

entertainment

A UNB suspense story

By Richard K. Anderson
Part One: The discovery of the plot to assassinate President Downey.

It was a dark and stormy night. Roger Armstrong was very, very tired, and just as frustrated. The time was 1:50 in the morning, and Roger Armstrong had been occupying the same chair, in front of the same terminal, in room B-17 of Head Hall, since 5:00 that evening. He had asked for help, read the text, swore, prayed, and offered his soul to the devil in an effort to get his program to work. No one had been able to help, the author of his text couldn't explain how to make coffee clearly, God was working overtime in Ottawa, and the devil had more profitable pickings in California with Reverend Falwell. The only thing which seemed to help was swearing, but Roger had run out of new combinations of words hours ago. He also had the sneaking feeling that the radiation from the terminal was making him sterile.

In complete despair, he finally gave up. He started putting his books away, throwing his printouts in the garbage, enough paper to wallpaper Harriet Irving, when a message appeared on his screen. He was caught in midstream of some particularly vivid descriptions of IBM, UNB, and Fredericton in general, when, letter by mysterious letter, the following appeared on his screen:
63005: RENDEZVOUS WITH COORDINATOR. What was this, he wondered? It was followed a moment later by:

79413: CONFIRMED. OPERATION TERMINATION ON SCHEDULE?

63005: AFFIRMATIVE. IS THIS LINE SECURE?
79413: YES. NO ONE IS INTERCEPTING.

63005: GOOD. SHOULD OPERATION TERMINATION BE LEAKED, CLEARLY ALL THOSE WITH KNOWLEDGE WILL REQUIRE TERMINATION.

Roger watched this in horrified fascination. He was completely alone, witness to a conversation he was clearly not meant to be a part of. It might be a joke, but the late hour and the deadly seriousness of the tone caused a cold shiver to rattle up his spine. The silent screen continued to print the messages:

79413: NATURALLY. HAS THE EXPLOSIVE BEEN PLANTED?

63405: NEGATIVE. AT 1:25 TOMORROW IT SHALL BE ATTACHED, OUR MAN AGENT ORANGE WILL DETONATE IT BY RADIO WHEN SUBJECT LEAVES FOR APPOINTMENT AT 2:30.

79413: EXCELLENT. YOUR FIRST PAYMENT SHALL TAKE PLACE ON THURSDAY.

63005: AT THE COSMO, FIRST FLOOR, YOU SHALL KNOW ME AS FOLLOWS: I SHALL PLACE A SILVER SEIKO ON TOP OF A PACK OF WINE-TIPPED COLTS.

79413: CONFIRMED. CONGRATULATIONS, TOMORROW PRESIDENT DOWNEY SHALL BE PART OF HISTORY!

63005: A GREAT TRIUMPH FOR THE PARTY. I SHALL LOOK

FORWARD TO FINALLY MEETING YOU IN PERSON.

79413: AND I YOU.

The eerie messages ceased. In shock, Roger sat down. Gone was his former attitude. He was very much awake, the adrenalin pouring, the hair on the back of his neck on end.

What should he do? Just then the security guard stepped into the room, scaring the hell out of him. He suddenly had a claustrophobic feeling, he had to get out, away from this madness! If 63005 or 79413 found out about his inadvertent eavesdropping he would be eliminated! He wasn't sure exactly what they would do, but he was sure it would put a serious crimp in his skiing that weekend. He had to get out of Head Hall!

He turned the terminal off so hard the knob came off in his hand. He threw it at the garbage, grabbed his stuff, and ran outside in a rush, forgetting about the security guard, knocking him down to slide along the floor into the lockers.

He ran over to Graham Ave., entering his apartment all out of breath. He threw his stuff down and ran into the bedroom, grabbing Tracy by the shoulders and shaking her awake.

"Tracy, wake up! Something really urgent has come up!"

"Okay, just a second," she mumbled, "let me take my nightie off first though, okay?"

"No Tracy, not that. You wouldn't believe what just happened to me at Head Hall!"

Roger paced up and down, telling her the entire horrifying affair. When he was finished he looked over at her to see her reaction to this incredible

chilling story.

She was sound asleep, her sweet innocent face set in a slight smile, and snoring slightly.

He would have to handle this himself. He covered Tracy up, kissed her on the cheek, and went to sit in the living room to plan.

The next morning, Tracy came out to find Roger frying some eggs. She walked up behind him and hugged him close.

"Did you enjoy last night honey?" she asked.

"Huh?"

"I mean it was great for me, so gentle and sweet, just like a dream. Was it good for you too?"

"Never been better Tracy, really," he said, turning an egg over. After Tracy left, Roger reviewed his plan. It was sound. First though he needed rest. He lay down and slept, setting his alarm for 12:50.

At 1:45 he woke up, his alarm ringing loudly. He had a headache and the memory of a long dream about being one of the clappers in the biggest bell at Notre Dame.

He'd overslept! The bomb was planted at 1:35, President Downey would be confetti at 2:30! He threw his clothes on and rushed over to the Arts Building. He had decided Agent Orange would likely position himself in the science library or thereabouts, and therefore he would have to approach Downey's car from the other side.

There was the car! He had to crawl under and find the bomb. He faked slipping on the ice, easy to do, and fell about twenty feet from the car.

He looked at his watch. It read 2:05! He started crawling towards the car. Just then two of his friends came from the other direction, he couldn't allow them to stop and talk, drawing attention.

"Hi Roger, lose a contact lens?"

Roger thought fast.

"Screw off you fruit."

They blinked, kicked snow in his face and walked off.

Roger crawled to and under the car, a beautiful Buick Century. He looked frantically around for the bomb. He found it! It was the size of a pack of cigarettes, under the driver's seat, the only thing not covered with slush and salt.

He grabbed it and yanked. As he suspected it was magnetic. He crawled out backwards and ran on hands

and knees back around the building. He looked at his watch. 2:10! He had twenty minutes! He rushed down to the Head Hall parking lot, and found what he was looking for, a security car. The security officer was waiting around, book and pen at the ready.

Roger opened the door of the security car and got in.

"Hey! yelled the officer, "what are you doing?"

"This car is illegally parked. There is plenty of parking at the Aitken Centre, and if you have business at Head Hall, you can easily walk down from there," said Roger and gunned out of the parking lot.

He raced down the hill and up to Forest Hill Road. He couldn't get up! It was too icy!

He leapt out of the car half way up, leaving it running in the lineup with the emergency brake on. He ran up the hill, desperate, his lungs straining for oxygen, his chest in searing pain. When he reached the top he looked at his watch. 2:30! He had no time to lose! He ran out on the Princess Margaret, as fast as the ice and his legs and his lungs could allow, clutching the bomb. He reached the middle and threw the deadly object as far out as he could. It raced down to visit its death upon the ice, when suddenly it exploded violently 50 feet above the water. When the sound had echoed away, Roger looked down. Not a trace of the destructiveness that had taken place a moment ago remained.

Roger walked wearily off the bridge and down the hill. As he approached his stolen security car, another security car pulled up along side and another officer got out of the passenger side to reclaim it.

A fine kettle of fish! Security had their car back, Downey made his meeting, and Roger would have to walk to his 3:00 class, and would be late at that.

He knew where he would be on Thursday night though. He was going to take Tracy to the Cosmo. 79413 would have some serious questions, thought Roger as he looked at his silver Seiko, and perhaps he should be the one to answer them. Dangerous business this, but he had to do it, and he couldn't endanger anyone else by bringing them into it.

He took two bucks out of his wallet. The hell with his 3:00 class, he was going to have to pick up a pack of wine-tipped colts.

(To be continued next week.)

STU presents "Fiddler"

By SHAWN WRIGHT

From March 2-6, Theatre St. Thomas will present the ever-popular musical, "Fiddler on the Roof" at Centre-Sainte Anne on Priestman Street.

Written by Joseph Stein, who has written innumerable successes for the Broadway theatre, "Fiddler on the Roof" is the profoundly moving story of a poor Russian Jewish family facing the joys and tragedies of life on the eve of the Russian Revolution.

The musical score, written by Harnick and Bock, includes a number of spirited chorus numbers as well as some moving ballads, such as the hauntingly beautiful "Sunrise, Sunset." The show will be performed with a full orchestra.

"Fiddler on the Roof" is directed by Ted Daigle produced by Steven Clark, and musically directed by Don Bosse, the threesome responsible for "Godspell," last year's extraordinary success.

Besides those in the orchestra pit, "Fiddler" has 45 cast and chorus members.

The musical first opened on Broadway in 1962 and played to full houses for over 3,000 performances. It was the recipient of eight Tony awards including best musical and actor. The movie version proved to be just, if not more, popular.

Tickets are available at Mazucca's on York Street, the STU business office or from any cast member and cost \$4 for adults and \$3 for students and senior citizens. Plan now to experience this landmark theatrical event.