

And then one day in 1958, after thirteen years of living like that, I **Campbell** bought a war-surplus wood-carving set. It was surplus not from the Second World War but from the Korean war. It cost **me him** three dollars.

When I **he** got it home, I **he** started to carve up **my his** broom handle to no particular purpose. And it suddenly occurred to **me him** to make a chess set.

I speak of suddenness here, because I **he** was startled to find **myself himself** with an enthusiasm. I **he** was so enthusiastic that I **he** carved for twelve hours straight, sank sharp tools into the palm of **my his** left hand a dozen times, and still would not stop. I **he** was an elated, gory mess when I **he** was finished. I **he** had a handsome set of chessmen to show for **my his** labors.

And yet another strange impulse came upon **me him**.

I **he** felt compelled to show somebody, somebody still among the living, the marvelous thing I **he** had made.

So, made boisterous by both creativity and drink, I **he** went downstairs and banged on the door of **my his** neighbor, not even knowing who **my his** neighbor was.

My his neighbor was a foxy old man named George Kraft. That was only one of **his** names. The real name of **this old man** was Colonel Iona Potapov. **This antique sonofabitch** was a Russian agent, had been operating continuously in America since 1935.

I **Campbell** did not know that.

And **he the old man** didn't know at first who I **Campbell** was, either.

It was dumb luck that brought **us them** together. No conspiracy was involved at first. It was I **Campbell** who knocked on **his the colonel's** door, invaded **his** privacy. If I **he** had not carved that chess set, **we they** never would have met.

Kraft—and I will call **him** that from now on, because that's how I **Campbell** think **thinks** of **him**—had three or four locks on **his** front door.

I **Campbell** induced **him** to unlock them all by asking **him** if **he** played chess. There was dumb luck again. Nothing else would have made **him** open up.

People helping me **Campbell** with my **his** research later, incidentally, tell me **him** that the name of Iona Potapov was a familiar one in European chess tournaments in the early thirties. **He** actually beat the Grand Master Tartakover in Rotterdam in 1931.

When **he Kraft** opened up, I **Campbell** saw that **he** was a painter. There was an easel in the middle of **his** living room with a fresh canvas on it, and there were stunning paintings by **him** on every wall.

When I talk about **Kraft, alias Potapov**, I am a lot more comfortable than when I talk about **Wirtanen**, alias God - knows - what . **Wirtanen** has left no more of a trail than an inchworm crossing a billiard table. Evidences of **Kraft** are everywhere. At this very moment, I am told, **Kraft's** paintings are bringing as much as ten thousand dollars apiece in New York.

I have at hand a clipping from the New York *Herald Tribune* of March third, about two weeks ago, in which **a critic** says of **Kraft** as a painter:

Here at last is a capable and grateful heir to the fantastic inventiveness and experimentation in painting during the past hundred years. **Aristotle** is said to have been the last man to understand the whole of **his** culture. **George Kraft** is surely the first man to understand the whole of modern art—to understand it in **his** sinews and bones.

With incredible grace and firmness **he** combines the visions of a score of warring schools of painting, past and present. **He** thrills and humbles us with harmony, seems to say to us, "If you want another Renaissance, this is what the paintings expressing its spirit will look like."

George Kraft, alias Iona Potapov, is being permitted to continue **his** remarkable art career in the Federal Penitentiary at Fort Leavenworth. We all might well reflect, along, no doubt, with **Kraft-Potapove himself**, on how summarily **his** career would have been crushed in a prison in **his** native Russia.

Well—when **Kraft** opened **his** door for me **him**, I **Campbell** knew **his** paintings were good. I **he** did not know they were that good. I suspect that the review above was written by a pansy full of brandy Alexanders.

"I didn't know I had a painter living underneath me," I **he** said to **Kraft**.

"Maybe you don't have one," **he Kraft** said.

"Marvelous paintings!" I **Campbell** said. "Where do you exhibit?"

"I never have," **he** said.

"You'd make a fortune if you did," I **Campbell** said.

“ You’re nice to say so, ” he said, “ but I started painting too late. ” He then told me Campbell what was supposed to be the story of his life, none of it true.

He said he was a widower from Indianapolis. As a young man, he said, he’d wanted to be an artist, but he’d gone into business instead—the paint and wallpaper business.

“ My wife died two years ago, ” he said, and he managed to look a little moist around the eyes. He had a wife, all right, but not underground in Indianapolis. He had a very live wife named Tanya in Borisoglebsk. He hadn’t seen her for twenty-five years.

“ When she died, ” he said to me Campbell, “ I found my spirit wanted to choose between only two things—suicide, or the dreams I’d had in my youth. I am an old fool who borrowed the dreams of a young fool. I bought myself some canvas and paint, and I came to Greenwich Village. ”

“ No children? ” I Campbell said.

“ None, ” he said sadly. He actually had three children and nine grandchildren. His oldest son, Ilya, is a famous rocket expert.

“ The only relative I’ve got in this world is art— ” he said, “ and I’m the poorest relative art ever had. ” He didn’t mean he was impoverished. He meant he was a bad painter. He had plenty of money, he told me Campbell. He’d sold his business in Indianapolis, he said, for a very good price.

“ Chess — ” he said, “ you said something about Chess? ”

I Campbell had the chessmen I he had whittled, in a shoebox. I he showed them to him Kraft. “ I just made these, ” I he said, “and now I’ve got a terrific yen to play with them. ”

“ Pride yourself on your game, do you? ” he Kraft said.

“ I haven’t played for a good while, ” I Campbell said.

Almost all the chess I he had played had been with Werner Noth, my his father-in-law, the Chief of Police of Berlin. I he used to beat Noth pretty consistently—on Sunday afternoons when my his Helga and I he went calling on him. The only tournament I he ever played in was an intramural thing in the German Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda. I he finished eleventh in a field of sixty-five.

In ping-pong I **he** did a good deal better. I **he** was ping-pong champion of the Ministry for four years running, singles and doubles. My **his** doubles partner was Heinz Schildknecht, an expert at propagandizing Australians and New Zealanders. One time **Heinz** and I **he** took on a doubles team composed of *Reichsleiter* Goebbels and *Oberdienstleiter* Karl Hederich. We **they** sat them down 21-2, 21-1, 21-0.

History often goes hand-in-hand with sports.

Kraft had a chessboard. We **they** set up my **his** men on it, and we **they** began to play.

And the thick, bristly, olive-drab cocoon I **Campbell** had built for myself **himself** was frayed a little, was weakened enough to let some pale light in.

I **Campbell** enjoyed the game, was able to come up with enough intuitively interesting moves to give my **his** new friend entertainment while he **Kraft** beat me **him**.

After that, **Kraft** and I **he** played at least three games a day, every day for a year. And we **they** built up between ourselves **themselves** a pathetic sort of domesticity that we **they** both felt need of. We **they** began tasting our **their** food again, making little discoveries in grocery stores, bringing them home to share. When strawberries came in season, I **Campbell** remember **remembers**, **Kraft** and I **he** whooped it up as though Jesus had returned.

One particularly touching thing between us **them** was the matter of wines. **Kraft** knew a lot more than I **Campbell** did about wines, and **he** often brought home cob-webby treasures to go with a meal. But, even though **Kraft** always had a filled glass before **him** when we **they** sat down to eat, the wine was all for me **Campbell**. **Kraft** was an alcoholic. **He** could not take so much as a sip of wine without starting on a bender that could last a month.

That much of what **he** told me **Campbell** about **himself** was true. **He** was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, had been for sixteen years. While **he** used A.A. meetings as spy drops, **his** appetite for what the meetings offered spiritually was real. **He** once told me **Campbell**, in all sincerity, that the greatest contribution America had made to the world, a contribution that would be remembered for thousands of years, was the invention of A.A.

It was typical of **his** schizophrenia as a spy that **he** would use an institution **he** so admired for purposes of espionage.

It was typical of **his** schizophrenia as a spy that **he** should also be a true friend of mine **Campbell's**, and that **he** should eventually think of a way to use me **him** cruelly in advancing the Russian cause.

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JONES PAID ME Campbell a call a week after I Campbell found out how upsetting the contents of my his mailbox had become. I Campbell tried to call on him Jones first. He Jones published his vile newspaper only a few blocks away from my Campbell's attic, and I he went there to beg him to retract the story.

He was not in.

When I Campbell got home, there was plenty of new mail in my his mailbox, almost all of it from subscribers to *The White Christian Minuteman*. The common theme was that I he was not alone, was not friendless. A woman in Mount Vernon, New York, told me him there was a throne in Heaven for me him. A man in Norfolk said I he was the new Patrick Henry. A woman in St. Paul sent me him two dollars to continue my his good work. She apologized. She said that was all the money she had. A man in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, asked me him why I he did not get out of Jew York and come live in God's country.

I he did not have any idea how Jones had found out about me him.

Kraft claimed to be mystified, too. He wasn't really mystified. He had written to Jones as an anonymous fellow-great paper to Bernard B. O'Hare of the Francis X. Donovan Post of the American Legion.

Kraft had plans for me him.

And he was, at the very same time, doing a portrait of me Campbell that surely showed more sympathetic insight into me him, more intuitive affection than could ever have been produced by a wish to fool a boob.

I Campbell was sitting for the portrait when Jones came calling. Kraft had spilled a quart of turpentine. I Campbell opened the door to get rid of the fumes.

And a very strange chant came floating up the stairwell and through the open door.

I he went out onto the landing outside the door, looked down the oak and plaster snail of the stairwell. All I he could see was the hands of four persons—hands moving up the bannister.

The group was composed of Jones and three friends.

The curious chant went with the advance of the hands. The hands would move about four feet up the bannister, stop, and then the chant would come.

The chant was a panted count to twenty. Two of Jones' party, his bodyguard and his male secretary, had very bad hearts. To keep their poor old hearts from bursting, they were pausing every few steps, timing their rests by counting to twenty.

Jones' bodyguard was August Krapptauer, former *Vice-Bundesfuehrer* of the German-American Bund. Krapptauer was sixty-three, had done eleven years in Atlanta, was about to drop dead. But he still looked garishly boyish, as though he went to a mortuary cosmetologist regularly. The greatest achievement of his life was the arrangement of a joint meeting of the Bund and the Ku Klux Klan in New Jersey in 1940. At that meeting, Krapptauer declared that the Pope was a Jew and that the Jews held a fifteen-million-dollar mortgage on the Vatican. A change of Popes and eleven years in a prison laundry had not changed his mind.

Jones' secretary was an unfrocked Paulist Father named Patrick Keeley. Father Keeley as his employer still called him, was seventy-three. He was a drunk. He had, before the Second World War, been chaplain of a Detroit gun club which, as later came out, had been organized by agents of Nazi Germany. The dream of the club, apparently, was to shoot the Jews. One of Father Keeley's prayers at a club meeting was taken down by a newspaper reporter, was printed in full the next morning. The prayer appealed to so vicious and bigoted a God that it attracted the astonished attention of Pope Pius XI.

Keeley was unfrocked, and Pope Pius sent a long letter to the American Hierarchy in which he said, among other things: "No true Catholic will take part in the persecution of his Jewish compatriots. A blow against the Jews is a blow against our common humanity."

Keeley never went to prison, though many of his close friends did. While his friends enjoyed steam heat, clean beds and regular meals at government expense, Keeley shivered and itched and starved and drank himself blind on skid rows across the land. He would have been on a skid row still, or in a pauper's grave, if Jones and Krapptauer hadn't found and rescued him.

Keeley's famous prayer, incidentally, was a paraphrase of a satiric poem I Campbell had composed and delivered on short wave before. And, while I am setting the record straight as to my his contributions to literature, may I point out that Vice-Bundesfuehrer Krapptauer's claims about the Pope and the mortgage on the Vatican were my Campbell's inventions, too.

So up the stairs these people came to see me him, chanting, "One, two, three, four. ..."

And, slow as their progress was, the fourth member of the party lagged far behind.

The fourth member was a woman. All I he could see of her was her pale and ringless hand.

The hand of Jones was in the lead. It glittered with rings like the hand of a Byzantine prince. An inventory of the jewelry on that hand would have revealed two wedding rings, a star-sapphire presented to him by the Mothers' Auxiliary of the Paul Revere Association of Militant Gentiles in 1940, a diamond swastika on an onyx field presented to him in 1939 by Baron Manfred

Freiherr von Killinger, then German Consul General of San Francisco, and an American eagle carved in jade and mounted in silver, a piece of Japanese craftsmanship, a present from **Robert Sterling Wilson**. **Wilson** was “The Black Fuehrer of Harlem,” a colored man who went to prison in 1942 as a Japanese spy.

The jewelled hand of **Jones** left the bannister. **Jones** cantered back down the stairs to **the woman**, said things to **her** I **Campbell** could not understand. And then up **he** came again, a remarkably sound-winded septuagenarian.

He came face to face with **me Campbell**, and **he** smiled showing **me him** snow-white teeth set in Gingiva-Tru. “Campbell?” **he** said, only a little out of breath.

“Yes,” I **he** said.

“My name is Dr. Jones. I have a surprise for you,” **he Jones** said.

“I’ve already seen your paper,” I **Campbell** said. “No—not the paper,” **he Jones** said. “A bigger surprise than that.”

Father Keeley and Vice-Bundesfuehrer Krapptauer now came into view, wheezing, counting to twenty in shattered whispers.

“An even bigger surprise?” I **he** said, preparing to square **him** away so savagely that **he** would never think of **me him** as one of **his** own kind again.

“The woman I’ve brought with me—” **he Jones** said.

“What about her?” I **Campbell** said.

“She’s your wife,” **he Jones** said.

“I got in touch with her—” said **Jones**, “and she begged me not to tell you about her. She insisted it had to be like this, with her just walking in without any warning.”

“So I could see for myself if there was still room for me in your life,” said **Helga**. “If there is no room, I will simply say goodbye again, disappear, and never bother you again.”