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OUTSKIRTS OF BERLIN, NOVEMBER 18, 1949

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"Were almost there, sir", said the young uniformed driver. There was not much to say from the man in the back of the jeep. He was very quiet with and had aviator's shades covering his eyes. Unlike the driver, the man in the back did not have on an army uniform or even look presentable or even dressed for the weather. Only a Hawaiian aloha print shirt and khaki slacks barely seemed to shield him from the cruel winter breeze. As they came upon their destination the driver reached over to give the man a green field jacket. "Here you go, sir. Kinda cold out here", the driver said. They stopped among a ton of vehicles with military markings including jeeps and tanks with a team of soldiers protecting the area. Of the people that were walking around the forest that the soldiers were in front of was an officer that met the man in the back of the jeep. "Captain Oliver McCarthy?", asked the young army lieutenant. "Yeah", the man in the back responded. "Sir, I'm going to escort you to the crime scene. Just down here", the young lieutenant said. The two officers walked down a grassy plain to approach the beginning of the forest. When they got there, McCarthy's eyes were fixated on the corpse that lay near a tree hunched over. "The hell happened?" asking without delay. The lieutenant explained that at about 3:33am that day a farmer reported to a nearby military patrol that there were shots fired near his farm. A six-man patrol was sent out in an armored troop carrier to investigate the story. The army troopers found the man dead where he is now. Since the troopers had no power to investigate the crime scene they called OSI (the Office of Special Investigations), a branch of the United States Constabulary, to take over for the investigation. Since there were not any available investigating officers they called up Captain McCarthy right out of paid vacation to investigate. Once all was explained McCarthy started taking. "Well. Move the body to the coroners office and wake Argyle up, tell him to begin examination because I'll be there later to check on what he found", ordered McCarthy. He also pulled the young army lieutenant out of the way to speak to him. "Call OSI and tell Joe Crocker that vacation time is over. Got it", whispered McCarthy.

Office of Special Investigations, Berlin, Germany

McCarthy was driven up to the large marble building that was his office. He dismounted from the jeep and walked up the steps past the sign that was marked 'United States Armed Forces, Europe'. In the lobby, he approached a Military policeman behind a desk that got up and stood at attention in McCarthy's presence. "Sir, you have a nice trip", asked the policeman. McCarthy looked up at the MP and said "Beautiful trip. Hula dancers, boxing matches, mixed island drinks. It was heaven, kid, I'm telling ya". A couple days before he came back to Germany, McCarthy was spending leave in Honolulu catching up on good times and lots of cigar smoking, it was the best time of

his life as an officer in the Army. McCarthy was processed through and went up to the third floor of the building where OSI was.

In the office, he shifted through rows of desks to get to his colleague, First Lieutenant Joe Crocker, who was talking with OSI commanding officer and his boss Lieutenant Colonel Shaw about the murder on the outskirts of town. "What's the news", asked McCarthy. "The body was sent to the coroner. But there is no identification so we were going through personnel records to find out who he is", Crocker explained. McCarthy dragged himself into his office where welcome back cards were on his desk and his officer's uniform was hung in the corner near his desk. He stretched over his Siamese cats to get his uniform and drop his travel bags near the office chair. While dressing, Crocker explained that they were on a timetable to solve the murder of the man in the woods. In a couple days there would be Thanksgiving and along with that would be leave for most personnel in the German sector. This would pose problems if the murderer were a soldier attached to the European command. Once McCarthy was finished dressing, he took Crocker along to the armory to retrieve their officer's sidearm and talk further about the time-strained dilemma. McCarthy proposed that in about four days they could have the murderer in cuffs if they question all the right people. Crocker agreed and decided to check at the coroner first to see whom they have to question. Coroner's office, two blocks from OSI

The body had looked little waxy and paler than about three hours ago when he met eye to eye with the unknown corpse. Captain Argyle, chief coroner, welcomes the two detectives as they were walking in checking up on the body. "So what do you have thus far", asked Crocker. Argyle pointed to brown folder that held the information on the victim. "Cause of death", asked McCarthy. "Gunshot wound through the forehead", Argyle said while pointing out the fatal wound. While McCarthy and Argyle talked about cause of death, Crocker dove into the victim's file and tried to find out a little bit about him. The victim was Dietrich Voss, a former Nazi storm trooper that was captured during the fall of Berlin in 1945 and held by U.S. forces until two days before his recorded death when he was released from jail and sent back to Berlin via armed convoy. Voss was let out on good conduct while serving two years due to his help in bringing in three German scientists that helped in the construction of the V-2 rocket during the war.

As Crocker was feeding the two men information from the file, a young female officer walked into the office and asked for the coroner. Argyle excused himself from the conversation to attend to business elsewhere. McCarthy started to ponder who might want to kill a former Nazi storm trooper even after he served time in jail. "It doesn't say he served in a camp or anything that might relate him to a revenge fueled murder. Out of his regiment he displayed very responsible action on the battlefield including, get this, tending to wounded six year old Jewish girl", Crocker read. McCarthy was baffled on the reason why someone would kill a soldier just after he gets out of jail. "The Jail. We'll go and find out what type of life our friend was living in jail", McCarthy suggested. Both men walked out of the room to their jeep outside. When McCarthy looked back he saw a beautiful young brunette woman weeping on the shoulder of coroner Argyle. He looked back at Crocker who showed some sympathy

McClellan occupational detention center, Hamburg, Germany

When they walked into the records office, an enlisted man who escorted them into the adjutant's office greeted Crocker. On the walk there, both men were talking about the boxing match between Crocker and a visiting air force officer from Hawaii. Crocker was the only African-American officer in the Constabulary duty that had a previous record as a semi-professional boxer, fighting in California and Washington. He later put his boxing skills to good use playing against fellow officers as part of morale day on 1st Friday of each month. McCarthy had missed the fight due to his R&R trip in Pearl Harbor.

On the other side of the door, they met First Sergeant Castle, NCO in charge of the prisoner's files and information. "I heard about you officers on the way into the office today. Here from Berlin to investigate the murder of one Voss, Dietrich", explained the first sergeant. Crocker nodded and asked, "What do you know about Voss. Well when he was in the slammer anyway". First Sergeant explained that Voss from the time he started his sentence to the day he got out was not a troublemaker and made no attempt to escape. The First Sergeant noted that Voss had no grudges from anyone even though he was in prison. McCarthy then began to ask about the days before Voss's release. The First Sergeant recalled that nothing was strange. Two Air force officers from command were sent to the prison to process out Voss and collect his files. One of the officers, Major Angelou, had requested for the information not to be handed out freely to anyone related to press corps or military police except an military personnel with security clearance. He believed that Voss's life was endangered after he helped the army capture the German scientists. "Who might want punch his lights out", Crocker asked. "Our friends, the Soviet Union. They were probably still convinced Voss knew where most of the remaining German scientists were that they planned to capture him. Not complying with their wishes to help them on their grand plan an agent killed Voss in the backwoods where no one would think someone was dead there", McCarthy explained. Crocker asked who transported Voss out of prison the night of his release. First Sergeant scrambled through a copy of the out-processing papers to identify the unit in charge of prisoner transport. "First Squad, Second Platoon, Bravo Company attached to the Constabulary headquarters in Bamberg. Technical Sergeant Nicholas Panabaker in charge", First Sergeant said. "Thanks for the help. See you at the fight next Friday", said Crocker.

November 19th, 1949

U.S. Constabulary Headquarters, Bamberg

After a five-hour rest at the Officer's Club, both detectives found themselves at Headquarters at early dawn to find first squad. During the night ride, Crocker had read up on first squad in the early edition of "Stars and Stripes" newspaper. The headline was "Constabulary unit in for visit from the I.G.". The article had explained First Squad's success as a combat-ready, multi-role (police and military) unit and it being recognized as the influence for the rest of the army. The reporter had predicted that the Inspector

General of the United States Army might indeed come in December to award the unit a commendation medal for excellent work in abnormal conditions. This had Crocker second-guess if they should continue with questioning Panabaker on the night of first squad's duty.

McCarthy had gone to the office to get permission from the commanding officer to have a talk with the members of First Squad, Baker Company. Crocker was outside smoke a cigar when he stumbled across Sergeant Panabaker who was taking five (breaking) to smoke also. Crocker didn't know how to start the conversation but tried to ease on into one. He remembered he saw Panabaker at a game of his recently. As Crocker continued to smoke Panabaker looked his way. "Hey, I know you. You're that boxer from California. Uh, shit, uh, Crocker. Yeah, sorry, I'm not always well with remembering names", Panabaker explained. Crocker smiled and replied, "You may not be good with names but you know a boxer when you see one. First Lieutenant Joe Crocker with the Office of Special Investigations". "Sounds official. Tech Sergeant Nick Panabaker, First Squad, Baker Company. You should come on over here and fight Captain Sullivan with out a doubt I know you'd take him down with one blow", said Panabaker. They broke into a light-hearted conversation for about ten minutes until Captain McCarthy came out of the building to start questioning Panabaker and members of the First Squad. Crocker introduced McCarthy to Sgt. Panabaker and asked if he had a couple minutes to spare for questioning. Panabaker didn't mind and escorted the detectives to First Squad barracks.

When they arrived at the barracks, Sgt. Panabaker led them to the members of the convoy that took Voss out of prison and back to Berlin the night before his murder. The four convoy members including Panabaker went to the vacant office of the barracks watch commander. Inside the office they began by asking if they had anything against Voss. They gave the same answer 'only that he used to be a Nazi SS'. But Panabaker's answer was a little deeper than the other convoy members. Voss, according to Panabaker, was stationed at a forward position on Omaha Beach during the invasion of Normandy. When Panabaker's friend Sonny Miles made was clearing trenches with the 82nd Airborne, Voss popped up and shot him in the face, killing him instantly. Beside Voss being a Nazi and killing his best friend, Panabaker had no real active problem with the prisoner.

Then Crocker asked about the night of Voss's release from McClellan detention center and their detail. The driver remembered when he got the prisoner two air force majors walked up to him and explained how vital his mission was to sending Voss to Berlin. The driver assured the majors that everything would be okay. "Do you remember both majors names and who they were with", asked McCarthy. "Major Angelou and Major Carter. They were attached to European Command's personnel sector", explained Panabaker. To add to it Panabaker remembered that the officers wanted them to take a specific road and that they keep in contact with any nearby Constabulary detachments if trouble were to arise. Beside the information nothing really out of the ordinary for the unit's members. McCarthy let them go with a good luck on their award from the inspector general and hoping for the best of luck ahead.

As they went down the hall to the main building they saw Lieutenant Colonel Shaw at the front of the building. He was with the commanding officer of Baker Company Captain George Sullivan. Shaw excused himself from Sullivan and showed the two men to a vacant office in the main building belonging to the camp's First Sergeant. Inside Shaw took out his smoking pipe and started to shove tobacco into it furiously and without care. As he lit the tobacco he settled himself into the First Sergeant's office chair and looked up at both detectives in disgust and nervousness. Crocker opened the conversation with, "I'm guessing you're here with some bad news". "The hell I am, Lieutenant. I just got off the phone with the I.G.; he is raising hell to me about some goddamn witch-hunt. I drove out here to see exactly what he's talking about", Shaw explained. McCarthy, leaning against a file cabinet told Colonel Shaw about the questioning of the members of First Squad and their response to his questions. But McCarthy had sensed another cloud was over the Colonel's head. As Shaw sunk deeper into the seat, he buffed out more smoke vigorously. "Ms. Anna Muller, Voss's Girlfriend is M.I.A. I had military police scoping all of Berlin even the damn countryside for her and no trace of her yet", explained Shaw. "Anyway, I was sent here to make sure you weren't creating anarchy. The unit is rumor to be on the edge of a Commendation award ceremony for unit readiness and firm command structure. The I.G. called to assure him that First Squad was involved in anything that may revoke the award or possibly postpone the ceremony". "Tell the I.G. for now their possible suspects in a ongoing murder investigation. No one has been charged in any crimes yet", said Crocker. Once the Colonel was through venting he excused the detectives to go on about their routine investigation without further delay.

European Command Headquarters, Personnel section

Berlin, Germany

Inside the section they pulled the files of everyone they were looking into for the case including the victim. Crocker laid them out on a desk and began to look through each. McCarthy had called the M.P. patrol looking for Anna to see if they found her yet but they had made no progress in finding her.

As McCarthy was calling around to different patrols, Crocker had found an important detail in Voss's file. In the back was a war department file addressed to First Lieutenant Sonny Panabaker of the United States Army Signal Corps. Inside the file were several messages between Lt. Panabaker and intelligence ships off the coast of Normandy Beach on June 6th, 1944. The messages contained coded intelligence useful to the invasion force. Another document found was a transfer form for Panabaker to be sent to the U.S. Air Force. Crocker showed the documents to McCarthy who was struck dumb by the sudden find. "He lied to us. Sonny miles is his brother Sony Panabaker", said McCarthy. "Son of a ... Okay, what do we do", asked Crocker. McCarthy suggested that he would go back to OSI to get a warrant for the arrest of Nick Panabaker. As McCarthy went to get the jeep he felt a blow to the back of his head as he fell unconscious.

Backwoods outside of Berlin

McCarthy woke up on a grass knoll facing Sgt. Panabaker and some other people behind him. "Sorry, Captain. I needed to do it but it will all pay off", Panabaker said. "Yeah. Like when your brother had to pay for it", said McCarthy. Sgt. Panabaker went back to the group of people and gathered three Air Force officers and brought them to McCarthy who was struggling to get out of the chair he was tied to.

"Do you recognize me?" asked the Air Force Captain. Unlike the two majors surrounding him, the Captain stood erect and had a better sense of authority than the two officers on the sides of him. McCarthy remembered the officer in the hidden Voss file. "You are Sonny Panabaker. I thought you were killed during D-Day", McCarthy explained. Majors Angelou and Carter were amused by the story as Sonny tried to set straight the details of his supposed death with connection to the events of the murder of Dietrich Voss.

Sonny Panabaker along with Angelou and Carter were special intelligence operators with the OSS (Office of Strategic Services- a precursor to the CIA). Early in the war, they were discovered by Colonel Donovan (head of the OSS) when serving in the army as German translators in the Signal Corps. First working with the OSS as foreign message translators they proved their combat worth when they were parachuted into Burma in 1942. After the Burma mission, Sonny was given a commission to lieutenant and given the rare opportunity to gather first-hand Intel for Operation Overlord. During the operation his cover was Dietrich Voss, a young German man joining the elite Nazi Waffen-SS to serve his country. After Operation Overlord, he was asked to keep cover a bit longer to aid with the allied push to Germany.

When the war ended in Europe, Lieutenant Panabaker helped to find scientists working on the V-2 rocket program and give them over to U.S. military officials. A couple months later after the official end of the war, Panabaker volunteered for Operation Backlash. The operation was centered on the infiltration of the Soviet Union with Panabaker as a Russian army officer and his team as Russian soldiers as official cover. In order for Panabaker to achieve believable status as a Russian soldier he had to learn to speak fluent Russian and learn the Soviet army customs.

The murder came in when one of the fellow SS platoon members Otto Schulte who was working with the Soviets spotted Panabaker in uniform talking with Angelou about the operation plans. Otto got away and told a friend of Nick Panabaker who is a Russian soldier stationed at the West to East Germany checkpoint. Word got back from Nick to Sonny who also got word from the Central Intelligence Agency that the mission might be compromised. In order to ensure mission integrity Panabaker devised a way to lure out his cover Voss, for one more mission. They would capture Otto during one of the meetings.

Before Otto was killed, Angelou and Carter impersonating Air Force officers from European command switched out 'Voss's' picture with Otto's picture to match the murder victim with someone they have in their record. For the prison, which was

actually a makeshift intelligence center, Panabaker with the help of his older brother Nick would send 'Voss' back to Berlin to meet up with Major Carter who would hide him out in the backwoods. The day Carter and Panabaker got to the cabin; Otto was waiting there with his service pistol. Carter went into the cabin first and was shot in the arm. Panabaker pulled out his .45 pistol and shot Otto in the forehead. With the plan almost shot because of Otto's unknown plan to kill 'Voss', Panabaker dragged Otto's body out to the edge of the forest while Carter bandaged him self and made a false report to the nearest Military police patrol about the shots fired.

When Panabaker had finished explaining one question still lingered in McCarthy's mind: Who was Anna and what became of her? "Oh. And Anna Mueller, our West German contact, is busy helping to set up the final touches for the operation. But when you get back to your office your going to fill out a report saying she crashed into a river. You'll have to stay up a bit longer when your commander will tell you to investigate the death of one Anna Mueller," explained Captain Panabaker. "What about the Voss case? Who's the killer?" asked McCarthy. "It was suicide. Here is the weapon to prove it", said Major Carter. He tossed McCarthy a blood stained .45-caliber pistol for evidence. McCarthy wrapped it up a handkerchief and threw it in the jeep. "Captain McCarthy, I could only say I'm sorry for the confusion you were put through these two days but now you know why it had to be done. I just hope this doesn't cause you to have a guilty conscience", said Sonny. McCarthy shook his head in disbelief and let out a big sigh. "Well, I have to go fill out paperwork. Two people died and neither had anything to do with the military or anyone related to the service", explained McCarthy. As he got into the jeep, Nick came over and thanked him for helping his brother out and not arresting him on suspicion of murder. "I'll see you soon, kid", said McCarthy. He rode off toward town knowing that the case wasn't about murder but deception amongst secrecy.