

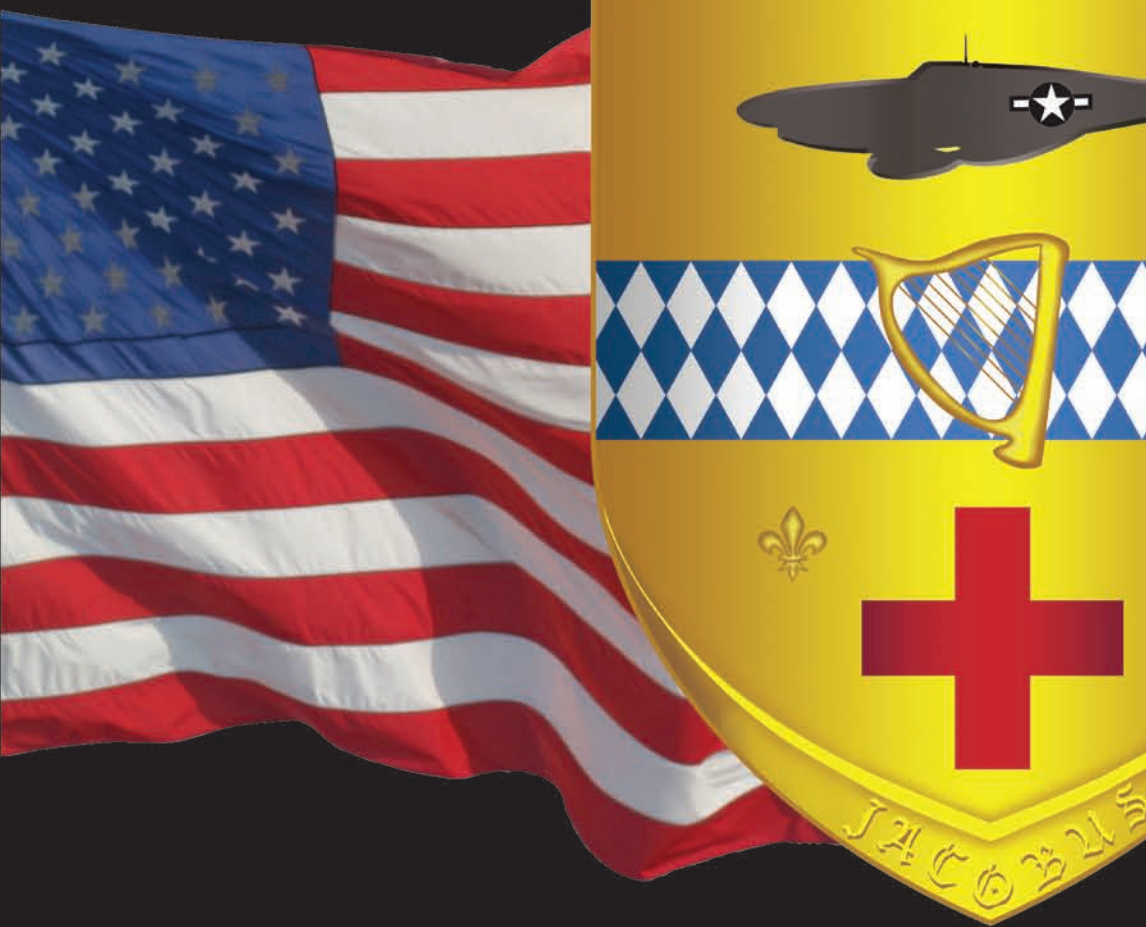
Farewell, My Republic is a surreal political satire. To reduce crime, the President and Congress inaugurate various illegal acts, including domestic bombing. A constitutional crisis and convention destroy the republic, replacing it with a thinly disguised, divine right monarchy.

Farewell, My Republic

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Farewell, My Republic



John F. Binder

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CHAPTER TWO

FORGING THE WAR AGAINST CRIME

Shortly before one a.m. the next morning, Congressmen began arriving in the House of Representatives. These were the select group of Senators and Representatives, numbering one hundred, who had received notices of the extraordinary joint session. They had no idea what the session was going to deal with. The unusual time and the information that the Vice-President was going to “run” the meeting were curious enough, to say nothing of the absence of the 335 other Congressmen, but the lack of any media people in the area and the presence of armed guards were ominous.

People in the room were beginning to feel very uneasy. Some were wondering whether World War III had started, while others feared it had already ended.

“What the hell’s this all about?” everyone was asking. The Vice President assured the Congressmen that there was nothing to worry about. As the last arrivals entered the room, the guards closed and locked the doors. The Vice President gavelled the distinguished representatives of the republic to order. The miscellaneous conversations buzzed down to silence.

“Ladies and gentlemen [there indeed were three females among the group]. We’re here for a little fun and then some serious business. Just relax. We’ll have some refreshments later, too. We hope you’ve found the anti-pornography meetings...a stimulation to your thinking. But first we’re going to do a couple of songs.

“Let’s start with *When the Saints Go Marching In*,” shouted the Vice President with great enthusiasm. “That ought to get the old adrenaline flowing here at one a.m.”

A cacophony ensued. Congressmen sang in groups, all out of synchronization with each other, while the Vice President waved his arms wildly, grinning and laughing, and stamping his foot in an effort to bring some semblance of togetherness into existence. Many feigned groaning after his attempts, thus entering into the *gemutlichkeit* atmosphere the music director was creating. There was a sizable number of the group who were quite incredulous at all this, but they could only sit through the singular performance.

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“You sure are a great bunch of guys and gals!” the Vice President announced as the first song ended. “Now let’s do *Waiter, waiter, I’m as hungry as can be*.” He was a member of various business clubs in Washington, and this song was a regular part of the lunch time festivities at these meetings. He began the song and suddenly appeared startled and banged his gavel sharply.

“Ladies and gentlemen! I forgot the Pledge of Allegiance. All stand, please.”

His oversight gave some of the body a chance to show him that his brief forgetfulness was not going to be held against him. They launched into *You’re a Grand Old Leopard*, one of the anthems of club he and they belonged to.

“I pledge...pledge...allegiance...allegiance” as the legislators followed his lead. “One nation, indivisible, under God—or under God, indivisible, God damn it!” The vice President was muttering now.

“UNDER GOD, INDIVISIBLE,” the body corrected him.

It was time to get down to the business at hand. Only the dozen who had been at the meeting with the President the previous day knew what this session was all about. Some had talked about it with some of the newcomers, but there was little clarity about what was going to happen.

The Vice President’s opening remark did not make matters any clearer.

“Are we going to blow Grant off or not?” he asked abruptly.

Most looked around, puzzled, and began talking agitatedly about what the Vice President meant. One ultra loyal representative got the floor and answered the opening question pointedly.

“Indeed, Grant must and will be blown off. I have never thought that he was a good general or President, and nothing he has done lately has made me change my mind. I say destroy all the records of his administration. They are black pages in our history.”

Representative Fogg who had made these remarks was always ready to back the administration’s proposals, whether he knew anything about them or not. He had recently been released from the Washington Hospital for Criminally Insane Lawyers, having earned his freedom by successfully prosecuting President Grant for crimes against southerners in a mock trial staged at the hospital.

“I’m sorry, but you’re out of order, Representative Fogg. It’s nice to see you again. Welcome back.” said the Vice President.

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Following Senator Stuart's whispered suggestion to the Vice President that he should go into a bit more detail about the matter at hand after his opening blunt question, he proceeded to give a brief summary of the Grant tale of woe, explaining what the President wanted and why.

"I promise that there will be a full debate on the question of war, if anyone wants a debate, and in addition a number of you have said that you have some legislation to propose after the debate and resolution of the question. [This was the group who had the plans for the new companies that would be needed to run operations before and after the attack.] Okay? How many of you want to discuss and debate the question further before proceeding to a vote?"

Eighty-five wanted a debate. There were a number of reasons at work moving the Congressmen to decide for a full debate. Some hoped to prevent the bombing of Grant and thought they could convince their colleagues to think the same way. Others simply wanted to find out more about Grant and the reasons for the President's harsh recommendations. No one, except those present at the meeting with the President yesterday, had ever heard of Grant. There were also many reluctant to follow the President's lead blindly, since they felt that as the legislative branch of the government they had something to do with sovereign power and therefore should have something to say about the wording of any final resolution.

Furthermore, many thought that a formal declaration of war was essential if the full advantage was to be derived from the unique opportunity the President had given them—what the Vice President had called a blank check—in making them responsible for all aspects of Operation Crimestop, including being the recipients of criticism and outrage in case the whole enterprise was not favorably received. The leadership, therefore, had made a point of talking to individual Congressmen about the need for them to exercise their right of free speech and to be mindful of the dangers of being too hasty to condemn.

In the meantime, the Vice President would have to preside over a debate whose outcome was really a foregone conclusion. It would simply require a bit of time and talk for the Congressmen to be convinced that they were convinced of the merits of destroying Grant.

Those opposing Grant's destruction spoke first, since the speakers who would support it were still deciding what to say. They

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had had, after all, little time to get acquainted with the President's recommendations.

Senator Larabida rose to speak. Like the other few who had opposed Operation Crimestop at the earlier meeting with the President, he had been brought to the joint session by the armed guards. His presence demonstrated that the President had been true to his word that even the opposition would be represented at the session in proportion to its total congressional strength. The Senator was one of twenty-five of this group, twenty-five per cent, about right in terms of the opposition's strength.

"This proposal to destroy Grant is barbarous in the extreme. It is against all decency and every principle of a free society. If people in Grant are in fact guilty—if indeed that is the word—what is it that they are guilty of? Being out of work? Fornication? If the citizens of Grant have committed actual crimes, then they must be given due process. Nothing could be clearer to anyone who calls himself an American. Furthermore, the crime statistics for Grant collected by the Commission on the Cities [all present now had a copy of them, as well as the summary report] is a patent absurdity."

The Senator elaborated on these points at some length and sat down exhausted. He could barely believe the reality he was participating in. The opposition to the destruction of Grant in essence repeated the Senator's points. A number of them spoke eloquently and with great passion, some weeping and shouting.

After more than an hour of speeches denouncing the plan, Representative Merkin noted to one of his colleagues, "All those against have only got two arguments, 'It's illegal and immoral,' and everyone's repeating them. They're going nowhere. How far can you get with that? Shit, we've got 'em."

This view was essentially correct. In any case once they were prepared, the most interesting speeches came from those who supported the destruction of Grant.

Representative Penworthy, another fierce supporter of the President, rose to explain by way of terrible example why Grant had to go.

"I have recently read a fine book, *Satan Ate Rome*, by the Reverend William Maistoso, which is a study of why Rome fell. He explains that unemployment, immorality, disrespect for the Praetorian Guard, and a perverse and unbounded desire for socialism led to the

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death of that once great empire. We have in Grant, as an example of what in fact is a national problem, the same ingredients for disaster. By destroying Grant we can make an example which will certainly bring the rest of the country into line. *Delenda est Grant!*"

Senator Stuart suddenly got up and insisted, "Rome's fall was inevitable for it was after all only the city of man. Moreover, the sack of Rome in 410 was just what the doctor ordered. Even the trees failed Rome: a catastrophic paper shortage which nearly put the oppressive bureaucracy out of business also played a part in the downfall."

One of his colleagues told Stuart to shut up before he ruined the whole thing. The Vice President ruled him out of order. Penworthy resumed.

"Let me give you an example of what goes on in Grant. A dropout from the Grant Agricultural and Mining College, insane with marijuana and in an hallucinating state sexually assaulted an octogenarian woman..."

"Shame, shame! Why don't they stick to their own race?" several Congressmen yelled out.

"...imagining her to be his common-law girl friend. [The Vice President muttered, loudly enough for most in the session to hear, "She must have been a real looker."] The poor woman died, but not before her syphilis-induced madness caused her to...I can barely bring myself to say it...to fondle a goat wrapped in an American flag in the children's clothing section of the local dry goods store. It is tragic to have to add that the dropout in question is from one of America's oldest and best-loved families. His grandfather was the inventor of urinal deodorant pellets."

Representative Penworthy sat down, shaking his head solemnly. It was clear that Grant's story was not going to be a pretty one. One Congressman reported that "a certain Mrs. Smith, on the way out of town to meet her lover, had turned into a pillar of salt while glancing in the rear-view mirror of her car." There were a number of loud guffaws from the Congressmen on this one.

Senator Chalmers approached the problem philosophically. "What do the great political thinkers have to tell us about the problem of a political society with a rotten spot in it? Very little, I must say. I have looked through the *Syntopicon* of the *Great Books*, and rest assured, they are great—Plato, Dante, people like that—and I could

find nothing. What about the *Reader's Guide*? Zero. But at last the hint of an answer came to me.

"In the Bible there are signposts for those who know how to read them. For example, in pursuing the *Epistle to the Romans*, I found the following: 'The just shall live by faith.' 'Not much, perhaps, but a beginning. Do we not also read something about if an eye causes you to think or do evil, pluck it out? Or cut off an arm if it brings grave danger to the person as a whole.

"Putting these two ideas together, we can see that the unjust will live without faith, as is the case in Grant, where according to a recent survey only five per cent of the people adhere to a religion.

"By the way, as an example of how impious Grant residents are, people there are reported to have said, while laughing sarcastically, why should they go to church when all their prayers have already been answered—meaning we've sent them so much money over the years which they have scandalously squandered they've got everything they want or need. What scoundrels!

"Let me continue. We have also seen that we are exhorted to remove deadly evil from our midst, and by whom? God Himself! Doesn't his command mean just a little more than our puny laws and so-called rights?"

"Yes!" many shouted back, indicating that it did.

"It is clear," Chalmers continued, "that Grant must be obliterated."

Senator Stuart again jumped to his feet.

"Martin Luther is the ultimate source of all the evils under which we groan today. Though I agree that Grant has to be removed, I am troubled that you and Luther share the same inspiration."

The Vice President wondered not so quietly what the hell Stuart was talking about, and once more ruled him out of order.

"How did this lunatic ever get elected?" Merkin wondered.

"I've got news for you, Senator. He's not the only lunatic here, just the most outspoken." Thus, Senator Jameson.

Senator Chalmers, surprised by assent from even a few, was temporarily stunned and lost his opportunity to go on, as the Vice President recognized one of the many others who were warming to the task of denouncing Grant and insisting that they be recognized. Chalmers had for some years been the butt of his colleagues' unkind remarks and was used to seeing them walk out on his speeches. In

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an effort to become one of the boys he once introduced a bill to reduce the width of all railroad tracks in the country by three inches, citing the interstate commerce clause in the Constitution as his authority for suggesting such a move. Though he offered a number of weighty arguments for the plan—it would leave more room for flowers and grass, make walking through tunnels easier, make trains cozier, conserve wood, and provide jobs, and all this by the simple expedient of moving only one rail over—it was defeated. One of his colleagues said that this kind of “horseshit legislation was okay for city councils and state legislatures, but it won’t go here. Get a little class, will ya.”

The next speaker, Senator Mary Cook, moved the discussion to a more substantive level. Her speech was lengthy and explained in great detail the crime problem in Grant as reported. She spoke of the multi-million dollar programs that had been developed to correct it, how they all had failed, and how crime had doubled in Grant in the last two years. This was a re-hash of themes, but it gave the leadership a chance to button-hole Congressmen to line up their votes in support of the bombing plan, though it didn’t take much effort to assure that. Clearly, most had been selected for their reliability and limited intellectual and ethical powers. Nevertheless, promises of good things to come after war was declared were absolutely guaranteed. “There’ll be enough for everyone,” the leadership was telling everyone. “Just stick with us.”

A few did need special talking to, however. Representative Merkin cornered Representative Whitman and was offering him a deal.

“You support the bombing, and I’ll see to it that you get support on that monument you want for victims of hippie-spread gonorrhoea, the bastards. The hippies, I mean.”

The one Congressman the leadership was not quite certain of and definitely wanted on their side was Representative Bede, aged one hundred and one, and the oldest member of the House. Bede had been flown in from the West Coast on what many thought was his deathbed.

“I remember when Thomas Jefferson addressed the House. Did you know he was cross-eyed?” he said to his colleagues as he was wheeled in on a litter.

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"We must have missed that session," one of the Senators remarked.

For the past twenty years, Bede had imagined a number of unlikely things in his role as the oldest member of Congress. He was also fond of noting with a leer that not only was he the oldest member of the house, but that he had the oldest member in the House. Bede was very unhappy about being brought to Washington when he learned that the purpose was to decide the fate of Grant. He thought that the baseball issue was to be settled. When he was told that the Grant Vikings softball team had a 1 and 117 record and was in favor of the bonus, he was glad that he had come after all.

"Those bums, " he said. "They can't play ball, and they want the bonus, too. Hell, they oughta be bombed."

"Exactly what we were thinking," Representative Merkin told him.

Like most of the other stories about Grant this early morning, these charges about the softball team were a total fabrication, since no one knew whether Grant had a softball team or not.

At this point, Senator Cook was summing up her remarks with a telling anecdote of Grant's crime problem.

"I understand that for the past ten years the mail in Grant has been kept in a large warehouse undelivered. Nearly all the mailmen before then were killed while on their rounds, and no one has been willing to take the job since. The city administration had considered using armored trucks and police to deliver the mail, but all the vehicles were destroyed by pacifist gangs."

When Cook finished speaking, Representative Johnson, an outspoken conservative, followed. His focus was to be on Grant's "gratitude."

"Grant has always been the beneficiary of special attention from the people of the United States. It was among the first areas to have the benefits of industry. Until fifty years ago it was a flourishing coal mining town, providing thousands of jobs, a high standard of living, fine churches, schools, and banks. People from the eastern parts of the country came in large numbers to build that town. Great fortunes were made in those days by rugged, hard-working individuals who put their shoulders to the wheel and built great enterprises. You didn't hear whining then about anyone needing government help. They helped themselves.

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“As time went by, the mines became less and less productive, until the old ones had to be abandoned and new, more efficient strip mines were developed. Again the people of the United States helped Grant out. Federal tax breaks for the mining companies’ new strip mining equipment were provided to give them the incentive to keep Grant flourishing. The American people indicated their willingness to subsidize that necessary help through higher personal income taxes. But as happens, even these mines were exhausted, and the town again seemed doomed.”

Johnson was getting angry.

“I emphasize here the ‘seemed doomed’ because I believe the whole thing was an illusion which the town bought so that it could wallow in self-pity. It was never doomed. That was just their excuse—a convenient one while they’ve been putting their filthy, lazy hands in the American till ever since—to the tune of a half-billion dollars in the last thirty years.

“So Grant seemed doomed. So the coal mines were exhausted. So what’s the big deal? Did they dig for more mines? No! Did they prospect for gold or uranium? No! There was a twenty-seven per cent depletion allowance for all those, but no one in Grant had the get up and go to go get it. They blew it. They just sat around crying crocodile tears in their champagne paid for by guess who.

“When my oil wells went dry, I didn’t sit around saying the world owed me a living. I drilled new ones and they came in. When my uranium mines were exhausted, I built a plastics factory and bought IBM and Xerox stock. People in Grant could have bought those stocks dirt-cheap fifteen-twenty years ago, the same as I did, but they were so busy giving everyone the shaft—the mineshaft, ha! —that...”

Senator Stuart suddenly jumped up from his seat.

“*Gemeinschaft* gap! That’s what Grant has! That’s why there’s so much crime there. It’s dog eat dog. No sense of an organic social order.” He seemed to have just discovered something. He looked amazed. Once more the Vice President ruled him out of order.

“Somebody shut that asshole up!” he growled at those near him.

Representative Johnson continued. “...they didn’t even bother to keep up with the market.

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“But let’s get to the real point here. It’s simple. Grant is un-American. It flies in the face of everything we stand for. It laughs at decent, hard-working people, and what’s worse, it’s a standing temptation to everyone to follow its lead and get on the gravy train of irresponsibility.

“You know, people are defined by what they do. When you meet people you always ask first off, ‘What do you do?’ Before anything else. You are what you do. So what’s somebody who doesn’t do anything? That’s right—he’s a nobody, he’s a nothing.

“Sure, getting helped is necessary sometimes. I’ll admit that. I mean if you’re sick, of course you go to a doctor. But you don’t move in with him! You don’t hang around his neck all the time with one hand picking his pocket. Too much help turns you into a leach, a bum. And that’s Grant’s story—the whole town’s a bunch of criminals and leaches on top of it. Did you ever hear the line, ‘They toil not, neither do they spin?’ Well that’s Grant. Oh...wait a minute! I take that back. They toil all right. Yeah, they sure do. They put in overtime screwing us! And they spin, too. Right. They spin immoral fibers. They even grow things there in Grant, but it’s a one-crop area—moral rot! That’s what grows there, and last year they had a bumper crop.

“Ladies and gentlemen, Grant’s a cancer. Who needs it? Who wants it? I say let’s get it the hell out of our sight and the sooner the better. Blow it to pieces!”

Johnson got a fine hand for this speech. When the applause died down, Representative Paton, the next speaker, announced he would deal with the efforts of United States’ citizens to help the people of Grant get back on their feet. Paton, the old liberal, was going to demonstrate that even liberals wanted Grant destroyed.

“You know, I used to think like Congressman Johnson—that was years ago, when I was a child.” He smiled. He and Johnson had baited each other for years. “But the good old days of tough individualism, if they ever were, are gone for good. We live in a new world, and have for some time, with new problems and conditions and opportunities, and these have to be met with new ideas and new programs. I would certainly be one of the first to admit that it’s proper for the government to help people out in the socio-economic realm, and you all know I have advocated many programs involving government assistance over the years. But I must admit that Grant troubles even me. Let me tell you what’s been tried there for the past

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thirty years to alleviate Grant's depressed condition and reduce crime and unemployment.

"What happened with the hopeful programs we developed and funded for Grant? I wish I could report good things, but the simplest way to put it is to say that the people of Grant slapped the rest of the people of the United States in the face. We funded dozens of public work projects, but people always completed them and once again entered the ranks of the unemployed. Schools and churches closed. Banks closed. Despite efforts to train teachers, deacons, bank clerks, and mining equipment operators, nothing and nobody worked. At the local college, students were dropping out and talking radically about the people's lack of control over their lives. Meanwhile, their hair grew, and I might add, so did the vileness of their vocabulary and personal habits. Their parents in many cases, instead of trying to make something out of Grant, left the town—they gave up on it. For those who remained, again the American people tried to bail them out. By this point \$453 millions in federal funds had been sent there.

"Everyone in Grant now received a federal check for \$500 to do with as he or she saw fit. We had hoped that people there would have joined together and started a small business, or gone to school, or something constructive and future-oriented. I need not tell you what happened to that money. I have the cashed checks here in hand—squandered and wasted."

Paton waved several pieces of paper, check size, in the air and read, "Deposit to the account of the Public Tavern #6. Look at this, 9,259 checks endorsed to the Grant Taxidermy Company. God only knows why that place does such a business."

Many in the session were booing at this information, though its origins were something of a mystery to some of those assembled. They wondered how the federal government had so much information about Grant's outrageous ways, to say nothing of hard evidence of thousands of canceled checks, for example, yet did nothing with all this until now, decades after the crime and fraud began?

Paton continued.

"Our government next offered to buy the town out in preparation for the construction of a superhighway through it, but the mayor wanted no part of it. Next we offered to replace the slum areas

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of Grant with new high-rise, low income housing, including the first complex of half-mile high buildings anywhere in the world, but no one wanted it.”

Many Congressmen asked each other if they had ever heard about half-mile high buildings. None of them had.

“We tried desperately to determine what peoples’ interests and skills were in Grant and match them up with new jobs. A survey conducted by the mayor’s office indicated that nearly everyone who was out of work was left-handed and interested in giraffes. So we appropriated funds for the raising and care of giraffes by left-handed keepers. But what happened? More ingratitude! Not one giraffe was ever born in Grant, and the ten we sent them were all killed in gang wars.”

“Christ, these people are maniacs, “ remarked Representative Bede. “I remember when Marlin Perkins addressed the House back in the 50s. I think he talked about giraffes, as a matter of fact.”

Paton was shaking his head in dismay.

“It gets worse. The same survey indicated a secondary interest by the townspeople in snow. We sent them two dozen snowplows, tons of salt, shovels, the works. But after all the equipment arrived, we learned that it hadn’t snowed in Grant in seventy-five years. They said they were still interested in snow and asked if we could send them some—the more the better.”

There was a great chorus of booing at these revelations.

“Finally, and this was America’s last offer, we said let us transport the citizens of Grant to places where there are jobs and retraining centers, but they said they wanted no part of that either. They said they just wanted to be left alone. Left alone! Well, that was the last straw. They are ones who are bothering us. They won’t leave us alone. Are we supposed to sit idly by in the face of crime and unemployment and soaring anti-crime and welfare costs?”

Paton was sounding flat during these last remarks. He was now at the critical part of his speech, all of which so far was the work of the President’s chief speechwriter. His feelings were badly mixed. As a liberal, could he actually bring himself to demand that Grant be destroyed, even if his reward for going along was getting to name a blind Native American to the Supreme Court? On the other hand, what alternative was there? The dreary recital of an unbroken succession of totally ineffective programs seriously upset him and his

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liberal colleagues who all actually believed the things Paton had just reported. Grant seemed to give the lie to everything they had believed in and fought for for years. But, finally, Paton could not bring himself to accept the implications of his own speech. While most Congressmen were now chanting, "No, no! Bomb it!" in answer to his rhetorical question, he decided there was only one thing he could do: mutiny. He wiped his forehead with his handkerchief and resumed.

"Nevertheless, I cannot go along with the plan to destroy Grant. Such an action would be inhuman and indecent and a repudiation of all we as a nation have stood for. Instead I say let us give Grant one more chance. I ask the American people to be patient and generous once more. Rather than obliterate Grant, let us nationalize it, that is, let the federal government take over the functions of local government—the schools, the churches, and the remaining businesses there as well. Let us, temporarily, incarcerate Grant as the necessary basis for the rehabilitation of its citizens, after which it can be returned to its freedom, which to a great extent now, I must admit, it has forfeited."

Paton seemed considerably relieved at this point and even enthusiastic. The liberal group was also relieved and began to discuss the suggestion animatedly among themselves, although it was certain that they would not be able to persuade the rest of the assembly to accept it.

"While I am not prepared at this time to say exactly what the details of such an arrangement might involve, I can say that no lives would be lost. I urge that you give this proposal every consideration."

There was a great deal of booing after these remarks and shouts of "turncoat." The leadership was furious, but the repeated chanting of "Bomb it! Bomb it!" by most of the assembly made it clear that they had nothing to worry about.

Suddenly, Representative Carlson was on his feet waving his arms to get the Vice President's attention.

"I have new and terrible information. I must speak!" The Vice President recognized him. "This ought to be good," he mentioned to those around him.

"I just learned that the administration in Grant is in possession of tactical nuclear weapons. How they acquired them or for what purpose or purposes they may have them is not known at this time. But the thought of a town full of criminals with nuclear weapons in

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hand is enough to make me shudder. Clearly, they must be stopped and the weapons secured. This is an intolerable situation.” Representative Carlson sat down shaking his head. He received this information as one of the insiders directly from the President himself who had phoned him minutes before. “We need to sew this thing up. This ought to do it. Get up there and give it your all,” the President had told him.

The chamber was aghast and ready to vote Grant’s end immediately. But there was one more speaker who had been promised a few minutes for his remarks, and he wasn’t about to relinquish his opportunity. That was Senator Stuart who had been bouncing in his seat, ready to pounce on Grant as soon as he was recognized. He had come to hate Grant deeply since the previous day. Though he was unpredictable, and at times, outrageous, he could be expected to offer “profound” arguments for whatever he advocated.

Picking up from some of Paton’s remarks, Stuart began. “The gentleman from Maryland is surprised at what he calls the ingratitude of the people of Grant. I say their behavior was perfectly predictable, at least to anyone aware of the eternal character of human kind. All the much-praised programs of social-moral-economic reconstruction and rehabilitation could only have failed, for they are founded in a fatal error. Man cannot be other than what he is; there is no changing him. All that these environment-manipulating programs can do is establish false hopes and waste money. The liberal error, whose ultimate modern source is, as I said earlier, Martin Luther—not King Junior, the original one—preaches that man is to be free and that he is rational. He is neither and doesn’t want to be either. The case of Grant is simply the latest example of the *inexorable fatum* of the liberal degradation of society working itself out. As the invisible bonds of the seamless fabric of medieval Christendom dissolved, only dislocation, revolution, the cash nexus, and a shameless individualism could result. As Shakespeare said, ‘Untune that string and hark, what discord follows.’ “

The Vice President wondered to Senator Cook whose side she thought Stuart was on. Cook said she wasn’t sure yet.

“Permit me to tell you of an experiment I tried with the help, not of your social workers, condemned to failure by their mistaken assumptions about human nature, but of philosophy students from

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Christian universities, that is, those that are also aware of the immutability of the human animal. In my own state there is a city with problems similar to Grant's. Instead of anti-poverty programs of various kinds and such foolishness, I sent out teams of philosophers to that city to convince the populace that their expectations of fiscal aid and so on were pointless and wrong into the bargain.

"We explained to them that their troubles were ultimately due to the passing of the medieval world, and that if they could accept in their hearts and minds the idea and implications of the great chain of being, they would be much better off. But the people there would have no part of it. Talk of hierarchy and the plenitude of being meant little to them. They scorned the message.

"I suspected in advance that these people would not be content to remain poor and miserable and with no hope for the future. Such is the shortsightedness of most human beings. If only they understood that the next life is the one that counts. But nursed in a world that makes happiness its goal, their eyes were only on the present and the near future."

The Vice President was considering ruling Stuart out of order and shutting him down, but the Senator's next remarks suggested that he was heading in the direction of getting to the point.

"But I digress. We have a grave question at hand, and we must proceed with it: whether Grant, as a place of many evils, shall, in its entirety, be destroyed. Following the method of the late St. Thomas Aquinas, we proceed to the first article.

"It seems that Grant, though an evil city, should not be destroyed. Objection 1. It is written, if your enemy strikes you, turn the other cheek. Objection 2. Furthermore, we should not return evil with evil. Objection 3. Innocent people would be killed in a total destruction. Objection 4. Due process would be violated; Constitutional rights would be trampled upon.

"Reply to Objection 1. I answer that the reference is to an act of physical evil, for example, striking a blow. While Grant's citizens have performed physical acts of evil—murder, fellatio—it is really something spiritual that we are confronted by—sin—and we are specifically enjoined against tolerating that. Hate the sin and not the sinner.

"Let us be perfectly clear about what this means. While it is evil that we wish to and must and will destroy, it is physically

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inseparable from Grant and its people. This is simply one of the limitations of the physical world. To destroy what is beyond the physical, that is, the metaphysical, in this instance evil—sin, we have to destroy the physical, that is, Grant.

“Reply to Objection 2. On the contrary, I have just shown that to destroy the spiritual evil is not an evil act, but must therefore be construed as an act either neutral in its morality, or even good.

“Reply to objection 3. It is true that innocent persons could be killed. We have here not a certainty, but a possible probability. Therefore, the question becomes, is the risk of causing innocents to be killed morally justified? I answer that it is, for the intent of the destruction is certainly not to kill innocent persons, but rather to destroy evil. Since sin resides in the will, and the intent, that is, the turning of the will toward its object, namely, the destruction of evil, is good, the act of destruction cannot be evil, or a sin, and is therefore morally permissible. So if there is a double effect here, and innocents are killed, that is acceptable also because the good brought about by the destruction would outweigh the loss of innocent life, which given the nature of the case, could not involve many persons. In any case, numbers of people are not the point.”

A great cheer suddenly arose from the forty or so Congressmen who were still awake at this point. The clamor came as it was realized that Stuart was going to be calling for the destruction of Grant, probably soon. The shouting woke the others up in time to hear the final rejection of the objections.

“Furthermore, all other avenues of straightening matters out in Grant have been tried and failed, as Representative Paton has so well demonstrated. Finally innocents who might be killed would have nothing to worry about. We have it on the authority of the Abbot of Citeaux in the 1220s at Beziers, a forerunner of Grant in certain ways, *mutatis mutandi*, that God will know his own as they meet Him. *Requiescant in pace, pomi boni!*

“Reply to Objection 4. In all wars, the normal guarantees of due process and constitutional liberties are always less certain and at times done away with altogether. Such drastic developments may be necessary for obvious reasons: to prevent subversion, to maintain morale, and so on. But there will be no denial of due process in the United States when Grant is destroyed, because at that point Grant will no longer be a part of the United States. The United States, of

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course, cannot declare war on itself, so we must first separate Grant from ourselves. I have in hand a bill to this purpose which I will introduce shortly.”

There was tremendous cheering and clapping at this information. Even the Vice President realized at once that making Grant a foreign country inside the borders of the United States would immediately remove many of the objections the Congress and public would have to Grant's destruction.

“That crazy bastard's come up with a gem of an idea. Wait till the President hears about this. He'll be happier'n hell. This is fantastic!” The Vice President was all smiles.

Stuart resumed. “So we are really talking about what would be a state of war between two countries, and therefore, the question of due process and so on in Grant is no concern of ours. Belligerents cannot and should not worry about whether the constitutions of its enemies are upheld, subverted, or destroyed altogether. That is why, for example, we have not been concerned over the loss of the so-called rights of the Vietnamese in enemy areas of South Vietnam. Unfortunately, the whole country is an enemy area, given the nature of guerrilla warfare. Of course, we would be concerned about those so-called rights, if there were friendly areas somewhere.

“In view, then, of the crimes, follies, and vices of the people of Grant, of the terrible risk of contamination we face by virtue of their presence; in consideration of the profound evil that penetrates everywhere in that ungodly place and the boundless ambition of its citizens who want not only rights and status but our money; and finally in the realization that we are morally justified in ridding ourselves of this disaster area as I have so carefully demonstrated; I say let us separate Grant from ourselves and destroy it! I demand a declaration of war against Grant, a foreign country, and its complete obliteration!!”

There was a tremendous standing ovation for Senator Stuart at these words. Many were whooping it up like wild men. His earlier interruptions and peculiar remarks were completely forgotten. The Vice President was applauding wildly. After a minute or so of this demonstration, the Senator gestured to the assembly to quiet down and let him finish. He wanted to introduce his bill which called for the expulsion of Grant from the United States and which granted it the

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status of a sovereign nation. It passed amid much screaming and gesturing from the opposition, eighty to twenty.

The Vice President now announced that a foreign country, "One which is a menace to the United States, exists nearly at the geographical center of this great union. This state of affairs cannot be tolerated."

At four o'clock in the morning, the time for wrapping up the special session was upon the group. The Vice President banged the gavel and announced that it was time to vote on the proposed declaration of war. The guards in the chamber suddenly snapped to attention and shouldered their arms. Those against the declaration knew they were beaten. There was no point in trying to make any more speeches. The Vice President read the war declaration.

"The Congress of the United States of America, in extraordinary session assembled, on this day of June 28, 1973, hereby declares that a state of war exists between it and the nation of Grant. The sovereign state of Grant, by the crimes of its citizens, the degenerate state of its society, by the dangerous example it sets for Americans, and by the theft of hundreds of millions of dollars of American federal and state funds, has earned the wrath of the people of the United States of America."

Senator Jameson suddenly rose to his feet. He felt that as an opponent of the bombing he had to say something in protest of what was happening.

"I demand that the phrase 'sovereign state of Grant' be changed to read the 'sovereign nation of Grant.'

The Vice President and others of the leadership nodded their approval, and the change passed. War was declared by a vote of 83 to 17, several opponents now having joined the majority.

Representative Merkin said to one of his colleagues, "Now we can get down to business."

During the break which followed, many Congressmen learned that they could not leave the House except under armed escort. When one of them went to the door, the guard stopped him.

"I've got to take a piss, corporal," he told the soldier.

"I'm sorry, sir, but I'll have to escort you to the men's room—and wait for you."

This arrangement proved to be a minor inconvenience, and the guards treated all fairly, even the opposition. "There will be

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equality regarding latrine time,” as one of the officers put it to a group of Congressmen.

The leadership in the meantime had reported to the President that the United States was now at war with Grant. A telegram was also sent to the mayor of Grant, who was out on military maneuvers at 4:40 a.m., according to his wife. The telegram informed him that Grant was now a sovereign state, but failed to mention that war had been declared on it.

As the break continued, Merkin was explaining to about forty of the war supporters just what the President’s offer of a free hand in handling Operation Crimestop would mean for the pro-war group.

“As you all know, the President has placed a heavy burden of responsibility on our shoulders in order to involve us more directly in the decision-making processes of government and to share in some of the gui...uh, burden of work that falls to him in his lonely job.”

Merkin started coughing and fumbling a bit as he tried to continue. It had suddenly occurred to him that perhaps the President had had some unstated reasons for letting the rump Congress take most of the credit for the declaration of the war and the execution of the operation. After all, in recent years, Presidents had not been too concerned about having Congressional declarations to back them up or “help” in executing them. All that Congress needed to focus on was voting the money. But Merkin decided to leave this thought for another time.

Merkin went on to say that he, Stuart, and two others would take care of organizing the air offensive against Grant. Ground troops would not be necessary for a town of 10,000, except after the attack for keeping order in case there were any survivors. He mentioned there would be a couple of “pleasant surprises” for everyone regarding the means by which the attack would be delivered. These four then left the session and hurried to their offices. There was much to do to create “pleasant surprises” for Grant, particularly as regards airplanes and ordnance, as well as the details of the attack plan itself.

With the conclusion of the break, the Vice President recognized Representative Mayfair.

“In order to move forward on the attack, I submit the following Special Session Bill Number Three: An Act to grant to the Department of Defense a special supplemental aid package of \$100 million to finance the costs of an air attack against the nation of Grant

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on the morning of July 3, next, and the national television and radio coverage of that attack, provided that the latter will be managed by the National Media and Human Services Corporation of Washington, D.C., a corporation with a branch office in Colfax, New Gordon, seven miles distant from Grant.”

A number of the opposition groaned at the revelation that there was to be full media coverage of the attack, but they were too depressed and exhausted to try to combat the plan. Since Grant's destruction was to help set an example to the rest of the country to behave itself, it would have been very difficult to argue against letting everyone see the example go up in smoke. Logic was not on the side of the opposition. SS-3 passed, 83 for, 17 against.

The leadership group was moving things along quickly. Senator Cook was recognized and spoke to SS-4, “An act to incorporate the National Media and Human Services Corporation. “ The bill listed the directors and officers of the corporation and fixed salary schedule ranging from \$100,000 to 1\$ million per annum. The number and identity of these individuals were the same as those voting for the war. The corporation was also to wholly own several other companies: The Colfax Rescue Ambulance Service, The Native Lane Funeral Home of Colfax, The Grant Memorial Community Hospital and Medical Center of Colfax, The Land and Rubble Company of Colfax, and the Grant Memorial Hamburger Parlor, all “to become operative if the country of Grant should be attacked within two weeks of the passage of this bill.” All stock in these companies was to be held by the parent company, and the presidents of each of the companies were members of the congressional leadership.

Since the previous day's meeting with the president, quite a bit of work on these companies had already been done. Several trusted congressional staff members were in Colfax preparing to buy and reorganize small businesses there, especially those that had vehicles which could be used for ambulances and hearses. Nevertheless, there was still a great deal to do before all aspects of Operation Crimestop were completed. The medical facilities would be fairly complex to set up and staff, but the congressional advance people had nearly a week to work out the details before the attack. Certainly one of the biggest challenges would be to purchase airtime

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on short notice from the networks and secretly prepare for the live television and radio coverage of the bombing.

There was some concern among the leadership that the \$100 million voted for the operation might not be adequate to cover all costs. National Media and Human Services was to get \$70 million, the radio and television companies about \$20 million, and the air operations the remainder. But in the interests of expediting things, they decided to wait until after the attack and felt that if needed, a supplemental request would be funded later.

The reaction to this last bill to incorporate the National Media and Human Services Corporation was, predictably, mixed. Several Congressmen jumped to their feet, clamoring to be recognized.

“Ghouls, savages, gangsters!” many shouted. “This is worse than Hitler!”

Representative Bede, still lying on his litter, said to a colleague, “I remember when Hitler addressed the House. Couldn’t understand a word he said. By the way, did you know he was bald?”

The Vice President, gaveling furiously, finally got everyone to quiet down.

“The Chair recognizes Senator Smith.”

“I wish to offer a word of praise to the leadership for working so quickly to get these vital services available for the people of Grant, not only for those who must inevitably perish on that day of reckoning, but even for those who, though maimed, will no doubt be better off for it as a reminder of the price of evil and crime. This whole undertaking certainly demonstrates that the planned defensive moral airborne retaliation offensive against Grant will be executed in the spirit of a chastising father who, after administering a necessary swat to his young child, comforts him or her later and proffers him or her a lollipop or an ice cream cone. Grant residents who survive the attack, dazed and bleeding, will have the comfort of a speedy, low-cost ambulance ride to a fine hospital. Should the worst occur, dedicated funeral home drivers will, with care and sensitivity, pick up the corpses, wherever they may be—even if it means removing weighty debris or putting out fires first—and see to a modest but dignified service and burial, also at low cost.”

The Senator further pointed out that these bills authorized only a modest salary for the directors and officers of the various companies mentioned.

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“Those who provide services and have to make sacrifices to get those services established and organized are entitled to a return on their investment of time and money. After all, they have restrained themselves, have deprived themselves of consumption for the higher calling of investment, as true capitalists always do.”

Even as he spoke, Congressmen were answering this higher calling by lining up at a small table in the back of the House writing out checks or using credit cards to purchase stocks in the companies whose existence was immanent.

The opposition to these bills and to the war was beside itself with horror. For the past few hours they had desperately been trying to find a way to get the news of what was happening out of the chamber. But it was hopeless. Several, as they were being escorted to washrooms, unsuccessfully attempted to bribe the guards, but these proved incorruptible. Some tried running away, but all exits were locked, and they all were caught. Others screamed and yelled in the halls while they were on these excursions, but there was no one to hear them.

The most ingenious, but also ineffective effort, was that of Senator Larabida. In the privacy of one of the washroom stalls, he removed the contents of several amoxicillin antibiotic capsules he had for treatment of an infected pineal gland and scribbled a short messages on several scraps of paper which read, “Help, I am being held prisoner in Congress!” He signed them and enclosed them in the casings. Knowing that no open windows would be available to him on his escorted return to the House chamber, he flushed the capsules down the toilet and smiled slightly as he considered their route through the plumbing and sewers to the sanitary district treatment plant miles away. He remembered from a long-ago visit to the filtration plant that here were several steps in the treatment process which broke down wastes into their constituent parts. Then he remembered Anaximander, “All things must return to that from which they were born, for they must pay the penalty for their injustice according to the ordering of time.” He realized that it was doubtful in the extreme that as Anaximander’s pronouncement was fulfilled, his capsule and their messages would ever be seen. His smile faded, and when re returned to the House chamber, he wondered if his infection would be reinvigorated for want of the capsules.

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Several of the opposition were sitting together and trying to make some sense out of what had been happening. “This is a nightmare. How could this be? How could we have been so wrong about this administration and its plans and ideas? I don’t even know where this all came from—except right out of left field. Talk about being blind-sided.”

The other Congressmen were not at all upset by the attempts to flee or yell for help. “They’re entitled,” one of them said. “Anyway, they’re not goin’ anywhere.”

The stock purchases were almost complete. The speeches, however, were still going on. Representative Miller was addressing himself to the subject of the remains of Grant, as they were very soon to be, and was stressing the need for the Land and Rubble Company of Colfax.

“This company will not simply sell land to developers who will rebuild the area into something we can all be proud of—we’re expecting it to become part of the United States again after it’s cleaned up [There were cheers at this information]—neat little neighborhoods with fine churches, schools, banks, and drive-in restaurants, but it will also make it possible for every American to have a small piece of Grant as a reminder of what terrible things happened there before it was bombed. Through the agency of the Land and Rubble Company, a piece of the debris of Grant will be available to each American for, oh, say \$5 dollars apiece. This will also serve as a way to acquaint Americans in a first-hand way, by part ownership, with some of the great architectural landmarks which I am told are located in Grant.”

The bill to incorporate the National Media and Human Services, or rather bills, for the supporters of it conceded to the opposition that the formation of each company could be made the subject of a separate bill to be voted on individually, passed easily.

This had been a busy morning. A new nation was born, a war declared, and the details of the fiscal and military aspects of waging war were being worked out. There was nothing left to do now but continue with and finish the war preparations. The attack on Grant would be in five days, on July 3. Since Operation Crimestop was top secret, only the leadership could come and go to and from the House freely. The rest of the Congressmen had to remain in the building until hostilities were over, though the Chamber’s doors were now

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unlocked and people could wander around the building at will. All phones were under guard or in some cases had been removed from use. In the Chamber itself some Congressmen were talking in small groups, others napped, and a few read. The Vice President was sending sheets around to take food and drink orders. Senator Larabida ordered a roast beef sandwich and a refill of his antibiotic prescription.

Farewell, My Republic is a surreal political satire. To reduce crime, the President and Congress inaugurate various illegal acts, including domestic bombing. A constitutional crisis and convention destroy the republic, replacing it with a thinly disguised, divine right monarchy.

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