

The protagonist, Dr. Milt Davidson, a pathologist/researcher at a NYC medical school, is recruited by the CIA to spy on Russia's research on odors that target the brain. He gets entangled with Israeli and Russian female spies.

The Scenturion Spy: Book One - Becoming a Spy

By David M. Goldenberg

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**THE
SCENTURION
SPY**

BOOK ONE: BECOMING A SPY

DAVID M. GOLDENBERG

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1.

IT WAS NEARLY one o'clock on an ordinary Monday, and I was having lunch in the cafeteria of the medical center where I work. I had just finished my bowl of tomato soup — they have very good tomato soup there — when a tall man I didn't know walked up with a tray of food and asked if he could share my table.

Visitors to the hospital are always welcome in the cafeteria, so I didn't think much about it — though I did note that, with his blue double-breasted suit, crisp white shirt, and yellow tie, he didn't look like someone who'd come to visit a sick family member. I really wasn't in the mood for conversation — I wanted to enjoy my lunch while reflecting on the pathology lecture for second-year medical students that I'd just attended as a faculty member — but what else could I do?

“Be my guest,” I said, gesturing to the chair opposite me. As he placed his tray on the table, I noticed that he'd ordered a grilled cheese sandwich, iced tea, and a light salad with ranch dressing.

“Thank you, Dr. Davidson,” he said, taking his seat. I was surprised that he'd called me by name.

“Pardon me; I'm usually good at remembering faces, but have we met before?”

“No. My name is Bob Ehrlich. I spotted you from your description: 6 feet, 2 inches, physically trim — no extra weight but also not overtly muscular, short brown hair parted on his left side, an oval head with clear, clean facial features and thin lips, and large brown, penetrating eyes. And your ID badge confirmed it: *M. Davidson, MD, Ph.D., Pathology, Empire Medicine.*

“Nice to meet you,” I said, trying not to be obvious about eyeing his tray.

“I’m glad we can sit together privately,” he said, glancing about the room as he retrieved a small black leather case from his inside coat pocket. He opened it to show me a startling credential: *Robert Ehrlich, Special Agent, Central Intelligence Agency, United States of America*. The office address was in Lower Manhattan.

“What is this about?” I asked.

“You attended a conference on olfaction in Philadelphia recently, but we didn’t recognize your name from other events involving this kind of research. After researching you, we found it surprising that a physician doing cancer research had an interest in the sense of smell. It was suggested that I make your acquaintance and find out more.”

“There were at least two hundred and fifty attendees. Did you investigate every one of them?”

“We do have a list of all olfaction researchers in academia, government, and business, since olfaction is an area of special interest to us. And we like to know our resources — and your interest.”

“Well,” I said, “it’s a pretty simple story, really. During my time in med school at Dartmouth, I also pursued a Ph.D. in sensory physiology, specifically olfaction. This stemmed from my undergraduate studies, including neuroscience — learning about behavior and the importance of the sense of smell in the animal kingdom, especially mammals and, of course, humans. So, when I read about this conference just a couple of hours away, in Philadelphia, I decided — impulsively, I guess — to sign up and see if the field has advanced since my day.”

“And what was your conclusion?”

“I was very impressed with the progress made,” I said, dabbing my mouth with a napkin. “The finding that changes in olfactory acuity occur with a number of neurological diseases, and even viral infections, was stimulating. I think this is very exciting from a

scientific perspective, and lately, I've been thinking about it from a commercial perspective as well."

"Interesting," said Ehrlich, taking another quick look to see if anyone was observing us. "That is what we — as well as our adversaries — think, too," he said, lowering his voice.

"Really?" I said, "that's fascinating."

"Yes, it is. Listen, Dr. Davidson, do you have a few minutes to talk privately outside? I'd like to learn a little more about you and also to discuss how we might help each other."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, if you could help us with our olfaction research, perhaps we could reciprocate and be of assistance to you in your commercial interests."

I checked my watch and told him I could spare a half-hour if that would suffice. I had my teaching lab at three o'clock.

*

THE BLACK LINCOLN Town Car was parked at the curb about fifty feet away. When the driver saw us coming, he started the engine. Ehrlich opened the rear door, and I slid in first. "Jim, our driver, will take us for a short trip around the neighborhood while we chat," Ehrlich said, pulling the door shut. Jim nodded at me in the rear-view and slowly pulled away from the curb.

"Dr. Davidson, my colleagues at Langley asked me to confirm some information we have on you," said Ehrlich, "and to assess your ability and willingness to help your government in its security work. Your Ph.D. thesis involved the measurement of olfaction in humans, after developing an olfactometer. You also studied emotional or autonomic nervous system responses to an odor, and that's what we're interested in."

“You actually read my thesis?” I asked. “You’re now a member of a very small club.”

“We do our homework, Doctor. Permit me to summarize the main points and fill me in where needed.”

How much do they know about me?

“Okay,” I said tentatively. “Go ahead.”

“You’re the third and last child born to Libby and Larry Davidson. Your parents emigrated to the U.S. from the Soviet Union when they were twenty and twenty-two years old, respectively. Your parents had two other children — your brother, who was twelve years older than you, and your sister, who was ten years older. How am I doing?”

“Perfect. But continue.”

“Your family lived in a modest apartment in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, where your mother kept a kosher home, and you and your siblings were raised as traditional Jews, going to Hebrew school, having Bar Mitzvahs, and so on. The youngest of three children, you’re now forty-one years old.”

“That’s right,” I said softly.

“Your parents and sister are deceased, and your brother is retired after a career in real estate...”

I nodded — all true.

“Tell me about your boyhood and your schooling,” said Ehrlich. “Did you have hobbies? Who were your close friends?”

In spite of my reluctance, I complied. *Why, exactly, am I doing this?*

“Living in a crowded tenement in Williamsburg, I had to grow up quickly. I roamed the streets with neighborhood buddies at a very early age, playing on empty lots, stickball in the street, and later at the school yard or the basketball courts in the shadow of the Williamsburg bridge. I knew kids of all races and ethnicities, and as we got older, some of them became parts of rival gangs — African Americans, Latinos, or

Caucasians from a variety of backgrounds, mostly Irish, Italian, Jewish, and Polish.

“Most of us went on to John D. Wells Jr. High School. I really excelled there, getting involved in student government, first as the eighth-grade representative and then, in the ninth grade, as school president. This was basically a popularity contest, and I was lucky to be running against a Jewish girl from an affluent family. A lot of the kids voting were Puerto Rican girls, and they preferred me to the Jewish ‘princess.’ Anyway, the election was more important than the activities afterward, other than my being able to leave classes when there were student government meetings. But as I look back on that time, being elected president gave me confidence and a sense of being different.”

“Different how?”

“Not defined by my upbringing. Destined for a bigger life. I remember thinking I would like to become a judge – not knowing why and having no appreciation that I would need to go to law school.”

“My senior high years were uneventful,” I continued, “except for commuting daily to Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan for the late-morning session, and being more challenged academically than ever before. Commuting home during the afternoon rush-hour was truly combat training.

“I tried out for the football team but soon retired with a dislocated thumb. I wasn’t built to be a football player, but I was a very fast sprinter — critical to surviving on the streets of Williamsburg, by the way — and later on, at the University of Chicago, I played intramural football with the dormitory teams. In the first two years, I made second string on the basketball team, playing guard because I was fast and a good shooter. But this meant that I played, at most, two or three minutes per game. Whenever winning was hopeless, I got to play longer.”

“Tell me about your summer jobs,” said Ehrlich.

“One summer, I was a delivery boy in Manhattan, transporting boxes of costume jewelry between factories in the jewelry section with a hand truck. This got me into good physical shape and a tan, I recall – many days were in the 90’s. Another two summers, I worked as a busboy and then waiter at hotels in the Catskill mountains. It was there that I learned about the anthropology of wives and their kids living in these hotels during the week, visited by their ‘hardworking’ husbands on weekends. Some of the waiters, myself excluded, provided other forms of service to the women guests during the week.”

“Why not you?”

“Jewish guilt, I guess.”

Ehrlich nodded and smiled. “Thanks for this summary, Dr. Davidson. I’ll share it with my colleagues, and I expect that my supervisor, Dr. Brad Williams, will be in touch with you soon.” He signaled the driver to take us back to the medical center.

“In the meantime, we expect you to keep our meeting today strictly confidential. No mention to your colleagues at Empire State University, or ESU — you’re to tell no one. Is this understood?”

“I won’t tell anybody,” I said. “But I have to say, I really don’t know what to think about all this.”

“Brad Williams will clarify everything when he gets in touch. Good-bye, Dr. Davidson.”

I got out of the car and watched it disappear into the New York traffic.

Why did I tell him so much about myself, and what will this lead to? I guess when you’re questioned by a CIA officer, you drop your usual need for privacy.

2.

IT WAS A beautiful May morning when I removed my pre-owned 2009 Jaguar XKR convertible — my one major luxury — from its expensive garage a few blocks from my apartment. Dropping the top, I drove from Manhattan to Queens and across the Whitestone Bridge to the Hutchinson River Parkway, then north on I-95 toward Westport, Connecticut. It felt great to be out of the city with the breeze in my hair.

I was excited and nervous about being on my way to my very first meeting with a venture capital group. My lawyer and I hadn't yet applied for a patent, but I had been diligently gathering my thoughts in preparation for writing my business plan. My pitch to the venture capitalist community, involved saying:

The sense of smell, among the five major senses, is the least understood compared to taste, sight, touch, and hearing. It is basically a chemical sensing system whereby odorants bind to specific receptors in the two nostrils, and the resulting neuronal electrical signals are transmitted to the olfactory bulbs in the brain, from where the nerve signals are distributed to other parts of the brain. These cerebral functions are responsible for the identification of odors, memory, and emotion.

If one could make drugs into odors that can be delivered both to the blood and brain via the lining of the nose, a medical business opportunity of 'olfactory pharmacology' could be created. Just like perfumes and cosmetics influence behavior, olfactory drugs could be designed to more specifically affect moods, thinking, and even neurological diseases.

The almost twenty venture capital firms I contacted either gave me a polite decline, saying the project was too early for their consideration, or just failed to respond. But I had heard about this V.C.

group, Sequel Ventures, from a friend in product development at Bristol-Myers Squibb. Sequel had told Bristol about a new technology that Bristol invested in, a small gene therapy company in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Sequel planned to take this company public as part of the investment by 'big pharma' and reap big profits on their startup investment of only \$10 million.

It was an exciting thought. But how much should I say in our meeting? How much to reveal? With no patent yet, could I trust the V.C.s not to steal my idea?

A silly question: of course not. Yet, I decided to provide them with more information, since the sense of smell was not something that venture capitalists usually hear about. But this would not provide anything confidential to my business prospect:

Unlike sight and hearing, the sensitivity of the nose in humans is not precisely known, although some studies suggest that we can discriminate many thousands of olfactory stimuli or scents. Therefore, with hundreds of different olfactory receptors, it is much more sensitive than sight and hearing in terms of the number of stimuli that can be discriminated. These stimuli are usually mixtures of various odor molecules in different ratios. Since olfactory receptors in the nose that connect directly to the brain have been discovered, defined odors could be used to stimulate the brain and some of its functions instead of using pills or injections. Synthetic odors represent a new drug delivery method, particularly affecting human behavior and certain neurological diseases.

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WESTPORT IS ONE of the smaller of the many picturesque and affluent towns on the Connecticut coast. The town green is anchored by the typical statue of a Revolutionary War soldier with his rifle held high. At each end of the oval are the obligatory cannons, and quaint

shops surround the green and spill over to the intersecting streets leading to Long Island Sound.

My original contact at Sequel Ventures was with Bill Rhodes, the senior partner. I had written him a letter explaining that I'd been referred by our mutual acquaintance at BMS, and then I had described my idea very superficially, telling him also that I was in the process of writing a patent covering this invention. I said that if the subject were of interest to him, I would be willing to tell him more under a confidentiality agreement. I emphasized the uniqueness of the olfactory sense, and that it has so far never been explored in terms of making pharmaceuticals.

"We generally don't enter into CDAs until we're further along in discussions," Rhodes had told me when I followed up with a call. "We get a lot of proposals and select only a very few to pursue, but your letter did intrigue me," he admitted.

I was of course pleased, but I wondered how I could interest him in my idea if I couldn't disclose it beyond a general description. "Let's worry about that when you get here," Rhodes said.

So now here I am, waiting for the senior partner of a billion-dollar life science fund at Sequel to come out to meet me in their reception area. All around me were framed announcements, or 'tombstones' of public offerings of their many investments displayed — Centercede, Immunoproton, Medattack, Therapy Seeds, and others, working with such prominent bankers as Lehman Brothers, Oppenheimer, Salomon, J.P. Morgan. If this were to impress visitors and potential clients, it worked.

Finally, Bill Rhodes came out to greet me in the reception area. "Dr. Davidson," he said. "Thanks for coming. I'm Bill Rhodes."

"Call me Milt," I said, standing to shake his hand.

He smiled and escorted me to a conference room, where he immediately took a seat at the middle of the widest part of the long

table, motioning me to sit directly across from him. “Would you like coffee or a cold drink?”

“I’m fine,” I answered. Bill Rhodes was a powerful presence, the walking epitome of a confident, hard-driving, and financially comfortable player in both the financial and social worlds of New York and Connecticut. His tan attested to his hours of sailing, tennis, or golf — probably all three — with the ‘right’ people who played along the Connecticut shore of the Long Island Sound.

“I’d like to have one of our analysts join us,” he said and made a quick call. Soon ‘Robert Selden, M.D., Ph.D.,’ as it said on his card, came in, greeted me, and sat down next to Rhodes.

Selden explained that he’d been working at Sequel for about a year, after earning a Ph.D. in physiology from Rockefeller University, and then an M.D. at Cornell medical school across the street on Manhattan’s Upper East Side. After doing an internship at a Cornell-affiliated hospital in New York, Selden decided to go into investment banking, he explained, saying:

“Medicine intrigued me from an academic perspective, but I was anxious and often uncomfortable on the ward managing patients. I got interested in the pharmaceutical side of medicine and took a summer course at Columbia on the business side of drug development and marketing, getting intrigued with the new sciences being pursued in biotechnology.

“I read the brief summary of your business idea,” Selden continued, “and found it both intriguing and quite radical. The notion of developing scents to affect different behavior patterns on a more objective, scientific basis is interesting, but I’m wondering how it could be the basis of a business.”

I could tell that Rhodes wasn’t pleased with Selden’s launching right into the matter — it tipped me off that there was real curiosity, maybe even interest, in my project. At this point, though, I wasn’t sure

what to say. My attorney had warned me that until I had a patent that was found to be valid by the patent and trademark office — which we might not know for at least a year or two after filing — it could be treacherous to reveal too much. If I discussed an aspect that the patent wouldn't gain patent protection, I could risk its being adopted by another party.

“I can't really get into more specifics until we have a CDA,” I said.

“Oh yes,” said Rhodes. “Bob has our standard form for you to sign.”

With that, Selden opened a folder and took out two copies of an eight-page confidentiality agreement and slid it over the table to me. I read through it quickly.

It looks reasonable, but what do I know?

“Well,” I said, “my attorney wants to review all agreements before I sign them, so maybe I can just take this along and get back to you in a couple days.”

Selden was noticeably displeased, but not the very cool Bill Rhodes. He just nodded to me and sat back, waiting for my next move.

“Let me just give you an overview of my technology and business plan, and we can get into more specifics once the CDA is in place — and, of course, once you've decided if you have an interest.”

Rhodes again nodded, so I went on.

“Although I'm a practicing and academic research pathologist, involved in studying genes that may code for certain products made by cancer cells, I did research on olfaction during my graduate training for a Ph.D., while also completing my M.D. training at Dartmouth. I was interested in how defined odors could be measured and how they affected one's emotions.”

Rhodes seemed perplexed, but Selden became more inquisitive. “What kind of behavior modification are you referring to, and what odors, in particular, were involved?” Selden asked. “Have you

identified any new chemical classes? And, more importantly, how do you envision this as a new method of treating disease?”

We're now treading on proprietary information being developed in my patent filing, so I need to be very careful here.

“Pheromones are well-known as chemical substances that can affect behavior,” I said, “and are usually used in the context of arousing sexual behavior in animals by the odors which contain these chemicals. It’s well known that odors affect hormone production, even in humans. But although humans have these, they haven’t been chemically defined, at least not extensively. I believe I have the ability to do this and to incorporate those related to specific behavioral responses, in different classes of individuals, based on certain genetic classes found in different populations. But I really can’t get more specific until we have the CDA in place.”

“In my view,” I continued, “this can revolutionize the perfume business, and provide all sorts of behavior-modifying odors, from those that influence eating patterns, shopping, moods, and, of course, sexual arousal. Olfaction is also being studied in relation to disease, both from a diagnostic as well as a pathophysiological perspective.”

As soon as I said it, I regretted saying so much. Now Bill Rhodes’s initial skepticism had changed to something resembling interest, at least based on the intense way he was looking at me. Bob Selden was taking down copious notes.

“What genetic patterns would you define?” Selden said.

“This is really part of the invention,” I said.

“Can you elaborate more on therapeutic applications?” asked Rhodes. I hesitated to respond. “Well, Dr. Davidson,” Rhodes said, sliding back his chair, “we do appreciate your visiting with us. Please have your counsel review our CDA while we give this further consideration. We’ll give you a decision of our initial interest or declination in a week or so. Okay?”

“Fine,” I said. I stood to shake hands and leave.

“By the way,” said Rhodes, “are you showing this to any other venture capital firms?”

In fact, I wasn’t, but I didn’t want them to know that. “I have a couple of appointments set up through my patent attorney, and a friend of mine presented the general idea to his companion, who is involved in the perfume business.”

“Well,” said Rhodes, “I wouldn’t spread it around too much. The venture capital community is very small and well connected.”

17.

AT ONE O’CLOCK precisely, I was picked up by the usual black Lincoln Town Car with Brad Williams in the back seat. He told me we were going to a special safe house about twenty minutes away. “I need you to put on this blindfold,” he said.

I didn’t appreciate this over-the-top intrigue, but I assumed he had a good reason. So, for the next nearly half hour, I rode blindfolded. “Why was the auto-recording device on your CIA cell phone deactivated?” he asked in a perturbed voice.

“Why was this inserted in the first place, compromising my privacy?” He didn’t answer, but I could tell he was waiting for me to do better. “Marie Chalfont found it and removed it,” I then admitted matter-of-factly.

“Well,” said Brad,” it’s surprising to us that a Mossad agent could discover your CIA affiliation so easily. Our meeting today is to determine where we are and the risks in continuing with you.”

Is this my out?

While there were pluses to being connected with them, I saw nothing but problems with my Pharmascent Sciences plans, my patents, and my freedom to collaborate with other parties. I didn’t believe these were nice guys when doing the government’s spy business, and I suspected they couldn’t care less about my research and business interests independent of their own needs.

In a while, we slowed down, and I could feel the car turning. Then we stopped. Brad helped me out of the car and guided me into a building, then onto an elevator. We went up for less than 20 seconds or so. Then, as the elevator doors opened and we stepped out, Brad said, “Okay, you can take the blindfold off now.”

We walked down a corridor with what appeared to be various offices and stopped in front of a door marked 511. Brad used his key

to let us into a room furnished as a sitting room, where two other men and a woman were waiting. One of the men was Robert Ehrlich, who started this whole thing months before by approaching me in the hospital cafeteria. He didn't look as friendly now.

I was asked to sit in a leather chair across from the others, like in a witness chair. On the coffee table in front of us was a recording machine. Brad reached over and turned it on. Then he introduced me to his grim-faced colleagues. "Dr. Davidson, this is Judy Reagan, who is a member of the chemical weapons team; Jim Rossi, who focuses on a number of areas, including counterespionage; and Bob Ehrlich, whom you've met. Bob manages some of our operations here in New York."

Jim Rossi started the questioning. "Milt, we informed you during the Vienna conference that Marie Chalfont was a Mossad agent. So why did you get involved with her and disclose your CIA relationship?"

What could I say that wasn't going to be embarrassing? "Well," I said, "she's clearly more experienced at this than I am."

Bob Ehrlich shook his head dismissively. "What did you do, hold up a sign saying the CIA is interested in chemical weapons using smells?"

I wasn't used to being talked to that way, and I shot back with a definite edge in my voice. "Look, Bob — in my line of work, we don't use aliases and play secrecy games. So maybe we ought to just agree to disagree, and I'll go my way and forget everything that's happened. Okay?" I could feel my face getting red.

"I'm afraid it's not that simple," said Brad. "First, we can't risk your walking away now — you may not know everything, but what you do know is too much. Second, we need to get this involvement with Marie and the Mossad under control. And third, you've established contacts, such as Dr. Borofskov in Vienna, who are

important to us. You fell into a honey trap, and now you need to help us take advantage of that.” Suddenly, everyone appeared to be stifling a smile.

“Finally, and most importantly,” Brad again spoke, “we lost a CIA officer at the Vienna conference, which was clearly also related to his monitoring you and some of the other participants.”

Then Judy Reagan looked at me seriously. “Dr. Davidson, your involvement with Marie Chalfont has come to the attention of the highest levels of both the U.S. and Israeli espionage and counterespionage groups. Our director and the head of the Mossad are in discussions about you and Marie and how this should be handled in the future.”

Reagan continued. “Our order for today was to make it perfectly clear that you’re not to continue in any Agency-oriented discussions with Marie Chalfont. On the other hand, you *are* to maintain your relationship with her until we can get more clarity and instructions. She is not to know of this meeting. She is not to know that we’re in discussions with her bosses at the Mossad. She is not to know of *any* of our plans going forward unless you are so advised by us.”

Now it was my turn to stifle a smile.

Apparently, Judy Reagan didn’t like the expression on my face. “Dr. Davidson,” she said, “we’re talking about matters of national defense, in which many lives are at stake. We have already lost an agent, who now has a widow and fatherless children. We will not tolerate any disloyalty, intentional or not, by you. And we have fairly broad powers to do what is necessary to protect our nation.”

Clearly, that’s a threat.

“Are you blaming me for Charles Hughes’s murder?” I confronted them.

Ms. Reagan ignored my question, and continued: “We know it’s going to be difficult managing Ms. Chalfont, who’s a very well-trained

spy and active field agent. She, of course, knows or suspects a lot about you and your CIA affiliation, but you have to try to be less communicative, yet let her continue trusting you. Has she told you anything about her activities last Thursday?"

"No, is there something more I should know?"

"Her main reason for being in New York, my handsome spy," she chuckled, "was not you, but interrogating a Hezbollah agent who is part of an ISIS cell working in Brooklyn, and whom the Mossad was thinking of recruiting as a double-agent. Marie is fluent in Arabic, especially the dialects in Yemen, and knows enough of their various cells and leaders to determine whether this Arab was being sincere."

"So, she wasn't here to do perfume business, shop, or take me to the opera?" I asked disappointedly.

"No, but she knows how to manage her time and objectives. In an hour, she learned that the potential mole was a plant, brought to deceive and mislead us. Neither the Mossad nor we had anyone else who could have trapped him into revealing this."

"How did it end?" I asked naively.

"Let's just say that neither we nor the Hezbollah cell will have need of his services. He just never walked out of our consulate to return to Brooklyn," Judy ended this conversation.

"Okay," I said, "I understand now. But I really am a novice at this; you have to be patient until I get more experience, or you find someone else."

"We're going to help you with that," said Brad, sounding less hostile. "In addition to visiting Langley again, you'll need to get special training."

"Wait a minute," I said. "I have a full-time job. I can't just 'go off' to some spy school. What'll I tell my department chairman? My dean?"

“We’ll take care of that,” Brad said. “I’ll be in touch soon once we’ve come to some decisions. In the meantime, here’s a new cell phone with encryption capability. Use it to stay in regular contact with me, and try keeping it away from any of your future lovers.” Even I had to smile at this.

*

RETURNING TO MY office, I checked for messages. One was from Dr. Bickers, asking me to drop by his office. He had left his message at 1:20 p.m., and it was now almost four o’clock, so I went immediately down the hall to see him. His office was open, so I just knocked softly and walked in.

“Milt,” he said, looking up from his desk. “Come in and have a seat.” Then he asked how I was and how the work was going, which sounded to me like he had something more serious on his mind — which he got to right away. “Some of the staff think you’ve been distracted lately, Milt, so I wanted to see if I could be of any help or maybe a sounding board.”

So, my stress is showing. I didn’t quite know what to say. “Oh, John, thanks — I’ve become a servant to the CIA, I may be involved in chemical and olfactory weaponry, I’m trying to start a business on the side, and I have a new girlfriend” couldn’t be shared with my department chairman.

“Thanks for your concern, John,” I said. “I have some exciting new findings with my lab project, which I hope to share with you soon, but I’m very engaged with these experiments while having some other personal things to take care of. So, I guess I’m a little pressured.”

“Well,” he said, patting me on the shoulder, “I’m here if you need any fatherly advice. But, of course, I don’t want to pry.”

I was glad to get out of his office and back to my own, since I knew he was a keen observer and probably knew I was giving him only a partial story.

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PART OF THE stress that others were noticing was due to my concerns about protecting my intellectual property rights, which meant I needed to invest in another expensive phone call with John Sackler. Amazingly, I got through to him immediately, and he said he generally liked the most recent patent draft I'd sent him. "That's great, John," I said, "but this call is about a couple of issues that are troubling me. I need your advice."

"Sure thing," he said.

"First, I'm a full-time employee of ESU, and I recall that my contract states that all inventions have to be submitted to the patent committee for review — and that if a patent is pursued or awarded, the assignee is ESU. But this olfaction invention of mine is totally unrelated to my work at the university and was conceived after hours and on weekends. On top of that, it's mostly prophetic and not reduced to practice. So how do I handle this?"

"Well," he said, "first — as I explained when you first visited with me — we need to determine if indeed you do have an invention. And if you do, we need to figure out how it is or isn't governed by your employment agreement. You may have to discuss this with an employment attorney who'll need to review your contract. I can give you a couple of names."

Always another damn lawyer.

"Okay, thanks. My next question is a little more diffuse. I am a consultant to the government," I said, "and this required a confidentiality agreement that bars me from sharing with any other party any information on this — I'm not even supposed to reveal that

this arrangement *exists*. I'm having serious concerns about this arrangement and would like legal advice on how I might end it. But if I talk to anyone about it — you, for example — am I violating my secrecy agreement?"

"Confidentiality agreements should not be consummated unless each side has separate legal advice," he said, "so I gather you did not, since you're asking what should have been addressed before you signed one. In any event, it's your right to have legal representation in any business or private transaction, even with a government agency. So, I don't understand your concern."

"John," I said, "this isn't just *any* government agency. This is one that's involved in secret and security issues."

"My comment still holds. If I understand you correctly, you'll need an attorney experienced in dealing with the government and some of its more clandestine agencies. Does this in some way involve your invention and business plans for the olfactory company?"

"Yes," I responded, "but it's more expansive than that. It includes other activities of a highly secret nature."

John sent me an email before the end of the day, with two names each for employment and government contract attorneys, all of whom he knew well and assured me would be capable of handling my problem.

I jotted John a quick thanks, adding, "They look expensive."

He wrote back: "Another reason to discuss doing this with your employer. If you delay, they could refuse to reimburse you for any initial bills you'd paid."

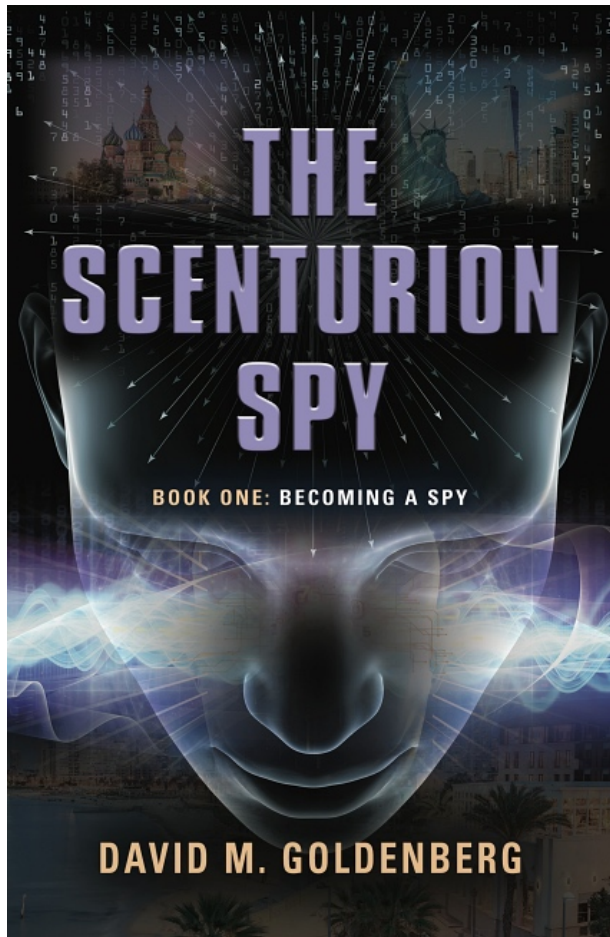
*

AT JUST BEFORE 6:00 p.m., I got a text from Brad Williams, thanking me for our meeting and saying that they now had plans to share with me. He would pick me up in his car tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.

if that worked for me. He wouldn't need more than an hour, at most. I acknowledged and agreed.

I was glad for the chance to meet with him again so soon before I consulted one of these attorneys. I needed to have a frank discussion with Brad regarding my involvement and their expectations. I planned to make it clear that I have another life and wouldn't simply jump every time they called.

Yet, here I am, jumping at every ping of my CIA phone.



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