

EYE OF THE CHINOOK

SERIALIZED

A NOVEL

By Homer Kizer

Chapter Three

Within the walls of a gray concrete fortress across the Potomac from the Capitol— the windowless fortress crowned with microwave antennae— the thirteen members of the newly formed *National Security Investigative Taskforce on Alaskan Pipeline Terrorism* meet around an oval conference table of black walnut. The base of the table had been hand carved by the carpenter the Puritan preacher Edward Taylor disfellowshipped from the Body of Christ. When each of the taskforce members sat down, each had looked at the table's base, carved with eyes within and without, each eye open and appearing to stare at the legs of whoever sits around the table.

Bob Estes, liaison for the Executive Office, asks, "Have all of you received a copy of the seditious document recovered from the fisherman, Les Jones?"

Peggy Sax lifts her copy, and asks, "Can we really take this seriously?" And she begins to read what she holds:

"Declaration of Secession

We, the citizens of the Commonwealth of Alaska, believing that we have a God ordained right to govern ourselves— to be a free and sovereign people— no longer recognize the judicial claims of the Government in Washington, D.C., over the Territorial Lands of Alaska. Because the Government in Washington, D.C., has historically and consistently failed to fulfill its treaty and statehood obligations to the citizens of the Commonwealth of Alaska; and because the Government in Washington, D.C., has usurped authority not granted to it by the Constitution of the United States, the lawfully binding contract between it and its people whereby it derives its authority to govern; and because governments should not be changed for light or trival reasons, but only as a court-of-last-resort, we, the citizens of the Commonwealth of Alaska regretfully resolve to separate ourselves from the Government in Washington, D.C.

Any and all lands that the Government in Washington, D.C., has illegally claimed ownership thereof shall become the property of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Alaska to be held in trust until such time that they can be speedily and equably dispersed to the citizens of Alaska. All other lands shall be held by their present deeded owners to do with as the deeded owners see fit.

We, the undersigned, agree to do whatever necessary to establish and to exercise our right of self-government; we agree to form a government based upon the original contract of the peoples of the United States as expressed in the Constitution of the United States and as

limited by Amendments One through Ten (known as the Bill of Rights). We pledge our lives, our fortunes and our honor to this cause.

Signed:"

Peggy doesn't read the signatures, but asks, "Who are these people? How many of them are there? And why haven't we heard about them before?"

"Well, that list you have is about as many of them as there are. We think this group does not have widespread popular support, but is a bunch of cranky Frostfairies who are out of touch with political reality, so much so that they pose little threat to anyone but themselves."

"Then you don't think they will threaten the Pipeline?"

"They might... there is this Committee of Twelve that we're meeting here to deal with today." Estes looks a little uncomfortable as he sets his copy of the Declaration aside. "Caroline reported in this morning. Apparently the fisherman has accepted her as his daughter."

Not willing to dismiss the Declaration quite so quickly, Peggy asks, "How did we get a copy of this?" She again holds up the paper.

"The fisherman had it on his person when he was admitted," says Will Forchiner of Central Intelligence.

"Then," Peggy asks, "he is getting the treatment he requires?"

"Yes, he's getting better treatment than he deserves." Estes shuffles the papers in front of them. "Within a week we'll break the back of this damnable radical conspiracy. They'll be cooling their little revolutionary asses behind bars."

"We know who they all are? Even this Twelve?" Peggy feels the eyes under the table crawling up her legs as if she's being examined across time. The feel of the eyes makes her want to pull her skirt down even farther— and knowing she can't makes her irritable. "I don't see Les Jones' name on the Declaration. Does that mean he didn't sign it? And isn't a part of the conspiracy?"

"Oh, he's a part and may even be its leader." Florchiner doesn't want to admit that Central Intelligence, an agency not officially involved in this affair because of its domestic nature, has been tailing every signatory for the past two days. The Agency's justification for its involvement is last week's rumored arrival in Alaska of a Mossad agent.

The Agency knows that Alaskan gold has been showing up in South Africa. More than ten thousand ounces was sold on the Pretoria exchange a month ago. The money was allegedly used to buy arms from South Africa's national company. Light arms, mostly. Assault rifles and grenade launchers, a few anti-tank missiles, the type of arms guerrilla fighters would require.

"Why," Peggy asks, "do you think Jones is involved?"

"Because he had that Declaration on him. Because he didn't sign it when we are certain he was at the meeting where it was adopted. Because he met a fellow who came from London last week, possibly a foreign agent.... Oh, he's involved all right." Estes knew Peggy would be a problem when she was appointed to the taskforce. Her background as a human rights attorney couldn't make her anything but trouble.

Peggy, presently a senior fellow at William & Mary, still isn't satisfied with what she has been told: "Where is Jones's daughter being detained? And how long before Jones realizes that our agent isn't his daughter?"

Estes sorts through his stack of files, finds the one he wants, then reads, "Erika Jones is being held without bail in Clark County jail, on a State of Nevada illegal gaming charge. Bail was denied on March 9th. No date has been set for further arraignment."

"Is she guilty?" Peggy needs to know.

"No, but she'll have to stand trial." Estes omits reading the entry about Erika having attempted suicide shortly after she was arrested. "She stands a good chance of conviction, a lever we thought we needed before that Declaration fell into our hands."

"Then Jones has been of interest to us for some time?" Peggy likes this whole affair less with each answer given.

From across the table Gerry Johnson asks, "What about Caroline? Can she keep up the deception for any length of time?"

"We believe so." Estes returns to where he had wanted this meeting to go. "She breakfasted with a Dr. Hans Grewe, and she asked for background information on him."

"Well, who is he?" asks Peggy.

"I'm awaiting that file right now. Will, see if there is a secretary waiting to bring it in, but afraid to interrupt."

Florchiner stands, opens the door, and takes a file from a young man posed to knock.

Estes scans the file, then reads aloud a portion of the detailed evaluation: "Doctor Hans Grewe, staff, psychology department, Tacoma University, School of Medicine. He holds degrees from a university in Cologne, 1959. From UCLA, 1962. Harvard, 1967. His credentials are impressive. If Caroline can get him to sign commitment papers, his evaluation will never be questioned. And Jones will be in the looney bin where he belongs."

"I thought we had agreed we wouldn't do that?" Peggy is angry at the implication that American dissidents will be treated like Russian dissidents are.

"In Jones's case, snow blindness fried his mind. He really does need help." Estes knows he can't get rid of Peggy, but he can keep some things from her, sort of protect her from herself.

Florchiner flippantly adds, "His mind was so scrambled that it hasn't taken many drugs to keep him confused."

"He's being given hallucinogens now?" If he is, she will go directly to the President. "And is the hospital staff aware of what he's being given?"

His tone serious this time, Florchiner answers, "None of the hospital staff are presently aware of our interest in Jones. And as to how the drugs were administered, Caroline gave them to him last night. I imagine now he's conscious that they will have to be given to him in his meals."

"What happens," Peggy asks, "if the hallucinogens react negatively with the drugs being prescribed for him?"

Coldly, Florchiner says, "We fry his mind permanently. No big deal. We're not going to let him get away with rebellion. Sooner or later, we'll have to straighten out his thinking. And if it happens in the hospital, let his heirs sue the doctors. By then they'll deserve the money."

"You're slime," Peggy snaps.

Eager to be the peacemaker, Estes says, "Let's not fight among ourselves. Let's take a break. We'll resume in thirty minutes." Then directly to Peggy, he says, "We're not going to harm Jones's mind, not now, not later. He will receive the best medical care available so don't worry about him. As you know, the President is very concerned about human rights, especially those of our citizens." Then turning to Florchiner, he says, "And, Will, it's that attitude that has gotten your funding cut. I want to talk to you alone."

Believing that Estes intends to ream the Agency chief a new bunghole, Peggy leaves, feeling a little better than she had just minutes ago.

When the room is otherwise empty, Estes stacks the files in front of him as he says, "Will, your idea of letting the hospital take the blame is a good one, but this taskforce is composed of mostly citizens. You have to keep remarks about frying brains to yourself." He pauses, then adds, "Give Caroline a week, then make sure it happens. I don't want Jones killed, but I don't want him to be able to string two coherent thoughts together."

"You've got it. Do you want him to be able to tie his shoes?"

"No."

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