

Howell now believed that Paul and Bill were straightforward commercial hostages. Dadgar's investigation into corruption might be genuine, but he knew by now that Paul and Bill were innocent, therefore he must be holding them on orders from above. The Iranians had originally wanted either their promised computerized welfare system or their money back. Giving them their welfare system meant renegotiating the contract - but the new government was not interested in renegotiating and in any case was unlikely to stay in power long enough to consummate a deal.

If Dadgar could not be bribed, convinced of Paul's and Bill's innocence, or ordered by his superiors to release them on the basis of a new contract between EDS and the Ministry, there remained to Howell only one option: pay the bail. Dr Houman's efforts to get the amount reduced had come to nothing. Howell now concentrated on ways of getting thirteen million dollars from Dallas to Tehran.

He had learned, bit by bit, that there was an EDS rescue team in Tehran. He was astonished that the head of an American corporation would set in motion something like that. He was also reassured, for if he could only get Paul and Bill out of jail, somebody else was standing by to get them out of Iran.

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Liz Coburn was frantic with worry.

She sat in the car with Toni Dvoranchik and Toni's husband Bill. They were heading for the Royal Tokyo restaurant. It was on Greenville Avenue, not far from Recipes, the place where Liz and Toni had drunk daiquiris with Mary Sculley and Mary had shattered Liz's world by saying: 'Jay will carry him over the fence ... Oh, God. I shouldn't have said that.'

Since that moment Liz had been living in constant, stark terror.

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Liz Coburn sipped her drink. Across the table were Pat Sculley's wife, Mary, and another EDS wife who had been evacuated from Tehran, Toni Avoranchik. The three women were at Recipes, a restaurant on Greenville Avenue, Dallas. They were drinking strawberry daiquiris.

Toni Avoranchik's husband was here in Dallas. Liz Coburn knew that Pat Sculley had disappeared, like Ray, in the direction of Europe. Now Mary Sculley was talking as if Pat had gone not just to Europe but to Iran.

Liz said: 'Is Pat in Tehran?'

'They're all in Tehran, I guess,' Mary said.

Liz was horrified. 'Jay in Tehran ...' She wanted to cry. Jay had told her he was in Paris. Why couldn't he tell the truth? Pat Sculley had told Mary the truth. But Jay was different. Some men would play poker for a few hours, but Jay had to play all night and all the next day. Other men would play nine or eighteen holes of golf. Jay would play thirty-six. Lots of men had demanding jobs, but Jay had to work for EDS. Even in the Army when the two of them had been no more than kids, Jay had to volunteer for one of the most dangerous assignments, helicopter pilot. Now he had gone to Tehran in the middle of a revolution. Same old thing, she thought: He's gone away, he's lying to me, and he's in danger. She suddenly felt cold all over, as if she were in shock. He's not coming back, she thought numbly. He's not going to get out of there alive.

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