning, Kim. What can I do for you?"

"Jack," she said gently closing the door behind her.

"I need to talk to you about the Garvey story."

He shrugged, then gestured toward the door.

"Fine. What's with all the secrecy?"

She took a seat to the left of his desk. She laid-out

the four articles she'd uncovered along with notes from her own research and conversation with Durantē.

"Jack, do you remember the headlines on Garvey that ran three years ago? About the space accident and his hospitalization?"

"Who doesn't?"

She stared at him, her expression studded with determination.

"I don't think that was anything compared to the story these articles tell." She pushed the computer print-outs forward. "Just look at these: four newspaper accounts printed in countries separated by thousands of miles; scattered, literally, around the globe. In each case, Garvey's name is mentioned. In each case some ... outrageous occurrence takes place."

Limpert's eyes drifted up from them.

"Cures? Medical cures?"

"That's right! Three of them. And if you can believe this," she said clasping the paper in her hand, "I don't know what else to call it, but a miracle; or at least a purported miracle." She stared at him brimming with wonder. "Water from a bed of rocks, Jack! That's what they're claiming in this report from En Nhad, Sudan."

Limpert sat back in his swivel chair. He patted the back of his graying pate where a carefully camouflaged bald spot was beginning to emerge.

"Well, what do you think?"

Her boss gazed straight ahead; his eyes unseeing; his mind abstracted.

"Where did you find these?"

"I uncovered two in my own research, then asked Jack Murdock to do a computer scan. That's when I began to piece things together."

Limpert sat forward.

"Piece what things together?"

"Why the pattern that was beginning to develop, of course! Yesterday afternoon I went to the library to pick up some books about faith healing, hypnosis, psychosomatic diseases, the works. I read those books, Jack, and believe it or not things like this really do go on."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning I'm beginning to suspect that something happened to Jason Garvey during that Sky View mission three years ago; something I can't explain, but I think I can document."

He was hesitant. His eyes were cautious; wary.

"I know it sounds fantastic, but early this morning I got a call from the priest involved in this drowning incident." She searched his gaze, attempting to make contact. "The priest swears Luis Pinada was dead before Garvey revived him. No pulse. No heartbeat. Nothing."

It was all too much for the fifty-seven year old

journalist.

"Those sorts of coincidences happen every day!" he answered dismissing the accounts with the wave of his hand. "As a reporter I used to chase ambulances. Do you know how many times cops were ready to bury comatose victims before a doctor showed up to say he was still alive?"

"Okay, okay. That's one. But here are three others. Blindness. Cancer."

"What have you done to verify these reports?"

A thread of dejection hung from Kim's voice.

"I sent cables to the news agencies and the principals involved. I solicited more information."

Limpert sighed heavily. He took the research into his hands, then read through it. Finally, he nodded.

"You did right. And I'm glad we're discussing it because you're also correct in thinking this could be a major story. But this is not the National Enquirer," he warned, tossing the articles back on his desk. "If we're going to do this, we're going to do it right. I want every witness interviewed; every newspaper and wire service account corroborated; every scrap of evidence verified before a single syllable of this sees print!"

A knock sounded. They looked from one another to the door. It was Mona.

"I've got a call on line three."

"Important?"

"She says it's urgent Mr. L., but it's not for you."

It's for Kim."

"Do you want to take it here?"

"If it's okay with you."

He parted his palms in a gesture of munificence.

"Enjoy."

She picked up the receiver.

"Yes?"

"Kim, this is Joyce."

She turned away from her boss.

"I hope this is something that's going to change my life," she whispered. "I'm in a meeting with my editor."

"You decide. But I think it's important. At least if you're serious about the Garvey story."

Kim's expression grew suddenly intense.

"Yeah?"

"I questioned 'Ben' about him; the way I told you I would."

"And?"

"The program carried just so far before it ran smack into a security block. Now, that's not so unusual. The Pentagon classifies just about everything under one code or another, but this one was different; something totally unique from any I've ever seen before."

"What does it mean?"

"I don't know, but I do know one thing. Jason Garvey is in Haiti. I don't know why he's there or what he's doing,

but I'm certain he arrived only recently."

"How do you know that?"

"The data is fresh. Someone had entered it on his disk, but hadn't had time to code it."

"Anything else?"

"That's it for now."

"Thanks, Joyce. And listen, if there's anything ..."

"Forget it! Anyone who could put up with me as a roommate deserves consideration."

Again, the spangle of mischief glistened.

"In the meantime, I'll be trying different combinations to see if I can break that code. We've got one of our newer models working on that. An IBM 380. It won't take long."

"Okay, Joyce. And thanks again."

Kim returned the receiver to its cradle. Her boss's eyes were questioning.

"That was a source of mine at the Pentagon. Jason Garvey is in Haiti right now. Please, Jack, please let me go there to interview him."

"What about your column?"

"It's done. Completely. Writing, pictures, lay-out. The whole thing ready to go to press this Sunday."

Limpert touched his fingertips together to form the configuration of a pyramid. He leaned forward, then stared deep into Kim's large, blue eyes.

"Do it."

Air Florida flight 89 bound for Francoise Duvalier Airport was filled to capacity. The salient odor of sweat permeated the medium-range jet like the scent of a potion, concentrated, then concentrated again as if something of the Haitian soul floated around Kim. She was one of a handful of whites among the fifty-seven passengers, but it was more than the color of her skin that separated her. She realized this in New York after having talked with Joe McNally, Time's Caribbean analyst. Throughout the island's long and bloody history, Haitian culture was unique. This could be seen in its religion, politics and penchant for extravagance. Scores of governments had risen to power, then collapsed as quickly since the island gained independence in 1804. Nearly all had left behind some grisly footnote as a reminder that this was Haitian history and unlike any other.

After a brutal war waged against French Colonialism, Boisrond Tonnerre commented upon Haiti's Act Of Independence written for President Jean Dessalines: "To write this document we must have a white man's skin for parchment, his skull for an ink well, his blood for ink, and a bayonet as pen." In 1805, Dessalines declared himself Emperor, like Napoleon, and was assassinated one year later. His successor, Henri Christophe, in violation of a new constitution, declared himself King. Employing some 20,000 slaves over

a ten year period, he had a mountaintop citadelle built to protect him from his enemies. Upon completion, he ordered an entire batallion to march off one of its walls just to impress a group of visiting diplomats with their loyalty. In 1820, with his rule in hopeless jeopardy, Christophe shot himself through the head with a solid gold bullet.

Haiti's modern history was no less anomolous, McNally had reminded her. Since the coming of "Papa Doc" and his "nightmare" republic in 1957, Haitians seemed to hold dark secrets within them; a side of their culture kept hidden from the rest of the world. Kim's mind flashed back to a Time feature done on the Haitian "boat people" who had escaped to Miami in 1982. Many had died enroute, but those who survived told of poverty, torture and pervasive political oppression. While "Baby Doc", Duvalier's son and successor, spent millions on European jaunts among high society, his people existed in a timeless chasm of ignorance filled by an abiding belief in voodoo. Perhaps, it was the scent of fear that surrounded her, Kim concluded but whatever it was, she had never felt more on edge.

She leafed through a copy of the in-flight journal, then put it aside. Haiti, she pondered. Of all the places in the world to turn up, why had Jason Garvey chosen this tiny island republic? It seemed so strange, so incongruous and yet hadn't Garvey already claimed this terrain as his own? If one evaluated the steps leading up to his arrival,

hadn't each taken him more deeply into the very cauldron of human misery?

The man beside Kim nudged her.

"You are from the United States?"

She turned. He was not Haitian, but Pakistani.

"Yes."

"You have stayed in Haiti before?"

"No. I'm here on business. And you?"

"I am a merchant. I have been here many times. I buy wood carvings, then export them." He settled into his seat. "There's no place like it, you know. It is as if all the world around Haiti grew and evolved leaving this island behind. That's where the art comes from. A timeless sort of place. Like the Stone Age in the villages outside Port Au Prince." He broke from his reverie. "How long will you be staying, Miss ..."

"Buckley. Only a couple of days."

"How nice," he said smiling as he closed his eyes to doze. "Haiti is a wonderful place to visit for a couple of days."

The Boeing 727 rolled to a halt. The passengers deplaned. Immediately, Kim sensed the pervasive eccentricity of Haiti and its president. A huge portrait of the dictator adorned the terminal entrance with political messages bearing his picture posted throughout. In each, "Baby Doc" was depicted as a benevolent fellow with a round, smiling face. "Bon Excellence M. Jean Claude Duvalier President

A Vie," read the caption below.

Kim's throat tightened. She swallowed a spasm of fear as the group proceeded into two lines: one for Haitian citizens, the other for visitors. Fifty-two queued to the right. She and four others moved toward the second line where her passport was stamped and baggage inspected. Kim watched as her suitcase and overnight bag was opened and their contents scattered across a long, narrow table. Three members of the Tonton Macoutes, Duvalier's secret police, observed the search with owl-like vigilance. It was twilight, yet each of them wore mirrored sunglasses. It was part of the uniform.

The customs agent nodded to them signalling that her belongings were without contraband. Their implacable faces never diverted as they watched her repack. Then, as she turned to leave, one of them moved to block her path. Kim's face flushed scarlet as they confronted one another. Just what was he trying to prove? she asked herself.

The answer came immediately. These initial acts of intimidation were meant to engender a message. 'Haiti is a dictatorship,' the message went. 'Here there is only one kind of justice. It is meted out by us: the Tonton Macoute.'

Kim's composure quavered. She stepped around the man, then rushed from the stifling terminal. Her eyes fell upon a waiting cab. She tossed her luggage in the back seat, then shut the door behind her as a covey of barely-clad street urchins pawed at the windows.

"You gots some money for me, Miss-Miss?" "You got some money for poor, hungry boy?"

"Take me to the Hilton," she gasped. "And hurry!"

Once Kim collected her jangled nerves, she rolled down the window. The scent of tropical flowers wafted into the car. She felt the cool, evening breeze on her face as the cab moved along Avenue Dessalines toward the heart of Port Au Prince.

"You are in Haiti for vacation?" the driver asked.

"No, not a vacation," she sighed. "I'm here to meet with someone. An American named Garvey."

"Oh, very good. Very nice," he beamed nodding enthusiastically.

"Do you know Jason Garvey?"

"Oui. I hear of him. Everyone heard of him now." Her interest heightened.

"Now?"

The driver peered into his rearview mirror.

"He with Duvalier. He been a guest at Presidential Palace for three day now."

She remained purposely silent.

"American astronaut been with him to talk. Serious talk. Duvalier make speech tomorrow."

"What kind of speech?"

The driver shrugged boyishly.

"No one know. Duvalier make speech not so often no more. He make speech to all Haitian tomorrow from Palace

balcony. Many people be there."

He reached to his right drawing a copy of Le Nouvelliste from the cab's front seat. He passed the newspaper back to her. A nodding acquaintance with French allowed her to translate:

Duvalier to Address Contrymen

Tomorrow

Important Message After Meeting

American Spaceman

Chapter Three

Kim awakened early the next morning feeling more confident than ever that she had stumbled onto something wildly important. She sat at a small desk in her hotel room, the morning edition of Le Matin Haitien spread before her as she jotted notes into her daily journal. She wrote glancing frequently to the television screen where Tele Nationale reported the news of Duvalier's upcoming speech.

There is an electricity in the air here on the island prison of Haiti this morning. It can be seen in the faces of the Haitian servants and desk clerks; heard and felt in the conversations between French businessmen and a handful of American tourists. The news commentators reporting for the official government television station, too, seem to have been swept up in the whirlwind of speculation.

Rumor has it that Duvalier has been meeting in marathon sessions with Jason Garvey for three days now. At noon today, the flamboyant dictator of the poorest nation on earth will address his people for the first time in twenty-seven months. What will Duvalier say? What has transpired between these two men during the past three days? These questions are on the lips of every thinking man, woman and child

in the city of Port Au Prince as twelve
o'clock approaches.

Kim dated the scrawlings, then closed her black, reporters diary. It was too early to cable the New York desk now, but Jesus, what a story she hoped to have by this afternoon!

* * *

Kim arrived at Duvalier's Presidential Palace an hour before his scheduled address, yet already thousands of Haitians had gathered. Dressed in colorful red, white and black native garb, they clamored within the gates that surrounded the grounds awaiting any sign of their self-proclaimed President For Life. Portraits of the ever-smiling "Baby Doc" were posted on every street corner. The Palace, itself, stood glistening white like a mirage in the midst of Nastrond. Kim fended off the clusters of beggars who surrounded her as she passed through the iron gates. Soldiers equipped with rifles and submachine guns stood at either side while hundreds of others, equally well armed, encircled the sprawling mansion. It was no coincidence that Duvalier's official residence was adjoined by a military base complete with armored tanks, anti-aircraft weapons and a Presidential heliport. Even the statue of Tonssaint L'Ouverture,

ex-slave and liberator of Haiti, stood with sword drawn and in the ready. Kim shuddered. The entire scene had a dimension of unreality to it, she thought, as stories about "Baby Doc" and his infamous father trickled from the back of her mind. "Papa Doc", patron saint of barbarity and corruption, who ordered the head of his political rival Albert Jerome delivered to him in a bucket of ice. "Baby Doc", his progeny, who squandered half the revenue of his country annually on personal security and high living while his population buckled under the weight of his tyranny. Now this. A three day encounter with Jason Garvey, the mysterious astronaut responsible for a rash of alleged "miracles". What did it all mean? What thread of reality could possibly link these two men and their individual destinies?

The crowd began to swell as noon approached. It spilled over onto Rue Ghilloux, the main boulevard, and into the government plaza beyond. The speech would be broadcast on both television and radio, but the people wanted to see their leader; to be near him. More than an audience, this was a congregation not of citizens, but of believers. Like child disciples awaiting the blessing of some paternal diety, they had gathered simply to be touched. Then, sadly, Kim realized that this was all these people had. A belief in their President, however corrupt, and in the mythical ideals

he espoused. The air was frenzied with anticipation as maimed beggars cried out and starving infants wailed in their mothers' arms. Duvalier, how can you be so cruel? Kim whispered. How can you deceive so many who need so desperately to believe in you?

The brilliant sun was relentless. It shone down like a glittering goldpiece upon the dazed men and glaring women shrouded in their native headdress. Again, there was that acrid, vinegary odor. It was the smell of human misery, Kim decided as she edged her way forward toward a balcony that jutted from the east side of the palace. Portable speakers had been positioned on lamposts in the street and atop the four, Greek columns that framed the palace facade. The ground around Kim quaked with the rumble of voices and laughter accentuated by the jackal howls of the impassioned citizenry. The spectacle was, in some ways, chilling. The potential for a civil disturbance, even a riot, could not be ignored. Uncertainty stirred like an eel in the pit of Kim's stomach. She glanced nervously around her, then listened as a thunderous wave of handclapping and screams rose up from the crowd. Slowly it built as the eyes of the people lifted. Their reaction heightened. It reached crescendo, then ceased with the wave of a hand. The sudden silence left a vibration in the air.

President Jean Claude Duvalier stood on the balcony

with Jason Garvey at his side. He strode to a pack of long-stemmed microphones arranged at the lip of the landing. He stared down upon the multitude his words emanating in Haitian rather than his usual French.

"My confession will be short and it will be truthful," he proclaimed in a slow, resolute voice. "I have met with the American astronaut and he has convinced me that the tyranny of my regime is evil. My propaganda has been a deceit. My entire life has been a lie. Until now!"

The President took a pile of political brochures into his hands, then tore them to pieces. He threw them down from the balcony with disdain.

"There will be no more injustice in Haiti!" he roared. "There will be no more propaganda! There will be no more lies! This I vow to you all. Today, I have uncovered my true, inner self. I have learned what it means to be a man and a person. The lesson was painful. For three days and three nights, I lived with the torment of my sins and the sins of my father. But the past will be no more. Duvalier has found Duvalier. I will treat my people more better now!"

There was a stunned silence. What had their President said? Had Duvalier been put under a spell? Had the American somehow gotten hold of his astral self? No one knew just how to react. Then, a man called out the words,

"Vive Duvalier, liberateur d' Haiti!" The phrase floated above the mass with a lilting quality that seemed to ignite some spark deep within the Haitian spirit. It was repeated by several others, until it became a deafening chant. 'Duvalier, the liberator of Haiti!' The words resonated as their President urged Garvey forward.

The crowd quieted by degree. It was the astronaut who spoke now. His voice was soft and rapturous by contrast to Duvalier's emotional strains.

"Your President is a great and wise leader," he began. "For three days our minds became one. We met on the plane which bridges the gaps between souls in a region called Connected Space."

The black astronaut thrust his arms forward, then joined his fingertips to form the configuration of a pyramid. He looked out onto the ocean of humanity before him, his expression strangely contented; contagiously euphoric.

"I give you this as a sign of all that can be and all that is. I offer it to you, Duvalier, and to the people of Haiti, as a symbol of the power you hold within."

Jean Claude Duvalier embraced him, then turned to the throng below.

"Connected Space!" he declared emulating the astronaut.

"The Sign Of Garvey!"

Kim could not believe what she was seeing as literally thousands of tattered and starving Haitians attempted to imitate the symbolic gesture.

"Harmonie interspatiale! La Symbole De Garvey!" they chanted while others sang patriotic songs and danced in joyous celebration.

Duvalier and his honored guest stood together before the population. They raised one another's hand in gesture of unity.

'Bon Dieu bon!' bellowed one man next to Kim. 'Sauve nous!' another implored extending his arms toward the balcony. 'Prend nous avec vous!'"

"Save us! Take us with you!" the people cried as the two men paused to savor the radiance they had helped to create.

It was all too good to be true, thought Kim as she elbowed her way through the jubilant crowd. She had just witnessed perhaps the most dramatic story to come out of the Caribbean in three decades. More, there was something wondrous about what had happened. The people around her were frenetic with a euphoria which had taken hold of even her. Somehow, some way, Jason Garvey had convinced Duvalier, that his tyranny was evil. 'Malin'. That was the word he had used. It was a religious

sounding word; one that implied conversion, but a conversion to what? The answer could only come from its source and that was her next objective: an interview with the ex-astronaut. For now, she would be satisfied to cable this, the biggest story of her young career.

Kim stood at the entrance to Roi's, the dilapidated bistro where Michel Legondē, Haiti's Minister Of Foreign Affairs, had suggested she would find Jason Garvey. Physically, it was more of a shell than a structure with a tin roof and cement floor. If the American astronaut wanted to go unrecognized, as the corrupt Haitian had confided, he had found the right place, for it was patronized by only a handful of fishermen and sugar cane farmers. She scanned its shabby interior. Seated alone at a small table was Jason Garvey. He sipped from a cup filled with rum. His eyes were vacuous. He stared straight ahead as if viewing some celestial interplay which only he could see.

She approached. He said nothing as she stopped, then stood across the table from him.

"Mr. Garvey, my name is Kim Buckley. I'm a reporter for Time magazine. May I join you?"

The gravity which seemed to envelope him rarified, if only partially. His large, brown eyes raised.

"You've done a wonderful thing here in Haiti, Mr.

Garvey," she explained as she settled in her seat. "I'd like to tell the American people about it. About you."

Garvey drank from his cup of rum.

"You see, I've become something of an expert concerning your background. I know about the things you've done in other parts of the world. I've read about the cures and the power you seem to possess."

He smiled.

"I've been waiting for you, or someone like you. What do you want?"

"Just this. I want to know how you did those things. I'd like you to explain how you got this power and from where it derives."

Garvey looked up as a waiter arrived. He placed a dish of rice and fish before him.

"Tell me, Miss Buckley, are you hungry?"

Kim shook her head wordlessly. She watched as the former astronaut took a fork into his hands to begin eating. He brought the food to his mouth, then put it down again. He pushed the plate away chuckling as if at some intimate joke which only he could understand.

"You know, I find that I have no need for this anymore. The food, I mean. I eat rarely these days, Miss Buckley. Less and less frequently as times goes on."

Kim's brows gathered in puzzlement.

"Ah, but you asked me about my power." He sipped

from his cup. "It's simple really. I don't know where it comes from, but I can tell you this: it is real and it emanates from within me."

"But how? Where does it come from?"

He thought for a moment, then spoke slowly as if recollecting something vague and dream-like.

"Some years ago, while in a hospital, I learned about the interconnectedness of things; the correspondence between the cosmic and terrestrial which is existence. Somehow, perhaps through meditation, I learned to draw energy from that source; to strip away the distractions of everyday life and tap into a spring of potential that exists within all people."

He looked across the table to her. Kim could sense it, herself. It was an intensity which she should feel or, at least, wanted desperately to feel.

"While in space, you were exposed to a solar flare, isn't that so?"

"Yes," he said emphatically. "Quite so."

"Could that exposure have anything to do with this capacity you now possess?"

"It is not my capacity. It is the expression of a greater capacity though I have at times put others in touch with it."

"What about the cures? The miracles?"

"Miss Buckley, the perception of miracles requires

no faith or assumptions. One has only to observe the world closely. The true miracles are all around us. In ourselves and in the vastness of space. You've heard of entropy? The theory that the universe is moving toward destruction?"

She nodded.

"A demoralizing theory and untrue. In tests conducted at the University of Paris recently, scientists sent photons speeding in separate directions. To their astonishment, they watched as these particles, traceable only through our most advanced technology, began responding in closely coordinated patterns. The only explanation for these responses was to admit that a back and forth communication had gone on at speeds greater than that of light!" His eyes became large, shining marbles. "Don't you see? The scientists wanted to prove that matter exists in chaos and the photons did a dance for them! There really is a plane where all things are connected. Entropy is order. We simply couldn't see it before."

Kim felt suddenly torn between her instinct to let him go on and her training which told her to cross-examine him for specifics.

"But the space accident?" she persisted. "The radiation?"

"I possess no special power, Miss Buckley. The cures happened because the people believed. It wasn't

the radiation that cured them. It was the power that they held inside. I was simply the instrument that brought it out."

"What about the accident?"

"There was no accident."

"What did you see? What was it that you experienced?"

"Only the things that you, yourself, have seen and experienced."

"And Duvalier today?"

Garvey took a long drink from his cup.

"A soul crying out for recognition. A poor, shrivelled soul poisoned by greed and hatred."

"How did you do it?"

"Duvalier was detached, dying! He was travelling in a murky, diminished world of half-blindness. I taught him to see. I helped him purify himself so that he was no longer an alien separated from his true existence. Now, he lives as a man; as a part of creation."

"Do you honestly believe a man like that can change over night?"

"Yes."

"What about the people of Haiti? What about the Tonton Macoutes and his cabinet and all of his corrupt followers? Do you think they'll just watch while he turns everything inside out?"

"He must try, Miss Buckley. We all must try."

Kim huffed in exasperation. Somehow her method had backfired. She was supposed to be putting pressure on him, but it was she who had become flustered.

"What were you thinking while in space during the exposure?" she asked hearkening back to her original probe. "What did it feel like?"

Garvey rose.

"I have told you all that I can. There is no more to tell you. You know everything there is to know."

Kim started after him. He turned. His eyes, those eyes, stared at her. They paralyzed Kim; the part of her that wanted to believe.

"No more now," he commanded before leaving the shabby, Haitian bistro called Roi's.

Slowly, Kim got to her feet. She realized then how weak she felt. How drained. She started for the door, then stopped at the sound of the waiter's voice. He beckoned her. Kim watched as the emaciated black man touched the fork which Garvey had held to a knife which lay beside it. He lifted them, dangling the shiny, steel utensils in midair.

"You see, Miss. They sticks together."

Kim rushed to examine them. It was true. They were, in fact, magnetized.

The ticketing area of Francois Duvalier airport had been bedlam. Haitians had swarmed upon the international

airline windows seeking to book any of the limited number of seats available. Foreigners had been no less anxious guarding their place in line with equal vehemence, then paying a surprise "exit tax" just for the privilege of saying they'd visited Duvalier's mystical island.

There was nothing new to this, Kim was informed. Long lines and surprise "taxes" occurred here on a daily basis.

Now, she waited to board her Air Florida flight near the less frenetic terminal gate experiencing mixed emotions about her stay in Haiti. She stared alternately from out of the plateglass window to the landing strip, then to the airport bar where doctors and missionaries drank Heinekens swapping tales about bodies and souls. True, she had cabled her story and it was a whopper. The week's issue of Time had even featured Jason Garvey on its cover! Still, in her heart of hearts, she knew she'd blown it. Her past twenty-four hours had been spent attempting to relocate the ex-astronaut, but without success. She had seen Michel Legondē, Minister of Foreign Affairs and again offered to bribe him, but he claimed to know nothing of his current whereabouts. She had called on the Office of The President, Haitian Immigration and even the American Consulate, all without result. It was as if Jason Garvey had vanished!

Almost moment to moment now, Kim tried to re-create her interview with the man. She played it out as it happened and as it would happen if she had the opportunity to see him again. She altered her questions, her tone and the attitude she'd gone in with, but always it came out the same: she had reported the news of Duvalier's conversion by the former NASA astronaut, but she had let the real story slip through her fingers. This was the one about Jason Garvey, the man who had stirred her and everyone that he met personally; touched them in some deep and mysterious way so that they were never the same person again.

Kim's Air Florida flight began taking passengers. She stepped into line with the others, then walked through the gate to the passenger ramp. She boarded wondering what her next move should be. Now that her Time feature had hit the streets, every reporter who could write his name would be after Garvey for an interview. The same interview she'd been granted only to have pressured him into a maddened dash for the door! She took her seat near the middle of the craft feeling absolutely nauseous. If she had played her cards right, been a little more pleasant even, chances were they'd have formed a relationship that would have her interviewing him again - maybe exclusively! As it was, the explanations he'd given about this presumed "gift" seemed so vague

they were barely quotable. More, she really didn't understand. He'd spoken in mystical terms, not scientific ones. He'd claimed that every person had the same capacity as him, but hadn't learned to use it. Significant, too, was his ellusiveness when asked about the radiation exposure he'd suffered. He stated that it had no bearing on the so-called cures or the apparent psychological transformation he'd undergone. But what was most puzzling to Kim was this: when she asked him about the space accident, he told her that there had been no accident. If it wasn't an accident, she wondered, what was it?

Kim adjusted her seat backward, then slipped down into the cushion, exhausted. The events she'd witnessed in Haiti had saturated her mind. Maybe, it was all just too much for a nice Catholic girl from Fort Wayne, Indiana , she mused. It was a joke to her now, but that was the way her parents had described her when she'd gotten accepted at N.Y.U. 'New York?' her Dad had asked. 'I don't understand why anyone would want to go to New York, not to live anyways.' All the while her Mom had nodded in that pragmatic, forthright way. 'Father's right, dear. It's just too dangerous. With the crime! Why a young, girl like you could get killed, or worse," she'd added, so that there was no mistaking what worse meant.

A fond smile played at the corners of Kim's mouth. Her head lolled to one side. She could feel herself

submerging as if into fathomless ocean depths as a deep and profound slumber overtook her. Father, Mother, Little Girl, the voice inside her head gently whispered. It was there all right! She could sense its presence warm as new milk. It was soft and so alive, but hazy and out-of-focus, far away as it was in the distance. Kim looked for it grinning in anticipation as she walked in its direction. Father, Mother, Baby Boy, the voice inside her head teased, 'I can find you,' she was thinking, 'cause I know where you're hiding.' She skipped through the clouds, her eyes searching the horizon, until there it was just as she'd expected all along: A baby! She just knew it! 'But not a baby yet, her mother had told her. 'Not yet. But you can feel.' She placed her hand on her Mom's tummy. 'Do you feel it, Kitten. That's it,' she announced with a magician's wonder. 'That's the baby!'

Kim's eyes searched and searched, the feel of her Mom's round tummy still warm on her palm. Her pace quickened with anticipation. She giggled as it drew her nearer, it's soft, cottony heartbeat thumping clear and steady as a timepiece. She walked faster, until at last she was running. She ran and ran as fast as her little girl's legs would take her ... but this was not fun anymore. She stopped as her eyes began to take focus. Something was wrong. Babies don't look like that!

Kim stands before it. The sac is large, much bigger than she had ever imagined. And inside is the fetus. She watches in awe as it floats weightless amid the embryonic water. The head is oversized. The limbs and phlanges are diaphonous. The features are very clear now. She can see every vein and vessel in its body as it drifts around to face her. With great effort, the lids begin to tear loose from the web of pinkish membrane that seals them. They strain. They lift. She stares into its eyes. They are dull and hueless. "Why did you kill me?" the fetus asks.

Only now does she recognize it. The face and voice of Jason Garvey.

Chapter Four

"There she is! The celeb who writes about celebs!"

"Good morning, Mona," answered Kim flatly.

"So, that's the way it is since you got your cover story, huh?"

The secretary trotted after Kim as she made toward her office.

"Well, I just want you to know that I, for one, am very proud of you. You're an inspiration to journalistic females, Miss Buckley, and to the cause of women's liberation!"

Kim peeled her waist length, corduroy jacket. She sat down at her desk, then squared her body in the chair like an equestrian reacquainting herself with a favorite mount. When she looked up, Mona was still beaming, her red hair and flamboyant dress almost too bright for that hour of the morning.

"I brought you your mail."

Kim accepted the stack from her. She glanced perfunctorily at return addresses dealing one piece behind the other, then stopped.

"Mona," she sang sweetly. "These letters have all been opened."

"Don't blame me for that, Miss Buckley." She pointed

to the office of Jack Limpert. "If you want to blame somebody, you can just walk through that door and start screamin'."

Kim sucked in her annoyance. Again, she burrowed through the pile placing one piece to the side, then another. Both had emanated from out of the country. One was postmarked Columbia, S.A.; the other Buryat, U.S.S.R.

She felt suddenly lightheaded. Could this be the medical verification of Garvey's cures? She emptied the contents of the first envelope. It was a personal letter, not a medical transcript. Worse, it was handwritten in Spanish, a language she did not read. Kim groaned audibly.

"Excuse me, Miss Buckley, but I could read that if you want me to. I studied Spanish in school."

Kim held the piece of stationary up like a white flag of surrender. Mona took it into her hands. Her cadence was fast initially, then slowed once she understood what the letter was; what it meant.

"'Dear Miss Buckley,'" she translated. "'I am not a doctor so my words will not matter so much to you, but something wonderful happen to me I want to say in answer to your telegram.

When I was small girl, my father took me in his truck and we have a terrible accident which leave me blind.

For many year I see only darkness. Then, one day last year, I go to market with my sister. There we meet American who talk to me about this condition. He ask me if I want to see again. Yes! Yes! I tell him. That is what I want more than anything! The man touch my eyes," Mona continued. "'Then, he rub them gently. He tell me to think of flowers. He tell me to think of the way they smell in springtime. He tell me I can see flowers and all thing if I want. To my surprise when he take his hand away I can see! Then, I cry. I kiss his hands. I kiss his hands and he tell me his name is Jason Garvey the man you ask about in telegram.

I hope this is a good letter. If it is not I can only tell you it is the truth.'" Her voice trailed off. "'Sincerely, Maria Rodriguez.'"

Mona folded the letter. She stuffed it into the envelope, then put it back on the desk beside Kim.

"That's heavy. I mean it, Miss Buckley. Heavy and spooky!" She looked to Kim tentatively. "Is that all you wanted? 'Cause I gotta do a letter for Mr. Limpert now, if you don't mind."

"Yes. Thank you, Mona," she uttered absently. "I appreciate the help."

Kim watched the secretary leave, then stared ominously at the small, white envelope that lay on her desk. It seemed to exude a force, some power, over her.

She could feel her heart suddenly pounding as she took the second manila carrier into her hands. She tore it open. It contained a copy of the medical transcript on the Russian cancer victim Garvey was said to have cured. It read:

Patient: Ann V.
Sex: Female
Age: 46 years

Essential Physical Findings:

Patient in moderate respiratory distress and appears somewhat confused, pale and cachetic.

Head - unremarkable.

Throat - inflamed and injected.

Neck - presence of multiple, firm 2 cm. lymph nodes in anterior cervical chain bilaterally. Multiple nodes also palpable in axilla (armpit) and sternal chains.

Lungs - loud inspiratory and expiratory crackles and rales in all lower fields.

Special Procedures:

Thoracentesis revealed a yellow exudate with abundant mesothelioma cells.

Biopsy of sternal and cervical nodes showed metastases to these sites. Radionuclide bone scan showed metastases to the sternum, humeral head, hip and pubic bone.

Prognosis: Terminal

Remarks:

Miss Buckley, your inquiry concerns my most interesting case as a physician. For no known reason, later

X-rays, pathological and laboratory tests all proved negative. The only explanation I can offer is that the patient somehow reversed her physiological chemistry so that the tumors were absorbed or changed.

With reference to Mr. Garvey, it is true that he spent time with this patient while she was hospitalized here. I am told that he pressed his hand in the area of the tumors on numerous occasions while promising a cure.

I have no other explanation or theory except to say that such regressions are rare, but can sometimes occur as the result of genetic immunology.

Kim fell back in her chair feeling like the wind had just been knocked from her lungs. This was it! she thought, clutching the transcript in her hand. Here was the medical verification she'd been waiting for, yet oddly she felt unable even to speculate on its significance. What did it mean? she asked herself. What did any of it really mean? A woman claims she is blind. Garvey touches her eyes: she can see again. A cancer patient is dying. Garvey meditates over her tumors: they shrink and never return. Were these events coincidence? Or, had Jason Garvey somehow performed what is popularly called a 'miracle'?

Kim pondered the circumstances surrounding them.

Maria Rodriguez was doubtless sincere, but little more could be said for her story. There was no objective verification and while Kim was no expert, herself, she felt certain a skeptic would label the cure psychosomatic. As for Dr. Andrei, he admitted having no explanation in his 'remarks', but then went on to add that such regressions have occurred before as a result of 'genetic immunology'. So, were they miraculous cures or just freak medical responses? There was really no way of knowing. After all, Kim asked herself, what constitutes a 'miracle' to begin with? She attempted a definition. A miracle is something so far removed from the realm of nature that it becomes supernatural. Fine. Understood. But if that's all it is, another part of her reasoned, then how would biblical man have reacted to space flight? Or primeval man to X-rays and lasers? Certainly, they would believe these were miracles and outside the realm of nature when, in fact, they are merely extensions of very natural laws.

So much for that one, Kim admitted. She'd try another. A miracle is a phenomenal occurrence brought about by an individual who possesses supernatural power. An example would be Christ walking on water, or Zenobius restoring a decomposed infant to life with the touch of his hand. Okay, but couldn't the same logic be used to disclaim those? As recently as the turn of

the century, heart attack victims were considered beyond hope once their heart stopped functioning. Yet, today hundreds were saved annually as a result of electro-stimulation. Penicillin! Kidney transplants! Chemotherapy and the restoration of limbs through microsurgery would all have appeared miraculous just a century ago! So where was the cure? Where was the miracle? Only this, she concluded. The miracle was that these things happened then and not at some time in the future. The gap that separates the natural from the supernatural, she theorized, is time. Kim thought back to her interview with Garvey. Hadn't he made reference to something like that? He had learned, he'd told her, to tap into a source of energy; a spring of potential that exists within everyone. Was it possible that all men and women had the capacity to perform 'miracles', but hadn't yet learned how to use it?

Kim's eyes fell once again to Maria Rodriguez' letter on her desk. She placed the Soviet medical transcript beside it, then wondered. All she could do was wonder now. The chance to know for certain had passed and there wasn't a blessed thing she could do about it.

A tap on the glass partition snatched Kim from her reverie. She jerked up in her chair.

"Boss wants to see you in his office pronto."

"Wants to see me 'happy' or wants to see me 'angry'?"

The secretary winked.

"Wants to see you 'ecstatic'. Our last issue with the Garvey cover sold out in three days!"

Kim's brows raised. Well, well, well.

Jack Limpert was looking over some copy for the forthcoming issue when Kim entered. She carried the letter and medical transcript with her; a scutcheon for the ire still festering inside.

"Morning!" sang-out Limpert, rising to greet her.

He stepped around his desk to welcome her, hand extended. She accepted with reserve.

"You did a great job in Haiti, Kim. I want you to know that before either of us says another word!"

She took a seat. He angled around to his own chair.

"We beat the newspapers by a full day. Same with the network television news. A full twenty-four hours." He sat. "So, how does it feel to write your first cover feature?"

An embarrassed half-smile erupted beyond her reluctant gaze.

"It feels nice, Jack. It feels just great."

"I'm glad. Happy for you because you deserve whatever success comes along with all of this. It took a sharp eye to pick up on a lead like this. A journalist's

eye."

Kim fought back a blush. It came anyway.

"So where does this leave us, Kim? Where is Garvey now and what is he going to do next?"

"I wish I knew, but I don't. Since he left Haiti, I've checked with everyone from the Department of Immigration to the Lost and Found at Macy's, but it's always the same. No one seems to know. It's like he's vanished; disappeared."

"You did interview him?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"Very little, I'm afraid."

"Okay," he mitigated, "this man is not Burt Reynolds, but tell me about it anyway. Please."

Kim let her mind drift back to Haiti. She could feel the tug of its allure like an undertow dragging her mind through the grottoes of its dark, mystical depths, then blurring her perceptions, until just one lingering doubt remained: was the faith she held for this broken, former astronaut fact or mere self-deception on her part?

"Jason Garvey is a unique individual, Jack. Not an easy person to understand, but very powerful in a wordless, telepathic way. Undeniably, there is something behind these cures and now this latest incident with Duvalier. Trouble is, I can't figure out what it is.

There's something both real and unreal about him, but I can't put my finger on it."

"Is he a fraud?"

"I don't think so."

"Is he genuine?"

"It's possible."

They stared ahead to one another as if trying to coordinate their thoughts.

"Did you tape the interview?"

"I didn't think he'd let me."

"You have notes?"

"Of course, but it's not like he just opened up and started telling me his life story. No, Garvey was vague in his responses. He talked loosely about a kind of philosophy he'd been preaching, but the more I tried to press him for information about himself, the more elusive he became. Still, he did make a couple of comments that struck me. For one, he denied that the radiation exposure had anything to do with the curative powers he now seems to possess. Likewise, he maintains that his subsequent breakdown was absolutely unrelated to this religious evolution he's undergone during the past three years. He was adamant about both of those points."

Limpert grunted.

"Anything else?"

Kim held up the documentation she'd received in response to her inquiries.

"Well, I'd offer to show you these, but I guess you've already seen them."

He flashed her a roguish simper.

"Sorry, babe, but that's show biz. You were away and I couldn't risk waiting."

"Has anyone else seen this?"

"No," he answered slicing his hand through the air. "There are certain ethics in this business that I adhere to and that's one of them. This is your story. You dug it out. You'll be the one to write the follow-ups."

"None of the senior writers? Not even an editor?"

"Kim, I'm counting on you, can't you see that? You've met Garvey. You understand where he's coming from. It would be foolish, crazy, to pull you from it now."

"What about the "People" section?"

"Forget the "People" section! Starting today, I want you on this full time."

Kim took a deep breath. She realized now that being taken off the story was what she had feared all along.

"I appreciate that, Jack. This assignment has come to mean a lot to me."

"I know," he soothed with a mentor's devotion.

"I know the feeling very well."

Kim smiled at last. Her senior editor did the same. They laughed. She had finally won him over, she realized. She had finally gained his respect.

"So, with that out of the way, what's next?" he asked. "How do we follow-up the Jason Garvey story?"

"I've been thinking a lot about that and this is what I've come up with." Her expression grew suddenly intent. "There have been a series of unexplained phenomenon surrounding Garvey that we know, but few others do, correct?"

He nodded.

"Now granted, not all of it is well documented and some of it isn't documented at all, but why should that prevent us from reporting the news?" She shot him a bold stare. "Not fact, Jack. Just news. That's how we skirt the fallout if Garvey turns out to be something other than what he seems. We report the claims that people have made concerning Jason Garvey without corroborating or refuting them."

Limpert listened nervously patting his bald spot.

"You know, fifteen years ago I'd have probably thrown you out of this office using a line of reason like that." He sighed. "But that was fifteen years ago. For now, for today, I say 'let's go with it.'

We can't afford to let this one slip through our fingers."

Kim rose as the senior editor pulled a manila folder from out of his top, desk drawer.

"Thank you, Jack," she said, the words rushing from her mouth. "You won't regret it."

She turned to leave.

"Here, before I forget, you may as well have this. It's a copy of Garvey's psychological records dating back to his debriefing at Cape Canaveral. Also, I've arranged for you to interview one of the psychiatrists who treated him then. His name is Dr. Darius Stone. He can be reached at Bellevue Hospital, First Avenue and 27th Street."

Kim seized the additional information like a runner snatching a baton.

"I see I'm not the only one who's been working overtime."

She left Jack Limpert's office with the dossier in hand. As she returned to her cubicle, Kim spied the N.Y. Daily News headling: "BLACK SUPERNAUT LOST!"

There was something disquieting about Bellevue Hospital's 29th Street building, thought Kim upon entering its cavernous lobby. She sensed it in the faces and powerfully divergent emotions of those around her.

Outpatients registered for appointments, guardians hung over wheelchairs, relatives of those committed waited patiently, at information windows seeking visitors' passes. All were observed by a guard stationed to the lobby's northside corner who viewed a bank of twelve, separate television monitors. She passed silently through the vestibule, her initial impression confirmed. It was like being overwhelmed, she felt, caught-up in the swirling eddies of psychic disharmony which seemed to transfuse the building. She entered one of the waiting elevators, then depressed the button for the eighth floor where Dr. Stone had his office. Their meeting had been prearranged, but remained open-ended. He would be somewhere on the floor, he'd told her. She had only to ask for him.

Kim stepped from out of the elevator. Her eyes drifted from one end of the corridor to the other. There was no registration desk, just this hallway separated from the main wing by two, gray panel doors. She walked through and into the "open" ward where gatherings of white-smocked patients conversed while a contingent of trustees scrubbed and mopped the area. To the center of the long, narrow chamber stood a glass security booth. This was the nurses' station. Kim approached it. The smell of ammonia stung her nostrils as she took notice

of the inmates who surrounded her. Some stood by dazedly while others chatted with unbounded animation. A dwarfed cretin flashed her a secretive grin as he mopped the floor beside her. She turned away in time to see the furtive glance of a young girl whose eyes had raised from her cluster of friends. The phrase anorexia nervosa passed through Kim's mind as the eyes of the tall, emaciated girl flew back to the group. She could not have weighed more than seventy pounds.

Unconsciously, Kim's pace quickened. The stout, black nurse had anticipated her. The voice sounded dull and muffled from behind the booth's plateglass.

"Can I help you?"

"I have an appointment to see Dr. Stone."

The nurse appraised her.

"You'll find him in there," she said pointing to a second set of doors.

Unlike the others, these were hinged in a heavy steel frame. They marked the entrance to the 'disturbed' ward.

"Thanks."

Kim walked toward the doorway.

A wave of dissonant cackles and screams flooded the adjoining ward as she passed into the next wing. Her body turned to gooseflesh as a waft of stale, choking

air inundated her. It was the odor beyond the ammonia that she recognized. That same suffocating stench which she'd first noticed while on the plane headed for Haiti. She followed the sound of the echoing clamor down the hallway and into a large solarium. She stood at its outer lip watching the patients as they sat playing chess and reading comic books while a covey of others encircled a black youth who dribbled a basketball to the beat of a tune by The Police which blared from the stereo speakers of a transistor radio. A single custodian supervised the group of twenty. He barely took notice as Kim moved across the recreational facility, then delved one wing deeper into the psychiatric treatment center.

Kim's spirits heartened when she peered down the dimly lit corridor. Midway down it, stood a doctor flanked by two attendants. He was administering an injection into the arm of a middle-aged woman who stood paralyzed in a catatonic stupor. A shaggy mane of blonde hair sheathed her round face as her head sagged downward. Her right arm was outstretched and rigid as if saluting or pointing at Kim. The doctor pulled the hypodermic needle from the upper bicep of her left arm. She shuddered violently, then threw her head back laughing as the attendants seized her from behind.

"Take this one to her room," the doctor muttered before breaking away to meet his guest.

Even from a distance, Kim could sense something strange and intense about Darius Stone. His gray eyes were ringed from lack of sleep. Though she guessed him to be in his early forties, his dark, craggy countenance conveyed a dimension of age that went beyond appearance. Stone looked tormented and drained; the kind of tired that no amount of sleep could hope to alleviate.

"Miss Buckley?"

"Yes."

"I knew it was you," he ventured, clasping her hand. "I saw your picture in the paper this morning." He turned. "If you'll follow me, we can talk in my office."

Kim followed him down the corridor. They entered the patient housing area.

"I trust you found me without too much trouble. Normally, someone would have escorted you, but I'm afraid we're understaffed. Fiscal crunch," he apologized.

They passed through a wing of high security hospital rooms. The doctor spoke, perhaps sensing her discomfort.

"Have you ever been inside one of these places before?"

"No. I can't say that I have."

"Quite a population here at Bellevue. Interesting, especially for a writer like yourself." His pace slowed.

"Take that man, for example. Maybe you remember the name Steven Darrell?"

Kim turned. There, in the patient lounge, sat a frail, high-strung man nervously paging through a copy of the Wall Street Journal. She shook her head in the negative.

"Steven was a successful stockbroker here in the city a few years back. He and his family lived happily enough in a New Jersey suburb before he underwent what is known as an hysterical conversion reaction. That is, he came home one evening after having been fired from his job - changed; literally changed, both mentally and physically. He bludgeoned his wife and three small children to death with an ax , then packaged the various sections of their bodies in one dozen neatly wrapped boxes. He shipped those boxes to an assortment of relatives living throughout the state, then promptly disappeared."

"I do remember now!" Kim remarked. "I read that he'd disappeared, but then nothing!"

Stone smiled slyly.

"That's right. No one knew what became of him. Not the police. Not his business associates. Not even his closest friends. It was a total mystery, until on a sunny afternoon three years later, the mailman called

police headquarters to report someone who resembled Steven Darrell standing outside the house where the murders had occurred. When a team of cops responded, they discovered him in a state of total confusion. 'Where's my wife?' he was asking. 'Where are my children?'" His brows gathered. "The first break in the case came shortly thereafter when investigators discovered that Steven had spent the past thirty-six months living in New England under the name John Crowley. When questioned about it, he had no recollections for any of that period. He maintained that his name had always been Steven Darrell and that he was distraught because he'd been fired from his position at the stock exchange that very morning!"

"I don't understand," Kim admitted.

"Neither did anyone else, until he later revealed during psychotherapy that his father had suffered a similar fate just before committing suicide; a fact he had never been able to accept as a child. It was the trauma of his own firing that resurrected the horror of that memory and the shock proved too much for him. He was thrown into a state of hysteria which saw him transform into another man rather than accept the truth. It was from out of this hysterical conversion reaction that John Crowley, the mass murderer was born."

Again, Kim glanced in the direction of the thin, jittery murderer. Darrell's icy, blue eyes leapt over the top of the newspaper. They glistened.

"You said that he'd undergone physical changes after this condition overtook him. What kind of changes?"

"Muscle density, hair growth, facial features. One witness swore under oath that even his eye color had altered. Psychological afflictions among hysterics often take-on physical manifestations. The neurologist, Marcel Binet, published evidence linking conversion reactions involving the viscera to the creation of tumors, intestinal obstructions and epilepsy." Darius Stone sniggered. "Isn't it amazing what the human mind can do?"

Kim didn't answer, but thought she discerned something of the man in his tone. It hinted at some dark and vaguely mocking ego beneath, as if he was playing a cat and mouse game meant to shock her. These patients weren't people to him, it told her, but a collection of curiosities from which he derived some perversely disturbing satisfaction.

They walked through to the administrative quarter. It was here that Darius Stone had his office. He unlocked the door, then flicked on the light. He gestured toward a chair.

"Please sit. Let's talk about Jason Garvey. That's what you're here for, isn't it?"

Kim took a seat. On the wall hung a collection of

diplomas and personal mementos including a photograph of the doctor and the crew of the "Sky View" mission. She gathered a Lanier tape recorder and microphone from her purse.

"Do you mind?"

"Feel free," he answered from a chair behind his desk. "As you know, it's been years since I treated him, but I don't mind discussing Jason. Thanks to you, he's become something of a public figure."

Kim didn't know how to take the remark. Was he still playing that game? She gazed into his penetrating, gray eyes. They reflected the fluorescent light above like sunbeams through a prism.

"You give me too much credit. Still, there is a renewed interest in him and his tenure with NASA. Unfortunately, my research has turned-up surprisingly little."

"And that's why you're here."

"Yes. That's it exactly."

Stone nodded. He flashed her an oddly distanced simper.

"Fair enough," he agreed, "but I may as well tell you I no longer have any affiliation with NASA. Haven't for some time. You see, I was asked to leave and am now what some would consider a disgruntled, ex-employee."

"Which means you're at liberty to talk freely about the case?"

He chuckled sardonically.

"Which means I really don't give a damn about the organization and find a lot more sanity right here than I ever did at Cape Canaveral. But, to answer your question, 'yes'. I am ready, willing and able to tell you what I know about NASA's most famous astronaut."

Kim depressed the 'on' button to her miniature recorder.

"Fine, Then, I'd like to begin by asking about his background: childhood, family, that sort of thing."

Stone's eyes screwed to the ceiling as he attempted to retrieve the information. It seemed one history among a compilation of hundreds.

"Jason Garvey was born into a low-income family in Chicago where his father was chronically unemployed. He deserted the family when Jason was twelve, if memory serves me, so that it was his mother who supported him through high school. From there, Garvey was accepted to MIT on scholarship. He received a degree in Engineering, then went on to serve with distinction as a pilot in the Air Force. He applied to the NASA space program five years into his enlistment where he was, again, accepted. While in training, Jason was regarded as a bright, stable

and capable candidate. "Sky View" was his first mission. The rest of the story you know," he added, "until he was admitted to an Air Force psychiatric clinic in Arizona for treatment. During his hospitalization, he was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic."

"Could you explain what that means?"

"Certainly." His voice became that of a lecturer. "The essence of paranoia is that the patient suffers from delusions around which his entire life revolves. These may be delusions of grandeur, wealth or power, called megalomania. Schizophrenia of the type Garvey suffers is called ambulatory. That is, it's gradual and often progressive. It sets in slowly. The subject is normal at times, but experiences severe anxiety and even hallucinations."

"What caused it? With Garvey, I mean?"

Stone nodded as if he'd anticipated the question even as it had formed in her mind.

"A lot of work has been done recently linking the disorder to hereditary causes. The instability of his father gives credence to that, but as often it's brought to catharsis, from the breakdown to the setting-in stage, by some personal catastrophe. The onset of delusion, particularly of the grandiose variety, represents a retreat from the reality of a trauma which the subject

cannot accept. Rather than admit his failure, he tends to over-compensate. Thus, the delusions of grandeur. Our people concluded that the schizophrenia was a pre-existing condition we failed to detect initially and that Jason's "space accident" represented the trauma which caused the syndrome to begin. In short, we started with a failed astronaut, but wound up with a faith healer. You understand, it all stems from guilt. Instead of being inadequate, Garvey is super-adequate. Instead of being damned, he is God's own emissary sent to save or damn others."

"But I've met him," Kim objected. "He doesn't seem ..."

The doctor passed her a condescending smile.

"Crazy?"

She nodded.

"That's the tricky thing about it. Most chronic schizophrenics can take care of themselves, they endanger no one and are in reasonable contact with reality most of the time. This makes them difficult to diagnose, even for a professional."

"Doctor, I have affidavits documenting the fact that this man has cured at least three people of diseases ranging from glaucoma to cancer."

He shrugged.

"Cures and spontaneous conversion like the ones you've described have gone on since before the time of Christ. Afflicted individuals are really quite convinced of their delusion and so greatly influence those susceptible to suggestion and psychosomatic diseases. Comas and Damian in the year 300 A.D., Galen of Pergamon and even St. Martin all boasted of curative powers. In more recent times, one has only to look at Lourdes where in the past fifty years more than four thousand cures are said to have occurred. As I stated when you first came here, it is truly amazing what the mind can do. If you're interested in the subject, I recommend William James' study, 'The Psychology Of Sudden Conversion.' He was a pioneer in the field." Stone scrutinized her. "But you're still not convinced, are you?"

Kim said nothing.

"Well, that doesn't surprise me. The doctor rose from his chair. He stepped toward a file cabinet of patients' records, then pulled open the steel drawer. "Everyone wants to believe in gods and miracles. Maybe that's one pathology ingrained in us all; part of our human nature. We can't accept death and the limitations of our existence, so we fantasize about 'souls' and 'cures' and 'divine beings'." He spread a series of PETT VI brain scans across his desktop. "Trouble is, there's nothing to it in the end. Just a lot of ignorance and superstition all put under the euphemistic heading of

'religion'." He looked Kim dead in the eye. "But this is the reality, Miss Buckley, and it has little to do with anything more miraculous than a chemical imbalance in the brain."

She examined the three, framed squares of X-ray film. The first was marked 'NORMAL'. The second 'DEPRESSED' and the third 'SCHIZOPHRENIC'.

"The slides you see here are pictures taken by a Positron Emission Transaxial Tomograph or PETT VI scanner. They represent graphically how the function of a normal brain compares with that of a depressed or schizophrenic patient. They're made by injecting radioactive PETT isotopes into the bloodstream, then photographing the pattern they yield while emitting positron particles in the brain." He pointed to the first. "Notice the way the particles are spread evenly throughout this "slice" of a normal subject. There is no bunching. No grouping of the individual isotopes." He touched the nail of his index finger to the second. "In a depressed subject, we observe that the particles are not spread so uniformly. There is an intensity of emissions which cluster toward the upper and lower portions of the "slice". It is not an erratic pattern, but not nearly so symmetrical as the first. This reflects a temporary abnormality; an imbalance in either the chemical distribution or production in the lateral hypothalamic area." The doctor pointed to the third scan. "This is the "slice" representative of

the schizophrenic. Can there be any mistaking it? Look at the bunching of emissions and how all are dropped to the lower portion of the frame. There is no uniformity which would suggest balance. The pattern is totally erratic in that the positron particle emissions are both intense and flared."

Stone handed her the photo marked, 'CM + 5 SCAN JASON GARVEY.'

"Finally, we have the tomographic scan for Jason Garvey's brain "slices" which, I think, speak for themselves."

He watched as Kim placed it beside the others for comparison. She moved it from the first, to the second, finally stopping at the third. She looked up to him feeling suddenly vulnerable and hurt.

"You see, Miss Buckley, there really isn't anything mystical about any of this. Just mental illness, plain and painfully simple."

"But what about his conversion of Duvalier?" she protested. "What about the Sign of Garvey?"

He cast her a steely stare.

"Duvalier was converted through the persuasive powers of a psychotic who would die rather than surrender his delusion. So far as your Sign Of Garvey, it's the most classic symptom of all in progressive cases like this:

the onset of aphasia. When contact with reality begins to fade, the subject invents "personal languages" in an attempt to better communicate his delusion." The doctor ran his index finger along the lower portion of Garvey's scan where frame after frame displayed the odd, clustering pattern indicative of a schizophrenic. "No, this is not the beginning of some new religion, Miss Buckley, but aphasia, the outward manifestation of guilt and a disturbed mind."

Kim swallowed hard.

"What's the prognosis?" she asked in a soft voice.

"The condition is virtually untreatable. Jason Garvey will wind up like an entire ward of patients; a physical and mental burn-out."

It was already dark by the time Kim made it back to her apartment. She unlocked the door still ruminating over her interview with Stone. It had left her feeling ambivalent not merely about Garvey, but about herself. She switched on the overhead light, then walked across the cramped, rectangular space that served as both a living room and dining area. Her Phone-Mate had recorded three messages. She rewound the tape. Wasn't there something about mental illness that frightened everyone? she wondered. In our own peculiar way, weren't we all

sometimes something other than 'normal'? If Garvey was insane, who was to say that Muhammad hadn't merely suffered a schizophrenic delusions when visited by the angel, Nāmūs? Or Buddha when he was tempted by the demon, Mara? Or the Apostles at the Mount of Olives when they claimed to have seen and spoken with the resurrected Christ? No, she reasoned, there was no end to it. No end to the undermining of everything and everybody if one viewed events through the jaundiced eyes of skepticism. Somewhere, somehow, a person had to look beyond the mathematics of existence in order to understand the spirit that imbued it. This vision could only be realized intuitively and it was in this way that she had come to know Garvey, she decided. She sensed intuitively that there was something much more to all she had witnessed than a chemical imbalance in the brain.

Kim experienced a tremor of satisfaction deep within her as she let the tape play back. This newfound belief in Garvey's legitimacy was a self-revelation that left her excited; renewed. She listened. The tape ground through a stretch of clicks and static, until at last the first warbled:

"Hello, dear. This is Mother calling just to see how you're doing. You know it's been nearly two weeks since you called. Are you sure you're all right out there? Well, anyways, your father and me would both appreciate

a how-do once in a while. You know how we worry."

Kim leaned her weight back on one high-heel. Good ol' Mom, she was thinking as the sound of the second recording passed over the miniature speaker:

"Kimmy, baby! This is Jeff. Jeff Sublett from Accounting. I'm calling to find out what's doing this weekend, now that you're a free agent. Up for a movie and some Chinese? If you think you can handle it, give me a call. I shall be awaiting your decision with bated breath."

A spate of heavy breathing followed.

She smiled. Jeff Sublett, the hot-to-trot accountant. "I don't think so!" she chimed as the third message began to play. The voice this time was anxious, near desperate:

"Kim, this is Joyce," she rasped in an unfamiliar whisper. An odd, crackling sound passed through the line. "I know this sounds crazy, but did you hear that? My phone has been making noises like that for the past three days! Anyway, I'm calling about your story about Garvey. Please call me back whenever you get in, but not here. Okay? Call me at 202-848-9072 instead. I'll be waiting."

Kim flicked the machine off, then dialed the number. It rang just once.

"Hello?"

"Joyce, this is Kim. Where are you?"

"I'm calling from a pay phone at my laundromat."

"But why? Why a pay phone?"

There was a silence filled only by the sound of her breathing.

"Because I think my phone may be tapped," she blurted.

"Tapped? I don't understand."

"Listen, Kim. I don't know what you've stumbled onto with this Garvey story, but there's something very strange about it. About everything connected with him!"

"Strange? Why? What do you mean?"

"I broke through that security block this afternoon, Kim. The code was based on a correlation between letters of the alphabet and higher mathematics, but the IBM 380 managed to decipher it, or at least part of it. So, listen carefully to what I'm saying: Jason Garvey is in Jerusalem."

"What?"

"He left three days ago accompanied by a team of diplomatic and security personnel. I don't know why or how they intend to do it, but Garvey is being used as some sort of go-between in the Middle East. It has something to do with a new peace initiative, that's all I could make of it."

"What kind of peace initiative?"

"I don't know," she gasped. "I really don't, but I

can tell you this. The Pentagon has everything on him. Every syllable ever spoken, written or thought about Jason Garvey is on that hard disc. And here's the kicker: about half of the information emanates from the Soviet Union! I tell you, roomie, there's something fishy going on here and I think I may be getting to the bottom of it!"

"But what, Joyce? Specifically, what do you think is going on?"

She answered still attempting to catch her breath.

"It has to do with a committee of some kind. The Committee. It's an international peace organization so far as I can make out, but that's all I know. It's all I had time to get my hands on before 'Ben' got suspicious and shut himself off."

The downstairs buzzer sounded.

"Are you all right, though?"

"Yes, I think so. A little excited is all. I mean, I feel as though I've broken into some kind of high-security vault. Only it's not filled with money, Kim, but secrets. Secrets kept by a group of people who are trying to change the course of history!"

The buzzer croaked again and then again, until just one harsh and strident screech filled the room.

"Joyce, someone's at the door. Can you stay where you are? Can I call you right back?"

"Yes, but please hurry. I really don't feel safe here or anywhere since all of this has happened."

Kim hung up the receiver, then rushed to the intercom covering her ears all the while. She depressed the 'speak' button.

"Who is it?"

"It's John. Remember me. I'm your husband."

She recognized the slur in his voice immediately. He was drunk.

"What is it?"

"We've got to talk."

"It's late. I can't let you up."

"We've got to talk. We've got to talk now. It's important."

"I said 'no', John! I have an early day tomorrow. I can't talk with you now; and besides, you've been drinking. I don't feel like going through all of that again."

"What again?"

"The fighting. The screaming. That's what our conversations turn into and I can't handle it, do you understand? I'm not feeling strong enough to handle it. Not tonight."

There was a silence at the other end. Kim's voice softened.

"Go home now, John. Go to bed and get some sleep. I think we could both use a good night's sleep, don't you?"

Kim awaited his response. It came in a tidal wave of hostility.

"You vindictive bitch! Did you think I wouldn't find out? Did you think I'd just disappear?"

She could hear the crash of his fist as it slammed against the intercom receiver.

"Goddamit! It was my baby, too! You didn't have the right to abort it! Not without telling me!"

Kim's finger let loose the 'listen' switch, the screams of her ex-husband still resounding up from the lobby two floors below. Her hand raised to her mouth unconsciously.

My God, he knows.

Kim staggered from the intercom to the opposite end of the room. She stared at the blank wall. How could things have gone so wrong between them? Was there actually a time when they'd loved one another? She shut her eyes tightly. If she tried even now she could conjure a memory of the old John, the one she'd married. It was the image of a handsome, young attorney living in a vibrant world filled with dreams and ambition. Principled to a fault, 'too idealistic' was the way her friends had described him. She shook her head clear. But that seemed a long time ago. Their love was dead now, the victim of one explosive infidelity and a thousand little ones. She had tried to love him like her Mom had loved her father. She had believed in all of the

overnight meetings and off-handed excuses she'd seen him abuse so many times with others and she had been naive enough to listen. For some reason, she just never thought he could treat her that way. An investigative reporter? Kim guffawed. She hadn't been able to see beyond the smoke screen that obscured the life of her own husband! That is, until the medical evidence turned up. No denying that one, John. She quaked with revulsion at the thought of it. He had brought disease into their home. He had tainted her and everything so that no matter what he said or did, she could never forgive him. And now, he knew. Word of the abortion may have come from a mutual friend or supposed confidant, or maybe he'd suspected the pregnancy all along. She didn't know. But one thing was certain. The news had left him howling like a wounded animal. She had hurt him badly and now she wondered if her decision had been no more than an act of simple vengeance. Had all of the counselling, all of the soul searching been mere self-deception? Could it be that her abortion had nothing to do with the baby's welfare or her career, but that she'd been trying to kill a part of John all along? The possibility shook Kim to the very fiber of her being. For if that was true, if that was the only reason, she feared she could never forgive herself, either.

Chapter Five

Kim was ragged when she entered the office the next morning. She hadn't slept a wink, what's more, when she'd tried to return Joyce's call there was no answer either at the pay phone or her apartment. That, not to mention her latest episode with John! Her eyes lifted to the wall clock behind Mona's desk. Once again, she was late, but not to worry: the scoop she had on Garvey was all of the ammunition she needed. Talk about a leg up on the competition! She'd have to alert Jack to take one of his nitro glycerin pills before springing this one on him. It was that big!

She raced toward her cubicle stopping momentarily at the IMS tickertape: a U.S. reconnaissance plane shot down over Soviet air space; three South Korean soldiers killed in a border conflict; renewed fighting between Syrian and Israeli troops in Lebanon; a Cleveland, Ohio baby sitter arrested for immolating three infants in order to save them from demon possession.

Kim groaned. "Nothing like a little good news to brighten the morning."

She turned from the churning terminal, then entered her office. On her desk lay a stack of inter-office memos, several back issues of Us magazine, a pile of 8" x 10" glossies with accompanying bios and a typed note from Mona taped to the keyboard of her IBM

selectric. She peeled it off.

'Dear Kim,

Jack wants to see you in his
office first thing.

P.S. Heard about your promotion.
Some hotshot you've turned
out to be!'

Kim smiled. Good ol' Mona. No matter how turbulent things got, you could always count on her for some additional jostling. She leafed through her correspondence not bothering to sit. There was nothing that couldn't wait and since most pertained to the 'People' column, it would have to be forwarded to her replacement anyway. The notion calmed her. She had been promoted, hadn't she? Though her personal life seemed a shambles at times, she could at least find succor in that much: Kim Buckley was at last becoming somebody and with this latest shot in the arm, there was no end in sight. If Garvey was in Jerusalem on a peace initiative as Joyce claimed, Kim might just find herself sitting on Time magazine's story of the year.

She headed for Limpert's office vaguely distracted as the implications of her friend's comments rose up from beyond the news of Garvey's whereabouts. Like loose threads, they dangled from the pattern

of this, her latest 'item'. Joyce had spoken about some sort of committee, Soviet input into Garvey's hard, drive disk and the feeling that her home telephone was being tapped. If one juggled those components into the proper order, he could have the makings of a pulp, spy thriller. It would go something like this: the KGB and CIA had allied themselves to keep something about Jason Garvey hidden. Joyce had unwittingly stumbled onto that secret. This collaborative intelligence network had been alerted and were attempting to discover just how much she knew. Not bad, thought Kim, though she doubted Robert Ludlum would lose much sleep over the scenario. Still, Kim worried about her longtime friend. Always the mischievous one ready to take that brazen, extra step over whatever line an authority figure cared to draw, Kim prayed that she hadn't gone too far this time.

She fluffed her short, pageboy hairdo with her open fingers as Jack Limpert came into sight. Not unexpectedly, as Time's deadline neared, he was upbraiding one of the lay-out artists about a sloppy 'Arts and Leisure' pictorial. She stood to his side. He discerned her presence without breaking stride.

"I need to see you in my office right away."

It didn't take much imagination to predict what he wanted, thought Kim. Her follow-up story had yet

to materialize even in outline form. She headed for his office watching as her colleague's head sagged at Jack's parting tribute. Thank god Joyce had come through for her or she might yet be back at her desk clipping press releases about Michael Jackson.

Limpert swept into his office just one step behind her. He pushed the door closed with a backhand as he made for his desk.

"So, where are we with this Garvey follow-up? I don't mind telling you I'm hoping you have something concrete since you spoke with Stone.

"I do, but it has nothing to do with him."

"Good because in my opinion we're skating on some pretty thin ice."

"I don't follow."

He passed her a morning edition of the New York Times. It was turned to a page three story.

"We're not the only ones who thought about contacting the physicians involved with Garvey's treatment. Stone was borderline, but this Dr. Matheson has taken a touchy situation and made it worse."

Kim was skimming the article as her editor continued. He was edgy.

"Matheson was a member of the panel of NASA personnel who examined Garvey after returning from "Sky View". He claims the man was evaluated as

mentally incompetent even then." He snapped at the top of the newspaper with his fingertips. "Notice the editorial comment in the final paragraph? They're hinting that our story is "media invention". In case you don't know it, we're about to be tried by our peers for the exploitation of a mentally handicapped individual. Not a very savory charge."

Kim had only gotten three-quarters of the way through before a smile, then a laugh erupted.

Her editor's long, worried face spread wide with astonishment.

"This could be a serious blow to our credibility, Kim. Don't tell me you're taking it so lightly. I've got too goddamn much at stake!"

She handed the paper back to him.

"I would agree if I didn't know better, but I've got some news for the Times and Dr. Matheson."

He waved her on from his chair.

"So enlighten me. I could use a little encouragement this morning."

"Jason Garvey is in Jerusalem, Jack. He left three days ago on a peace keeping mission. A mission authorized by the United States government."

His protruding jaw slackened.

"How do you know that?"

"A contact."

"Who?"

"Same as before."

"Come on now," he urged, "don't give me that Woodward-Bernstein bullshit. Who is it and where are they placed?"

"Her name is Joyce Malmin. She's an old friend who happens to be working at the Pentagon. She has access to coded information taken directly from Jason Garvey's file."

Limpert was stunned. He sat back immured, feverish as he projected the significance of such an occurrence.

"Jason Garvey on a peace keeping mission to the Middle East," he repeated. "Why that's," he fumbled for the right word, "incredible."

"Isn't it, though?"

He looked up as if suddenly aware of her presence.

"But what about Matheson?"

"Neither Matheson or Stone has seen Garvey in three years. Besides, what scientist would put stock in something so esoteric as this anyway?"

He ignored her.

"You're certain that this information is reliable? This friend of yours, she wouldn't be shading the truth for some personal reason that you're unaware of?"

"She tipped us to the Haiti story, or are we forgetting that already?"

Limpert paused for a thoughtful moment.

"Sounds like this could be right up Jon Galsworthy's alley. If anything of this proportion is happening in Israel, Jon is sure to have a line on it."

He reached for the telephone.

"Hey! Wait one minute! This is my story, remember?"

He was dialing.

"Be realistic. What do you know about the Middle East? Jon's a veteran analyst. He's been covering that beat for years. He knows the people; the politics involved in a situation like this."

Kim reached across the desk. She grabbed his wrist.

"Jack, we had an agreement! Don't try to back out on it now. That wouldn't be fair."

He looked to his wrist, then glared back at her.

"Fair? What the hell does a word like 'fair' have to do with anything? I'm your editor and it's my best judgement that Galsworthy is right for this assignment. He's a veteran who'll check our your information the way you should have the last time. If there's anything to it, he'll cable back a report."

"As simple as that?"

He challenged her.

"Yes. As simple as that. This is a weekly news magazine, Kim, not a congregation of saints."

"In other words, what you told me last week was a pack of lies."

He slammed the phone down.

"It's what I thought would net us the best coverage at the time! That's my job. It's not much, but it's a living. Now, if things pan-out, we can talk about it again! But for the moment, I'm going with Galsworthy."

She shook her head clear.

"I don't believe I'm hearing you say this! Not after you told me the exact opposite two days ago!" She stood silent as she brooded over her predicament, then charged his desk. "Well, I'm not going to accept that, Jack! If you think I'm going to let you take this lead from me, you're wrong. I'll sue. I'll sue you personally and then I'm going to sue the Time-Life corporation for sex discrimination. We'll see how Time's liberal image fares once its female readership discovers that they discriminate against their women reporters!"

The threat stopped Limpert cold. His large, blood-hound eyes raised as he touched an open palm to the

back of his scalp.

"And I'll tell you something else! I may have given you my source, but there's a lot more to know about Garvey that I haven't told you. Things that will either make or break this story that only I know. Without that information, Galsworthy will get nowhere, Jack. He'll be just another veteran correspondent, chasing his veteran tail, up his veteran ass!" Kim's petite frame loomed large over his desk. "Now, you think about that. Consider every aspect of what you're about to do before you make a final decision."

She turned toward the door, the feel of Limpert's stare hot on her back.

"Wait a minute!" He sighed audibly. "Let's talk."

"Don't say anything you don't mean."

"Okay, okay," he squealed, nodding his head in resignation. "You've got it. You've got the follow-up. You can chase it from here to Timbuktoo, if necessary."

She pivoted around to face him. Her gaze was prosaic.

"When do I leave?"

"Today. This minute, if that's what you want. I was wrong in what I said before and I apologize. The Garvey assignment is yours. No one is going to take it from you."

Kim held back the grin that was beaming inside of her. She would be leaving from Kennedy for Israel's Ben Gurion airport that night.

Kim stood, half-dressed, staring at an empty suitcase spread open on her bed. The details concerning her trip were flying through her mind like tracers, too fast and too staggering to contend with as they happened. Mona had already booked her on a TWA flight emanating in New York and bound for Tel Aviv. Her passport was in order and a telex had been sent confirming a single room at the Jerusalem Hilton for the week. The temperature would be moderate, Fodor's Israel promised. So, what to wear? she asked aloud. No sooner had Kim tossed a blouse and pair of slacks into the valise than the most nagging realization of all came back to haunt her: she had still been unable to contact Joyce Malmin. She had tried her work number, her home and even the pay telephone from the night previous, all to no avail. Beyond that, too, was the concern of having committed herself to so nebulous an assignment. Assuming that Joyce's information was accurate and that Garvey had left for Israel, where was he exactly? Was his mission so sensitive that his presence would be

denied by Immigration and State Department officials? Kim wondered. Her neck was stretched a lot farther than she had ever imagined before entering her senior editor's office that morning. Now, it was produce or perish. She had staked her entire career on what could be no more than a computer mix-up or, worse, a practical joke played on Joyce by one of her cohorts. Hadn't she, after all, commented that the staff there was always trifling with 'Ben'? Who was to say that this wasn't some harmless prank gone awry? The thought left Kim choking with anxiety. God, oh God, how could she have gotten herself into this mess?

Kim edged toward her wall closet. She studied its contents finally deciding upon a white, cotton dress she'd bought at Macy's the summer before. She plucked it from among her winter clothes, then held it out in front of her. Not a great choice, but on this short notice it would have to suffice. She spread it across her bed, beside the suitcase, just as the intercom sounded. Who on earth? She pulled her robe tight around her, then padded toward the foyer.

"Yes? Who is it?"

"It's Jack Limpert, Kim. I'd like to talk with you for a moment, if it's all right."

"Jack? Why sure. Come right up."

She buzzed the security door open wondering what her boss could possibly want to see her about now. The prospect of him dropping by to wish her a bon voyage were slim to none, she reasoned, and he couldn't have changed his mind about her leaving after their confrontation today. Or could he? Her mind raced through the possibilities as he climbed the three flights of stairs. The sound of his footfall became more pronounced. She opened the door smiling. He stood before her looking worse than she'd ever seen him.

"If you're going to complain that I don't have an elevator, I'm going to ask for a raise!" she joked.

Kim waited for a smile. None came. Limpert's blue eyes were fluid.

"Jack? Is something wrong?"

He stepped inside.

"I've got something to say that may come as a blow to you. Do you want to sit?"

"What? What do you have to tell me?"

His expression was solicitous.

"No. No, I'm okay. What is it? Tell me."

"Joyce Malmin is dead."

Kim appeared puzzled at first. She seemed about to ask a question, but then reeled back as if struck physically. Limpert reached for her.

"How?"

"I thought you should be the first to know ---"

"How, Jack? How did she die?"

His voice quavered.

"She threw herself in front of a subway early this morning. It was suicide."

Kim reached to her mouth, then ran from the room. She fell to her knees lunging for the toilet. Sick. The world was diseased and it seemed now that everything wrong with it was pouring from out of some hidden repository deep inside of her: all of the fear and hatred, the violence and misery was gushing from out of her bloated, festering soul. Yet, through it all, Kim understood that what she'd heard was a lie. Joyce Malmin would never committ suicide, howled an angry voice from the back of her mind.

Kim rose slowly to her feet. She drifted to the sink where she splashed her face with cold water. She gulped it, then spit it out again like mouthfuls of fetid brine.

"You okay, Kim?" she heard her boss ask from beyond the door.

"Yeah. I'm fine now, Jack."

She towled her face, then left the bathroom forcing a tenuous smile.

Out of the office, Jack Limpert appeared a different person. A sad and blundering man; one who had taken

some small talent, tried to make the best of it and succeeded. But he had no talent for this. He was clumsy and uncomfortable, mouthing sounds and not words as he helplessly observed her horror.

"No, honest. I'm much better now. It was just the suddenness of it all."

She tried to compose herself.

"Is there anything I can do?"

"No. I'd just like to be alone for a while, if you don't mind."

His face registered a concern which surprised her.

"You're certain you'll be all right?"

She nodded.

"Okay. If that's what you want, I'll leave, but promise me you'll call if there's anything you need. I mean that."

"I know you do, Jack. Thanks."

She watched him leave feeling the tears well up in her eyes a second later. Her head was spinning. Her body seemed to float of its own into the kitchen where she poured a tall glass full of Jack Daniels. She held it with both hands, then raised the bourbon to her lips. She took a long swallow. Why was her best friend dead, she asked herself, and who had killed her?

Kim fell into a cushion chair. She felt desperate

and alone. It was as if a veil had suddenly been lifted to reveal a chasm hinted at but never before seen by her. Joyce was dead. She was beyond contacting; beyond help. The finality of that realization tore at Kim. Why hadn't she stayed on the phone with her when she had the chance? She knew her friend was in trouble, yet she had done nothing to help. The notion tormented Kim. She had failed Joyce and now she needed to do something; to tell someone about what had happened if only to relieve this torturous sense of isolation.

She stared at the telephone beside her. It seemed a lifeline to the outside. She considered calling her parents. She envisioned them listening in the kitchen of their modest home trying to understand the situation she faced, bound to fall back upon what was to them the obvious cause of her distress. 'Never should have gone to the city,' her father would conclude. Then, her mother, 'We think you should come home, dear'. Kim grappled with the idea. The thought of simply running away was alluring, but unacceptable. It was vital that she face this situation, then solve it on her own. She was not a little girl. She was not going to run. Kim took a deep breath. So, what to do now? she asked herself. The prospects vibrated in the air

around her. She strained to pull her thoughts together. There was a pattern to it all. Joyce had seen the talons of its grip before she'd been murdered and it had something to do with Jason Garvey. Perhaps, if she could compile what she knew of Joyce's information with her own, something of the truth would emerge. Kim's mind flew back to her recent conversation with Dr. Stone. After the space accident, Garvey had spent nearly two years in Air Force hospitals. During that time, he was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic. It was incurable, Stone had told her. Next, Kim considered Joyce's findings. Garvey's computer file, she'd related, was rife with information ranging from early childhood to the present. If he was the invalid that Stone claimed, why would the Pentagon maintain a detailed file on him? Further, why would the Soviets have any input into it, past or current? It was then that another connection clicked. The cancer cure originally reported by TASS, had occurred in Chuvash, A.S.S.R. and was verified by Vladimir Andrei, a Soviet physician. In retrospect, wasn't it odd that he so willingly opened-up his medical records for a foreign reporter to corroborate the cure? And Stone. True, he was upset with the NASA organization, but wasn't it equally peculiar that he'd volunteered Jason Garvey's entire psychiatric history? Wasn't that, technically,

a violation of the doctor-patient relationship?

Kim reached for the Manhattan telephone directory, then began paging through it. There was one link which bridged much of what had gone on, she speculated. She stopped at the heading, Stillman-Stonich. Her finger descended among the listing of names and numbers finally coming to rest at Stone, Darius, M.D. She took the telephone receiver into her hand lodging it between her neck and shoulder as she dialed. It rang twice before a man's voice answered.

"Hello?"

Kim swallowed the knot of anticipation in her throat.

"Dr. Stone? This is Kim Buckley, the reporter from Time magazine."

"Yes, yes," he replied wearily. "What can I do for you?"

"There was something I wanted to ask, Doctor. It's about Jason Garvey. Is it true that he had government affiliations outside of NASA?"

"I don't know what kind of affiliations you mean."

"Contacts at the Pentagon." She hesitated. "And the CIA".

There was a long pause.

"How would I know something like that?" He stammered. "I mean, why would you ask me a question

like that?"

"I thought that one of those agencies might have interviewed you," she persisted, "or solicited Garvey's medical records."

"No. The only people interested in Jason Garvey have been reporters like yourself. Certainly, no government agencies."

"How about NASA, Doctor? Have you been in contact with them recently?"

"I thought I made that quite clear during our last discussion. I've had no dealings with NASA since my resignation three years ago."

"Why did you resign?"

He sighed.

"If you must know, it was an organizational problem. They like team players and I guess I didn't fit into that mold. In the end, we agreed it was best that I leave. Of course none of that took effect until after Garvey's treatment, but that was typical of their bureaucracy."

"Is that when you began working for the Committee?"

Kim could feel a chill pass through the telephone wire.

"No," he stated emphatically. "I have never had any involvement with those organizations. Not with

the Pentagon, the CIA or the Committee."

"But you know who they are, don't you?"

Again, the pause. Stone seemed tentative and suddenly deflated.

"Miss Buckley - Kim. I don't know what you're trying to prove, but I've told you all I intend to. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a call holding on another line."

Kim held the receiver to her ear until after the dial tone had sounded there was no doubt in her mind now: The Committee did exist.

* * * *

Darius Stone sunk deep into the worn sofa set amid his dishevelled upper east-side apartment. His arms and legs felt heavy, his mind sluggish and distracted by the promise of nectar, sweet and lingering on his tongue. The thought lured him so that his body ached for release; for that thrust beyond fear and craving. His eyes locked upon the syringe. The attraction was physical. It was lust that he felt, pure and simple, as he stretched his trembling hand toward the table where the hypodermic needle lay. The allure of clarity, so crisp and clear, was beyond resistance. And who

more than he deserved such license? He had struggled to cure the sick. He had lived among them often tearing meaty sections from his very being to alleviate their anguish. Now, it was his turn. It had become a matter of survival. The doctor took the syringe into his hand. His attention diverted to the grandfather clock which chimed three times in the corner of the room. 3:00 A.M. Stone rubbed a tired hand across his pale, craggy face, then fumbled with a 500 cc bottle of Talwin. He punctured the seal with the needle, then filled the syringe with 40 cc's of the drug. He rolled up his pant, then turned his leg to expose the long, purplish blotch behind his right kneecap. He searched for a vein, then injected himself. The drug took effect immediately. His eyes rolled with relief at the first rush. This was the bridge that saved him from the abyss. It gave him strength to resist the tenacles of misery that daily threatened to submerge him down into the hellish depths of the underworld. Where would he be without it? he asked himself. His eyes filled with tears. Where would he be?

Stone rose. He stretched expansively. It was like flexing a muscle. The vision was there. The power. The understanding which made creation so logical. He stumbled to the door. He opened it. A waft of wet, musty air entered from the street below. He descended

the short set of stairs, luxuriating in the icy tingle of the rain on his face. It teased, then sated every nerve end as he ventured out into the deserted street. A tight, satisfied smile passed over his lips. With sleep impossible, the early morning had become his time; his chance to reign over the dead and silent city. He savored the sensation spurred on by the life which the injection had given him. He revelled in the supposition that there was an escape; a place where he could hide from all that he detested and perhaps even from himself. His momentary euphoria was replaced by curiosity and then awe as he caught sight of a man standing beneath a corner lamppost. The stranger stood with his back to him, yet Stone sensed something disturbing and recognizable about him.

"I know you," he muttered.

The man turned. His black, chiselled countenance seemed to materialize as if from out of the air. The suddenness of his presence made Stone's flesh crawl.

"Garvey!"

"Good morning, Darius."

The doctor's eyes grew large.

"You're in Jerusalem!"

"So they say."

"You are, you are! I know it!"

Garvey's expression was benign. His large, brown eyes emanated an inner peace which Stone saw and rejected immediately.

"What are you going to do, Darius?"

He laughed out loud.

"You're an hallucination!"

"Perhaps".

He fell back cackling.

"You're an hallucination and I'm talking to you!"

"That's right. Does it make you wonder?"

"About what?" he spat back.

"Does it make you wonder whether I am an hallucination?"

"What else would you be?"

"I could be Jason Garvey. Isn't that who you said I was?"

Stone's eyes narrowed.

"What do you want?"

"I want to know what you're going to do? You might consider your plans in light of the things that I've done."

"What have you done?"

"I've given you signs."

"You've given me nothing!" he snarled. "You're a goddamn hallucination!"

"Suppose I'm not."

"Then, I've gone insane. It would take a psychiatrist to know, wouldn't it?"

Garvey was silent. Warily, Stone appraised him. Though it was winter, he wore slacks, a white dashika and sandals. The palpability of the apparition was disconcerting, chilling.

"Suppose you're not?" he asked suspiciously.

"You know what you've done? You know what 'signs' you've given? The ones that we've allowed!"

Again, he laughed.

"You know that isn't true. It's gone beyond that."

His smile changed to an angry scowl.

"Coincidence! I could document dozens, hundreds of cases just like the ones you claim are real!" He staggered backward, pointing. "You think you're so goddamn smart. I know you. I know who are you, Garvey, but more than that, I know what you are!"

"Is that what you believe?"

"I believe in what we created! Not you! Not in this charade! In what we created!"

"One person has already died. There will be others."

"That's not my fault."

"You'll do nothing to save them?"

"Why should I?"

"You were a different man once."

"I was a fool once, but that was when I believed in the possibility of Providence and Divine Order and all of the shit they've got you preaching. But it isn't that way and you know it. What we've done isn't perfect, but it's something. If a few people have to die to protect the initiative, then they'll die, but that's real life, isn't it?"

"Tell me about real life, Darius."

"Just look around you!" He gestured exaggeratedly to a group of street gang members who passed shouting obscenities at one another. "Wake up to get an eyeful of what goes on in the world. There are no miracles. No redemptions or second comings. Just cause and effect, the scientific principle that's given us the guts to finally take matters into our own hands. You." He cast him a stare redolent with loathing. "You're a freak, or haven't you figured that out yet? A 'savior', at best. At worst, a psychotic barely sane enough to perform the functions we require."

"Perhaps, it will take a madman to cure the world."

Stone shook his head from side to side.

"You know, Garvey, that was always what incensed me about you. That way you have of twisting everything that I say; of taking what's self-evident and turning it into a pipe dream."

"You hide yourself in drugs, but I am the way back. With your outward senses you survey the world, but you won't let yourself see. You live in a sad kind of darkness. It hides the powers that are inside you. It distorts your vision."

"You're a dangerous man. You and people like you. You cause people to believe in things that don't exist. You delude them. If I hide myself in drugs, you hide yourself in lies."

"I am the bridge, Darius. A link between worlds. Have you never wondered why people have been seeking their creator since the beginning of time? It's because they are detached. Like lost children, they long for their true home and I can bring them back. You can bring yourself back, if you try."

Stone lurched forward.

"You don't live my life, nigger! You don't see what I see. The disease and hopelessness. The senseless struggle, and for what? To live another day on this stinking planet?"

"If the world is an ugly, dying place it's because you have failed to change it. You are the light, but you choose to go on living in darkness. You must travel beyond your own memory; beyond the false realities you perceive to the place of creation. Inside, there is hope."

"Inside, there is a fetid, rotting corpse, but it's me who lives in this graveyard. There is horror ..."

"There is life and you can't go on hiding from it, Darius. Soon it will be too late."

"Show me."

"Come to Jerusalem."

Stone stood unsteadily, bathed in the light of the streetlamp above.

"I'll go to Jerusalem," he leered. "But not for the reasons you think."

The doctor whirled away from him. His anger dissipated, replaced by a feeling of consummate emptiness. Blindly, he moved toward his apartment. He could feel his chin quiver and taste the salty wetness of tears as he climbed the stairs, then passed beyond the unlocked door. He stumbled forward toward the sofa. There, he collapsed, horrified by the fathomless sense of despair that was about to overtake him.

It was the cadenced ticking of the grandfather clock that awakened Darius Stone several hours later. He lifted his head wearily, then struggled to focus his blurry eyes. 7:15 A.M. He sat up. His entire body was shaking and already the ambiguity

of what had occurred was beginning to gnaw at him. He was certain he had encountered Jason Garvey earlier that morning, yet he knew the former astronaut was in Jerusalem. How could this be? he wondered. They had conversed at length, yet every tenet of psychiatry told him that audio and visual hallucinations rarely occurred simultaneously and even then produced words, but never complex logic. So, what had he seen? Could it be that the entire episode had been manufactured in his mind while he sat transfixed without ever having left the room? The drug-ravaged physician stared blankly into space. There was another possibility. It involved a phenomenon often associated with religious personages throughout history known as bi-location. That is, the ability to appear in two or more places at the same time. Padre Pio, a Franciscan friar living in the 1960's, was said to have materialized on dozens of occasions for individuals in need of his physical or spiritual help. Was it possible that Jason Garvey had evolved to a level of existence which enabled him to bi-locate? Stone's eyes fell upon his Florsheim wingtips set on the rug to the side of the couch.

They were wet with the early morning drizzle.

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis submitted by Ron Felber has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. James Rocks, Director
Chairman of the Department of English, Loyola

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

This thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

March 15, 1985
Date

James E. Rocks
Director's Signature