



THE ART OF BEING A SPY

A Tale of Espionage

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Oliver Stevens was busy writing another report. They were endless. But someone had to let the State Department know what was going on in Eastern Europe. Oliver had found it on a server in the Bulgarian embassy. It wasn't the thing you'd usually look for on a server. Some people simply do not know how to store a file. Thank god for low-level staffers.

The basement of the CIA building in Langley had been quiet for the last several hours. Usually, there was a staff of six in the room, but all the others had gone home. The desktop computers were quiet and dark. There wasn't a single printer in the room, but Oliver had an excellent memory. It wasn't exactly photographic, but it was close. He decided he had to get this information over to DOD right away. This kind of terrorist activity had to be stopped before it caused some real damage.

Various terrorist groups had been searching for sources of weapon's grade material. Fortunately, no government which held such material was crazy enough to supply them. *Naegleria fowleri*, commonly referred to as brain-eating amoeba, could easily be located all over Africa. And most of DC water sources were far less guarded than your average Air Force base. The bottled water plant on Delaware and P Street was even less well protected.

Making his way upstairs, Oliver walked across the parking garage towards his Toyota Celica. The place smelled of engine oil and car wax with a dash of new car fragrance. Halfway across the pavement, Oliver bent down to check an untied shoe. A bullet ricocheted off a supporting column. Oliver ducked under a nearby pickup truck as even more rounds found resting places in the cement column. White powder rain down onto the floor. Automatic weapon fire can make such a mess. He tried to crawl away as boots pounded across the pavement. He reached down for his hip but, of course, analysts don't carry sidearms. However, the cellphone was quite handy. Oliver dialed the security desk line.

"Doug Phillips here."

Oliver swallowed hard and whispered into the line, "they're shooting at me."

"Why are you whispering, I can't hear you."

"People are shooting at me!" he yelled holding the receiver at a distance as if it might be hurt by his loud voice.

"Are they our people?"

"No."

"Hold on a second."

Oliver was livid he'd been put on hold while people were throwing lead at him in the garage. "Tony Newman here."

"I like to report a shooting."

He sounded exasperated. "I think you want to call the Capitol Police."

"It's in the building parking garage."

"Where?"

“The parking garage at CIA Headquarters,” he screamed.

“Well, in that case you’ll want to call... hand on a minute.” It seemed like he was talking to someone else on his end of the line. “Yea, right, well be right down.” Tony hung up the line.

By now the footsteps were getting closer. Of course, that was probably the result of yelling over the cellphone. Oliver crawled under the pickup. This one had the extra-large tires so there was plenty of ground clearance. Still, it was hand over hand; knees and elbows to the ground. Once he got out from underneath, Oliver crabbed-walked over to a 1961 Lincoln Continental four-door convertible, DC license plate 227-100. Oliver thought the tires smelled a little like downtown Dallas.

Two more shots rang out. They bounced off the bulletproof windows. The car seemed to attract them like mice were drawn to cheese. Oliver was strangely thankful that he wasn’t in the passenger side back seat. The next noise was two large thuds. Oliver covered his head with his hands and cowered.

He remained still until he heard a voice over his head. “Mr. Stephens? Mr. Stephens?” Oliver looked up and saw a well-coiffed man wearing a green turtleneck. “The coast is clear.”

“Right, thanks.” Oliver sprinted for his Celica. He opened the door and nearly tripped over the body of the terrorist laying on the floor. Oliver sped out the garage ramp and made the right turn onto Highway 58. His tires squealed on the pavement. It was one of those sounds which can make your teeth rattle in your head.

Someone shook Oliver’s shoulder. “Hey, Stephens. You’ll be late for the meeting.” Oliver Stephens picked his head up off the keyboard. There was some drool between the ‘J’ and the ‘K’ key. He glanced around the tiny cubicle. It was one of those spaces designed to make the occupant feel small and insignificant. So, in other words, a regular staff cube. “We need to get on the phone with Tokyo and sell them some K-9500 Severs.”

“Yea, right. I will be right there.”

“Don’t fall asleep again.”

“No. No.” he took one last look at the classified terrorist data from the Bulgarian embassy as he flipped off the power switch.