

Cast of characters

Dallas

Ross Perot, Chairman of the Board, Electronic Data Systems Corporation, Dallas, Texas.

Merv Stauffer, Perot's right-hand man.

T.J. Marquez, a vice-president of EDS.

Tom Walter, chief financial officer of EDS.

Mitch Hart, a former president of EDS who had good connections in the Democratic Party.

Tom Luce, founder of the Dallas law firm Hughes & Hill.

Bill Gayden, president of EDS World, a subsidiary of EDS.

Tehran

Paul Chiapparone, country manager, EDS Corporation Iran; Ruthie Chiapparone, his wife.

Bill Gaylord, Paul's deputy; Emily Gaylord, Bill's wife.

Lloyd Briggs, Paul's No. 3.

Rich Gallagher, Paul's administrative assistant; Cathy Gallagher, Rich's wife; Buffy, Cathy's poodle.

Paul Bucha, formerly country manager of EDS Corporation Iran, latterly based in Paris.

Bob Young, country manager for EDS in Kuwait.

John Howell, lawyer with Hughes & Hill.

Keane Taylor, manager of the Bank Omran project.

(The team)

Lt-Col Arthur D. 'Bull' Simons, in command.

Jay Coburn, second-in-command.

Ron Davis, point.

Ralph Boulware, shotgun.

Joe Poche', driver.

Glenn Jackson, driver.

Pat Sculley, flank.

Jim Schwebach, flank and explosives.

(The Iranians)

Abolhasan, administrative assistant to Paul Chiapparone and
the most senior Iranian employee.

Majid, assistant to Jay Coburn; Fara, Majid's daughter.

Rashid, Seyyed, and 'the Cycle Man': trainee systems engineers.

Gholam, personnel/purchasing officer under Jay Coburn.

Hosain Dadgar, examining magistrate.

(At the US Embassy)

William Sullivan, Ambassador.

Charles Naas, Minister Counselor, Sullivan's deputy.

Lou Goelz, Consul General.

Bob Sorenson, Embassy official.

Ali Jordan, Iranian employed by the Embassy.

Barry Rosen, press attache'.

Istanbul

'Mr Fish', resourceful travel agent.

Ilsman, employee of MIT, the Turkish intelligence agency.

'Charlie Brown', interpreter.

'These are my men, I sent them there, and I have to get them back,' he finished.

'I'll see what I can do,' Kissinger said.

Perot was exultant. 'I sure appreciate it!'

'Send me a short briefing paper with all the details.'

'We'll get it to you today.'

'I'll get back to you, Ross.'

'Thank you, sir.'

The line went dead.

Perot felt terrific. Kissinger had remembered him, had been friendly and willing to help. He wanted a briefing paper: EDS could send it today -

Perot was struck by a thought. He had no idea where Kissinger had been speaking from - it might have been London, Monte Carlo, Mexico ...

'Sally?'

'Yes, sir?'

'Did you find out where Kissinger is?'

'Yes, sir.'

*

Kissinger was in New York, in his duplex at the exclusive River House apartment complex on East 52nd Street. From the window he could see the East River.

He remembered Ross Perot clearly. Perot was a rough diamond. He helped causes with which Kissinger was sympathetic,

She seemed to have been hearing reports like this for weeks. There were always delays, postponements, frustrations. 'But, Jim,' she began; then the tears started and she could not stop them. 'Jim ... ' Her throat tightened up until she could not speak. She thought: All I want is my husband! Jim stood there looking helpless and embarrassed. All the misery she had kept locked up for so long suddenly flooded out, and she could not control herself any longer. She burst into tears and ran from the room. She rushed to her bedroom, threw herself off the bed and lay there sobbing her heart out.

*

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 Dvoranchik. The three women were at Recipes, a restaurant on Greenville Avenue, Dallas. They were drinking strawberry daiquiris, and Mary Sculley was spilling the beans.

'They~~xxx~~ drives~~x~~ up to the fence, then they get on the roof of the van and drop a ladder down into the exercise yard,' she said.

Toni Dvoranchik had started this conversation. Her husband suspected there was a secret plan for getting Paul and Bill out, but he did not know what it was. Toni had asked Mary whether Pat was involved, and Mary had said Yes. Then she commenced to tell the whole story.

Liz Coburn was horrified. 'Is Jay in Tehran?' she said miserably.

'Yes.'

'I knew it.'

'But he's doing administrative work,' Mary added.

Liz 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 not much more than kids, Jay had to volunteer for one of the most dangerous assignments, helicopter pilot. Now he had gone to Tehran, and even 'administrative work' was perilous 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.

Toni Dvoranchik was saying: 'What if Bill can't make it over the fence?' The wives always talked this way about Bill: they saw him as a sensitive, vulnerable soul, and they worried about him more than they did about tough, confident Paul. 'What if he's sick?' Toni went on. 'What if he doesn't want to be rescued? What if he freaks out?'

'They've thought of that,' Mary said. 'Jay will carry him over the fence ... Oh, God.'

Liz stared at her.

Mary said: 'I shouldn't have said that.'

Liz 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.

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.

*

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.

(go to 316A)

Jay was everything to her. He was Captain America, he was Superman, he was her whole life. She did not see how she could live without him. The thought of losing him scared her to death.

She called Tehran constantly but never reached him. She called Merv Stauffer every day, saying: 'When is Jay coming home? Is he all right? Will he get out alive?' Merv tried to soothe her, but he would not give her any information, so she would demand to speak to Ross Perot, and Merv would tell her that was not possible. Then she would call her mother and burst into tears and pour out all her anxiety and fear and frustration over the phone.

The Dvoranchiks were kind. They were trying to take her mind off her worries.

'What did you do today?' Toni asked.

'I went shopping,' Liz said.

'Did you buy anything?'

'Yes.' Liz started to cry. 'I bought a black dress. Because Jay isn't coming home.'

*

During those days of waiting, Jay Coburn learned a good deal about Simons.

One day Merv Stauffer called from Dallas to say that Simons's son Harry had been on the phone, worried. Harry had called his

(go to p317)

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*

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Amendments to final draft

p75 DELETE Jesus Christ, he's a prick.

p82 DELETE was not a prick but he

p103 DELETE on Staten Island

p325 CHANGE bureaucratic, a stickler for the rule book
TO correct

p378 CHANGE Martin Air
TO Martinair