

Cool Gray Dawn
Episode #11: "The Canard"

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Cool Gray Dawn

"The Canard"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INSERT QUOTE AGAINST BLACK SCREEN:

"'It is unnatural in a large field to have only one shaft of wheat, and in the infinite Universe only one living world.' - Metrodorus of Chios, Greek Philosopher, circa 350 B.C."

INSERT EXCERPTS FROM "THE MIKE WALLACE INTERVIEW," MARCH 8, 1958, AMERICAN BROADCASTING COMPANY:

Reporter MIKE WALLACE patronizingly interviews former U.S. MARINE CORPS MAJOR DONALD KEYHOE who claims the Air Force and CIA have covered up the existence of UFOs. Keyhoe gives the names of military and civilian pilots, engineers and technicians who have seen UFOs or tracked them on radar.

EXT. HIGHWAY NEAR HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE, NEW MEXICO - NIGHT

Headlights on a passing truck illuminate a road sign that reads "Holloman A.F.B., LEFT LANE/U.S. ROUTES 70, 82 EAST/Alamogordo."

EXT. ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO - NIGHT

Stock footage of a frontier town, barely updated since its inception in 1912.

INT. "MEMPHIS WEST" NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

A honky-tonk where jaunty couples line dance to live music. At the bar, a distraught CARL EATON, 45, gulps a shot of bourbon. The BARTENDER offers him another but Eaton declines.

EATON

There a phone in here?

The Bartender points to the corridor at the back of the room.

EATON

Gets up, sidesteps the dancers and heads into the dimly lit CORRIDOR. Next to the Men's Room, he sees a...

PHONE BOOTH

Eaton enters and sits; the door sticks and won't shut. He puts a dime in the coin slot and dials "OPERATOR."

MEN'S ROOM

A man, ASASHIN, 35, walks up and pauses by the door.

INT. LATHAM'S APARTMENT - KITCHENETTE - NIGHT

WARREN LATHAM, still in his suit, is frying eggs. "Take Five" by The Dave Brubeck Quartet plays on the hi-fi. The phone RINGS O.S. He sets the skillet aside and enters the...

LIVING ROOM

Latham looks at his watch: 9:37. The Red light on his phone is not blinking. Latham lowers the volume on the hi-fi then answers the phone.

LATHAM

Hello?

OPERATOR (O.S.)

I have a collect call from a Carl Eaton for a Warren Latham. Is this Mr. Latham?

LATHAM

Yes.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

Will you accept the charges?

LATHAM

Eaton... Yeah, I'll accept.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

Go ahead, Mr. Eaton.

Silence.

OPERATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Mr. Eaton, go ahead, please.

PHONE BOOTH

Eaton is slumped, eyes shut; blood oozes from his nose. Asashin hangs up the handset. He writes a "202" area code number inside a matchbook cover, pockets it and leaves.

LATHAM'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

LATHAM

Hello?... Hello?

OPERATOR (O.S.)

I'm sorry, sir, but the calling party appears to have hung up.

LATHAM

Operator, can you tell me where he was calling from?

OPERATOR (O.S.)

Alamogordo, New Mexico.

LATHAM

Hm... Okay, thanks.

He hangs up and turns up the volume on the hi-fi.

EXT. COCKROACH ALLEY - GATE #1 - DAY (MORNING)

CIA PERSONNEL show their IDs as they pass the Guard House.

INT. LATHAM'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

The television is on, tuned to the "Jack LaLanne Show."
Latham enters just as COLLETTE DOWD emerges from his office.

COLLETTE

Your schedule's on your desk, along with today's papers.

Latham nods. Collette anxiously follows him into...

LATHAM'S OFFICE

Latham lays his briefcase on his desk and takes off his coat.

COLLETTE

There's a story in *The Post* about those two unknown satellites.

LATHAM

Idiots were supposed to hold off until the findings came in.

COLLETTE

What if they aren't asteroids?

LATHAM

C'mon, what else would they be?

COLLETTE

But what if they aren't?

She's trembling. Latham takes her hand and nods toward the TV.

LATHAM

Hey... Russians, Martians - no one's getting past him.

On TV LaLanne exercises. Latham smiles and squeezes her hand. Collette relaxes a bit. She nods and hangs up his coat.

LATHAM (CONT'D)
What have you got for me?

COLLETTE
Mr. Kensington is back.

LATHAM
With harrowing tales of his time
spent as a hostage, no doubt.

COLLETTE
Pity the poor man who had to
debrief him. Talk about torture...

LATHAM
(amused)
Anything IMMEDIATE?

COLLETTE
Berard at nine; SMOTH at the usual
place before close of play; oh, and
Colonel Wesley Spencer called.

LATHAM
What about?

COLLETTE
Didn't say. He just asked if you'd
meet him for lunch at 'The Canard.'

Latham sits and cocks his head - something is on his mind.

COLLETTE (CONT'D)
I've been there; it's a nice place.

LATHAM
No, it's not that... I got a collect
call last night from Carl Eaton.

Collette shrugs, not recognizing the name.

INSERT SCENES:

- West Berliners stand amid the ruins of their city and watch
U.S. C-47 military transport planes fly overhead.

- A grounds crew at Tempelhof Airfield, West Berlin
distributes boxes labeled "C.A.R.E.-U.S.A." to civilians.

- Photo of a C-47 transport plane; inscribed on the fuselage:
"LAST VITTLES FLIGHT/17,835,727 TONS AIRLIFTED TO BERLIN."

- At a hofbrau, Berlin Airlift crewmen celebrate. Eaton and
WESLEY SPENCER, in uniform, flank Latham (in civvies).

- Eaton, dead inside the phone booth.

(Use stock newsreel footage of the Berlin Airlift.)

SUIT WORDS TO ACTION

LATHAM (CONT'D)

He and Spencer flew in Operation
VITTLES when I was in West Berlin.

COLLETTE

The Berlin Airlift.

LATHAM

My first posting in the Company.

COLLETTE

Must have been exciting.

LATHAM

(remembering fondly)
C-47 'Gooney Birds' flying round-the-
clock into Tempelhof Airfield...
Eaton was a helluva pilot. I doubt
he slept more than 2 hours a night.

COLLETTE

And he's over at Andrews now?

LATHAM

No, no, he's with the Agency, over
at the Office of Scientific
Intelligence.

COLLETTE

Wow, he must be pretty smart.

LATHAM

Oh, yeah... He called me last night
from New Mexico. Collect. I accepted
the charges then he hangs up, the
goldbrick!

BACK TO SCENE

He shrugs, puzzled. Collette smiles and goes back to her desk.

FILM SEQUENCE:

A clip from the 1956 film "U.F.O." showing UFOs flying in
formation over Tremonton, Utah on July 2, 1952, shot by
WARRANT OFFICER DELBERT C. NEWHOUSE, U.S. NAVY. Newhouse
describes the event in an interview with a U.S.A.F. officer.

("U.F.O." is a documentary distributed by United Artists.)

END OF FILM SEQUENCE.

INT. BERARD'S OFFICE - DAY

WILSON BERARD, STEWART KENSINGTON and Latham each review a journal, photos and a report in folders titled "MAIER TAPE."

BERARD

On top is last month's *Journal of Space Flight*. There's a report in there on two sisters in Chicago, Mildred and Marie Maier.

KENSINGTON

The Doublemint Twins.

BERARD

The what?

KENSINGTON

The Doublemint Twins. You know...

(sings the jingle)

'Double your pleasure, double your fun...' They sang it originally.

Self-satisfied, Kensington beams. Latham rolls his eyes.

INSERT SCENES FROM THE MAIER SISTERS' LIVING ROOM:

- Victorian, replete with lace, wingtip chairs, a sofa and a storage trunk; two spinsters, MILDRED and MARIE MAIER listen excitedly to a ham radio connected to a tape recorder.

- Eaton introduces himself to the obsequious sisters; they serve him tea, which he sniffs first then sips warily.

- After viewing the sisters' scrapbook of clippings from their days on the stage, and a rousing rendition of their Doublemint Gum jingle, the put-upon Eaton finally gets the recording.

SUIT WORDS TO SCENES

BERARD

They claimed to have a recording of a radio signal from a UFO.

Kensington smirks; Latham shakes his head in disbelief.

BERARD (CONT'D)

The signal had also been recorded by some ham radio operators; that piqued our interest. So the Office of Scientific Intelligence sent one of their people to get a copy of the recording from the sisters who were, well, a bit eccentric.

BACK TO SCENE

Latham grins as he reads an excerpt from Eaton's Report: "It was like a scene from 'Arsenic And Old Lace'; the only thing lacking was the cyanide-laced elderberry wine."

BERARD (CONT'D)
OSI analyzed the tape.

INSERT SCENES:

- A page of 8-digit binary sets and Julian Dates:

01000101 01011000 01010000 01001100 01001111 01010010
01000001 01010100 01001001 01001111 01001110 00100000
01001111 01000110 00100000 01001000 01010101 01001101
01000001 01001110 01001001 01010100 01011001
1110100001110001001101001111
01000011 01001111 01001110 01010100 01001001 01001110

01010101 01001111 01010101 01010011 00100000 01000110
01001111 01010010 00100000 01010000 01001100 01000001
01001110 01000101 01010100 01000001 01010010 01011001
00100000 01000001 01000100 01010110 01000001 01001110
01000011 01000101 01001101 01000101 01001110 01010100
1001111010111110101 01001110
100000010111100001111 01010111
10011100101110000101101011000 01001110
11111100111110101111110110101 01010111

- A CIA OFFICER inputs the following Alpha-Binary matches onto computer punch cards:

A 01000001 B 01000010 C 01000011 D 01000100
E 01000101 F 01000110 G 01000111 H 01001000
I 01001001 J 01001010 K 01001011 L 01001100
M 01001101 N 01001110 O 01001111 P 01010000
Q 01010001 R 01010010 S 01010011 T 01010100
U 01010101 V 01010110 W 01010111 W 01010111
X 01011000 Y 01011001 Z 01011010

- The output begins printing on a Teletype machine:

1001111010111110101 base2/10000 base10 = 32.5109 base10;
100000010111100001111 base2/10000 base10 = 106.0623 base10;
10011100101110000101101011000 base2/10000000 base10 =
32.8665944 base10;
11111100111110101111110110101 base2/10000000 base10 =
106.1076917

SUIT BERARD'S WORDS TO ACTION

BERARD (CONT'D)
They concluded it was harmless Morse code from a local radio station, for the most part. The rest were binary numbers and Julian dates, which OSI decoded.

LATHAM'S OFFICE

Latham, PAUL "BAZZO" BARRY and a very skeptical CARLA DILAURIA read through the "MAIER TAPE" folder.

INSERT DECODED TEXT:

EXPLORATION OF HUMANITY 2437333.27223 (*Julian date, translation: Thursday, Feb-02-61*)
CONTINUOUS FOR PLANETARY ADVANCEMENT
32.5109N 106.0623W 32.8665944N 106.1076917W (*Geocentric Coordinates: Holloman AFB, KHMN/HMN, Runway 16*)

BACK TO SCENE

LATHAM

Those are the geocentric coordinates for runway 16 at Holloman Air Force Base.

DILAURIA

(scoffs)

Seriously... UFOs landing at Holloman?

LATHAM

C.I. says it's a KGB ploy.

DILAURIA

Was there any doubt? Why'd they choose February 2nd?

LATHAM

(exasperated)

It's Groundhog Day. How do I know?

BAZZO

Why is this on our plate?

LATHAM

Last month Alaskan NORAD reported multiple sightings over Point Barrow. They asked us for a scientific opinion, so OSI ran a joint study with Cal Tech. They concluded the UFOs weren't Russian because Boris didn't have the technological capability.

DILAURIA

So what were they?

LATHAM

Sunlight reflecting off seagulls.

DiLauria arches an eyebrow but Bazzo grows serious.

BAZZO

I remember two years ago, OSI and the Air Force looked into some UFOs over Air Defense Command in Montana.

DILAURIA

More birds?

BAZZO

Inconclusive. Whatever they were, radar tracked them doing Mach 15.

DiLauria is nonplussed. Latham gets up and meanders about.

LATHAM

Look, I mentioned NORAD because Berard feels it's a template on how to handle this; the opposite being how we handled the Maiers' case.

DILAURIA

Why, what else happened?

LATHAM

The sisters gave a radio interview to Bob Dunn. He's this ex-Air Force pilot who hosts a radio show in Chicago. The sisters told him they gave their tape to an Air Force Major named Eaton.

BAZZO

Wait - Scott Eaton from OSI?

LATHAM

Uh huh.

BAZZO

Geezus, you'd think he'd use a working name.

LATHAM

I know... Dunn wrote to him at the Air Technical Intelligence Center, asking if they'd analyzed the tape. ATIC wrote back, saying it had been sent to the proper authorities.

DILAURIA

I thought that was the Air Force?

LATHAM

Which is why Dunn figured Eaton was CIA and wrote to the Director.

Bazzo and DiLauria groan.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

OSI responded that the tape had been analyzed by another agency, and that the Air Force would contact him.

BAZZO

Yeah, right.

LATHAM

No, they did. They said Eaton was and still is a major, and that the tape had been analyzed by another agency who only found harmless Morse Code from a radio station.

DILAURIA

Can this get any worse?

LATHAM

So Dunn wrote back to Dulles, asking for the name of the tape analyst.

BAZZO

Great. So how do we get out of this?

LATHAM

You read the Brookings Report?

Bazzo nods but DiLauria shakes her head no.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

NASA asked the Brookings Institute to study peaceful uses of space exploration. Their report postulated on the public's reaction if NASA found evidence of extraterrestrial life, like artifacts left on the moon, or even a face-to-face meeting with the aliens.

DILAURIA

We know already. That story about those two unknown satellites in the Post has everyone spooked.

LATHAM

That's why the Report suggested the government withhold that information from the public. So Paul's going to see Mr. Dunn and convince him the tape had only innocuous Morse Code.

BEGIN FILM SEQUENCE:

- Moscow's May Day military hardware parade in Red Square.

- Fidel Castro and Nikita Khrushchev.
- Civil Defense signs; an atomic bomb detonates.
- The Pentagon; a meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- North American Air Defense (NORAD) command center; a U-2 spy plane takes off.
- U.N. troops arrive in The Congo.
- U.S. advisors in South Vietnam meeting with ARVN leaders.
- MI6's original headquarters, Broadway, London.
- The rustic headquarters of West Germany's Federal Intelligence Service (BND) in Pullach, West Germany.
- The headquarters of SDECE, France's external intelligence service, Hôtel de Brienne, 14 rue St. Dominique, Paris.
- A document labeled "TOP SECRET" is placed in a briefcase.
- The U.S. Capitol building, Washington, D.C.

END OF FILM SEQUENCE.

SUIT WORDS TO FILM SEQUENCE

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In a world of escalating tensions between rival superpowers, and the ever-present threat of nuclear annihilation, Prolaxis Global supports the United States and its allies by providing the tools to facilitate optimal decision-making. With effective intelligence collection and analysis through its cross-discipline capabilities, Prolaxis Global maximizes its extraordinary range of knowledge in security, aviation, logistics and operational expertise. Working with its international partners, Prolaxis Global provides independent solutions using professionals who understand the unique and sensitive security demands of a changing world.

INT. SMALL FILM ROOM

The lights go up. The AUDIENCE consists of seven well-dressed, middle-aged, Caucasian men, each with folders labeled "PROLAXIS GLOBAL." The SPEAKER reenters and walks to the dais.

SPEAKER

You've met one of our experts and now you've seen our presentation. Your time is valuable, so I'll keep this brief. If you're interested in our services, just call the number inside your folders and make an appointment to speak with one of our representatives. Again, thank you for accepting our invitation.

The Audience rises and heads out, led by MAXWELL GAMBLE, 52.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

As the Audience leaves the house, they shake hands with the Speaker and Asashin, then get into their chauffeured limos.

UP THE ROAD

In a Gray Ford, SAM takes pictures of everyone at the house.

INT. BLACK LIMOUSINE - DAY

Gamble opens his PROLAXIS GLOBAL folder then picks up the car's radiotelephone.

GAMBLE

This is General Maxwell Gamble...

EXT. E STREET - COCKROACH ALLEY - DAY

A view of steps leading to the Directorate of Plans building.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Alone in there, TOM PERCY takes a long swig from a metal flask.

OPERATIONS ROOM

The usual PURL of chatter, teletype machines and RINGING phones. Latham and Bazzo meet with JARED STOKES. Percy enters. Latham sniffs the air suspiciously as Percy passes by him.

STOKES

Paul, you'll have a sanitized analysis of the tape from ITEK.

Kensington bounces in and interrupts Stokes.

KENSINGTON

Off to Chicago, Paul?

BAZZO

Yes, sir - Operation Green Men.

STOKES

(to Bazzo)

You'll have Air Force credentials-

KENSINGTON

Won't be as exciting as New York.

BAZZO

No, sir, probably not.

STOKES

(growing frustrated)

So remember to wear civvies.

Kensington is about to interrupt again when Latham intervenes.

LATHAM

Did you want to see me, sir?

KENSINGTON

Oh, yes. I wanted to thank you again for what you did in New York.

LATHAM

I'm just glad it turned out well.

STOKES

(overlapping to Bazzo)

We also sent a wire under Air Force heading to the radio station, WMAQ, alerting them to your visit.

KENSINGTON

I was wondering... When was the last time you changed your blinds?

LATHAM

My what?

KENSINGTON

The Venetian blinds in your office.

LATHAM

I don't know... Never.

KENSINGTON

We should get you some new ones. And those windows of yours... You really ought to get them washed.

Bazzo and Stokes grin mischievously and turn away.

LATHAM

The dirt keeps anyone from seeing inside.

KENSINGTON

No need to live in squalor, man.

LATHAM

No, sir... Was there anything else?

KENSINGTON

Huh? Oh... Why not join me for lunch at the Club?

LATHAM

Sorry, I have a prior appointment.

KENSINGTON

Oh... Well, some other time then.

Kensington jauntily leaves. Latham sighs wearily.

EXT. POINT BARROW LONG-RANGE RADAR SITE, ALASKA - NIGHT

Stock footage of the base. A flood-lit sign reads "UNITED STATES AIR FORCE/POINT BARROW/LONG RANGE RADAR SITE."

INT. RADAR STATION CONTROL CENTER - NIGHT

Punctuating indistinct chatter and muted lighting is the green glow from radar screens manned by U.S.A.F. personnel. MATTHEWS and WHITTEN, late 20's, sit at adjacent monitoring stations. A white blip appears on Whitten's radar screen.

WHITTEN

Matt, I've got a target at 2:00.

MATTHEWS

At Angel's 10, I see it. I'll check with CAA for any commercial traffic.

He picks up his phone. Whitten also places a call.

WHITTEN

It's Whitten, sir. We have a target at 2:00... Right.

He hangs up. A couple of sweeps of his scope show the target still stationary. A moment later, bleary-eyed COMMANDER COLLINS, 42, shuffles over.

COLLINS

Nine A.M. and it's still dark out.

WHITTEN

Civil twilight. You get used to it.

COLLINS

I hope not. What have you got?

WHITTEN

'Seagulls' again at 10,000 feet.
Target's now at 3:00. Wait, 12:00.
It's bouncing all over the place.

Collins is worried. Matthews hangs up his phone.

COLLINS

Can you confirm this, Matthews?

MATTHEWS

Yes, sir. I've got stellar contact,
solid on every sweep.

COLLINS

You check with the CAA?

MATTHEWS

No commercial traffic in the area.

The dot on Whitten's radar screen suddenly triples in size.

WHITTEN

Whoa!

COLLINS

What is it?

WHITTEN

Target just dropped from 10,000 to
below 1000 feet - at Mach 15.

They're stunned. Matthews' phone RINGS; he answers it.

MATTHEWS

Control Center, Matthews.

He winces, jerking the handset away from his ear.

COLLINS

Who is that?

MATTHEWS

I don't know - the guy's screaming.

COLLINS

Put him on speaker.

Matthews flips a switch on his control panel.

MAN ON PHONE (O.S.)

You listening?! There's this huge,
glowing red object over Dish Row!
Wait - it's moving... It's moving!

Other radar operators peek over their shoulders at Collins.

COLLINS

This is Lt. Cmdr. Collins; identify yourself.

MAN ON PHONE (O.S.)

Lynch, Base Security. The object's moving this way. Oh my God, it's right above me! What do I do?!

COLLINS

Stand your ground, Lynch. Can you see any markings on it?

Silence. All eyes are on Matthews, Whitten and Collins. Suddenly RIFLE SHOTS CRACKLE over the speaker.

COLLINS (CONT'D)

What the hell's goin' on, Lynch?!

MAN ON PHONE/LYNCH (O.S.)

I shot at it... It zoomed back up.

MATTHEWS

Target has ascended to Angel's 10.

LYNCH (O.S.)

I can't see it now. I think it's gone.

WHITTEN

Target's off scope.

COLLINS

Lynch, do you want to file a report?

LYNCH (O.S.)

(an anxious moment, then)

No, sir. You can tell General Gamble it was probably them seagulls again.

ACT TWO

INT. "THE CANARD" BAR AND RESTAURANT - DAY

A popular watering hole. A table menu reads "The Canard/'The Rumor Mill.'" WESLEY SPENCER gulps a vodka shot and finishes it with a beer chaser. He signals for another round. Latham joins him, carrying a bottle of Diet Rite Cola and a glass.

SPENCER

Hey, glad you could make it.

LATHAM

Beats the alternative.

SPENCER
Yeah? What's that?

LATHAM
Lunch with Kensington - one of
Dante's Nine Circles Of Hell.

Spencer chuckles nervously. Growing somber, he leans forward. Latham recoils a bit at Spencer's strong liquor breath.

SPENCER
Hey, sorry about Bulgaria, man.

LATHAM
Forget it; it's over with.

The Waitress brings Spencer another round. He gulps the shot, swigs his beer then lights a cigarette. Latham sips his soda.

SPENCER
23 years in the military... I
shoulda bailed when Eaton did and
signed up with you people.

LATHAM
You know, he called me last night.

SPENCER
(apprehensively)
You spoke to him?

LATHAM
Never got the chance; he hung up.

Spencer leans back, oddly relieved at this.

SPENCER
So you don't know then...

LATHAM
What is this, 'I've Got A Secret'?
Know what?

SPENCER
I got a call this morning from the
police in Alamogordo. They found
Carl in some night club - a brain
aneurysm or something.

Latham is stunned - but then something bothers him.

LATHAM
Why did the police call you?

SPENCER
What do you mean?

LATHAM

I mean, why did they call you? Carl would've been backstopped with pocket litter for just that reason.

SPENCER

I don't know... Probably had one of my MATS business cards on him.

LATHAM

So do I. I also have one from Ace Typewriter Repair. But even if I jump out the window holding my Smith-Corona, I doubt D.C. Metro will call either one of you.

Spencer HUFFS and stubs out his half-smoked cigarette.

SPENCER

What, you gonna interrogate me now?

LATHAM

No... But someone will.

Spencer reaches for a cigarette but his pack is empty. He slumps, puts the pack back in his pocket and swigs his beer.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

Why did you want to see me, Wes?

SPENCER

At the end of The War they had me fly to Buchenwald to repatriate our POWs. The Jews there - like walking skeletons. And the ones the Nazis had experimented on... You wonder how God could let that happen. Then one day you're back home and you see something... Something you can't believe. And you wonder if there even is a God.

He looks past Latham, out the front window.

SPENCER'S P.O.V. - AN UNMARKED SERVICE VAN

Is double-parked across the street; behind the wheel, Asashin.

BACK TO SCENE

Spencer is visibly shaken.

LATHAM

What's the matter?

He turns and looks out the window just as the Van leaves.

SPENCER

I gotta go.

LATHAM

Why? What's going on?

SPENCER

Nothin'. I just remembered I have
to be some place.

He gulps his beer while staring at Latham's cup of soda.

LATHAM

Who was that out there?

SPENCER

No one.

LATHAM

Wes...

Spencer gets up. Latham grabs Spencer's arm.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

What are you afraid of?

SPENCER

(jerks his arm free)

For Chrissakes, will you back off?!

He takes a tiny envelope from his cigarette pack, drops it on the table and leaves. Latham opens it. With a toothpick he pokes at the white powder inside.

EXT. CHICAGO, ILLINOIS - DAY

Period stock footage of the cityscape and The Loop.

INT. RADIO STATION "WMAQ" - CORRIDOR

BOB DUNN, 55, peers through an interior window into a studio. The call letters "WMAQ" are affixed to the wall. Beneath a lit "ON AIR" sign, DJ JACK changes a record while silently jabbering into the microphone.

Toting a satchel Bazzo enters, led by an INTERN who introduces him to Dunn. Bazzo flashes his Air Force ID. DJ Jack flips a switch and "Small World" sung by Johnny Mathis begins to play O.S.

BREAK ROOM

"Small World" continues O.S. Dunn and Bazzo sip coffee.

BAZZO

Why a call-in show?

DUNN

I was bored spinning records. One day I went off-script. I don't know, I was just going on about what aliens must've thought when they saw Sputnik. Then in comes the GM, saying we got more action on the switchboard than in a co-ed's dorm room. So we ran with it.

BAZZO

So you believe in flying saucers.

Dunn sighs. He scoops a tiny bit of sugar from the bowl. He drops a few grains on the table, brushing away all but one.

BAZZO (CONT'D)

That's some kinda diet you're on.

DUNN

For this one grain...

(points to the sugar bowl)

That's how many stars there are in this corner of the Milky Way. Now take all the grains of sand at Lake Michigan; that's billions of suns, and that's just in our galaxy. You really think ours is the only one orbited by a habitable planet?

BAZZO

No, but it doesn't mean we're being visited by any of them.

DUNN

Why? Because they haven't landed on the White House lawn?

BAZZO

Be a good start.

DUNN

Hey, maybe they consider Earth the ghetto of the galaxy.

Bazzo chuckles.

DUNN (CONT'D)

Look, I was a Senior Pilot. I know what I've seen up there.

Bazzo raises his hands, conceding the point. He pulls a folder from his satchel and hands it to Dunn who opens it.

BAZZO

ITEK's analysis of the Maier tape.

DUNN
ITEK - Dick Mahorn's company?

BAZZO
Yeah, you know him?

DUNN
T25, Miss Lace, 498th Bomber Group.
He was the A.C.; I was his co-pilot.

BAZZO
Well, all ITEK found was Morse Code
from a local radio station.

Dunn scowls. He thumbs through the report.

DUNN
The Morse Code operator who analyzed
the tape... His name in here?

BAZZO
No. Air Force policy prohibits the
disclosure of any personnel
involved in an investigation.

DUNN
Uh huh. What about getting a
transcript of the tape?

BAZZO
Sorry, the file was destroyed.

DUNN
What kinda bullshit is that?!

BAZZO
When a case is without merit, ATIC
destroys the file rather than have
it take up wasted space.

DUNN
Since when did the Air Force become
like Jimmy Hoffa's Teamsters?

He brusquely gets up and leaves, taking the report with him.
Bazzo does a slow burn as "Small World" ends.

EXT. CHICAGO - ILLINOIS STATE BUILDING - DAY

Stock footage of its downtown location on North LaSalle.

INT. CHICAGO CIA STATION - OFFICE - DAY

On a desk is a RED PHONE; its subscriber name label, **DE7-4926**
(CIA's actual Chicago station phone number in 1960). Bazzo
sits at the desk, handset to his ear. He's livid.

BAZZO

Why the hell didn't Mission Planning
know Dunn had flown with Mahorn?

INT. LATHAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Latham is on the Red phone.

LATHAM

What?

CROSSCUT BAZZO WITH LATHAM

BAZZO

Dunn flew B-29s over Japan with
ITEK's CEO. All he has to do is call
Mahorn and the Operation's blown.

LATHAM

Alright, I'll call ITEK. Mahorn
lives in Boston. Call the station;
have them send a radio car to his
house. If I can't reach Mahorn,
I'll have the station disrupt his
phone service.

BAZZO

What about Mission Planning?

LATHAM

Later. Now get a move on.

KENSINGTON'S OFFICE

Kensington brushes his tuxedo. There's a KNOCK on his door.

KENSINGTON

Come.

Latham enters.

KENSINGTON (CONT'D)

Ah, Warren. You missed an excellent
lunch: Blackberry brandy grilled
pheasant, wild rice, grilled fruit
kabobs. What did you eat?

LATHAM

A BLT.

KENSINGTON

Oh... So, what can I do for you?

LATHAM

Mandarin One called. Seems Mission
Planning missed the fact that Dunn-

KENSINGTON

Who?

LATHAM

The Chicago radio host, Bob Dunn.
Mandarin One's gone to see him.

KENSINGTON

Oh, yes.

LATHAM

He and Itek's CEO, Dick Mahorn,
flew missions together over Japan.

KENSINGTON

What?! If Dunn calls him-

LATHAM

I already have a call in to
Mahorn's office. And the Boston
station's on standby to cut his
phone lines. But we have a larger
problem here, and that's drinking
on duty.

Kensington sighs, relieved. He resumes grooming his tuxedo.

KENSINGTON

We all tend to overindulge. But
that hardly qualifies as a problem.

LATHAM

It does when it affects a mission.

KENSINGTON

Then remind your people to exercise
some restraint. Anything else?

Latham clears his throat to calm himself down.

LATHAM

You know about Carl Eaton from OSI?
He wrote that report on the Maiers.

KENSINGTON

Yes. An aneurysm wasn't it?

LATHAM

Supposedly. I met with Colonel
Wesley Spencer earlier. And I got
the distinct impression he knows
more about Eaton's death than
what's been reported.

KENSINGTON

Why should he know anything?

LATHAM

The three of us have been friends since The War. Eaton called me last night, but he hung up before we could talk.

KENSINGTON

And that makes his death suspicious?

LATHAM

When you add that Spencer was on edge when I asked why the local police had contacted him - yes. He was also under surveillance.

KENSINGTON

By whom?

LATHAM

I don't know. When Spencer saw the man he bolted. He left an envelope with some white powder in it. I'm having it analyzed now.

Kensington sniggers and goes to his desk.

KENSINGTON

A little cocaine-induced paranoia?

LATHAM

He's a boozehound, not an addict. I'd like to put a mandarin on him.

KENSINGTON

For what?

LATHAM

Sir, I believe Eaton was killed and Spencer is somehow involved.

KENSINGTON

Then call in the FBI.

LATHAM

I don't have anything. That's why I want to do some digging.

KENSINGTON

What - to validate some addict's paranoia? No. I don't want a single resource wasted on him. Understood?

LATHAM

Yes, sir.

Deflated, Latham nods and leaves.

FILM SEQUENCE:

In a 1954 BBC interview, BOAC PILOT CAPTAIN JAMES HOWARD describes several objects that shadowed his plane for 18 minutes while en route from the U.S. to Britain.

END OF FILM SEQUENCE.

MID-SHOW BREAK

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - LAFAYETTE SQUARE PARK - DAY

Latham and LAWRENCE JONES (SMOTH) stroll. Latham is abstracted. Jones SNAPS his fingers.

JONES

Earth to Latham, come in, please.

LATHAM

Sorry. What did you say?

JONES

I said you're lucky Mahorn agreed to be indisposed. And you didn't even have to shut off his phone.

LATHAM

Oh, we did that anyway.

He glances up at the sky.

JONES

It hasn't fallen yet, Henny Penny.

Latham is puzzled and does a double-take.

JONES (CONT'D)

Sorry, 'Chicken Little' to you natives in the colonies. Look, before I tell you why I asked you here, you need to tell me what's bothering you.

LATHAM

I need you to put eyes on one of my Desk Officers, Tom Percy.

JONES

Why, you think he's doubling?

LATHAM

No, I think he's a drunk. But I need to know if anyone else knows.

JONES

Sure, I'll keep an eye on him.

LATHAM

Thanks.

Jones pulls an envelope from his pocket and hands it to Latham who pauses before opening it.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

No white powder in here, is there?

Jones is befuddled. Latham waves him off and pulls out Sam's photos of the Audience.

JONES

The house is in Arlington. Tax rolls list the owner as Prolaxis Global.

LATHAM

Never heard of them.

JONES

They're a private Intel and security firm based in Johannesburg.

Latham flips through several photos of the Audience.

LATHAM

Hm, business must be booming.

JONES

Their clientele are international businessmen - except for him.

(points at a photo)

Major General Maxwell Gamble, U.S. Air Force, Strategic Air Command.

LATHAM'S P.O.V. - PHOTO OF GENERAL GAMBLE

Shaking hands with the Speaker while Asashin looks on.

BACK TO SCENE

LATHAM

Why were you watching Gamble?

JONES

We were watching a British national. Gamble surprised us. Warren, you've already lost enough friends in the African and Asian ecumene because of Eisenhower's 'Europe First' policy. If the KGB gets wind of this...

LATHAM

I know... Who are those two with the general?

JONES

They work for Prolaxis Global.

EXT. ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE - DAY (DUSK)

(Its name in 1960.) Stock footage of the base.

INT. FLIGHT OFFICE - DAY (DUSK)

CAPTAIN WILLARD mans the Duty Desk; behind him, the MATS flight board. Spencer enters, heavy-footed.

WILLARD

Thought you were off today, Colonel?

Spencer grunts something unintelligible as he lumbers past the Desk. Willard rolls his eyes and returns to his work.

DUTY OFFICER'S ROOM

From his locker Spencer removes a Colt M1911 pistol. With his left hand he shoves it inside the waistband of his pants.

SPENCER

Crosses the parking lot and gets into his Ford. He grabs the steering wheel and quickly pulls his hand off. He rubs his fingers against his palm. He wipes the steering wheel with his sleeve, then starts the car and drives away.

I/E. SUITLAND PARKWAY - SPENCER'S FORD - DAY (DUSK)

Spencer shakes his head, trying to focus. Traffic around him HONKS. He pulls onto the shoulder and pushes open his door.

INT. SPENCER'S FORD

Spencer leans out and vomits. He shuts the door and slumps back in his seat, quickly slipping into semi-consciousness.

In the rearview mirror a Van pulls up. A Man wearing gloves gets out, walks up to the passenger-side door and opens it.

ASASHIN

Gets in, his revolver peeking from his shoulder holster. He puts an envelope labeled "Jenny" into Spencer's pocket and sees the stock of Spencer's M1911. Asashin grins.

He yanks out the M1911, RACKS THE SLIDE, then wraps Spencer's right hand around the stock, forefinger on the trigger. He lifts the muzzle to Spencer's right temple and - MUZZLE FLASH.

EXT. ACROSS SUITLAND PARKWAY - SPENCER'S FORD

Blood and brain matter SPATTER onto the driver-side window.

Traffic WHOOSHES past. Asashin alights, gets into his Van and drives away.

EXT. K STREET, NW - APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT (EVENING)

An MGA is parked out front; a YOUNG MAN leans against it. A YOUNG WOMAN leaves the building, toting an overnight case.

INT. APARTMENT - AT THE WINDOW

Percy bleakly watches the Man put the overnight case behind the seats. The Couple get into the car and drive off.

UP THE STREET - BLUE SEDAN

MI6 Officer FIONA, Black, takes pictures of The Couple. She lowers her camera. As the MGA passes, she writes: "19:30. Percy's wife leaves with unknown white male in late model MG."

INT. RADIO STATION "WMAQ" - STUDIO

The "ON AIR" sign is lit. The 24-hour wall clock reads 21:05. Dunn is at the microphone; beside him, KATE MILLS, 40.

DUNN

Getting back to that story in *U.S. Aerospace Technology Weekly*... It was unsettling enough to the few of us who read it, but then I opened today's paper and there it is. Now everyone's on edge. Look, I get it - two unknown satellites orbiting the Earth is news. But since no one knows for sure if they're man-made or natural phenomena, why not wait for the government to announce its findings first? Man... Anyway, I seriously doubt they're man-made.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A typical two-star room. The clock radio is tuned to Dunn's program. A beer sits on the nightstand. Bazzo leaves the bathroom in his robe. He plops on the bed and grabs his beer.

DUNN (O.S.)

Mars is at its closest approach to Earth, and typically that's when UFO sightings go up. So here to discuss this, the Maier tape and other UFO news is my guest, director of the Center For Unexplained Aerial Phenomena, Kate Mills. Welcome.

MILLS (O.S.)

Thanks for having me, Bob.

DUNN (O.S.)

I'm curious... What's your take on these two unknown satellites?

MILLS (O.S.)

I agree with you. I don't think they're man-made either.

DUNN (O.S.)

Glad someone's on my side.

MILLS (O.S.)

But - saying they're not man-made doesn't mean they aren't artificial.

DUNN (O.S.)

Whoa! Hang on... Are you suggesting they're extraterrestrial in origin?

MILLS (O.S.)

Yes. And the government, and by that I mean the CIA, is covering it up, same as the Maier tape.

Bazzo groans and BANGS his head back on the headboard.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - NIGHT

A light rain makes the Capitol Dome appear luminescent.

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE

A gaggle of men and women mingle. Percy is lost in his drink. A BLONDE eschews the balding lotharios and approaches him.

Fiona sees this. She excuses herself from a would-be suitor and heads to...

THE LADIES' ROOM

On the wall is a LOCAL FIRE ALARM. Fiona enters, sidestepping a TIPSY WOMAN who's leaving. Fiona looks about - it's empty. She pulls the Fire Alarm lever. A bell CLANGS incessantly.

AT THE BAR

GROANS and COMPLAINTS replace cooing as everyone scurries out.

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON HOTEL - NIGHT

The Guests spill into the street; some glance nervously at the sky. An ungallant Percy hails a taxi and gets in, leaving the Blonde in the lurch. Fiona approaches her.

FIONA

You can't win 'em all.

Fiona winks at her and leaves while the Blonde glares.

EXT. 704 3RD STREET, NW - APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The Unmarked Service Van is parked at the corner. Latham walks to the front door, Chinese take-out and briefcase in hand. He eyes the Van curiously as he enters the building.

INT. LATHAM'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Latham sits on the couch. "I Didn't Know What Time It Was" by Stan Getz and Gerry Mulligan plays on the hi-fi. Chinese food shares the coffee table with photos of Percy, his wife, her paramour and Fiona's SITREP.

The phone RINGS; its Red light is not blinking. Latham answers it.

LATHAM

Hello?

CLICK. The caller hangs up. Latham quickly hangs up, turns off the lamp and hurries to the window.

LATHAM'S P.O.V. - UNMARKED SERVICE VAN

A Man in overalls gets out and goes around the corner.

BACK TO SCENE

Latham turns off the hi-fi. He reaches into the record cabinet and pulls out an M1911 pistol.

LATHAM'S APARTMENT BUILDING - THIRD-FLOOR HALLWAY

Quiet and carpeted. The elevator begins to HUM.

LIVING ROOM

Latham waits beside the door. The elevator bell DINGS; its doors BURR as they open and close. Then silence.

Using his M1911, Latham reaches across the door and slides the metal cover off the peephole. Ambient light streams in.

The peephole suddenly goes DARK. Pfft. A silenced GUNSHOT BLOWS through it, the bullet SMASHING a table lamp. Quick, muffled footsteps fade O.S. Latham opens the door.

THIRD-FLOOR CORRIDOR - BACK STAIRWAY DOOR

Slowly closes. Latham races to the back stairs. WET SHOEPRINTS blemish the landing and steps leading downstairs.

There's a SKID, THUDS and a GROAN O.S.; someone has fallen. Latham races down the steps to the...

SECOND-FLOOR LANDING

Asashin lies there, unconscious; his pistol lies on a step. Latham checks him for a pulse then he secures the pistol. He rifles through Asashin's pockets but finds nothing.

Latham hoists Asashin onto his shoulders in a FIREMAN'S CARRY and heads back upstairs.

LATHAM'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Latham lays Asashin on the couch then picks up the phone.

EXT. 704 3RD STREET, NW - NIGHT - LATER

With LIGHTS FLASHING and SIREN BLARING, an AMBULANCE with Sam at the wheel pulls away.

INT. MI6 SAFEHOUSE - BASEMENT HOLDING CELL

Dimly lit. Sam and Jones carry a hooded Asashin to a heavy wooden chair and strap him down. Sam shines a klieg light on Asashin's face while a DOCTOR fills a hypodermic syringe.

Jones whips off the hood. Asashin GASPS for air and SQUINTS. Sam rips open Asashin's right sleeve and wipes clean his forearm. The Doctor slides the needle into a vein.

Jones crosses to a metal door and opens it - in walks Latham.

EXT. CHICAGO (THE LOOP) - STREET - NIGHT

The 'El' (elevated train) rumbles overhead as Dunn leaves the radio station.

EXT. TAVERN - NIGHT

Dunn enters. He glad-hands some old sots and sits at the bar.

INT. MI6 SAFEHOUSE - BASEMENT HOLDING CELL

The room lights are on. Latham, Jones, the Doctor and Sam stand around Asashin who, straps removed, recites nonstop.

ASASHIN

'The chair van Gogh had seen was obviously the chair I had seen, but incomparably more real than the chairs of perception.'

JONES

He's done resistance training.

ASASHIN

'What about human relations? How could one reconcile this timeless bliss, of seeing as one ought to see, with the temporal duties of doing what one ought to do...'

LATHAM

I know that; it's from 'The Doors Of Perception' by Aldous Huxley.

JONES

(snarkily)

I didn't know there was a *Classic Comics* version.

Latham sneers at Jones. The Doctor turns to Latham.

DOCTOR

You know, if you could recite some lines, you might trigger an autonomic specificity response.

LATHAM

A what?

ASASHIN

'To be shaken out of the ruts of ordinary perception; to be shown for a few timeless hours the outer and inner world...'

DOCTOR

Think of watching a comedy at the pictures. You have a heightened response - laughter, say, instead of a chuckle - because you're sharing the experience with the audience.

LATHAM

And me reciting from Huxley's book will do what?

DOCTOR

Make you part of his experience.

Not entirely convinced, Latham grabs a stool and sits in front of Asashin. As he leans forward...

ASASHIN

'But if the retired rubber goods merchant had sat still enough...'

Jones grins slyly. Latham shoots him a sidelong glance.

LATHAM

'It has been a retreat from the outward datum into the personal subconscious, into a mental world more squalid and more tightly closed than even the world of conscious personality.'

Asashin pauses and leans forward.

ASASHIN

'The man who comes back through the Door in the Wall will never be quite the same as the man who went out.'

LATHAM

'There isn't any need for a civilized man to bear anything that's seriously unpleasant.'

ASASHIN

'When a man has a thing before his eyes, how can he be said to hope for it?'

LATHAM

What thing? What did that man see?

ASASHIN

Asashin never saw what Eaton and Spencer saw.

Jones mouths "Asashin" curiously. Latham grows angry.

LATHAM

Is that why they were targeted? Did you kill them, Asashin?

Jones grabs Latham's shoulder. Latham nods, angry at himself.

ASASHIN

(dourly)

'I can't explain myself, I'm afraid, sir, because I'm not myself.'

Latham takes a deep breath to rein in his emotions.

ASASHIN (CONT'D)

'If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense. Nothing would be what it is, because everything would be what it isn't.'

JONES

(sotto voce to Latham)

Lewis Carroll.

LATHAM

'The time has come to talk of many things: Of shoes and ships, and sealing wax, of cabbages and kings.'

Asashin relaxes and grins.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

Who gave that man his orders?

ASASHIN

The owner of that flaming asshole.

Jones snickers. Latham thinks a moment, then turns to Jones.

LATHAM

(sotto voce)

You know, that's also an Air Force term to describe a jet turning on its afterburners.

(to Asashin)

Was that General Gamble?

ASASHIN

Higher. Gamble only protects The Meeting. Just three more months...

JONES

(sotto voce to Latham)

Until what?

LATHAM

(somberly sighs)

Groundhog Day.

EXT. CHICAGO - TAVERN - NIGHT

Closing time. Dunn leaves, albeit less sure-footed than when he arrived.

EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - NIGHT

A nearby WINO bobs and leans. Dunn shuffles to the far end and PLOPS DOWN on a bench. He leans back and shuts his eyes.

A MAN IN A PEA COAT enters and sits near Dunn.

A train RUMBLES into the station; it's brakes SCREECH, muffling a brief struggle. The doors open; the Wino straggles on. The doors close and the train leaves.

ON THE BENCH

Dunn lies there motionless, eyes and mouth open in a death mask. The Man In The Pea Coat starts to strip him.

ACT THREE

FILM SEQUENCE:

Excerpts from a 1953 BBC short "An Unidentified Object," an interview with ROYAL AIR FORCE PILOT TERRY JOHNSON and NAVIGATOR GEOFFREY SMYTHE who sighted a UFO in November 1953 (YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeMrXqJ6Ode>).

END OF FILM SEQUENCE.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - CONNECTICUT AVENUE - DAY (MORNING)

A crowd waits quietly for a city bus.

INT. LATHAM'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Latham enters, bleary-eyed. Collette jumps up from her desk.

COLLETTE

Where have you been? I've been trying to reach you all morning.

LATHAM

If I wanted to be nagged, I'd get-

COLLETTE

Colonel Spencer is dead.

Latham is stunned.

COLLETTE (CONT'D)

The Park Police found him in his car, along with a suicide note. They also found your name and our public number on the back of his MATS card.

LATHAM

(rhetorically rueful)
In case he jumped out the window holding his typewriter.

COLLETTE

Huh?

Latham shakes his head. She hands him a report.

COLLETTE (CONT'D)

That came in from OSI.

As Latham reads it, he grows horrified.

BERARD'S OFFICE

Berard, Kensington and Latham are in a discussion.

BERARD
Thallium sulfate?

LATHAM
Exterminators use it as rat poison.
It's odorless, tasteless...

KENSINGTON
Why would Spencer want to kill you?

LATHAM
Because he'd been ordered to.

BERARD
By whom?

LATHAM
Whoever wanted Eaton dead.

Kensington scoffs and looks away. Latham is growing angry.

LATHAM (CONT'D)
Spencer told me the police called him because his name and number were on a MATS card Eaton had. So he wrote my name and number on his own MATS card in case anything happened to him. That way I'd make the connection with Eaton.

KENSINGTON
What connection? Eaton didn't kill himself.

LATHAM
When the three of us were in Berlin, we used to play cards a lot. Eaton and I were always teasing Spencer when it was his turn to deal because he dealt backwards - you know, counter-clockwise. That's 'cause he was left-handed. So how is it he commits suicide by shooting himself in the right temple with his right hand?

Kensington looks away. Berard leans back, in serious thought. Latham shows them a photo of Gamble, the Speaker and Asashin.

LATHAM (CONT'D)
I got that from SMOTH.

BERARD
Max Gamble. There's a loose cannon.

KENSINGTON

Max? No, I've known him for years.

BERARD

He accused the White House of being soft on communism. The only reason he's still around is because the Secretary reassigned him to Alaska.

Kensington is embarrassed.

BERARD (CONT'D)

Why was SMOTH watching him?

LATHAM

He wasn't. He was watching a British national meet with Prolaxis Global.

BERARD

Oh, God - not those bastards.

LATHAM

You know them?

BERARD

You're aware conflict diamonds are funding the rebels in The Congo?

LATHAM

Yes...

BERARD

Well, one measure the government took to end the trade was to hire Prolaxis Global. The result was that massacre of Congolese mine workers.

LATHAM

SMOTH saw Gamble meet with Prolaxis Global and thought I should know.

Berard shakes his head, concerned. Kensington sees this.

KENSINGTON

Sir, whatever Gamble is up to, the Air Force's Office of Special Investigations should be handling it - not us.

LATHAM

And if he's involved in Eaton's death?

KENSINGTON

You have no proof of that!

BERARD

Gentlemen... Warren, I understand your feelings here - two of your friends have died. But I have to agree with Stewart. Turn this over to AFOSI by close of play today.

Resignedly, Latham nods. He gets up and leaves.

LATHAM'S OFFICE

The door is open. DiLauria sits as Latham meanders about.

DILAURIA

Why didn't you tell them about Asashin?

LATHAM

Right, tell them I'm swapping lines from Aldous Huxley and Lewis Carroll with a guy I've got drugged and stashed in an MI6 safehouse. And that after twice being warned to hand this over to the FBI or the Air Force.

DILAURIA

But he did try to kill you.

LATHAM

That comes with the furniture. Besides, I just learned Gamble and Kensington are old pals. If I had said anything, Kensington would have been on the phone to him the second I left the room.

DILAURIA

So, what are you going to do?

Latham sighs and sits. He takes the photo of Gamble, the Speaker and Asashin from his desk drawer.

LATHAM

Asashin said the orders came from above Gamble. But I still think he's the key to all this.

DILAURIA

Why? Because of this supposed meeting in three months?

LATHAM

All I know is Eaton and Spencer saw something they weren't supposed to see - and that got them killed.

DILAURIA

That UFO or whatever that's supposed to land at Holloman?

LATHAM

Hey, Eaton was found near Holloman.

Just then Collette rushes in, memo in hand.

COLLETTE

This just came in.

She hands Latham the memo. He reads it and passes it to DiLauria who reads it aloud.

DILAURIA

'WMAQ radio host Bob Dunn was found dead at the Quincy elevated train stop. He was under a bench, nude and suffering from hypothermia.'

COLLETTE

Why would he be nude?

LATHAM

I saw that in The War. Hypothermia sets in and the person gets confused. They think they're overheating, so they take their clothes off.

COLLETTE

Kensington was also copied on this.

KENSINGTON'S OFFICE

Kensington is beside himself and has Latham in the woodshed.

KENSINGTON

How the hell did this happen? Barry was supposed to persuade Dunn there was nothing of importance on the Maier tape. Just how did you misinterpret that to mean kill him?

LATHAM

Dunn died from hypothermia.

KENSINGTON

Yes, found under a bench, naked and fetid. A bit sordid, even for you.

LATHAM

That doesn't sound like Paul. If he felt Dunn wasn't coming around, he'd have told me.

KENSINGTON

Obviously he didn't feel a need to.

LATHAM

Shouldn't we wait to hear his side of it?

KENSINGTON

Why? You're such an inveterate liar, I'm sure you'll find a way to prove Dunn deliberately froze himself to death.

LATHAM

(seething)

Was there anything else, sir?

KENSINGTON

Isn't that enough?

Latham has had enough and quickly leaves.

FILM SEQUENCE:

Excerpts from an interview with original Mercury Seven astronaut Gordon Cooper about his 1951 encounter with UFOs while flying an F-86, a UFO landing on a dry lake bed, and Project Bluebook. (From "Sirius: The Film," Sirius Disclosure Project; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsEd_b1C8DY)

END OF FILM SEQUENCE.

INT. MI6 SAFEHOUSE - BASEMENT HOLDING CELL

The Doctor gives Asashin another injection and watches, along with Jones and Sam, as Latham has another go at Asashin.

LATHAM

'Soma: All the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects.'

ASASHIN

'Oh, I wish I had my soma!'

LATHAM

'But aren't you shortening her life by giving her so much?'

Asashin suddenly becomes reflective; he leans back. Latham hands him the photo of Gamble, the Speaker and Asashin.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

'She remained in her little room...
In bed, with the radio and
television always on...'

(MORE)

LATHAM (CONT'D)

There she remained; and yet wasn't
there at all, was all the time
away, infinitely far away.'

Now melancholy, Asashin drops his head.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

'What's in those caskets?'

ASASHIN

Eaton... Spencer.

Latham points to the Speaker.

LATHAM

And he put them there, didn't he?
'No wives, or children, or lovers
to feel strongly about... He had no
desire to see them.' Help me to see
him.

Asashin fights back tears; he looks Latham in the eye.

INT. MANOR HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Traditional. The Speaker hangs up the phone. He checks his
watch, grabs his coat and leaves.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

The Speaker gets into his Peugeot 203 and drives off.

EXT. ARLINGTON, VA - CHERRY VALLEY PARK - DAY

The Speaker parks on Nelson Street and enters the Park at
Custis Trail. It's empty. He waits by a post bearing the
Park's name. On the trail approaching him comes Latham.

LATHAM

Waiting for Asashin?

The Speaker eyes Latham curiously.

SPEAKER

I think you've got the wrong man.

He starts to walk out of the Park. DiLauria appears at the
entrance to Custis Trail. She pulls a Colt M1911 from her
handbag and aims it at the Speaker.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

What is this? Who are you?

LATHAM

You and I are going to talk.

SPEAKER

Look, I don't know who you are or
who you think I am, but-

DiLauria COCKS the M1911. The Speaker smirks.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

You're not going to kill me.

LATHAM

You're right. But you run or cry
out or just plain piss me off, and
I'll have her put a bullet right
between your legs.

DiLauria lowers her aim. The Speaker grows nervous.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

Come on.

The two men stroll down Custis Trail. DiLauria follows them.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

General Maxwell Gamble came to see
you the other day.

SPEAKER

Did he?

Latham RABBIT-PUNCHES the Speaker on the bridge of his nose.
The Speaker YELPS. He doubles over in pain, throwing his hands
over his nose. Blood drips from his fingers.

LATHAM

Let's try that again. Why did
Gamble come to see you?

SPEAKER

He was invited.

LATHAM

By whom?

SPEAKER

Johannesburg.

LATHAM

Why?

SPEAKER

To watch the presentation. He
called afterwards and asked to meet
with a rep.

He SQUINCHES. Latham hands him a handkerchief.

LATHAM

Has he?

SPEAKER

He gave us the details, but he hasn't signed the contract yet.

LATHAM

Exactly what does he want you to do?

The Speaker hesitates. Latham shoves his palm into the bridge of the Speaker's nose, knocking him on his ass.

SPEAKER

Okay! Christ! There's some event at Holloman Air Force Base in February. He wants us to provide security.

The blood from his nose now flows like a leaky faucet.

LATHAM

Why? The Air Force has its own security people.

SPEAKER

Gamble thinks some people might want to 'compromise the integrity of the event' - his words. We're to make sure that doesn't happen.

LATHAM

Meaning what - terminate them?

The Speaker nods and stands. He spits out blood.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

What the hell is this 'event'?

SPEAKER

He didn't say.

LATHAM

Asashin was ordered to terminate three men, one of them being me. Who gave the order and why?

SPEAKER

I don't know who.

DiLauria aims her M1911.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

I don't! Whoever it was used a cut-out to hire us. All we were told was that the other two saw something they shouldn't have.

LATHAM

So why me?

SPEAKER

It was assumed the one in New Mexico told you what he saw.

They start walking again.

LATHAM

I want the names of the people you're supposed to terminate.

SPEAKER

Maxwell's bringing us the list.

LATHAM

When?

SPEAKER

Tonight... 8:00.

LATHAM

Who's going to be there?

SPEAKER

Me, one of the reps.

LATHAM

Come on... In that big house?

SPEAKER

Everyone's in D.C. at a banquet.

LATHAM

What about the house staff?

SPEAKER

They get off at six.

LATHAM

One more thing... That radio host in Chicago - was that your people?

The Speaker nods as he painfully wipes his nose.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE - NIGHT

A Jeep and the Peugeot are parked in the driveway. A dark Sedan pulls up behind them. Maxwell gets out. He carries a satchel as he walks to the front door and RINGS the doorbell.

INT. HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Lavishly appointed. The door opens. The Speaker and Maxwell enter. Sitting behind the desk is Latham.

SPEAKER

(nasally)

This is Mr. Simmons, General. He'll be your lead operative.

Latham stands and offers his hand. As he and Maxwell shake, Maxwell looks curiously at the Speaker.

MAXWELL

You sound all stuffed up. You got a cold?

SPEAKER

Huh? Oh...

(glances at Latham)

Yeah.

Maxwell studies the Speaker as they all sit.

MAXWELL

Your nose is red, too. Try some Dristan - best thing for a cold.

The Speaker nods. Latham opens a folder on the desk.

LATHAM/SIMMONS

You have the list, General?

Maxwell pulls a manila envelope from his satchel. He hands it to Latham who pulls out the contents: A list of names with home and work addresses, plus several photos.

MAXWELL

The names are on the back of the photos.

Latham turns over a photo; a name is written there. He puts everything back in the envelope and puts it into the folder.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

I want confirmation each time a target is neutralized. Use the number I gave your people earlier. All calls are to be made between 2200 and 2400 hours, Eastern Standard Time. Other than that, I want no contact. Is that clear?

LATHAM/SIMMONS

Absolutely, sir.

SPEAKER

We just need your signature.

He takes two multi-page contracts from the folder and puts them on the desk. He attempts to hand Maxwell a pen.

MAXWELL

I have my own.

He pulls a small case from his satchel, opens it and takes out his Montblanc pen. The Speaker shows him where to sign.

SPEAKER

Sign here... And here, and date it.

(flips a page)

Same on your copy.

Maxwell signs, stows his Montblanc pen and pulls out a check.

MAXWELL

Who do I give this to?

SPEAKER

Me.

Maxwell hands him the check and puts his copy of the contract in his satchel.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE - NIGHT

Maxwell gets into his car and drives away.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Latham holds out his hand. Reluctantly, the Speaker hands over the check. The two then enter the...

LIBRARY

Where the Doctor checks the eyes of an unconscious PROLAXIS GLOBAL REP and Asashin, both slumped on the couch. DiLauria escorts the Speaker to a chair. As the Doctor fills his hypodermic syringe, Latham walks over to the phone and dials.

EXT. E STREET - COCKROACH ALLEY - DAY (MORNING)

CIA personnel show their IDs as they enter Gate #1.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Percy swigs from his flask then puts it in his suitcoat pocket. Latham enters. Percy nods. He's about to leave when...

LATHAM

Hang on, Tom.

Percy stops.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

You're going to the Infirmary.

Right now.

PERCY

Huh? I don't understand.

LATHAM

Dr. Patterson is there waiting for you.

PERCY

The psychiatrist?

LATHAM

Your record is going to show that you're taking 30-day's leave due to depression. What you'll be doing is spending that time at Bethesda while Patterson treats you for alcohol dependency.

PERCY

What are you talking about?

LATHAM

You're a drunk, Tom. And with your wife gone, things will only get worse.

PERCY

(stunned)

You... You've been watching me?

LATHAM

I had SMOTH's people keep eyes on you.

PERCY

No. You've got no right. What goes on in my life is my business!

LATHAM

Until it affects ours. And if MI6 hadn't been sitting in, you'd have been caught in a honey trap.

PERCY

What are you talking about?

LATHAM

That blonde you met at the bar the other night? KGB. SMOTH's officer pulled the fire alarm to get you out of there.

Percy looks away, embarrassed.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

I'm giving you a chance to save your career. If you refuse, I'll put in your DD 201 that you're an alcoholic, susceptible to KGB blackmail. You'll be out of here before the end of the month.

Percy is defeated. He nods and turns towards the door.

LATHAM (CONT'D)

Leave the liquor.

Percy puts the flask on the sink and leaves.

EXT. WASHINGTON, DC - PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, SE - DAY

Latham and Jones stroll.

JONES

You give the FBI their Christmas presents?

LATHAM

Two Prolaxis Global reps, one murder-for-hire contract, signed by the general with his own pen, and a sizable check. They arrested Maxwell later at his hotel.

JONES

I imagine Kensington won't be too happy, having pegged you and your mandarins as a bunch of perverted psychopaths - not that he was wrong, mind you.

LATHAM

And to think I wasn't going to use you as an employment reference.

FIRST STREET, NW

The two spies pause before the U.S. Capitol.

JONES

Are you going to let the Air Force in on this?

LATHAM

No. Someone above General Maxwell orchestrated all this. And I don't want it covered up.

JONES

Funny, from what I hear on the radio, that's all the CIA does.

LATHAM

I know. It pisses me off - but not for the reasons you think.

JONES

Then what?

LATHAM

(nods toward the Capitol)
They complain we're not held accountable for our actions, essentially just doing whatever the hell we want.

JONES

What do you expect from milk-and-water politicians? They're only concerned with appearances.

LATHAM

(growing more upset)
But now you have these private security firms like Prolaxis Global who aren't accountable to anyone - this shadow layer of Black Ops, pushing the political agendas of God knows who. They murdered three people to conceal whatever the hell it is they're up to, yet who gets blamed for implementing a cover-up here? The Agency. And we're as much in the dark as anyone.

Frustrated, he looks away and sighs.

JONES

Well, there's always the possibility the general will talk, shed some light on what's really going on.

LATHAM

(scoffs)
If Maxwell were one of your people, would you let him talk?

JONES

(grins sardonically)
I'll see you around.

They go their separate ways.

INT. RADIO STATION "WMAQ" - STUDIO

DJ Jack reads news copy over the air.

DJ JACK

And for those of you who may have missed our earlier news broadcast, according to astronomers at the University of New Mexico, the two unknown satellites discovered orbiting the Earth are indeed asteroids trapped by the Earth's gravitational field. So you can come out of your fallout shelters now. The Russians aren't coming - at least not today, anyway.

(puts a record on the turntable)

And that's it for the news. It's ten minutes past the hour, and we're gonna jump into this segment of the DJ Jack Show with a little ditty for those of you who stare into space for no reason whatsoever. A blast from the recent past and former number one hit, 'Destination Moon' by The Ames Brothers.

DJ Jack flips a switch and "Destination Moon" sung by The Ames Brothers plays O.S. He leans back in his chair and flips open an "OUTER SPACE" comic book.

END