

TREE FROG

by Clayton Emery

Based on the 1966 NYT and International bestselling novel
by Martin Woodhouse, with his collaboration.

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TEASER

INT. CAR TRUNK - NIGHT

Switzerland, 1966, late spring.

The screen is black. Car wheels rumble.

TITLE OVER

Somewhere in Europe -- 1966

In pitch dark, GILES wakes, groggy from being drugged. And BANGS his head.

GILES

What -- Where the -- Ouch! Bloody hell.

Fumbling, Giles tugs a cover off the taillight. A sliver of light illuminates Giles.

Giles Yeoman is British, medium-sized, lean and fit. He wears glasses and outdoor clothes.

GILES

What have we got for a start?

Giles lies on the spare tire, but can't find a lug wrench.

GILES

Not a dicky bird. Wait.

Giles squirms, digs a penny from his pocket. SCRATCHES the trunk paint to bare metal.

GILES

Let's go you one better, forces of evil.

Giles yanks taillight wires loose and SHORTS them on bare metal. SPARKS fly. Taillight POPS out. It's black again.

The car rolls to a stop. Tires CRUNCH on gravel.

Giles squirms around, ready to jump out.

Footsteps CRUNCH on gravel.

A key JIGGLES in the lock. Trunk lock CLICKS. Trunk opens.

Giles leaps from the trunk --

-- Trips over the trunk coaming --

-- And CRASHES on his face in the gravel beside the road.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Three men (unseen) stand around him.

Undaunted, Giles jumps up, swings wildly at one of them --

-- Is SLAMMED in the belly by a fist so he loses all his wind.

The three fold him back in the trunk and close the lid.

INT. CAR TRUNK

Giles GASPS for air. Being balled up doesn't help.

Someone KNOCKS on the trunk.

PZENICA (O.S.)
Nice trick with the wires. Very
clever.

Liquid TRICKLES through the gaps around the trunk.

PZENICA
Do you recognize it, Doctor Yeoman?

GILES
(woozy)
Ethyl -- chloride.

PZENICA
As demonstrated, you should stick to
designing aircraft and let other
people fly them.

Giles blacks out.

EXT. MARSH, DENMARK - DAY

Giles tramps across marsh. He wears outdoor clothing, and is fit, so it's easy.

TITLE OVER

Tree Frog

TITLE OVER

Three Weeks Earlier

In the distance, a FORENSICS TEAM retrieves bits and pieces.

ANDY puffs alongside. He carries a paper file.

Andy Killen is young but out of shape. He wears awful mod clothes and fancy shoes getting wet.

ANDY

So reading your service clearances
file --

GILES

Racier than TROPIC OF CANCER.

ANDY

It says you have both a medical degree
and a PhD in aeronautical engineering --

GILES

Daddy had money.

ANDY

And you spent four years in the RAF --

GILES

An excuse to break other kids' toys.

ANDY

You have, uh, 600 hours flying time
in a Dove, Anson, Dakota, Comanche,
a... Chipmunk?

GILES

Flies likes one, too.

ANDY

And a Crew Rating, Parachute, in
both Jump and Ejection. And a Q-
level clearance from the Air Ministry.
All reasonably correct?

GILES

I also write poetry. Is there a
reason you care?

ANDY

Uh, no. We at SEEKER just like to
know who we're dealing with.

GILES

Did I miss something? You requested
me for this evaluation.

ANDY

So we did.

They reach the crash site. The Forensics Team lays bits of a small drone airplane on a tarp: a wing, twisted wires, a smashed PC board, other junk, some scorched.

Giles pulls a compass to orient the flight path.

MAJOR DRIVER approaches.

Driver is ex-military, very correct. Smokes a stinky pipe. Doesn't shake hands.

DRIVER

Dr. Yeoman, care to give us your opinion? Unbiased, you might say.

GILES

Is this all you've got?

ANDY

Afraid so.

GILES

No sign of the engine?

YANCY (O.S.)

Oh, there's a sign.

Giles walks over. And lights a cigarette.

YANCY BRIGHTWELL is American, obviously military, but wearing civilian clothes.

Yancy stands over a watery hole in the mud.

YANCY

Engine's probably down there. Heavy. They sink. Yancy Brightwell, Captain, US Air Force Intelligence.

They shake.

GILES

Giles Yeoman, on loan to SEEKER. What's a Yank doing at a crash site in Denmark?

YANCY

We've got an air base over there --

Yancy points vaguely east. But Giles points south.

GILES

No, you don't. The nearest US military base is Geilenkirchen, 200 miles thataway.

YANCY

Huh. What do you know?

Giles goes back to the tarp.

DRIVER

Thoughts, Doctor Yeoman?

Everyone waits on his opinion.

GILES

My thoughts are, to make any sense of this mess, you need an airframe engineer, propulsion unit man, electronics expert, and a chemical engineer for the minimum of four weeks --

DRIVER

We don't have four weeks.

Giles picks up bits of scorched junk.

GILES

From the fluting, I'd say this is an air turbine, probably air-powered, so took a long time to come up to speed. Gyroscope, maybe.

(licks some tubing)

Oxidized hydraulic fluid, and there's yards of tubing, so a pretty sophisticated flight control system.

Andy picks up some junk. Giles takes it away.

GILES

(sniffs)

Plastic fuel tank for high-flash kerosene. Circuit board for -- anything, really. Aluminum alloy skin. Titanium tubing for the frame, welded, not bolted.

(picks up wing piece)

Wingspan approximately... 26 feet? Fuselage, who knows? Sixteen feet at its widest. Overall length, pick a number.

DRIVER

So, it's...

GILES

An unmanned aircraft. A pilotless drone.

YANCY

Not one of ours. Not yours, either.

DRIVER

And you guess this based on...

GILES

Drones fly in a straight line. By the scars in the muck it was flying west-northwest when it crashed, which means it came from east-southeast, probably overflow Rostock, so was launched from --

Everyone looks east.

YANCY

Our buddies over the wall.

GILES

Damned stupid. As soon as it reached the North Sea every Bloodhound from Margate to John O'Groats would be panicking six ways from Christmas.

YANCY

Might even spark a world war.

GILES

It doesn't make sense.

DRIVER

You conclude it was unmanned how?

GILES

Nothing suggests manual control. No rudder, no stick. No seat, no oxygen line, nothing that mates a cockpit cover, no instruments, no harness. No blood.

YANCY

No pilot to capture and interrogate.

GILES

And that's all I can tell you without a lab and specialized equipment.

DRIVER

Bide a bit.

ANDY

Does this -- drone -- represent the latest-greatest, standard equipment, or redundant rubbish?

GILES

It's new technology, but nothing you couldn't buy in a back alley in Bayswater.

Driver and Andy nod to each other.

YANCY

You're a handy guy, Giles. You do this all the time?

GILES

"You smash, we dash." It's this or assemble lawn mowers.

(to Driver)

Speaking of which, you promised me a computer.

YANCY

You don't have computer access?

GILES

This is Europe, Captain. We haven't even invented the abacus.

DRIVER

Ask me later. For now, we've got another one to look at.

GILES

Another wreck?

YANCY

Must'a been one hell of a party.

Driver and Andy walk off. Giles looks around, has nothing more to do, starts to go.

Yancy hooks his arm.

YANCY

You know, G-Man, old spooks say you shouldn't trust anyone.

GILES

"G-Man?" Does that include you?

YANCY

(winks)

Darn tootin'.

INT. SEEKER LAB - DAY

A big lab-office with a table heaped with papers and junk.

At a desk, BINNIE taps an adding machine from notes.

Binnie Abrams is a young plain woman with a winning smile. She wears a crisp blouse and sensible skirt.

Giles enters with a box of burnt junk. Dumps it on the pile.

BINNIE

Did you get your computer?

GILES

No, I got this.

BINNIE

I see. You build your own.

GILES

Funny. I can't linger. I have to pry my car away from my mechanic. There's another wreck in Lincolnshire. If I collect enough parts, I can build my own airplane.

BINNIE

Lincolnshire isn't an airplane wreck. It's something new.

GILES

How do you know?

BINNIE

A smart girl keeps her ears open.

GILES

"The engineer knows everything about a little something, the manager knows a little something about everything, and the little secretary knows everything."

BINNIE

(shows calluses)

I'm a statistician, thank you.

GILES

And how goes the hammering?

BINNIE

I've made enough overtime for a holiday in Perugia come Christmas.

GILES

Good for you. I'm on SEEKER's expense account. Can I buy you dinner?

BINNIE

Sounds marvelous.

GILES

No clue what this "something new" in Lincolnshire is?

BINNIE

All I know is, they specifically asked for you. Not McTeague, not Chapman, not Michaelson.

GILES

Huh. Why me?

BINNIE

Maybe they enjoy reading your expense claims. I've never seen a bigger pack of lies in one place.

GILES

For a statistician, you're not very objective.

Binnie taps his nose.

BINNIE

I play the odds. And no one's odder than you.

EXT. RAF BASE - DAY

Monkham Manor is a working RAF base in Northern England.

But a long new fence and locked gate block off a seemingly-abandoned section.

SLOANE waits for them behind the gate.

Sloane is a government suit. Doesn't talk much.

Driver, Andy, and Giles approach the gate.

An RAF POLICEMAN checks their ID. Sloane nods. Policeman admits them. He cradles a machine-gun.

GUARDS WITH DOGS patrol. Andy tries to pet a "doggy" and almost gets bitten.

Driver, Andy, and Giles walk through the "abandoned" section accompanied by TWO RAF POLICEMEN and Sloane.

GILES

Hello. We've picked up a straggler.

DRIVER

Hmm.

GILES

I'll play Mother.

(to Sloane)

Who are you?

SLOANE
Sloane.

GILES
From...

SLOANE
DI6.

GILES
Defense Intelligence 6. Offensive
operations?

DRIVER
Giles...

Weeds, junked vehicles, slumping buildings are everywhere.

GILES
Interesting camouflage. Early Post-
Industrial Municipal Rubbish Tip.
What is there to guard?

They approach a derelict hanger. A Policeman pushes a hidden
button. Doors open.

INT. RAF HANGER - DAY

Hanger doors open to reveal... Flight SGT. KELSEY.

Sgt. Kelsey is pudgy and average, in uniform.

Sgt. Kelsey leads the length of the hanger.

DRIVER
Sgt. Kelsey. PhD in solid-state
physics.

GILES
What? Is that true?

SGT. KELSEY
Little-known fact.

DRIVER
Kelsey's the resident genius.

GILES
Why aren't you a commissioned officer?

SGT. KELSEY
You're joking. I put away a thousand
a year. And non-comms eat better.
What's your degree, if I might ask?

GILES

Aeronautics. Stresses, effects on
the human frame. Instrument
calibration and recognition.

SGT. KELSEY

The man-machine interface.

DRIVER

Tree Frog.

GILES

Tree -- Did you say Tree Frog?

Sgt. Kelsey toes a button in the floor. An elevator rises.
They descend.

INT. RAF CORRIDORS - DAY

They walk, picking up TWO MORE RAF POLICEMEN. Sloane is
their ticket in.

One door says "Library". Another "Nose Gas Unit."

GILES

Why does everyone keep asking my
qualifications? And what's Tree
Frog?

SGT. KELSEY

Mister Killen tells me your job in
National Service was to design
aircraft control systems.

GILES

I did some theoretical work, yes.
Papers probably got chucked when I
left.

TWO MORE POLICE guard a door. Sgt. Kelsey opens.

INT. TREE FROG LAB - DAY

In a huge and immaculate lab, TECHNICIANS fuss over something.

It's Tree Frog, a gleaming drone airplane.

Torpedo-shaped, 25' long, 27' wingspan, sleek, with a pointed
nose and aerial. The ends of the wings are oval fuel pods.

"TREE FROG 2" is stenciled on the fuselage.

SGT. KELSEY
What do you think?

GILES
It's -- beautiful. Must have cost a fortune.

DRIVER
Two million pounds of taxpayers' money.

Andy idly bends something. Sgt. Kelsey stops him.

GILES
Where's Tree Frog 1?

DRIVER
50 miles west of Lundy Island.

GILES
That's --

ANDY
The bottom of the sea. Receiver failure, they think.

Giles looks around. Someone a ways off has a cup of tea.

GILES
Oh, look. Someone is brewing tea. Perhaps they'll take pity.

Driver and Andy bustle off. Sloane stays.

GILES
Not my fault. I never built any receivers.

SGT. KELSEY
Come see. The control system is based on your ideas.

GILES
Huh. Does it work?

SGT. KELSEY
(laughs)

Sgt. Kelsey unscrews a hatch to reveal the interior. Giles leans in to look.

CLOSE ON: The interior is the size of a coffin, empty.

GILES
Does look familiar. Reminds me of an Australian Jindivik. What's the payload?

Sgt. Kelsey points out interior rails to hold equipment.
Then points to a table of radio gear.

SGT. KELSEY
Two hundred pounds of whatever you
like. Radio equipment for the trial
run.

They circle.

GILES
Power plant is a Turbomeca Marbore
VI?

SGT. KELSEY
Good eye. The short semi-military
version. 1400 pounds static thrust.

GILES
Underpowered, then. Why not strap
on two?

SGT. KELSEY
The idea is to go slow and observe,
not set an air-speed record.

GILES
Air endurance... How much fuel does
it hold?

SGT. KELSEY
A hell of a lot. 150 gallons inboard
and another 60 in the wing pods.
More fuel than aircraft, pound for
pound.

GILES
Fiberglass skin? Airframe is?

SGT. KELSEY
Magnesium alloy.

GILES
And you built this?

SGT. KELSEY
With some help. You like it?

GILES
(long pause)
Sergeant, please don't take offense,
but it's a damned strange airplane.

Sloane nods. RAF policemen close in.

INT. RAF BASE - DAY

Giles, Driver, and Andy are given the bum's rush across the "abandoned" section by four RAF policemen.

DRIVER

The empire certainly lost a talent
when you failed to enlist in
Diplomatic Corps, Yeoman.

GILES

I'm sorry, but you asked my opinion,
and it's rubbish.

ANDY

That would be --

GILES

Tree Frog is rubbish, not my opinion.

DRIVER

Expensive rubbish. Tell me, Yeoman.
Why do you think we built Tree Frog?

GILES

No. I'm tired of everyone staying
mum while I guess. Ask whoever
commissioned it.

ANDY

Humor us?

GILES

Fine. It's so lightweight and
overfueled it's practically a flying
kerosene tin. A large wingspan means
it's designed to fly high, not fast.
The turbojet engine means it can't
climb far or fast, so you'd launch
it from a carrier plane. All right
so far?

DRIVER

Go on.

GILES

So you hang it on a bomber, take it
high, and drop it. It -- flies round
in circles as a high-altitude target
drone while our boys fire rockets at
it. Or make fly-bys to detect and
intercept it?

DRIVER

A balloon could do that. What else could it do?

GILES

Not much. Not operational surveillance. Not anything DI6 could use.

ANDY

Really?

GILES

Look. You can't fly Tree Frog 500 miles over enemy territory and bring it back. Or even fly it a thousand miles straight over the top of a foreign country.

DRIVER

Given enough time and effort -- and money -- anything is possible.

GILES

Is that bucket of bolts from the marsh giving you the willies? You think the Russians have something we don't?

ANDY

Russians, Americans, French --

GILES

No. Nobody has radio-radar control equipment good enough to fly remotely.

DRIVER

What makes you so sure?

GILES

To direct a flight over a hundred miles of flat land would be pushing it. For a thousand miles, you'd need electronics... ten times better than currently available.

ANDY

R&D thinks in two years they can push it out to 500 miles.

GILES

Ha. Read the trades.

They pass the new locked gate. Driver and Andy have one car. Giles has his Cresta. Andy drops his keys.

ANDY

Aren't you at least glad to see your hydraulic thingies put to work?

GILES

I'd rather it wasn't for some pantomime.

DRIVER

To sum up. The idea of a long-range, high-altitude drone as surveillance aircraft strikes you as impossible?

GILES

A baby Lockheed U-2 without a pilot? Sorry, no amount of taxpayer money could build one.

DRIVER

Exactly what we wanted to hear. Extremely grateful, old chap.

Driver and Andy drive off.

GILES

Could you at least throw me a fish?

INT. LONDON RESTAURANT - EVENING

Binnie, in an Op-Art dress, sits munching bread sticks.

Giles arrives. He wears a suit and tie, still scruffy.

A WAITER brings menus.

BINNIE

Thank goodness. Men keep trying to pick me up.

GILES

I don't see the problem. You're bigger than most of them.

BINNIE

Thanks awfully. Hard day at the evaluation?

GILES

SEEKER is trying to cook up another cock-up.

BINNIE

You weren't blinded by science, then?

GILES

This isn't science, it's more of their cloak and dagger clabber. I've tried that in the past, and I'd rather dive headlong into a truckload of guano.

BINNIE

That's an idea. I'll have the duck. What shall we do after dinner?

GILES

Whatever you like.

BINNIE

Go to the pictures?

GILES

Thank God for normal girls.

INT. GILES'S CAR - NIGHT

Being an engineer, Giles drives sporty cars tuned for performance. The current one is a Cresta.

Giles drives fairly fast. No seat belts.

BINNIE

You mustn't let them annoy you.

GILES

I can't stand politics. For a scientist, a fact is a fact. For a bureaucrat, a fact is just ammunition. If one fact doesn't do the job, you swap in something else.

BINNIE

Do you always drive this fast?

Giles slows a little.

GILES

Sorry.

BINNIE

Compass Committee is coming up.

GILES

God, no.

BINNIE

SEEKER's already signed you up.

GILES
All the more reason not to go.

BINNIE
It's in Vienna.

GILES
I don't care if it's in Katmandu.
Unless... you'd care to go as my PA?

BINNIE
P for Proposition?

GILES
Assistance.

BINNIE
You're sweet, Giles, but no.

Still, she lays her head on his shoulder.

GILES
It'd hurt less if you called me a
bastard.

BINNIE
(laughs)
All men are bastards.

Far out in the night, a gun flashes.

The windshield SHATTERS. The car rocks.

Giles can't see. He PUNCHES out the crazed windshield.

The car BANGS the curb. Another SHOT sounds. A tire BLOWS.

GILES
Get down!

Giles mashes Binnie and flops over her.

The car rockets off the road and ROLLS, ROLLS, ROLLS.

The car lands upside down, rocking. Gas DRIPS onto the hot engine.

Nothing stirs.

INT. GILES'S CAR - NIGHT

Giles's car is upside down, wrecked. Gas DRIPS on the hot engine.

Giles is rattled, groggy, but coming to. Binnie is out cold.

GILES
Binnie! Wake up!
(sniffs)
Binnie! We've got to get out!

He yanks her hair. Binnie GROANS.

Giles crawls out a window.

EXT. CAR CRASH - NIGHT

Balanced on rocks or brush, the car rocks dangerously.

Giles drags Binnie out.

Her face is bloody from a forehead gash.

GILES
C'mon, love.

BINNIE
(woozy)
I knew -- you were a menace.

GILES
Not my fault. Someone shot at us.

BINNIE
My head hurts.

Giles puts pressure on her scalp. Tears her skirt hem for a bandage.

BINNIE
Would you stop trying to push your
thumb through my skull?

GILES
Sorry. Anything else broken?

BINNIE
My dress.

GILES
We'll expense it. Along with my
car.

BINNIE
How? There's no -- What did you
say? Someone shot at us?

SOON.

A MOTORCYCLE COP takes notes. Binnie sits on the ground,
woozy, rag wrapped around her forehead.

MOTORCYCLE COP
Ambulance and wrecker on the way.

BINNIE
(dizzy)
I'm all right, really.

MOTORCYCLE COP
Let's not take chances. Just you
and the lady, then? No other
vehicles?

GILES
Just us.

MOTORCYCLE COP
Lucky. We've had several cars come
off there. Macadam's cambered the
wrong way. Were you going any speed?

GILES
A bit. I think a tire blew.

MOTORCYCLE COP
Were you drinking this evening?

GILES
One gin and tonic four hours ago.

The ambulance arrives and Cop waves it over for Binnie.

The wrecker arrives and backs up.

Giles approaches WRECKER DRIVER, borrows a torch.

Giles inspects the windshield gap and crushed roof without
much hope.

He inspects the upside-down wheel.

CLOSE ON: Finds a bullet hole in the metal hub.

INT. SEEKER LAB - DAY

Added to the junk on the table is the wheel from his car. A
pencil stands in the bullet hole.

Driver and Andy look at it. Giles watches them.

DRIVER
Very professional. Any idea of the
caliber?

GILES
303? Souvenir of the Boer War?

ANDY

You don't think we did this?

GILES

Frankly, no. You find other uses for me than target practice.

DRIVER

How's Miss Abrams?

GILES

Recouping. She'll have a scar.

ANDY

More irresistible than ever.

DRIVER

We'd still like you to attend Compass Committee, Giles.

GILES

Why?

Drives waves at hand at "This stuff".

ANDY

Think of it as a chess game, Giles.

GILES

Says the bishop to the pawn. I'm not entirely stupid, you know. I read the papers.

DRIVER

Any articles in particular?

GILES

Ever since Gary Powers embarrassed the hell of the USA, pilotless drones are all the rage. As that Air Force captain noted, you can't beat a piece of machinery with brass knuckles.

Andy makes punching gestures.

DRIVER

So, yes, SEEKER and everyone else are in a lather to launch drones.

ANDY

What's the next move, then?

GILES

Because the drones are fiberglass and alloy, they have a very low radar echo.

(MORE)

GILES (CONT'D)

You need traveling-wave reflection amplifiers mounted under the wings just to track them. Otherwise you follow thunderheads and flocks of geese.

ANDY

Capital. Yes. So...

GILES

So the next tech-race is to build bigger and better radar sets. At twenty million pounds just to start.

DRIVER

Funds diverted from other projects.

ANDY

The Cold War with the Reds is nothing compared to the infighting between Defense and Research.

DRIVER

But SEEKER's stock in trade will always be information. Which is why --

GILES

You want me to go to Compass Committee, where experts in cutting-edge aeronautics gather like school girls --

ANDY

And get a wee bit tipsy --

GILES

And gossip about work. Since I've been shot at, I'm in the thick -- whatever the thick is.

DRIVER

Excellent. Now, please don't wear a T-shirt labeled "Team Tree Frog, Go Go Go", but feel free to ask what everyone is up to.

ANDY

Drink olive oil before bending an elbow.

DRIVER

You could, with a show of reluctance, confess to a minor breakthrough that means everyone should think about large radar research appropriations.

ANDY

Without letting on exactly what we're doing.

GILES

That's easy. I don't know what we're doing.

DRIVER

Quite right.

Driver exits.

Andy flicks the pencil in the bullet hole.

ANDY

Fear of god, Giles. Fear of god.

Andy exits.

GILES

God.

Giles gathers stacks of calculations for Binnie.

INT. BINNIE'S FLAT - AFTERNOON

Binnie lives with her mother in a stuffy old-lady apartment.

Binnie opens the door to Giles.

Her adding machine and calculations sit on the kitchen table.

She wears slob clothes as she recoups. A bandage covers her forehead scar.

Giles drops off more paper.

GILES

More work.

BINNIE

Much more practical than chocolates or flowers.

Giles peeks at her work.

GILES

Looks like... operations for variable-rate power steering?

BINNIE

I wouldn't know. Giles, when you said someone shot at us, were you serious?

GILES

No, I was in shock and paranoid.

BINNIE

They say if people really are conspiring, you're not paranoid.

GILES

Yes, I attended that lecture.

She frowns, but lets it go.

BINNIE

Do I get taken to dinner again by way of compensation?

GILES

That, or you could marry me.

BINNIE

A proposition, then a proposal. How refreshing.

GILES

Is that...

Binnie kisses her finger and presses his lips.

BINNIE

Giles, you're sweet, but it wouldn't work out.

GILES

How do you know?

BINNIE

For one thing, you're too gullible.

GILES

I'm not gullible. I'm --

BINNIE

Curious? You are going to Vienna. And not just for the dirndl dresses.

GILES

I needn't leave the country to see a pretty girl.

BINNIE

I wasn't pretty before, and now I have a wicked scar.

GILES

Like a pirate queen. Next time I won't be able to sit down for men crowding around.

BINNIE
That'll be fun. But I'll drive.

GILES
You might's well. I don't have a car.

BINNIE
Or a clue. But you'll get there.

INT. VIENNA HOTEL - DAY

At the Reception Desk, Giles checks in with a small bag.

YANCY (O.S.)
Wait up. I want to see what he signs.
Who are you this week?

Yancy arrives in a US Air Force Captain's uniform. Checks in.

GILES
Giles Yeoman, PhD, MD, and punching bag, first class. So you really are a captain in the United States Air Force.

YANCY
Naw. Snagged this in a hock shop in Billings. Uniform is a chick magnet. You here to pump the powers of darkness about their busted-up drone?

GILES
I'll ply them with liquor first.
Are you here to pump me?

YANCY
I would, but you don't seem to know much.

GILES
Is this the kind of Intelligence they practice in the Air Force?

YANCY
Intelligence means you never tell the Army or the Navy. The Russians already know.

GILES
Someone once warned me not to trust anyone in this business.

YANCY

You're cooking with gas, G-Dog.

Yancy exits.

GILES

"G-Dog?"

INT. CONFERENCE LECTURE - AFTERNOON

A LECTURER drones on with charts.

The audience is 40-ODD SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS.

Giles takes desultory notes. Yancy dozes.

But Giles notices two men watch him.

COUNT ANDRE PZENICA ("Zen-a-ka") is Polish and looks like a government official.

OTTO KIESS ("Kees") is Swiss and wears a dull uniform.

Surprise. Binnie walks up with a satchel. The scar on her forehead is red and puffy.

Giles rises. BATS Yancy awake.

GILES

Binnie? What are you doing here?

Binnie gives Giles the satchel. It's papers.

BINNIE

Don't sound so welcoming. Major Driver wanted you to have the latest results of -- something.

GILES

They couldn't wait three days?

BINNIE

What's wrong with you?

(to Yancy)

Three weeks ago he practically begged me to come to this conference.

GILES

Yancy, Binnie. Binnie, Yancy.

YANCY

Brits are cold fish, honey. Now Americans --

GILES
Don't mash her. She's my PA.

BINNIE
Here to take notes.
(to Yancy)
That's all.

YANCY
I never argue with a woman.
Especially. Was that a beer bottle
or someone's teeth?

BINNIE
(rubs scar)
Oh.

GILES
I gave her that. Folded her up in a
car smash.

YANCY
Huh. There's hope for you yet, Big
G.

BINNIE
"Big G?"

But Giles wonders if Pzenica and Kiess are listening to the
lecture or studying him.

INT. LECTURE HALL - AFTERNOON

Three days later.

Giles, Yancy, and Binnie watch the conference end.

On the last day, Giles wears outdoor clothes, Yancy wears
civvies, and Binnie wears traveling clothes.

A Conference Host hands an Engineer an award. Host raises
his hands: All done.

Audience APPLAUDS. Disperses.

GILES
And so the frontiers of aircraft
instrumentation are pushed back a
few more millimeters.

YANCY
Now we can finally --

BINNIE

Drive me to the airport? I booked
an early flight.

GILES

That seems a pity. Why not cancel
and take a later one?

YANCY

Better run while you can, Doll.

Giles notices that Pzenica and Kiess, today in civilian suits,
watch him and whisper.

GILES

I didn't hire a car. And I won't
lack for company.

YANCY

I'll swing around front.

Yancy exits.

GILES

Binnie, when you get back to SEEKER,
do me a favor? See if they have a
file on Captain Yancy Brightwell of
the US Air Force.

BINNIE

Whatever for?

GILES

They have files on everyone. He'll
be after Yogi Bear and Yogi Berra.

BINNIE

Do you suspect him of something?

GILES

I suspect everyone. Working with
SEEKER is rubbing off.

BINNIE

Fine. See you at home.

Binnie blows a kiss and exits.

Pzenica and Kiess approach.

PZENICA

You are Dr. Yeoman? From the British
Air Ministry?

They shake. Pzenica is a bone-crusher.

GILES

Guilty as charged. You're Pzenica?
I read your paper on Doppler radar.
Very astute.

PZENICA

Mere common sense. My colleague,
from here in Switzerland.

KIESS

(almost a bow)
Otto Kiess, my pleasure.

PZENICA

Otto is also in flying medicine. Is
that what you call it? We were going
to dinner, and would delight if you'd
join us.

KIESS

We can "shop talk". The others here
wish culture.

PZENICA

I have a great many English friends,
all great drinkers.

GILES

You confuse us with the Irish, but --
can't let our side down.

They walk.

PZENICA

That American captain. Did he tell
you about a pilotless drone that
escaped from East Germany?

GILES

No. Tell me more.

INT. VIENNA CLUB - NIGHT

A dark bar has candles on the tables. It's packed. Cigarette
smoke swirls. A combo PLAYS JAZZ.

Giles, Pzenica, and Kiess enter. Giles is already tipsy.
Pzenica and Kiess are not. Giles BUMPS into something.

GILES

(half-drunk)
Where are we? I've lost track.

PZENICA

Surely you're qualified for nighttime
navigation on instruments, Dr. Yeoman?

Kiess speaks to the Bartender, nodding at Pzenica. Bartender
signals. Waiters bustle.

They're escorted to a table next to the tiny dance floor.

GILES

Special treatment.

KIESS

Andre is actually Count Pzenica,
from one of the finest families in
European aristocracy.

GILES

A count, huh? In England you'd be
an earl.

PZENICA

It's Otto pulls the strings. He
brings a lot of business to Vienna.

GILES

I almost went to medical school here.
But the girls were ugly.

KIESS

You shock me, Dr. Yeoman.

GILES

Call me Giles.

Waiters brings serious drinks in two glasses. Giles sips.

GILES

Woof. Don't breathe on the candle.
This stuff is 140 octane.

MUSIC STOPS.

PZENICA

Just in time for the entertainment.

A curtain parts. True, the dancer, enters.

TRUE is tall and oddly solid for a dancer. She's nude and
drenched in oil, even her hair. Her nipples are silvered.

GILES

The kiddie matinee is over.

PZENICA

An exercise in optimizing mechanical
design.

Sexy MUSIC strikes up. True dances, very modern and sexy.

Giles watches, but he's bleary. Ever the doctor, he checks his pulse. The backs of his hands sweat. He sniffs his empty glass.

KIESS

What do you say about Viennese girls
now, Giles?

GILES

I say -- Someone slipped something --

Pzenica crooks a finger at the dancer.

PZENICA

We can't hear you over the music.

The dancer swirls around, mesmerizing Giles.

GILES

Uh...

KIESS

I think she fancies you.

The dancer leans close and pinches out the candle.

Giles FLOPS on the table.

INT. LODGE BEDROOM - MORNING

A bedroom in a lavish hunting lodge. Shutters are closed. There's a mirror on the wall.

(This is Austria, but Giles won't learn that for days.)

Giles wakes, groggy from being drugged. He's naked.

His clothes are cleaned, ironed, and folded on a chair.

Confused, he OPENS the shutters. Recoils from daylight.

Window bars are thick iron.

SHOT: He's on a second-story. All around are forested mountains, no other buildings (on this side). It's cold.

He tries the door. The doorknob turns but won't open. The door is too thick to rattle. (Bolted outside.)

He searches his clothes. Finds a lighter but no cigarettes.

Five bolts UNBOLT. Door OPENS.

NIKLAS enters with a Schmeisser machine gun and stands aside.

Niklas is a Neanderthal guard in a ratty track suit, greasy hair, and leather jacket.

Kiess enters. He wears hunting clothes.

KIESS
Good morning, Doctor. Care to join
us?

Giles holds his lighter, SNAPS his fingers.

KIESS
Oh, of course.

Kiess gives Giles a cigarette. He LIGHTS and inhales deeply.
They exit.

INT. LODGE CORRIDOR - NOON

Giles looks out windows as he's escorted by Kiess and Niklas.

KIESS
You're a mountaineer, yes? We're at
1,900 meters. Just below the tree
line. Experiencing a spring thaw,
but the road is still snowed in.

GILES
I get it. You fetched me in by
airplane. We could be anywhere from
Norway to the Caucasians. Still, I
wouldn't mind a crack at those slopes.

A Maid passes with a food tray. Giles notes that.

KIESS
All things are possible with God.

GILES
I thought your country banished God.

KIESS
Even He can be useful.

INT. LODGE DINING HALL AND GUN ROOM - NOON

The hall is very rich and antique, with swords and antique
(nonfiring) guns on the walls.

Giles, Kiess, and Niklas enter.

Pzenica, True (the dancer), and MAXIUS sit at a fancy table for lunch. Niklas leans against the wall, rifle slung.

Maxius is tall, dark-skinned, Arabic. He wears a suit.

True wears a mini-dress. Pzenica wears casual clothes.

GILES

Hail, hail, the gang's all --

He gawks at True.

TRUE

You don't recognize me, Giles?

GILES

Not with your clothes on.

She actually blushes.

KIESS

And may I present Maxius.

GILES

Doctor? Admiral? Archbishop?

MAXIUS

Maxius.

KIESS

Maxius taught air engineering at the universities of Leyden and Malmo, and spent the last year in -- Brazil, was it?

MAXIUS

I look forward to discussing your latest research in aeronautics.

KIESS

But no business to intrude on our meal, eh?

GILES

If you expect me to sing for my supper, you're out of luck. Perhaps True can dance.

AFTER LUNCH

Giles, Kiess, Pzenica, and Maxius smoke and drink like some gentleman's club. True sits back and listens.

KIESS

And how is my old friend, Major Driver?

(MORE)

KIESS (CONT'D)

I imagine he sent you to the Compass Conference to drop all sorts of hints about the TF Mark 2.

GILES

I beg your pardon?

MAXIUS

Most likely it has some frightful code name. The Americans are the worst. The Cheeseburger. The Sidewinder. The Hound Dog.

GILES

I'm afraid I'm not with you yet.

MAXIUS

Tree Frog?

GILES

Sorry.

Dead silence.

KIESS

You'll have to do better than that.

Kiess signals True out. She exits.

KIESS

The sooner we get this over with, Giles, the sooner you go back to your test tubes and whatnot, what?

GILES

This is a stupid question, I know, but back in London? Are they keeping a candle burning in the window for their wayward son?

KIESS

You await rescue? Please. SEEKER does not expect you back at all. Either of you.

GILES

Either --

True escorts in Binnie, who's frightened.

KIESS

We'll leave the two of you to talk.

Pzenica, Kiess, Maxius leave. Niklas and True stand back and guard.

GILES

Binnie, what the hell are you doing here?

BINNIE

Really, Giles, all your sweet talk will turn a girl's head.

Frightened, Binnie pours herself wine and slugs it.

GILES

How --

BINNIE

Captain Brightwell drove me to the airport. While I was --

GILES

I knew it. That bastard.

BINNIE

Pardon? You don't suspect Yancy still?

GILES

(corny American accent)

"Aw, shucks, I'm just a lonesome lil' ol' cowboy."

(normal voice)

Captain Judas hands you over and collects thirty pieces of silver.

BINNIE

If that was the plan, he was dreadfully lax. He escorted me to Customs and left. Never even made a pass. I'll take a cowboy over a gentleman any day. Anyway, they called my name over the --

GILES

Did you actually see Yancy drive off?

BINNIE

Yancy is dead innocent.

GILES

He'll be dead when I see him. Go on.

BINNIE

They called my name over the speakers.

(points at True)

That tart in the handkerchief --

GILES

True.

BINNIE

(scoffs)

Posed as a ground hostess. Said there'd been an accident outside the Konigstuhl Hotel, and I was to go there.

GILES

Since Mum couldn't make it.

BINNIE

When I left you were all planning to get high as kites, and I -- worried --

GILES

That I'd fallen in front of a bus.

BINNIE

Something like that. She called a taxi and we drove off. An ambulance was stopped at a lay-by with a stretcher, but it was just fluffed with pillows -- and here I am.

GILES

It makes things ten times more difficult, but I'm glad to see you.

BINNIE

Yes, you almost broke my neck with that welcoming hug.

GILES

Drink up.

BINNIE

We're prisoners, aren't we? Or hostages? That big goon even has a gun, like in a film. And where are we exactly? Oh.

Kiess, Pzenica, and Maxius enter.

TWO SERVANTS carry in a large bulletin board.

GILES

Was it really necessary to abduct Binnie? She's only a statistician --

PZENICA

A what?

GILES

An -- accountant. You're frightening her. Send her home.

KIESS

Miss Abrams knew to whom you had spoken. And you're both dead.

BINNIE

Dead?

GILES

How'd you put that story out?

KIESS

Car crash. Bodies can't be released until the investigation's closed.

BINNIE

My mother will have a fit when she gets the news.

GILES

That's the second car crash you've staged. You bullies put a bullet into my Cresta.

BINNIE

(rubs forehead scar)
Them?

PZENICA

We wanted to meet you.

KIESS

Such are the perils of life in the Secret Service.

GILES

We're poorly paid peasants kept on a strictly "need to know nothing" basis.

True tows Binnie to sit by the wall. Niklas guards her.

Giles gets a chair square before the bulletin board.

Maxius pegs a large paper to the board with a simple outline of an airplane.

KIESS

Let's not waste time. You have permission to tell us everything.

GILES

How do you reckon that?

KIESS
Major Driver told us you were coming
to Vienna.

BINNIE
What?

GILES
(to Binnie)
He probably told them before he told
me.

KIESS
A gift horse. But still...

Maxius is poised to make notes on the airplane sketch.

MAXIUS
What is the dry weight of the TF
Mark 2?

GILES
This hypothetical Tree Frog aircraft?
KieSS walks over to Binnie. BACKHANDS her hard.
Binnie's forehead scar bleeds.
KieSS turns his back to Binnie.

KIESS
No more foolishness, Dr. Yeoman --
From behind, Binnie KICKS KieSS in the balls. He TOPPLES.
Niklas raises his gun to whack Binnie.

GILES
Hang on!
Niklas holds his gun poised over Binnie.

MAXIUS
Dry weight?

GILES
Twelve hundred pounds.

INT. LODGE DINING HALL AND GUN ROOM

Giles slumps in the chair. Pzenica is drunk. Niklas dozes
in a chair. KieSS watches, alert.

Binnie and True are gone. Maxius has refined the sketch of
Tree Frog until it looks like a blueprint.

But Maxius studies the sketch, frowning.

MAXIUS

What was the dry weight again?

GILES

One thousand, two hundred pounds.

MAXIUS

And what materials?

GILES

Glass-fiber skin, some magnesium alloy for the frame. I don't know the composition.

MAXIUS

And how much fuel does it carry?

GILES

One thousand, six hundred pounds.

MAXIUS

Including these wing nodules?

GILES

Yes.

MAXIUS

More fuel than its own dry weight?

GILES

Yes.

MAXIUS

A very light aircraft.

GILES

Yes.

MAXIUS

With a payload of...

GILES

Two hundred pounds.

MAXIUS

A very small payload.

GILES

... Yes.

Maxius notes the hesitation. He's unsatisfied: the numbers don't add up. Giles is just as puzzled.

MAXIUS

There's something you're not telling
us.

GILES

Gods above, I've given you my mother's
maiden name.

MAXIUS

Doctor Yeoman, a box kite could
outperform Tree Frog.

GILES

I've told you what I know. What I
think I know.

Kiess gets up, looms over Giles.

KIESS

Then think some more.

INT. LODGE BEDROOM - DAY

With nothing to do but fret, Giles paces the room.

Five bolts UNBOLT. Door OPENS.

Knowing the routine, Giles moves to the window.

Niklas enters, a tray and gun in hand. Giles hugs the window.

Niklas sets the tray on the bed.

GILES

Can you at least tell me if Binnie
is all right?

Niklas grins evilly, backs out, BOLTS the door.

GILES

Neanderthal.

Keyed up, Giles drinks the coffee and keeps pacing.

Suddenly he hurls the coffee cup against the wall. SMASH!

INT. LODGE GUN ROOM - DAY

The room is now stripped to the walls. There's only a canvas
laid on the floor, a cheap metal chair and the bulletin board
with Tree Frog blueprint.

Pzenica and Kiess wear shirt sleeves. Maxius still wears his tie. Pzenica is morose and drunk.

Giles is escorted in by Niklas. Pushed into the chair. Niklas fastens handcuffs through the back of the chair.

GILES

Are these really necessary? There's nowhere to escape to.

PZENICA

(half drunk)

Too late to think about escape, Giles.

KIESS

You've been talking nonsense.

GILES

You've attended my lectures.

KIESS

You are an English imperialist swine.

GILES

I don't practice politics.

MAXIUS

On what frequency does the TF Mark 2 control system operate?

GILES

I don't know.

MAXIUS

You do not remember?

GILES

No, I never knew.

Kiess puts his foot on Giles's chest and shoves.

Handcuffed to the chair, Giles topples and BANGS his head.

GILES

Jesus!

Kiess props him up again.

Maxius unrolls a large aerial photograph across the sketch.

MAXIUS

Royal Air Force base, Monkham Manor.

GILES

I'll agree to that.

MAXIUS

Antiquated. Slated for realignment.

GILES

We're a small country. Real estate is dear.

MAXIUS

Yet the home base of the TF Mark 2.

GILES

It's where I saw it, yes. That might be my Cresta parked in the lot, there. The car you shot up.

Kiess pushes him over again.

Giles CRASHES, SMACKS his head.

GILES

You son of a bitch!

KIESS

Please understand. We occupy an artificial environment where we make decisions and you do not.

Kiess drags Giles up again.

MAXIUS

Monkham Manor hosts a reconnaissance drone costing several million dollars, with cutting-edge technology built for long-range missions at high altitudes.

GILES

If you know all the answers, why keep me?

MAXIUS

Such a craft would require exceptionally powerful radar equipment as ground support. Is this not true?

GILES

Yes, but... Never mind. Carry on.

Maxius points out a radar dish on the photo.

MAXIUS

This dish is normal approach radar. An obsolete pattern.

GILES

So it is.

MAXIUS
 So the installation must be
 underground, with a retractable aerial
 array.

GILES
 Possibly. Unlikely.

MAXIUS
 Then why host the TF Mark 2 there?
 To overfly the North Sea? There are
 no enemy installations within range.

GILES
 It doesn't matter. I --

Kiess KICKS hard.

Giles CRASHES hard, BANGS his head. His ear bleeds.

GILES
 You buggering Nazi, let me finish!
 I told you -- I told them -- there
 isn't radio-radar control equipment
 powerful enough to direct Tree Frog
 on a long-range mission!

MAXIUS
 You tell us nothing!

GILES
 I'll tell you less when you induce a
 brain hemorrhage.

Kiess goes to the door, summons someone.

True enters with a first aid kit. She's rattled.

Kiess picks up Giles again.

True bandages his ear and gives it a small shot. Giles, a
 doctor, watches.

KIESS
 (to True)
 What about the other?

TRUE
 (shudders)
 As ready as she'll ever be.

True exits.

KIESS
 You prize your brain, Doctor Yeoman.

GILES

It's not much, but all I've got.

True enters with Binnie.

Binnie is a zombie, shambling and drooling.

KIESS

We have many resources, Dr. Yeoman.
More than you can imagine. For
instance, we acquired a drug
synthesized in Morocco --

GILES

(feigning worry)

Bring -- bring her over here, please.

True leads Binnie close.

KIESS

One dose, and the victim is
permanently lobotomized --

GILES

Bollocks.

KIESS

I -- beg your pardon?

GILES

I heard the Moroccan rumors. I made
inquiries. It's rubbish. There is
no brain-death drug.

KIESS

You toy with us?

GILES

Blow it out your bum. What you've
done is inject Novocaine behind her
eyeballs. I can see the pinpricks.
True numbed up my ear with the stuff.
Binnie will be fine in a few hours.
Can we get back to business?

True leads Binnie out gently.

KIESS

You are trained in psychology. You
know we can break you.

GILES

You don't have to massacre an entire
village just to kill a few partisans.

Pzenica plays Good Cop to Kiess's Bad Cop.

PZENICA

His superiors have wiped clean entire countries, Giles.

GILES

I wish I could accommodate you. I wish I had a damned cigarette. But I don't know what's planned for Tree Frog.

PZENICA

Be rational. If they wanted you killed, you'd be dead.

KIESS

They are dead. There has been no hue and cry, no diplomatic flurry.

MAXIUS

You insist the British government has developed, at a cost of millions of pounds, a long-range pilotless aircraft with no means of control.

GILES

That was my evaluation. Nobody seemed to care.

KIESS

It's ridiculous.

MAXIUS

It's -- incomplete.

PZENICA

It's typical British flummery.

GILES

Work it out however you like. I've told you all I know.

Pzenica nods. Kiess PUNCHES Giles hard.

He BANGS his head and blacks out.

INT. LODGE BEDROOM - EVENING

Giles wakes in his bedroom.

He rises, sore everywhere. Stares in the mirror.

GILES

You've told them everything you know. And you're already dead...

Five bolts UNBOLT.

Niklas, with Schmeisser slung, brings a tray.

Giles obediently moves to the window. Niklas sets the tray on the bed.

Suddenly Giles CHARGES and BULLS into him.

Niklas SMACKS his head against the wall.

Frantic, Giles plants a foot on Niklas and RIPS the gun loose, breaking the strap.

He HAMMERS Niklas with the gun to stun him. Shoves the barrel in his mouth.

Groggy, Niklas still freezes.

GILES
Where's the girl?

Gun in his mouth, Niklas looks up.

CORRIDOR

Giles walks ten feet behind Niklas with the gun.

GILES
You know the drill. Behave and you'll
collect a nice fat pension in the
Workers' Paradise.

STAIRS

They climb stairs. Giles is wary.

IDENTICAL THIRD-FLOOR CORRIDOR

Only one door has five bolts.

Niklas UNBOLTS the door and goes in.

INT. LODGE BEDROOM - BINNIE'S

The room looks much the same. There's a dinner tray.

Binnie stands in the corner with a teapot as a weapon.

BINNIE
No, you don't. I'll kill myself --
Giles!

GILES

Binnie, we're leaving. Have you got
any --

Niklas dives and grabs the gun. Giles abruptly lets go.

Off-balance, Niklas staggers back with the gun.

Giles jumps and jams his thumbs in Niklas's eyes.

Binnie throws her teapot and misses. CRASH!

Eye-gouged, Niklas drops the gun and grabs Giles's wrists.

Giles pushes harder. Niklas falls, THUMPS his head on the
iron bed.

Giles SLAMS his head until Niklas is out cold.

BINNIE

Couldn't have done better myself.
But what now?

GILES

You did fine. They reckoned you
were the toughie and I was the
pushover.

BINNIE

But what's happening?

GILES

Big picture, a war. Small picture,
we escape.

Giles strips Niklas of his leather jacket.

BINNIE

What war?

GILES

A cold one. And we're taking French
leave. Have you got any more clothes?

BINNIE

What for?

GILES

Ask one more question and I'll leave
you to find out.

BINNIE

My luggage went to London.

GILES

Put these on.

They strip Niklas of his track suit and boots.

BINNIE

He smells like a goat. Turn around.

Binnie unbuttons her blouse.

GILES

No, pile everything on top. Layers.
Wedge your shoes in his boots. Hurry.

Binnie piles on clothes, even the jacket.

Giles checks the jacket pockets, finds cigarettes and lighter.

Giles strips the bed of blankets, slings them over his shoulder.

They exit, Giles carrying the gun.

CORRIDOR

Giles SLIDES the bolts closed so Binnie's room looks undisturbed.

BINNIE

Which way?

GILES

Haven't the faintest.

Distant SHOUTS sound, come closer.

GILES

Opposite way.

They jog. Giles tries doorknobs.

All locked, then one opens. They scoot inside.

INT. LODGE BROOM CLOSET

A large janitor's closet. Mops and buckets. A card table and chair hold a tea cup, sugar pot, newspaper. A slung clothesline holds drying socks.

Giles grabs the sugar pot and CHUGS half. Gives the rest to Binnie. She CHUGS.

Giles takes everything and stuffs it in Binnie's jacket.

He glances at the newspaper.

BINNIE

Saturday's Lotto?

GILES
Might need to start a fire. Also,
it's in German. Maybe we're in
Germany.

SHOUTS come nearer.

Giles goes to the window. This same side faces mountains.

He picks up the table and SMASHES out glass and sash. Lobs
out blankets. Jams the chair under the doorknob.

GILES
Now you.

Binnie leans out.

EXT. LODGE ROOF - EVENING

Night is falling. Ten feet below is a sloping roof covered
with snow. No idea what's below that.

BINNIE
It's -- steep.

GILES
Right.

Giles SHOVES Binnie by the ass out the window.

BINNIE
Ahhh!

END TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. LODGE ROOF - EVENING

Binnie TUMBLES onto the sloped roof and SLIDES over the edge, out of sight.

BINNIE

Ahhh!

IN THE ROOM

Someone THUMPS the door. The chair BUCKLES.

Giles FLIPS the Schmeisser to single-shot and SHOOTS once through the door.

Someone HOWLS.

Giles pitches the gun and jumps out the window. Rolls down the short roof like a parachutist. Falls. And FLOPS in deep snow behind the lodge.

EXT. LODGE - NIGHT

Binnie flounders in snow.

GILES

(mouths)

You all right?

BINNIE

(mouths)

Fuck you!

Giles picks up broken glass. Slashes head holes in the blankets and drapes them like serapes. Cuts clothesline for rough belts.

Giles finds the sunken gun by the broken strap.

A gun CRACKS above.

Giles scrubs snow off the gun, pulls the magazine, counts rounds, CLICKS it back in.

Giles sidles along the wall and peeks.

SHOT: Around the corner is the front of the lodge.

GILES

Too busy.

They sidle to the other corner.

SHOT: Not far off is a runway and plane. Beyond is forest.

BINNIE

What now?

GILES

If this were television, we'd dash to that airplane, fire it up, and soar off to a trumpet fanfare.

BINNIE

But it takes forever to get planes going, doesn't it?

Giles points at forest beyond the plane.

GILES

Run for those trees and get under cover. If I don't make it, walk away from the lodge until you find a road. Go downhill until you find civilization. But wait a bit.

Giles FLIPS the Schmeisser to automatic, steps out, and SHOOTs upper windows.

GILES

Go!

BINNIE

Oh...

Binnie KISSES him and runs, floundering in snow.

A gun CRACKS above.

Giles SHOOTs to cover her.

Binnie runs onto the runway because it's cleared.

Giles creeps away from the lodge, SHOOTs.

Kiess opens a lower window and FIRES a pistol.

Giles SHOOTs a burst. Kiess disappears.

Someone else SHOOTs from an upper window.

Giles FIRES, then runs.

EXT. AIRFIELD - EVENING

Giles runs, weaving.

As he passes the plane, the door opens.

Pilot (who will later pose as HARKHAM) leans out.

Pilot/fake HARKHAM is a clean-cut military type in a pilot jacket. He holds a pre-flight clipboard.

HARKHAM
(German accent)
You there! Halt!

Giles gets a good look at Harkham's face.

Giles snaps a SHOT. Harkham ducks and SLAMS the door.

Giles runs for the forest.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Giles stumbles among trees.

Distant POPS are shots.

Binnie joins him.

BINNIE
Me friend, no shoot. Did you hit
anyone?

GILES
Don't know. Don't care. They're
not the danger anyway.

BINNIE
Then what is?

GILES
The cold. C'mon. We have to keep
moving.

BINNIE
These boots pinch my toes. My shoes
in the boots.

GILES
Take 'em off. Don't get your feet
wet.

Giles dries her feet. Gives her the stolen socks. Cuts
strips off the blankets to wrap her feet.

GILES
Better loose than tight.

BINNIE
I'm freezing.

GILES
That's why we keep moving. Anywhere,
but moving.

BINNIE
Through woods in the dark?

GILES
Take it up with our travel agent in
Bloomsbury. When did you last eat?

BINNIE
Just before you came in.

GILES
Ah. I mashed the football hooligan
into my meal. Come on.

They walk. There's little snow under the trees, but it's
difficult in darkness.

BINNIE
That road to civilization?

GILES
The desperation plan. The only road
will lead to the lodge. Infested
with villains.

BINNIE
So that leaves...

Giles points up at the forbidding ridge.

GILES
Onward and upward, Mrs. Peel.

BINNIE
Must we?

GILES
I know. It's madness to try that
slope in darkness without proper
tackle. Even by daylight I'd want
60 feet of Viking, gloves, helmet,
crampons --

BINNIE
But all you've got is me.

GILES
A girl and a gun. Eat your heart
out, James.

BINNIE
Wait'll SEEKER sees my expense report.

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

As dawn breaks, Giles and Binnie reach the top, HUFFING.
There's just more damned forest.

GILES
Fiddlesticks.

BINNIE
No ski lodge with a big fireplace
and steaming cups of cocoa?

GILES
Better would be a refuge hut. But
no refuge for the wicked. We need
to get off the skyline. If Kiess
and Pzenica get up in that Pilatus,
they'll spot us in a second.

BINNIE
You could have shot up the airplane.

GILES
Next time.

Dispirited and exhausted, they walk between trees.

BINNIE
I wouldn't mind dying in the
wilderness if only I knew why. Didn't
you all agree that Tree Frog was so
much codswallop?

GILES
Tree Frog is a deception operation --
Get down!

Giles pins Binnie in bushes.

The plane ZOOMS overhead, very close. And soars on.

They resume walking.

BINNIE
Deception. To deceive the Russians
or whoever that we have a brilliant
aircraft.

GILES
Bilge.

BINNIE
What's the deception part?

GILES
I wish I knew. The men in London
won't tell me, and I haven't the
brains to guess the rest.

BINNIE
The hero in the film would know.

GILES
So he would. But you're the hero.

BINNIE
Me?

GILES
I'm a volunteer, in a way. You're a
conscript, and proving a real trouper.

BINNIE
I'll put myself in for an Air Medal.
And a month's holiday in the Bahamas.

Binnie suddenly stops.

BINNIE
I can't walk another step.

GILES
I'm sorry. Truly sorry. If --
Perhaps if I go ahead --

BINNIE
Hark, said the heroine.

A RATTLING comes closer.

GILES
Get under cover.

BINNIE
They can shoot me.

A Land Rover DRIVES along a sunken road and STOPS.

A MOUNTAIN CLIMBER, a New Zealand man, drives. Gawks at
their weird blanket serapes and gun.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBER
Fancy a lift?

BINNIE
It's blessed Saint Christopher.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

Just Chris.

Binnie climbs in. Giles starts to get in. Mountain Climber nods at gun.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

You carry that thing everywhere?

GILES

What? Old Betsy?

Giles pulls the magazine, pitches it and the gun in opposite directions.

They drive.

INT. LAND ROVER - MORNING

The Rover is stuffed with mountain climbing gear.

Mountain Climber holds up a food satchel.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

Tea's cold, but help yourself.

Binnie and Giles wolf trail food.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

I could ask what you've been up to.

GILES

Wouldn't tell you.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

Fair enough. I been testing gear for Outdoor Magazine. Once I get me check, I'm going back to South Island and start a mountaineering school.

BINNIE

You're from New Zealand? I've got a cousin in Auckland. Penelope Whitehead. Do you know her?

MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

I know a Penny Something owns a hippie shop. And a Mick Whitehead who paints houses.

GILES

I hate to interrupt, but where are we?

MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

(puzzled)

You're in the Otztal Alps. I'll drop you in downtown Innsbruck in 30 minutes.

GILES

Austria.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

That's what they call it.

INT. SEEKER OFFICE - DAY

Major Driver's boring office. There's nothing personal except a tiny British flag.

Driver, Andy, and Sloane sit, immobile.

Giles enters.

DRIVER

You're back. Good.

Giles struggles to keep cool, but seethes inside.

The three men watch him impassively.

GILES

Look. Even my simple mind can comprehend that intelligence work can get nasty. And if we're not as nasty as the Russians and Red Chinese, we fall behind. Unless we're preeminently cleverer, which we're not. Still --

ANDY

We're not?

GILES

Who arranged for Miss Abrams to go to Vienna?

DRIVER

Sorry about that. We needed to check your progress without tipping our hand.

GILES

So you chucked an innocent girl into the lion's den.

SLOANE

Vienna, not Vietnam.

DRIVER

And besides, she's bound for Bermuda.

ANDY

The Bahamas.

SLOANE

You mustn't think we're absolute blackguards.

GILES

If you ever pull a stunt like that again, I'll scream so loud that everyone from the Security Commission to the Royal Mint will come down on your heads like a ton of bricks.

DRIVER

What did you eventually tell them?

GILES

The lot. Everything I knew about Tree Frog with a few bright guesses thrown in. They threatened to shoot me if I didn't shut up.

DRIVER

Inevitable.

ANDY

High treason but... no charges. You were under torture.

SLOANE

Or brainwashed.

DRIVER

Now, in the next phase --

GILES

Are you balmy? There's not going to be a next phase. Not for me.

DRIVER

National interest.

SLOANE

Patriotic dictate.

GILES

Free Wales, Home Rule for Ireland, and Scotland the Brave.

ANDY

(hums Scotland the Brave)

GILES

Have you been paying attention? I'm
hopeless at this espionage stuff.

SLOANE

In that case, we thank you, Dr.
Yeoman, for your contributions.

Huh. Giles edges for the door.

ANDY

So far.

GILES

So... far?

DRIVER

We'd be grateful if you'd attend the
next trial flights.

GILES

No.

ANDY

It uses your control system, based
on your designs.

GILES

Which dropped Tree Frog Mark 1 in
the drink, remember?

SLOANE

TF Mark 2 is greatly improved.

GILES

But still uncontrollable. No.

SLOANE

You only need watch.

ANDY

No risk at all.

GILES

No.

DRIVER

That's it, then. Good day.

Giles reaches the door. Turns the knob. Opens the door.

ANDY

Never learn what this is all about...

GILES

Where --

DIVER
Sun and sand. You'll love it.

INT. SEEKER LAB - DAY

Binnie briefs her replacement, another Female Statistician.
Giles enters.

BINNIE
Giles, did you hear --

GILES
I heard. Must you go?

BINNIE
To the Bahamas?
(mock-checks his head)
You poor dear. They lobotomized you too.

GILES
Have you considered my other offer?

BINNIE
Considered.

GILES
A good spy always gets the girl.

BINNIE
Good girls don't marry spies.

GILES
But I'm a wretched spy.

BINNIE
And if you were a girl, you'd always be pregnant. Where are they sending you next?

GILES
I'm afraid to ask.

BINNIE
I'll post you a card care of the office.

Binnie KISSES Giles, a scorcher.

BINNIE
Oh. I did read Yancy's file. There's something you need to know...

EXT. AL QARIF - DAY

A temporary RAF base in the Libyan Sahara.

There's a metal-section runway, prefab huts, tents, and planes under tarps.

Far off is a Quonset hut and a plastic radar dome.

A cargo plane lands.

Giles gets out, staggered by heat. He wears glacier goggles, khakis and a hat, carries a bag.

Andy greets him. He wears a mod safari outfit.

ANDY
Pleasant trip?

GILES
What's the temperature?

ANDY
Don't know. Thermometer only goes
up to 110.

They walk.

GILES
Why is this base even here? Just
for mad dogs and Englishmen?

ANDY
Some geologist drilled for oil or
uranium and hit water. Hey, presto,
an oasis, 500 miles from anywhere.

GILES
Good place to fly a kite.

Andy points at a hut marked "KEEP OUT" and "A/C FUEL".

ANDY
Your baby gets her own hut.

GILES
Your baby. I don't care if Tree
Frog sinks like a stone.

ANDY
Then why are you here?

GILES
Good question. Can I see inside
that radar dome?

ANDY
Ask the Yanks.

GILES
What are Americans doing here?

Andy leads down a row of tents. Giles' is last in line.

ANDY
Basking in air conditioning and eating
deep-frozen steaks. Here's your
tent.

INT. GILES'S TENT - DAY

There's a cot, table, and chair.

Giles sticks his head in, looks around, tosses in his bag.

EXT. AL QARIF - DAY

An ARAB WOMAN exits a nearby tent, straightening her clothes.

GILES
Females. Cooks?

ANDY
Yanks call them LBFMs. Little Brown
Machines.

Giles looks back. An RAF MP comes out the tent straightening
his uniform.

GILES
What's the "F" -- Oh.

ANDY
Home at last.

They enter a big tent.

INT. SEEKER TENT

Racks hold electronic gear. An easel has a topo map. There's
a teapot and some cases.

Driver and Sloane study the map. They wear tropical khakis
and shorts.

RAF Technicians run wires as Sgt. Kelsey hooks up electronic
gear. Andy tries to "help" and gets tools taken away.

DRIVER

Giles. Glad you could join us.

Giles studies everything, approaches Sgt. Kelsey.

GILES

Need a few more thumbs?

Sgt. Kelsey is oddly embarrassed to see him.

SGT. KELSEY

Doctor Yeoman. No, I've got it,
thanks. In fact, I need my multi-
meter.

Sgt. Kelsey bumbles up and exits.

Giles picks up a multi-meter from a tool box, wonders.

GILES

Why do I always get the civilian
nuthead treatment?

ANDY

I expect you've scared him off with
your shining forehead.

(checks watch)

We're at T-minus 32:30 hours. You
might want to rest up.

GILES

Rest up for what?

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Giles goes for a walk, marveling at vivid stars. He turns a
complete circle. Sits. Leans back.

And sees a genie-like face looming over him.

GILES

Yaaaa!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Looming over Giles like death himself is...

MOHAMMED JALIL AT MURZUQ, a Tuareg, wears a long blue shirt, black trousers, head scarf, dagger and short sword.

YANCY (O.S.)
Some hot dog, huh?

GILES
I might have known.

Yancy also wears a Tuareg blue shirt, black trousers, and head scarf. No weapons visible.

YANCY
Mohammed Jalil at Murzuq. My driver.
I'd be lost without him, and I'm not
kidding.

Mohammed does not shake hands, so Giles makes a quick bow.

GILES
Giles Yeoman. You have a lovely --
desert.
(to Yancy)
May I ask, what the hell are you
doing here?

YANCY
You know Americans. Always late to
the party, but we bring great goodies.

GILES
I heard about deep-frozen steaks.

YANCY
Freeze-dried. It's the new logistics
thing. Freeze-dried steaks. Freeze-
dried Creole gumbo. Even freeze-
dried ice cream, which is a good
trick.

GILES
So...

YANCY
The Libyan government allows Brits
and Americans to camp, long as we
pay rent.

GILES

Second question. Why didn't you keep better watch on Binnie?

YANCY

Sorry about that. I watched her pass through Customs. The boys on the other side give you a hard time?

GILES

No permanent damage. Binnie's toughing it out in the Caribbean.

YANCY

Good for her. Mohammed wants to show us a fun spot.

GILES

Uh-uh. The last time I got suckered into a car, I woke up in another country.

YANCY

Come on. Can't pick up the game without playing a few hands.

GILES

Binnie said to trust you.

YANCY

Smart girl. You should marry her, Yo-Yo.

GILES

She's too smart for that, Cow... boy.

INT. JEEP IN THE DESERT - NIGHT

Mohammed drives fast. Giles and Yancy bounce around in back.

GILES

If I'm kidnapped, it's at least novel to ride inside the vehicle.

YANCY

Red Chief, relax. Who'd pay to ransom you?

GILES

How far are we going?

YANCY

Biet.

(MORE)

YANCY (CONT'D)

(Huh?)

"Long way."

They bounce high. Giles BANGS his head on a cross-bar.

GILES

Could be camels.

YANCY

You check out the radome?

GILES

I did. All state of the art --

YANCY

Thank Uncle Sam.

GILES

But nothing revolutionary. Once they toss Tree Frog in the air, they can track it out to 400 miles, tops.

YANCY

No magic remote-control guidance system? What about a mysterious black box buried out in the desert?

GILES

Full of what electronics?

YANCY

So the whole operation is a crock?

GILES

With Driver's devious mind, it could be anything. Or just an ordinary air trial with a circus act thrown in.

YANCY

We got clowns.

The jeep stops. Mohammed hops out. And Yancy and Giles.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

There's absolutely nothing but sand and scree.

GILES

Uh...

YANCY

A little walk. No talk.

Mohammed leads. Giles and Yancy follow.

And follow.

And follow.

GILES
(clears throat to
speak)

Mohammed whirls and glares, scary. Beckons.

They creep up a slope. Peek over the top.

EXT. TUAREG CAMP - NIGHT

Six tents are quiet. On the far side sits a Tuareg Guard with a rifle, unmoving, probably asleep.

Yancy stays behind the slope. Nods Giles to go.

Mohammed leads Giles down slope. Stops behind a tent.

Giles feels something underfoot.

Huh? A power cable runs into the tent.

Mohammed SLICES a tiny slit. Light spills. Giles peeks.

SHOT: Inside the tent is a compact radar dish and electronics.

Mohammed pokes him. They retreat.

They slither over the ridge, rejoin Yancy, and creep away.

EXT. JEEP IN THE DESERT - NIGHT

Back at the jeep, they drink water and smoke.

YANCY
Had to show or you'd never believe
me.

GILES
I'll believe almost anything these
days.

YANCY
Someone thinks this test is important.

GILES

If secrecy were important, they'd test fly in Woomera. There'd be only kangaroos to eavesdrop.

YANCY

So SEEKER is putting on a show for -- the world? When's the first test flight?

GILES

Tomorrow night -- Tonight. There's a briefing this afternoon.

YANCY

Bet we don't get answers?

GILES

The answer is, Tree Frog is a deception operation.

Yancy signals Mohammed. They climb in the jeep.

YANCY

Could've fooled me. C'mon. I'll buy you a freeze-dried Heineken.

INT. BRIEFING TENT - EVENING

A big pavilion tent with the sides up. RAF MPs stand loose guard on all four sides, facing out.

Briefing is in progress. BRIEFING OFFICER points to a map.

In the front row sits an RAF BOMBER FLIGHT CREW, four men in flight suits. Sgt. Kelsey sits at the end.

People sit on folding chairs. Driver, Andy, and Sloane sit in the middle.

Yancy sits in back. Wears crisp khakis. Has a pen in his pocket.

Giles enters, frumpy and yawning.

BRIEFING OFFICER

... You'll recall our first trials were straight-line flights. Tonight's plan is to fly Tree Frog in a gentle outward spiral and put down right -- here. Five miles out. Now let me introduce our flight crew.

Flight crew stands, turns, and nods as introduced.

BRIEFING OFFICER
Squadron Leader Bayliss. Flight
Lieutenant Morris, pilot and number
two. Flight Lieutenant Brister,
navigator. Flight Lieutenant Harkham,
electronics officer.

YANCY
Where have you been?

GILES
In bed. How do you manage to look
so damned fresh?

YANCY
Stash my shorts in the freezer.
Trick I learned from my wife.

GILES
That explains it. I'm a bachelor --

Giles stops, GAWKS.

CLOSE ON: Lt Harkham standing and nodding.

FLASHBACK: He was the pilot at the lodge in Austria. Giles
shot at him and he ducked inside. Had a German accent.

YANCY
What's up? Giles?

GILES
Harkham, did they say? Fourth in
line, there.

YANCY
I guess. You seeing things?

GILES
Seeing them again. Lend me your
pen.

Giles flips the pen and PINGS Andy. Signals outside.

Driver and Andy slip out. Giles and Yancy exit.

EXT. AL QARIF - EVENING

Giles tows Driver and Andy away. Yancy follows.

DRIVER
(nodding at Yancy)
Is this for everyone's ears?

YANCY

It was my pen.

GILES

This will sound crazy, but one of the flight crew, Harkham? Is from the away team.

DRIVER

Hmm.

ANDY

Huh.

GILES

I saw him in Austria outside the hunting lodge. He was flight-checking the Pilatus. I shot at him as I ran past.

DRIVER

Ran past?

GILES

I'll admit I hurried, but believe it. One of your hand-picked air crew is an enemy agent.

DRIVER

I see.

GILES

You do know this base is under radar surveillance from at least one unauthorized post? I've seen it.

ANDY

We wondered where you and Captain Brightwell got to.

YANCY

Cigarette run.

DRIVER

Don't misunderstand. We have no objections.

GILES

Any objections to double agents stealing secrets or sabotaging the mission right under your noses?

DRIVER

We've known Lieutenant Harkham for quite some time.

ANDY

Everyone on the crew has the same security rating as you, Giles.

GILES

Some have the same itinerary. Ask him where he was a fortnight ago. If he says anything other than, "Flying over the Alps hunting two fugitives", he's lying.

DRIVER

Yet you fled that hunting lodge under duress. Interrogation can leave -- odd aftereffects.

ANDY

Deja vu.

GILES

Life-or-death escapes tend to sharpen one's focus.

ANDY

It's too late to stop the mission.

DRIVER

I wouldn't lose any sleep, old man.

Driver and Andy re-enter tent.

GILES

The one thing I don't understand --

YANCY

Is all of it?

GILES

That too. Is why I care. If this Harkham forgets to switch on the works and Tree Frog goes crunch back of beyond, so what?

YANCY

They might blame your control system come next Compass Committee. Make you sit in back.

GILES

You could get incensed. The bad guys said Sidewinder and Hound Dog were insipid names for missiles.

YANCY

Why, those ornery polecats.

Giles thinks. Yancy smokes. Giles accepts a cigarette.

Sgt. Kelsey comes out of the briefing tent.

For some unknown reason, he's embarrassed again to see Giles.

GILES
Knock 'em dead, sergeant.

SGT. KELSEY
Thanks. And good luck to you too.

Good luck?

The briefing has ended. Pilots, including suspect Harkham, walk for the runway.

Giles pitches the cigarette, leaves Yancy, runs after Harkham.

GILES
Got a fag?

Harkham stops, smiles.

HARKHAM
(British accent)
Sorry. I don't smoke.

GILES
You don't remember me?

HARKHAM
'Fraid not.

GILES
Even after I shot at you?

HARKHAM
(puzzled)
If you don't mind.

Harkham strides off to catch his crew.

Activity picks up at the airfield. Jeeps rush. Ground crews wave batons.

Yancy rejoins Giles.

YANCY
Not a twitch, huh?

GILES
It's apt to be an exciting night if
Harkham pulls a Tokarev and flies
the whole rig to Red Square.

YANCY
Red Square's not big enough to land
a Beverly.

(MORE)

YANCY (CONT'D)
(checks watch)
Meet you here at 10:00?

Giles waves: Fine. Yancy walks off.

Giles feels his face. It's gritty. Walks toward his tent.

EXT. GILES'S TENT - EVENING

A small RUSTLE inside his tent alerts him.

Giles creeps -- and FLINGS open the tent flap.

INT. GILES'S TENT - NIGHT

The interior is shadowed.

GILES
Aha!

On his cot sits an Arab Woman. Naked, nervous.

GILES
Wait. I've seen this before...

Some big guy (an RAF MP, unseen) grabs Giles from behind in a sleeper hold.

Giles blacks out.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. TREE FROG - NIGHT

TIGHT SHOT: Looking down through a tiny window, far below the desert soars by.

TIGHT SHOT: Reverse view. Looking up through the tiny window, Giles' sleeping face is smooshed against the window.

PAN AROUND GILES. He lies in a coffin-like space. Struts and wires and cables hem him on all sides.

Dim light comes from jury-rigged dials and gauges.

A safety harness pins his shoulders.

An IV tube enters his left wrist on top.

A small radio speaker is next to one ear.

(This setup recalls the car trunk, but...)

A WHISPERING WHISTLE comes from a small jet engine.

Andy's voice comes from the speaker.

ANDY (O.S.)

(over radio)

Giles. Wake up. Wakey-wakey. Damn it, Giles. Snap out of it.

Giles wakes up and BANGS his head.

GILES

Huh! Oh, Jesus. Not again -- Ow!

He can barely move an inch in any direction.

Just as well. Even tiny movements make the coffin-affair wobble side to side.

GILES

Whoa, whoa. What the hell?

Face down on the glass, he sees the desert soaring below.

GILES

Oh.

OUTSIDE SHOT: Tree Frog ZOOMS over the Sahara Desert.

It looks like a buzz bomb with a tiny window in the belly.

THE BIG REVEAL: Giles, kidnapped and stuffed inside, is the mythical "top-secret remote-control system".

INT. SEEKER TENT / TREE FROG - NIGHT

Driver, Andy, Sloane, and Sgt. Kelsey hunker over a radar scope and radio. Andy wears earphones.

INTERCUT scenes as needed.

ANDY

Come in, old boy. Are you there?

GILES

Did you think I might've stepped out?

ANDY

That's the spirit. Now here's the plan --

GILES

I know the plan -- now.

(mimics himself)

"Tree Frog is a deception operation."

Except the only one deceived was --

Whoa!

OUTSIDE SHOT: Tree Frog hits turbulence and drops a hundred feet.

Giles's nose THUMPS the window.

GILES

Where am I?

Andy, whom we thought a bumpkin, is now super-efficient. The mark of a good spy?

ANDY

About 220 miles out of Al Qarif on a course of 1-0-8 true. Heading for the northeast corner of the Sudan. But you're on autopilot, so no fear. Take a moment to unfog your head.

CONCEPTUAL DRAWING: Seen from above, Tree Frog zooms over a map of the Sahara Desert. Country names pop up.

GILES

The ground's a bit close for comfort. What's my altitude?

ANDY

Look to your left.

Giles lifts his chin.

CLOSE ON: A jury-rigged altimeter reads 5,000 feet. A compass points southeast.

ANDY

We lashed up an altimeter for your piece of mind. It's -- what?

GILES

(laughs)

I like the bit where you worry about my piece of mind.

ANDY

Our radar pegs you at 5,000 feet. Your instruments aren't spot-on. We didn't have time to run a check.

GILES

Yes, pre-flight was putting the pilot in a choke hold.

ANDY

Sorry about that. Feel around in front of your head. There's a small joystick.

CLOSE ON: A toy joystick is in front of his fingers.

ANDY

Don't move it yet. It's rigged to the servo-control valves in the hydraulic circuits.

GILES

I'm not moving anything. You know you're psychotic, the lot of you.

ANDY

No need to shout, Giles. You're breaking my eardrums.

GILES

And I'm press-ganged and stuffed in a flying coffin a mile over the bleeding Sahara! Is Driver there?

ANDY

Sure. This is his --

GILES

Put him on.

Driver takes the earphones.

DRIVER

Good evening, Giles. Before you start carrying on like a pork chop, may I ask one question? Would you have volunteered for this mission? Even if we'd asked nicely?

GILES

Not on your life.

DRIVER

I rest my case. We've a shortage of qualified pilots. You can fly, you know the hydraulic control system inside out, you know Tree Frog, so we nominated you. Leave it at that.

GILES

I'll see you lot fry in Hell.

DRIVER

No doubt, old boy. Here's Andy.

Driver hands earphones to Andy.

ANDY

Yeoman. Let's pull this off, get you back alive-o, and after you've had a nice cup of tea you can lecture us on ethics or bash us up behind the gym, whatever you like, eh?

GILES

It's not a chess game, Andy. It's poker, and you're bluffing.

(beat)

But so am I, now.

(sighs)

Fine. Why are my feet uncommonly warm?

ANDY

They're resting on the forward end of the turbojet.

GILES

Memo to the company president.

Giles looks at the IV tube going into his left wrist under a bandage.

GILES

What's this cannula?

ANDY

Auto-drip of pentothal under pressure.

GILES

So I'd sleep a while and wake at
precisely the right moment.

ANDY

Not too soon. Would have jeopardized
the mission.

GILES

Would it ever.

ANDY

We switched off the drip five minutes
ago, so pull it out.

Wiggling, Giles drags out the needle and mashes the bandage.

GILES

Pavlov's dogs had it easy. Look,
this thing was never meant to be
flown by a live pilot.

ANDY

So what? The payload allows for 200
pounds of guidance equipment. You're
only 150 pounds of guidance equipment,
so we threw in an autopilot.

GILES

How much actual flying is involved?
Though it's, as usual, the landing
that makes the trip memorable.

ANDY

The joystick's got a button on top.
The autopilot flies until the "Yeoman
Mark 1" pushes the button to
disengage. Then you're on the air.
Set a new course and let go. The
autopilot jumps in and keeps the
plane smooth and level. Got it?

GILES

So far.

ANDY

Then stop dawdling. You were fueled
for 700 miles. You've flown 250.
We want you to turn Tree Frog 180
degrees and fly back here. Should
be a cakewalk.

CONCEPTUAL DRAWING: Tree Frog flies over the map. Mileage
pops up.

GILES
What altitude? Hey, what did the
bomber drop me from?

ANDY
11,000 feet.

GILES
Oxygen deprivation, nosebleeds, brain
cell death -- no worries.

ANDY
You've climbed higher mountains.
And that's our briefing. You're
losing altitude, so have a go and
pull the nose up.

GILES
God save England.

Squirming, Giles wiggles the tiny joystick. Nothing happens.

He PRESSES the button atop. A soft RATTLE-CLICK means the
autopilot disengages.

Now in control, Giles pulls back gently.

OUTSIDE SHOT: Plane noses up slowly.

GILES
I feel her responding. ("Her."
Listen to me.) But --

OUTSIDE SHOT: Plane tips left.

He moves the joystick right.

GILES
I'm in a roll to port. I need to --
Ahh!

OUTSIDE SHOT: Tree Frog almost flips over.

GILES
Bloody Christ! Urp!

Giles tries to correct. He's also getting airsick.

OUTSIDE SHOT: Plane drops her nose and almost stalls.

GILES
Stalling! Sideslipping! I can't
see!

OUTSIDE SHOT: Plane waggles all over the sky.

Sgt. Kelsey jumps, grabs Andy's shoulder.

SGT. KELSEY
Tell him to let go!

ANDY
What?

SGT. KELSEY
Let go of the stick!

ANDY
Giles, let go of the stick!

Giles lets go the joystick.

The autopilot kicks in: RATTLE-CLICK.

GILES
(praying)
Please, please...

OUTSIDE SHOT: Plane flattens and purrs nicely.

CLOSE ON: Altimeter shows 3,000 feet.

GILES
Lord have mercy. 3,000 feet.

ANDY
Wonderful! I don't know what you
did, but it looked sensational on
our screens.

GILES
I'd like a word with Sgt. Kelsey
when I get back. If I get back.

ANDY
You'll get back. You'll be fine.
We might need your services again.

Carefully, Giles pulls on the joystick.

OUTSIDE SHOT: Plane rises gently and levels out.

CLOSE ON: Altimeter reaches 5,000 feet.

GILES
I'll survive this. If only to get
even.

ANDY
According to our screens, you're
over the Sudan. Time to turn. Don't
climb and don't dive. Move the stick
sideways and hydraulic circuits do
the rest. It's tied to the aileron
and the rudder circuits.

GILES
We hope. Turn which way?

ANDY
Flip a coin.

Giles gently turns the ship, then lets go.

Autopilot kicks in, RATTLE-CLICK.

OUTSIDE SHOT: Plane makes a wide turn, then levels out and heads for home.

ANDY
Smooth as silk. Quite the show on our screen.

GILES
I didn't do it for your benefit.

ANDY
Nevertheless.

GILES
Now that we're heading home, dare I ask if you packed a parachute?

ANDY
No room, old boy.

GILES
Likely you had to lift my wallet too. Hey. What happened to that gentle outward spiral the briefing promised?

ANDY
Change in plans. The radio control boys are standing on their heads trying to guess why Tree Frog went rogue. They'll never work it out.

GILES
How many people know I'm inside this tin of beans?

ANDY
Nobody but us chickens. Wouldn't want to spoil the surprise.

GILES
Give the devil his due. This is a masterpiece. So all the multi-nationals scattered around the desert see Britain has a new wonder toy and rush out to spend millions of pounds to detect and counter it.

ANDY
That's the theory.

GILES
And ten years from now, find they've
been pranked, and a good laugh is
had by all.

ANDY
If we're lucky.

GILES
So where am I now?

ANDY
About... 300 miles out. Say an hour
and a half to land. Care to rehearse
the landing procedure?

GILES
Not yet.
(beat)
What say you leave me alone a while?
I hate to admit it, but I am flying
something no pilot ever flew before.

ANDY
Anything you say.

Radio CLICKS off.

Giles relaxes. Resting his head on the window, he watches
the desert fly by. And reaches for the joystick.

OUTSIDE SHOT: Plane flies gracefully, but not flashy.

In the tent, Sloane points at the radar screen. Driver and
Andy look. Andy grabs the earphones.

SLOANE
Incoming.

Giles flies, looking out the window.

Radio CLICKS on.

ANDY
Control to pilot.

GILES
Cut the Battle of Britain guff.
What?

ANDY
We have an unknown closing from the
northeast.

GILES

An unknown what?

ANDY

Air speed is Mach Two. Altitude
32,000. Range 150 miles, closing at
1200.

GILES

And what do you suggest? Cock
my machine guns? I can't even see
him unless he flies under me.

ANDY

Just thought you should know. Could
be flipper, come to have a rapid
shufti and then blow.

GILES

A MIG-17? Ducky. The Russians hand
those out like Green Stamps. At
Mach Two he'll be here in... seven
minutes. Shall I boost to supersonic?

ANDY

The throttles are hand-set for
economical cruising. Try to relax.

GILES

What if he's bored and wants a little
target practice?

Sgt. Kelsey makes a shallow dive gesture.

ANDY

He won't. Eh? Yes, you could dive.

GILES

And skip like a stone? Fine.

Giles pushes the joystick.

OUTSIDE SHOT: Plane goes into a shallow dive.

CLOSE ON: Altimeter drops below 3,000.

GILES

Wait. Isn't there a mountain range
somewhere? You said the altimeter's --

A ferocious SKROOOO00M rises as a jet bears down.

GILES

Shit!

OUTSIDE SHOT: A Russian MIG swoops overhead, throwing a
tremendous wave of air. Tree Frog wobbles wildly.

The jet RUSHES past, gone.

GILES

Control, do you read? Control --
Help!

SKROOOOOM! The jet makes a second pass, closer.

OUTSIDE SHOT: Tree Frog is thrown around the sky.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. SEEKER TENT / TREE FROG - NIGHT

In the tent, Driver, Andy, Sloane, and Sgt. Kelsey panic.

In Tree Frog, Giles struggles to retain control as the tiny plane is bounced around the sky.

INTERCUT scenes as needed.

ANDY

Giles! Are you OK?

GILES

Flaps and skids, Andy. How do I put them down?

Driver, Sloane, and Sgt. Kelsey argue in pantomime.

ANDY

You can't, not yet. You'll never make it back with the extra drag.

GILES

I want to make it down in one piece.

ANDY

The bogie can't see you against the desert floor. You must be invisible.

GILES

One more buzz and he'll knock my wings off. Tell me!

Sgt. Kelsey rips the earphones off Andy's head.

SGT. KELSEY

There's a bar switch behind the joystick.

CLOSE ON: Just behind the joy stick is a tiny bar switch.

SGT. KELSEY

It syncs in the auxiliary hydraulics and kicks on the nitro-generator for a hundred-second burst. The first time you touch it, a sting switch cuts the engine --

Driver grabs the earphones.

DRIVER

Yeoman, you really mustn't --

SKROOOOOOM! The jet makes a third pass, much closer.

OUTSIDE SHOT: Tree Frog flips around like a toy.

GILES

Bugger off!

Giles mashes the bar switch. CLICK!

The auxiliary turbine WHINES, WHOOSHES.

Gentle WHUMPS mean the flaps and belly skids drop into place.

The background WHISPERING WHISTLE drops in pitch.

OUTSIDE SHOT: Tree Frog's flaps drop. Belly skids and tail skid emerge.

Giles mashes his face on the window to see outside.

SHOT THROUGH WINDOW: A sandy stretch is just ahead.

GILES

I see a valley of sand! I'm going
in!

Giles moves the joystick down.

GILES

Easy, easy...

OUTSIDE SHOT: Tree Frog skims the sand. The kill switch in the belly TRIPS. The engine SHUTS OFF. The flaps retract with a THUMP.

GILES

Forgive me, father, for I have
sinned...

Giles covers his face with his arms.

OUTSIDE SHOT: Tree Frog skims, bounces, skims, bounces and... Drags... to a halt.

SILENCE except for a few cooling TICS and CREAKS.

GILES

I'll be damned.

Giles flips over, UNHOOKS his safety harness, UNFASTENS the hatch.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Giles scrambles out and slithers down the wing.

GILES

Hail the conquering hero --

SKROOOOOOM! High overhead, the MIG bores away.

Giles checks his watch.

CLOSE ON: The crystal is cracked.

GILES

Expense that. All right, lads. You
know where I am. Come and get me.

LATER

It's dark and cold. Giles shivers. He scrunches against
Tree Frog for warmth.

EXT. DESERT - DAWN

The sun rises. The land is sand and stone.

Giles looks around and gawks.

Twenty feet ahead are large jagged rocks he almost hit.

Giles dons his glacier goggles. One lens is cracked. He's
warm but thirsty.

GILES

Hey, ho, for the gay life of a super-
spy. Eh?

Far off, an army truck approaches. RATTLE, CLUNK. It's big
enough to carry Tree Frog with the wings off.

Truck STOPS. Glare on the windshield obscures the occupants.

GILES

Took you long enough -- Oh.

Pzenica and Kiess get out.

Both wear khakis with flowing head scarves and pistol belts.

PZENICA

Good morning, Doctor Yeoman.

KIESS

Where is your truck?

GILES

My -- truck?

KIESS
He is not armed.

PZENICA
They've -- left you to guard the
plane?

Puzzled, Pzenica and Kiess inspect the plane.
Peer in. Look at Giles. Peer in again. Huh.

PZENICA
You flew this thing?

KIESS
Impossible.

GILES
Ridiculous.

PZENICA
(laughs)
Doctor Yeoman, you clever, clever
bastard.

GILES
It wasn't my idea.

KIESS
Amazing you never leaked this to
Maxius. We were sure you told the
truth.

GILES
I did. I didn't know about the "top-
secret remote-control miracle gizmo"
until I woke up inside.

Both men SCOFF. Kiess gets a canteen and sips, offers to
Giles, who DRINKS it dry.

PZENICA
Clearly we underestimated you. You
are a professional after all.

GILES
I assure you, I'm not.

PZENICA
We tracked you on radar. No surprise,
eh? We wondered how a remote vehicle
could dodge a jet. Huh.

KIESS
We should go.

PZENICA

Yes. Your friends from Al Qarif are
fifty miles out, but still.

Pzenica waves at the truck. Kiess touches his holster.

GILES

Since you insist.

Giles marches ahead.

GILES

(to Pzenica)

I can guess his game, but what do
you get?

PZENICA

Poland is my homeland. Wedged between
fascists and Communists, we learned
to adapt. You British, on your little
island, will never understand.

GILES

We can sympathize.

PZENICA

We don't want your sympathy.

Giles picks up the pace.

KIESS

Wait.

Pzenica and Kiess trot to catch up.

Giles circles the truck. OPENS the driver's door and grabs
the ignition key.

A tool bag lies on the floor. Giles palms a large wrench.

PZENICA

Doctor Yeoman --

Giles throws the ignition key into the desert. CLINK!

KIESS

Swine!

Giles swings the wrench, but Kiess is a pro. He KNOCKS Giles
down, SLAMS his head against the truck, KICKS him.

Stunned, Giles sinks.

PZENICA

Stop. Go find the key. I'll see to
the wings.

Kiess stomps off to find the key.

Pzenica takes the tool bag, studies how to dismantle Tree Frog.

Giles sits, stunned and hurting.

Kiess gives up on the key and returns, furious. KICKS Giles again.

KIESS
You arrogant bastard. If you think
I'll allow myself to be captured --

Kiess pulls his pistol.

PZENICA
Otto! Put that away!

Kiess drags Giles to the plane.

KIESS
I say we shoot the fool and burn the
plane.

GILES
Or you could hot-wire the truck.

Kiess aims at Giles.

KIESS
You could hot-wire the truck.

GILES
But I --

Kiess SHOTS Giles's ear, rocking him. It bleeds.

YANCY (O.S.)
Drop the shootin' iron, hombre, and
reach for the sky!

Surprise! Yancy pops up from behind a rock with a gun.

Kiess ducks and SHOTS at Yancy. Yancy SHOTS back.

Pzenica draws his pistol and aims at Yancy.

Mohammed pops up out of nowhere (probably from under the plane), swings his sword, and LOPS off Pzenica's gun hand.

PZENICA
Aggh!

Kiess swings his aim to Mohammed.

Yancy WHISTLES. Kiess looks around. Giles jumps and KNOCKS down Kiess's gun hand.

Kiess SHOOTs and HITS the engine on Tree Frog.

Nitro HISSES.

GILES
(to Mohammed)
Run!

Giles and Mohammed run and dive flat.

Tree Frog EXPLODES in a fireball.

Pzenica and Kiess BURN like torches. Collapse, die. Greasy smoke stains the sky.

SOON

Giles, Yancy, and Mohammed regroup away from the fire.

Yancy wraps Giles's ear with his head scarf.

Yancy gives Mohammed the truck key, which he obviously found.

YANCY
(to Mohammed)
Better move the truck. Like a hundred miles.

Mohammed drives off with the truck.

GILES
How do we --

YANCY
Jeep. You know me. I think of everything.

GILES
Wish -- I could say -- the same.

Giles blacks out.

INT. JEEP IN THE DESERT - MORNING

Yancy drives at a leisurely pace.

Giles jerks awake. Finds he's safe. Accepts a canteen and candy bars. Nurses a sore head.

GILES
How -- Ouch. How did you come to violate the Official Secrets Act?

YANCY

When you went missing, I camped behind
SEEKER's tent and cut a hole.

GILES

The old tricks are the best.

YANCY

Radar lost you below the horizon.
Your last contact was ditching in a
valley of sand. Mohammed knew a
likely spot along your flight path.

GILES

So why isn't SEEKER here?

YANCY

They don't have Mohammed.

GILES

You know, I thought you handed me
and Binnie to the Reds.

YANCY

Binnie didn't. This business makes
you paranoid.

GILES

So when you said not to trust
anyone...

YANCY

I meant you could trust me.

GILES

Still, why?

YANCY

Follow you around? I snoop. You
were at the center of -- something.

GILES

Like a golf ball. And that's it?

YANCY

And I had no dog in the fight.

GILES

Translation?

YANCY

You seemed outnumbered.

GILES

You were the only one I suspected.

YANCY

You're batting a thousand. They're striking you a special medal, says scuttlebutt.

GILES

Imagine where they'll pin it.

A Land Rover drives towards them with Driver, Andy and Sloane.

The Land Rover STOPS. Yancy moves to slow down.

GILES

No.

YANCY

Don't you want --

GILES

Not a thing.

Yancy shrugs and GUNS it.

The jeep SAILS past the Land Rover and keeps going.

Giles lifts two fingers.

DRIVER

I say.

The Land Rover turns and chases the jeep into the sun.

END CREDITS AND THEME: The intro to "Supercar". (Martin Woodhouse and his brother wrote all the episodes.)