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.

“ Ididn’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**. “ Ijust 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.

\*

**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. ”