

TAYLORED ALTERATIONS

By Richard Tornello

The radio alarm came on. "Traffic and weather," the commercially excited and overly enthusiastic voice stated. The radio announcer should have said, 'gridlock and guess what today'.

It was a November Monday morning, just like most other mid November days. Winter was sniping at fall. And fall, fall was holding on with her warm weather fingers' last grasp, slowly slipping away, until that first rush of snow and

winter cold ended it all. Winter would then carry over for the next block of 90 days, or so. Winter would have his chance to hang on, clutching grabbing with the occasional freeze, trying not to let go.

A warm today was promised by the prognosticators. So, a bike ride for lunch was planned as opposed to the treadmill or elliptical. Artie always felt that he should have wood chips by these machines; the activity was so gerbil like.

Artie showered, shaved, brushed his teeth, his hair, and dressed. Artie wore jeans, a tee shirt, and sweater with coffee. That was his formal business attire. Business casual for the home office was sweats and socks with coffee. Coffee was sometimes literally part of the attire, when he spilled it.

As he walked to the kitchen, he stopped by his office on the second floor, which was down the hall from the bedroom suite. He turned the computer on, but instead of waiting for it to boot up, he headed down the seventeen stairs, on to the main floor, into the kitchen and set up the morning breakfast, and coffee. He turned on the satellite radio, and tuned it on to channel 30, loud enough to hear it in the office.

Artie fed Stella the Cat. Then he climbed back up the seventeen steps to his office, and raised the shades. He

looked over the street, watched a few of the cute Barbies running by, as they did every morning. He logged on to the system. He downloaded the weekend's resumes and junk mail. Then he went down stairs again. He forgot his coffee. He walked up to the second floor office, again. He had a sip. Now that was nice. This was the weekday routine.

Later he would sort through the emails, discard the junk, file those that just need filing, and finally review the good resumes.

Artie sat looking at the screen, sipping coffee. There would be no incoming client phone calls until after they got out of their usual Monday morning meetings. That gave him until noon or a bit later to gear up. This was the life of Artie, the headhunter.

Downloading the weekend and AM resume dump, Artie sorted through the obvious not-a-fit types, and deleted them. Then he began to read the ones that had some interest. He hit one that was rather extensive. "Oh shit, another fucking tome. When will these people get it? This is an exercise in

getting an interview. They're not writing a book," he said aloud to himself and to his cat Stella. She looked up, gave him a purry "ger-ow," and washed her face.

Something in this résumé caught his eye. The security clearance listed had an access code Artie had never seen. Artie occasionally received data that he knew was not supposed to be sent out. Usually it was an oversight by the security people who reviewed cleared resumes before they hit the street. Sometimes the candidate simply sent the resume out without going through the complete readout process. Artie held a clearance too. He would send a copy to his Facility Security Office. That was the drill. That was the law.

Artie ignored the clearance designation. That was one thing he could find out quickly enough. What did this guy have to say? Artie ran into some interesting people every now and then. This might be another good one, or a complete wacko. There were certainly enough crazies out there.

Yeah, yeah, satellite work, climate work, intelligence work, bla-bla-bla, same old stuff, and then on the second

page, a section of the resume had a part inserted with a different font and type set.

The section that read differently stated something about the CIA conducting research on the effects of climate change and national security. That was not news to Artie. That was in the open literature and magazines. What did catch his eye was the last few paragraphs and conclusion stating that, even though climate change was a human driven situation and we could make some re-alterations with climatic corrections, there was another issue that no one but the cleared scientists have been made aware. The sun has been heating up and there is little to nothing that can be done to correct for that. The effects will be disastrous, unless a solution is developed.

The document that was imbedded into the resume stated that three different governments have been working on a secret program. The success and outcome of the program was not a sure bet. Russia, China and the US have been, and planned to continue setting off very small nuclear bombs deep below active volcanoes. And, over the last ten years, they have been attempting to restart those that they believe can be

reignited. The collective mathematical guess was that the modeled level of ash, potentially spewed into the atmosphere, would block the sun's rays. The effect, it was hoped, would keep the temperature down at a level that would allow for the continuation of life. They expected, at worst, a possible mini ice age as was in the Middle Ages. At best, the model suggested the potential for the same effects as the Krakatoa volcano in 1883, resulting in a cooling of the earth.

The next related line stated:

'This data has been suppressed for fear that the populations will panic, followed by riots, mass migrations, and chaos that would spread beyond control.'

The following paragraph then began with more sections missing. It stated:

'... and additionally, the increase in climate warming has led to an increase in sea height/volume. The additional weight placed upon fault lines is now causing an increase in earth quakes. The model shows a potential rapid shifting of the continental plates, the effects of which are beyond the capacity of the current systems to model.'

Artie read and reread the resume. What to do? If this was truly classified, then he was obligated to destroy it and report the leak to his FSO. If not? Then what?

He wanted a copy to read later, so he printed a copy out, and hit the delete button. Better to get rid of the document on the computer. He'd call his friend at the agency, as soon as he printed it out. THEY know what to do.

That he did. They were rather quiet when he described the data that was imbedded in the resume. "Can you send me a copy?" they asked.

"Nope, I deleted it. But I do have a hard copy. I can fax it," he said.

"Do that. You have the number. Thanks, I have to go," they said curtly and hung up.

Artie looked at the phone. That was a first he thought.

About thirty to forty-five minutes later, there was a heavy thump of a knock on both the front and back doors. "What the...?" He pivoted the chair and looked out the office window. Three blacked out Chevy Tahoes were parked in front. Two men in dark suites, with comm devices in their ears, looked up and down the deserted street. They stood blocking the front of his street doorway.

Before Artie could get up to answer the door and see what was what, he heard a crashing noise. He looked up, surprised and said, "What are you doing in my hous..." phut, phut.

THE END