

39. A Spy is Born

The Englishman never did show up, so his wisdom and learning at the University of Cambridge criminology school never reached the United Nations. However, the project, as far as Ferrapotti was concerned was well under way, and had no need of the Englishman, given that he had hired a well qualified Australian, who had taken his class at the University of Pennsylvania when he was a visiting professor there. In fact it was there that the idea, and subsequent Ford Foundation funding for the project on World Crime had first been explored. A bunch of very bright Ph.D. Students who came there from all over the world took his class.

For his part, Dennis, the scruffy Aussie, who ended up running the project, after what seemed a year or two, though time, he had learned did not seem to matter in this life, was still at a loss as to how to proceed. The Council of Europe meeting had provided little direction or ideas of substance to even begin to design the project. So he sat in his office, shared with a visiting expert from Iran, who did little but talk to him of how things in Iran were done, what a wonderful university he had attended in Iran before he went to Ohio State University, all of this as he laughed and smiled, such a happy person. His main concern was to find a good trattoria for lunch every day, which certainly made Dennis's life much richer. Lunch, at least for U.N. Experts was a three hour affair. Most often taken in one of the many trattorias or hostarias hidden away in the alleys around Via Giulia, Campo dei Fiori and the like. Iranians were just like Italians. They liked food, that was Dennis's incisive observation. And as each day went by, so did he.

Yet Rome in the days after Di Napolitano's kidnapping

had taken on a somber outlook. People in the street seemed to be tense. They did not stop and talk to passersby as had been the practice, as far as Dennis had noticed from the first day he arrived. Perhaps this was aggravated, or even caused, by the garbage collectors' strike. There was trash lying everywhere, in the gutters, in any corner or crevice where the winds of Rome blew them, piles of trash in plastic bags making mounds in front of apartment buildings covered in graffiti, and especially in the front of restaurants that, naturally, produced large amounts of rubbish every day. As well, carabinieri appeared to be everywhere, on street corners, cruising in their Alphas or motorbikes,

While the kidnapping of his friend and colleague Judge Ugo Di Napolitano shook the entire staff of UNSDRI, Ferrapotti remained his hurried self, constantly stopping to talk with anyone who may pass him in the corridor, darting into offices, looking this way and that. His arguments with Di Napolitano were more frequent, and the Judge's voice reached crescendos like never before. His most common words that could be heard, maybe even out on the street were, "Franco! Do you know what you are doing? Non fai niente! Next time the kidnappers will kill me, and you too if you keep going on this way."

It was now almost three years since his kidnapping, and Di Napolitano's kidnappers had been caught, so to speak, their colleagues had been released, just as Di Napolitano had promised when he was in captivity. So it was a kind of twisted quid pro quo. Ferrapotti stood at the door of the judge's office.

"Si! Si! But don't worry! I know what is going on," Ferrapotti whispered so loudly that surely most of the experts in the UNSDRI building heard it. And as if to demonstrate his superior knowledge, he added, "something's coming down, and I can tell you it won't involve you or me."

"Franco! What are you saying?" cried Di Napolitano.

"Oh... ah...eh... Don't say anything to anyone else,"

responded Ferrapotti in English, looking over his shoulder, then all around.

Flabbergasted, Di Napolitano threw up his arms in alarm. “Ferrapotti! Franco! Basta! “

Ferrapotti grinned and nodded, as if to say, “I’ve got a secret and nobody knows it but me.” He stepped back into the judge’s office. And muttered, “don’t worry. I know what I am doing. Anyway, I have to run. Have a special case in Milano.”

Di Napolitano eyed him distrustfully. If they weren’t such good friends, he would terminate him immediately, except that he wasn’t his boss anyway. “Milano? What’s there? I thought all your cases were in the Vatican?”

“That is true. Mostly, you know priests with, er..ah..oh.. Personal problems.”

“Then Milan?”

“I have a special mission.”

Di Napolitano eyed his friend with a mixture of amusement and concern. “Franco. I know you. You will get yourself into all sorts of trouble if you are not careful.”

Ferrapotti inched forward a little into the office. “All I can tell you is that the Vatican has money problems, and for reasons I do not fully understand, the chief administrator of the Vatican has asked me to look into the dealings of one of their major bankers who is located in Milan. After all, it’s Milan where all the money is, right?”

“But you’re a psychiatrist. Not an investigator. And I am sure you know nothing about money!” said Di Napolitano trying to keep his voice down.

“True again. But psychiatrists are in a way investigators. We investigate the mind, do we not? And it so happens, I think that one of the Vatican bankers is having such trouble. Or should I say, has already suffered much angst. Then in English, “Or, ah... eh...oh... that his decision-making when it comes to finances is becoming impaired.”

The perceptive Judge of the Supreme Court leaned

forward at his desk. "I see. *Penso di averlo capito*. Say no more."

"*Ciao*. I will see you in a day or two." Ferrapotti turned to leave.

"Perhaps you are going to Sardinia?" called his friend with a grin.

"No time for that."

Ferrapotti stepped off the plane and at the bottom of the steps a young man, could have been his son, held up the palm of his hand on which was written UNSDRI. The man nodded towards the terminal and Ferrapotti followed. Once inside, the young man turned his head slightly towards him and said in a quiet voice, a slight northern accent, "I am Wolfgang," I will be your assistant for the day. The meeting, or should I say the announcement, will be made just before we break for lunch.

Ferrapotti grinned slightly and looked at his watch, and in English he asked, "oh.. Ah..you are German?"

"Not quite. Swiss, but my father was Italian, from Torino. But either way, we are of the same race, are we not?"

Ferrapotti was not quite sure what this meant, but he just nodded in assent. A deep blue Alpha pulled up at the curb. "Dopo di te," said Wolfgang as he held open the door.

"Oh.. Ah...er... So you are a journalist for *Corriere Della Sera*?" asked Ferrapotti in English.

"I was, or actually I am, though for the past several months I have been the personal assistant to Dr. Gelli. He is an amazing person," answered Wolfgang in almost perfect Oxford English.

"Oh... er...ah..no doubt he is. And also very brave if I understand correctly what he is up to," said Ferrapotti.

"I don't think bravery comes into it. He just knows what has to be done, and he does it, and we all agree with his goal."

"Of course. It is essential," said Ferrapotti with a frown. "But there are many road blocks, the Vatican being one. I

take it that is why I was invited?”

“Well, probably, though I do not know. I try not to get too involved. I just carry out my boss’s orders and I am so busy I have no time to think about what he is trying to do at any particular moment.”

Wolfgang looked out the window, trying to avoid Ferrapotti’s gaze. Ferrapotti responded:

“Oh.. Ah..You know, I think it is important that the United Nations understands the situation. But there are certain *colonne sotterranee* that would oppose and undermine all he is trying to do. And that includes the Vatican.”

“Yes, we know about that. But the Vatican has very little power, and, well I probably should not say this, it is running out of money, and Dr. Gelli is the only person who can save it. The banks, you know.”

“Oh... ah..si...I know all about that. One of my clients....”

“Shhh! Never know who is listening,” warned Wolfgang.

The car turned into Via Angela Rizzolli and pulled up at the front of the *Corriere Della Sera* headquarters. Wolfgang leaned over, annoyed and tapped the driver’s shoulder. “Not here! Go to the back entrance!”

Ferrapotti grinned. As the car pulled up, the door opened and a number of individuals, talking loudly and clearly angry, poured out, gesticulating wildly.

“It looks like we missed the opening,” said Wolfgang. “Never mind. The important thing is that you are here and representing the United Nations.” With that, Wolfgang leaned over and pinned a name tag on Ferrapotti’s lapel, the tag simply saying UNSDRI.

They pushed their way into the building, against the crowd of people exiting.

“What’s going on?” asked Ferrapotti, somewhat annoyed at being pushed and shoved aside.

“Oh, I thought you knew. Dr. Gelli has taken over the

Corriere della Sera, and is bringing his own team to run the paper. Although I think that a good number of the lead journalists will remain.”

Ferrapotti’s eyes immediately darted this way and that. Who was who of those rushing out? And could those remaining behind be trusted? “Is he that much of a threat? That bad?” asked Ferrapotti.

“No of course not. You know as well as I do that he’s not a fascist. He is simply a sensible businessman who understands money, who has it, who should have it, how to get it, and how to spend it,” answered Wolfgang as he pushed through large double doors. “This way. Dr. Gelli is looking forward to meeting you.”

They entered a big meeting room, a large oblong table in the middle, many chairs crammed in all around it, a terrible din of many Italians talking loudly and all at once, and of course, gesticulating wildly.

“Calma! Calma!” called Gelli who now stood at the head of the table, running his hand lightly over his plentiful greying hair. “Those of you who want to stay may do so, and in your current positions. I am simply replacing the top editorial staff. From now on, this great newspaper will report the news without communist bias. The communists must be kept out. You have seen what they have done to our cities, the violence of kidnapping and terrors they bring with them all in the name of equality.”

Silence suddenly descended. Then it was replaced with murmurs and a buzz of excitement. Gelli continued:

“We have the Vatican and its bankers to thank for their willingness to step up and save this paper, and quite frankly, save this country.”

Quiet applause erupted followed by a light chant of, “P2! P2!” at which Gelli raised his hands and called “*Calma!* Hush! We in the P2 lodge do not look for loud accolades. We work quietly in the background. Now go back to your families and tell them that your job has been saved and that you will, beginning tomorrow, be reporting

all the hews accurately and faithfully and without bias. Thank you! Thank you!”

Gelli left quickly by a side door. Wolfgang managed to pull Ferrapotti close enough to the door so that Gelli could see the UNSDRI name tag. Ferrapotti, thoroughly entranced, thought that Gelli looked at his tag and smiled, but could not be sure. In a flash, Wolfgang had left him and trailed behind his boss Gelli. Ferrapotti turned and pushed his way into the small throng of chattering journalists, showing his UNSDRI badge. Many were instantly interested in the United Nations and what it had to do with P2. Some disparagingly called the UN a great organization corrupted by communists, others that it was essentially a tool of imperialist countries that was built on the back of slaves, dedicated to maintaining white superiority.

The year was 1977, the year that the clandestine Masonic Lodge known as “Propaganda Due” or P2, infiltrated and took over the failing left wing daily newspaper, *Corriere della Sera*.

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Ferrapotti stood in front of the *Corriere Della Sera* headquarters and hailed a cab.

“Take me to the Banco Ambrosiano and hurry!” shouted Ferrapotti.

“I hope you’ve got plenty of money,” quipped the driver.

“How’s that?”

“They’re going broke, everyone knows that. But then you’re from Rome, I can tell, so you wouldn’t know,” joked the driver again.

“Si, si. I mean I don’t have money in that bank. You think I’m crazy?”

The driver laughed into the rear vision mirror as he wove through the Milan traffic, beeping his horn continuously, waving and yelling epithets at motorists who were in his way.

Ferrapotti grinned and caught the driver’s eye in the

rear vision mirror. “Hah! I keep all mine in the Vatican bank, that’s where all the money is,” he joked.

“Si, si, I know. But I heard it’s all going to the Banco Ambrosiano to bail it out.”

Ferrapotti looked shocked. “How do you know that?”

“You’d be surprised what I hear in this taxi,” he grinned.

“I would, you’re right.”

The taxi screeched to a halt, Ferrapotti paid the driver, gave a generous tip, thanked him for his information, and stepped out.

The bank was closed. He pressed and repressed the bell button at front, and after what seemed like an eternity, a small side door opened and an old man, looking well into his eighties, squinted at him through rimless glasses.

“We’re closed. Can’t you see the sign?”

“Take me to your boss, Roberto Calvi. He’s expecting me,” ordered Ferrapotti.

“And you are?”

“The man from UNSDRI.” That’s all you need to know. Go on! Tell him and let me in.” Ferrapotti pushed past the old man and pulled the door closed behind him. The old man had no alternative but to lead the way through a maze of corridors until they came to a very large rosewood door, beautifully carved, and knocked feebly.

“Come!” came a gruff voice.

The old man opened the door and with what strength he had, pushed Ferrapotti through, and quickly pulled the door shut behind him.

“Doctor Ferrapotti of UNSDRI, at your service, Dr. Roberto Calvi, I presume?”

“Ah yes! How good of you to come all this way. I hope Wolfgang managed for you to stop by the *Corriere della Sera*. Very exciting news indeed!” smiled Calvi, “please take a seat over there and I will sit on the couch. That is what a patient is supposed to do, right?”

“Well, I don’t think we will be doing any deep analysis

today. And if we get to that, it would be best if you came down to my consulting rooms in the Vatican,” said Ferrapotti in the best of bedside manners.

“You are the official Vatican psychiatrist?” asked Calvi as he tweaked his small mustache, pulled the knees of his pin stripe trousers up neatly between thumb and forefinger, and sat on the edge of the couch.

“Yes, they trust me. Many of the cases are, one might say, are delicate. Privacy and secrecy in both of my professions are vital.”

“Then let’s get on with it.”

“Tell me when you first had these thoughts,” said Ferrapotti, putting on his most serious expression, a deep frown.

“When I realized that the bank was *fottuto*.”

“I see. So you have never had such thoughts before?”

“No, never! When you live your life making money, you have to be positive all the time. I always expect to make money, never to lose it, or if the latter, only temporarily, if you see what I mean.”

“*Si, ho capito perfettamente*. Immediately, I would advise you not to stand by an open window that is more than two levels above the ground.”

“Oh, no. I think you have misunderstood my problem. It is not the loss of money, although it will no doubt affect many people badly, unless the Vatican steps in and saves us, which I think they will.”

“So this is not what is bothering you?”

“Well, not really. You have to take risks if you want to be successful in finance. And with banks, well, I’m just taking risks with other people’s money, aren’t I?” said Calvi, a faint smirk, the moustache rising a little as his upper lip curled.

Ferrapotti crossed his legs, his mahogany chair, though beautifully crafted, was a little high for him and made him uncomfortable. “Then why am I here?” he asked, his perpetual grin breaking out.

“I’m having....” Calvi looked down and wriggled on his seat even further forward to the edge of the embroidered couch.

Ferrapotti waited, raising his eyebrows, his tongue quickly wetting his lips in anticipation.

“... I can’t, I mean, well, my friend...” stuttered Calvi.

“Friend?” asked Ferrapotti, suddenly guessing what Calvi was trying to say.

“I can’t...”

Ferrapotti leaned forward from his chair. He tried to look as kindly and understanding as he could. Empathy was what it was all about. “Oh, I get it. You have a male friend...” he said, deliberately not finishing the sentence.

“Yes, that’s why Bishop Marcincus advised me to consult with you. But it’s not exactly that. After all, my preferences in that direction are not at all new.”

“Then...what?”

“I can’t raise one. At first I thought it was boredom or that my partner was no longer of interest to me. But I tried others, and it was the same. A gorgeous young neophyte came on to me when I visited the Vatican last month, but it was no use. I wasn’t up to it.”

Ferrapotti worked hard to hold back a grin. Wasn’t up to it! “Are you having dreams or fantasies of encounters?” asked the good doctor.

“Nothing. Can’t sleep though. Try to think of past encounters, but nothing comes.”

“Yes. Well. I can see what your problem is. It’s depression, pure and simple, but exhibiting itself through sexual dysfunction, rather than in that other major symptom of depression, suicide,” announced Ferrapotti with authority.

“Well, either way,” said Calvi, looking away, “if I can’t have sex, I might as well be dead.”

“There is a new anti-depressant drug under trial that I could prescribe for you. It’s popularly known as ketamine. They’re using it in Vietnam. Very experimental though. It

is essentially used as an anesthetic, but in very small doses, can stave off depression.”

“If it’s experimental, I’m not sure about that. Besides, I haven’t had suicidal thoughts as yet.”

“Perhaps it’s not a good idea to wait for the inevitable. Depression is a very serious disease.”

“That’s why I’ve come to you, Doctor Ferrapotti.”

“Then I suggest we meet weekly if possible in my Vatican clinic. It helps you know, simply to have someone to talk to about your problems. Unless you have someone else to talk to? Your priest perhaps?”

“*Penso di no*. I know these Vatican types too well. All they think of is money. And I do not have a local priest. I will try to see you once a week, but my schedule is so busy.

“Excellent! Here is my UNSDRI card. You can always get me there, even in an emergency,” said Ferrapotti with a happy smile as he stood and reached out to shake hands.

But Calvi did not respond with a handshake. Instead, with tears in his eyes, he embraced his doctor in the Italian way, kissing each cheek. “*Grazie mille!* Can’t thank you enough! This talk has helped me already. And if you need any financial advice, don’t hesitate to come to me.”

“Thank you. But I have most of my important finances and transactions done in Puerto Rico. That’s just in case the Communists take over this country.”

“Makes sense. Do you have American citizenship, then?”

“A green card. Just as good, maybe better.”

Ferrapotti turned and departed, the old man was waiting outside the door to show him the way out.

