

## NAKAM 2

### *Anthropoid*

The story of the assassination of Heydrich brought me to tears. There is a well of grief and anger in me that was touched, like the proverbial knife in the wound. My identification as a Jew runs deep, even though I was only four or five years old when the murderous shitshow occurred. Walking down Dekalb Ave. holding my father's hand, down to the Paramount theater – how he pronounced the word *filum* for film. Movietonews News. Bodies stacked up. I loved seeing that Nazi super Aryan – Heydrich -- blown away by those brave fighters, all of them suicides or killed. The entire Czech Resistance was wiped out. Now? Now I'm too old and compromised to do anything, obviously, but I can speak through the medium I know – the Stage.

Remembrance. Preparing for death on the horizon. Not really. Living as always, keeping the routine. Noting that nobody around me gives a rat's ass. Considering the question of revenge. Too late now. But would have been one of them, the fighters, it's in my nature, despite the love of comfort and quiet. Little guy with a gun or a bomb.

Mankind subjected to the tyranny of psychopaths. Narcissistic maniacs, devoid of Conscience. Evolution made a mistake. Not all against all but one against everybody. Raving lunatics on murder sprees. There's a play – a monster on the horizon making its way to your hole in the

ground. The reverse of Godot. Had a mystical feeling about the horizon when I was a kid. Even today I'm grateful for a view of the sky when I look up out my window.

Have constructed a life against all odds – depression, acid, junk – the whole nine yards. Was it my doing or an angel on my shoulder? The angel Gabriel. Kicked methadone for the Work. Could never have done it otherwise – the hardest ordeal of my life. No, growing up in the household was equally a trial. Hanging in there. Screaming and yelling and feeling responsible for the sordid mess. So identified because of the Hebrew letters, the chanting, the ancient tradition, the wisdom (and the Terror) in the Old Testament. A beautiful life if you don't get fanatical about it.

Miscommunication with the women in my life. Never got on the same page with anyone. Hard to know why -- can't see myself well enough. Reconciled. Have a mild impulse to put my arms around a woman and give them a kiss etc., but it doesn't last long, and I don't take it seriously. Pent up need to talk – most of my talking in my own head, an endless flow of dialogue and imagination, replays, memories, self-justifications, dreams, and the rest of it. Better to put it on the page, as it is with other writers. Like Kafka, I believe in language, in the necessity of literature in the Life of Earth. The bones of the culture. As important as the Sciences. On the page.

We are machines. God knows who or what formed us, why it is the way it is. We have evolved technologically, but not

morally or spiritually. Our murderous nature continues. All it takes is one aggressive power-hungry lunatic to start a war where millions are killed.

Consciously preparing for posterity while doubtful Life as We Know it will persist. Getting my plays and poems/prose in order as well as the relationships I value. More friends than family, unfortunately, though it's good with them – not much involved in their lives. Everything still needs work. Nausea and serious pain in my hips, pelvis. Suddenly realize the self-importance of all this. Next thought is about the Pueblo sand paintings -- Navaho or Apache – once it's done you wipe it clean away. Different idea entirely. Junkie in me still alive in my body due to the constant pain. It's in my body, hidden from view like my liver. A permanent entity in the background. Now there is something interesting I could get into if I have the energy. The hidden addictive element in the body.

When I was in High School in the Catskills, I had two Jewish teachers who were veterans of World War II -- Milton Brizel (Mathematics) and Gene Feldman (English). This was in the fifties; I was in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Brizel was a bit of a womanizer who frequented some of the bars in the Hotels I was working as a busboy. Feldman was a handsome, melancholy family man. The two were in the cement business together. Teaching was a sideline: both read the New York Times in class. Feldman once called me aside to chide me for being more interested bouncing a ball than in reading and writing. Turns out Feldman had been a tank

commander who fought his way up the Italian peninsula and into Germany. When they crossed the border, he told me, he opened fire indiscriminately. His Brigade followed suit.

## **NAKAM 2**

**TZIVIA**

**JOHN**

**ARLECHINO**

**UPSTAGE CENTER: A DOOR.**

**ONSTAGE: ONE STOOL**

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JOHN: A while ago, when I was in the hospital, someone came into my house and stripped it of all drugs and alcohol. I think I know who it was, but I will not credit them or complain. A disparaging, insulting invasion of privacy.

TSIVIA: Wasn't me.

JOHN: I didn't think so.

TSIVIA: Could have been a nurse.

JOHN: No.

TSIVIA: A guard.

JOHN: No.

TSIVIA: Our prisoner.

JOHN: He's locked in the closet.

TSIVIA: Bring him out.

JOHN: Not yet.

TSIVIA: Why not?

JOHN: Make sure you're okay with it.

TSIVIA: Why wouldn't I be okay with it?

JOHN: I don't know why.

TSIVIA: I'm okay with it.

JOHN: A reconciliation of forces.

TSIVIA: Yes.

JOHN: He's a scapegoat.

TSIVIA: Yes.

JOHN: Retribution?

TSIVIA: No. Killing is no longer possible for me. And memory slips away.

JOHN: He *is* the six million.

TSIVIA: In your mind.

JOHN: It's Arlequin.

TSIVIA: A clown.

JOHN: He stands for the German High Command. The murderers we couldn't get to because of politics. We saw them on the road and spit at them and taunted them, the Aryans, but we were denied vengeance.

TSIVIA: Where were you?

JOHN: In Northern Italy, with the Jewish Brigade.

TSIVIA: Is that all you did?

JOHN: I can't say.

TSIVIA: Okay, bring him out.

JOHN: He means symbolic retaliation, outside History, outside Time.

TSIVIA: Years ago, I gave up on it.

JOHN: On Revenge?

TSIVIA: On History. History is over. You'd have to be an idiot not to know that.

JOHN: I am an idiot.

TSIVIA: Look around. Listen to the radio. Read the [apers. Watch the evening news. Time erases all.

JOHN: What about the right wing? The religious in their black costumes and hatred and persecution of the Arabs. Things have come full circle.

TSIVIA: I forget. I forget every day, every hour, every minute. Even now, I can't hold it close to me – only one generation removed. And then you remember, and your heart drops into your gut with a sickening thud.

JOHN: Yes. Thoughts of Revenge. Repair. Yes, as necessary as food, or faith, or hope. To restore the balance of forces. Our fathers may have understood that.

TSIVIA: My father was a dumb witness. He hadn't the brain to process it. He barely knew, like most Americans, the extent of the massacre.

JOHN: Your father was brain damaged.

TSIVIA: Yes.

JOHN: And your mother?

TSIVIA: We won't talk about mother. I've said enough about my mother. At the end she was dancing around like a partridge in a pear tree.

JOHN: Oh. Jewish?

TSIVIA: Superficially, yes. But I always associated her story with the Warsaw uprising. Don't ask me why.

JOHN: Why?

TSIVIA: Reckless desperation. Survival underground, in the sewers, bread and bullets. I saw a photo, the Warsaw Jewish quarter, a woman with a pail, her face contorted, desperate poverty and madness. Came down the line to my mother and me.

JOHN: You?

TSIVIA: Mad as a hatter. And what is your situation?

JOHN: Other than crippling arthritis, dependence on drugs and alcohol?

TSIVIA: Yes.

JOHN: Outside the canon, the economy, the historical notation, as was said. A reckless devotion to the art of poetry.

TSIVIA: Interesting – you are referring to the rhyme of Being. Big forces. Rhyming and colliding. But the pattern is off, the balance is corrupted.

JOHN: Yes. It's what some of the Rabbis said at the time. The balance of Being is broken. The body of Jewish life is torn apart. People steal and lie about it. My own body is crumbling before my eyes.

TSIVIA: Get ready to die.

JOHN: All flesh is fertilizer. Food for the coming generations. They will breathe the dust of our remains.

TSIVIA: And the spirit?

JOHN: They say energy cannot die. Everything is electricity.

TSIVIA: Thought?

JOHN: An electrical phenomenon built into the machine by mistake.

TSIVIA: To get high?

JOHN: Yes. And get off the train. And if your head is right, you can feel the rotation of the earth. You can hear the hissing of the stars.

TSIVIA: I'm interested in my personal satisfaction.

JOHN: Good luck on that.

TSIVIA : My salvation.

JOHN: The myth of the Self.

TSIVIA: No, no – the balance of forces – Evil over Good, Dark over Light.

JOHN: It's like the plague, or a swarm of insects, lies and the murder of Conscience. The German nation subsided into denial and stupefaction.

TSIVIA: We must awaken them with retribution.

JOHN: Too late now.

TSIVIA: Yes.

JOHN” They’ve gotten away with it.

TSIVIA: Yes.

JPHN: But not all.

TSIVIA: Let’s get them before they all die. Let’s get after them.

JOHN: They’re all over the place.

TSIVIA: We’ll start with the clown in the closet.

JOHN: They’re in us. They’re in our heads. In our blood. Stinging. Regret. Suppressed anger. Fury.

TSIVIA: Open the door and let him out.

JOHN: And what about the righteous war-mongering black-coats in the Land of Israel?

TSIVIA: We must support the state.

JOHN: Why?

TSIVIA: It’s a matter of survival. Land and water.

TSIVIA: Then history is not over.

TSIVIA: You're an old junkie. You should know. Once a junkie always a Junkie.

JOHN: Once a Jew, always a Jew.

TSIVIA: This is true. You're dreaming of a heroin fix in an alley, in a hallway, home alone with tramadol or morphine.

JOHN: Morphine doesn't get it, though it helped during the war. The Germans had all kinds of drugs, like dolaphenine, after Adolf, which became methadone, the nastiest drug of all.

TSIVIA: Methamphetamine?

JOHN: Yes, Benzedrine, bennies. They were stoned all the time, the krauts. That's how they blitzed their way into France.

TSIVIA: And the Jewish Brigade?

JOHN: We did as much as we possibly could. Soothe the pain, calm the soul. *(Bell and a light change.)*

TSIVIA: I came through the Warsaw ghetto. We used German guns and Soviet weapons smuggled into us by Partisans.

JOHN: I know.

TSIVIA: I killed many, teenage Jew-hating boys. We got out of the ghetto and fought through the sewers. We fought like demons and some of us survived. I got out of there and walked among the destitute and the dying. No one knew where to go, at first, except to go South. And then we got help from the Brigade and the Jewish Committee.

JOHN: At the end, we wanted to continue the fight. Some of us. Some wanted to go back to the homeland, where there'd be another fight to come. With the Arabs.

TSIVIA: What did you do?

JOHN: We were constrained by the British.

TSIVIA: But what did you do?

JOHN: I can't say right now.

TZIVIAL: Why not?

JOHN: We were on the run.

TSIVIA: It doesn't matter where you run. Away from the Gentiles, the Jew-killers. Run, run, run.

JOHN: Said the Raven, evermore.

TSIVIA: The Raven?

JOHN: The Trickster behind the door.

TSIVIA: Bring him in, bring the prisoner in. We'll deal with him now, bring him in. (*ARLEQUIN appears in the doorway.*)

JOHN: Sit down, sit the fuck down. (*ARLEQUIN struggles to find the chair.*) What. Take off his hood. Yeah. Take off his mask, yeah.

ARLEQINO: It's my face, stupid.

TSIVIA: Hello, there.

ARLEQINO: Fuck you.

JOHN: Fuck you, too.

ARLEQINO: And all your ancestry and progeny too, your whole genetic line.

JOHN: Slap the sonofabitch. (*Slap*)

ARLEQINO: Great. And John is not your real name.

TSIVIA: What's his name?

ARLEQINO: It's an alias. He's on the run from the authorities.

TSIVIA: I knew that.

ARLEQINO: The British Army. The Jewish Brigade in the British Army

TSIVIA: I knew that too.

ARLEQINO: He's a killer.

TSIVIA: And so am I. And so are you.

ARLEQINO: A curse on him until the 12<sup>th</sup> generation.

JOHN: I'll saw your fucking head off.

ARLEQINO: Go ahead. I'm done.

TSIVIA: Done?

ARLEQINO: Yes, I'm tired of the human condition. The killing and fucking and shitting and lying and all the rest of it.

TSIVIA: Me, too.

ARLEQINO: I'm ready to die and join my ancestors.

TSIVIA: Not just yet.

JOHN: Questions first.

ARLEQINO: Fuck you, like I said.

JOHN: Not a good attitude.

TSIVIA: No.

JOHN: Slap him again. (*Slap*)

TSIVIA: Next time I'll bring an axe.

JOHN: A guillotine.

TSIVIA: Swish.

JOHN: So, what did you do?

ARLEQINO: When?

JOHN: Slap him again. (*SLAP*) There you go.

ARLEQINO: Nice.

JOHN: Next time it's the water cure.

TSIVIA: Sure.

ARLEQINO: We don't do that anymore in civilized society.

TSIVIA: We've decided that history is over.

JOHN: Only one idea left, thoughts of revenge –

ARLEQINO: Too late now.

JOHN: Against the stupid and the bent, the evangelical resentful. Grieving for a white Christian America, lawns and white fences and church steeples in the town.

TSIVIA: Are you one of those?

ARLEQINO: No!

JOHN: Who think they're going to fly up to Heaven, bodily intact?

ARLEQINO: I don't think so.

TSIVIA: Yes, you do.

ARLEQINO: No, I'm mainly a song and dance act.

JOHN: As a matter of fact, you do know.

TSIVIA: It's the craziest thing I ever heard of.

JOHN: Nuts. Jesus coming down to save their asses.

TSIVIA: I thought he came down already from the heavenly ramparts above.

JOHN: That's what I thought.

TSIVIA: Hatred of the Jews -- when the guy hanging on the wall is a Jewish fellow.

JOHN: Savior of the bone headed.

TSIVIA: Suffering on the cross. The Indians couldn't believe it -- the image of a god nailed to a tree.

JOHN: Thirty-five hundred years ago, in Hellenic Egypt.

TSIVIA: Is what?

JOHN: The beginning. Competition with the Jews, hatred of the Jews, expulsion of the Jews.

TSIVIA: And then the mass murder and the bomb. Jewish scientists creating Tech, forgetting what happened altogether.

JOHN: Life and death in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

TSIVIA: For which you will pay, Clown.

ARLEQINO: I had nothing to do with it.

TSIVIA: That's what they all say, hiding in their living rooms and shops and machinery and labs.

JOHN: Nothing to be done. Freedom of thought, freedom of belief.

ARLEQINO: I believe in the Lord Jesús, who will smite you with a fiery sword, and his Kingdom will be made right again.

JOHN: Who asked you.?

ARLEQINO: No one has to ask me.

TSIVIA: You sound like a broken record.

JOHN: We have rights, too, we have rights.

ARLEQINO: Revenge”

JOHN: Yes. Mainly for Revenge.

ARLEQINO: Who cares? We have an army of believers and we're on the march.

JOHN: If it was up to me, I'd kill all of you.

ARLEQINO: It's not up to you.

TSIVIA: No. Impossible. We'll start and stop with the Arlequin.

ARLEQINO: I'm not the one but go ahead.

TSIVIA: Well, you're a stand in, Pal.

ARLEQINO: Why me?

TSIVIA: Your vicious antisemitism stood out.

JOHN: Attracted our attention.

ARLEQINO: I was locked in the closet for three nights and two days.

TSIVIA: Try a hundred years.

JOHN: We know you. You're just the right type. Gentile and stupid.

ARLEQINO: How's your sugar today, John? Take all your pills today? Your liver must be rotting by now. Your pancreas as well. I can smell it from here.

TSIVIA: The nasty things you say. As though we are eating Christian babies.

ARLEQINO: Southern fried in Crisco fat!

JOHN: Whack him. (*Whack*)

ARLEQINO: Marching to glory!

TSIVIA: As though we're bombing churches from our battle stations on Mars.

JOHN: Well, you never know.

ARLEQINO: Halleluiah!

JOHN: It could be true for all we know. Satellites in the sky. Get a bead on Germany and the American South.

TSIVIA: We'll start with you. Got a bead on you.

ARLEQINO: Raping toddlers, attacking priests!

JOHN: You never know.

TSIVIA: Have you?

ARLEQINO: What?

TSIVIA: Burned down synagogues.

ARLEQINO: No.

JOHN: Speak up why don't you.

ARLEQINO: No!

JOHN: Halleluiah. It's a Hebrew word meaning Praise the Lord.

TSIVIA: Did you know that?

ARLEQINO: Not anymore. Now it's a Christian war cry, a call to battle.

JOHB: Slap the motherfucker. *(Slap)*

ARLEQINO: Don't do that!

JOHN: Hitting old men in the street. Pious Jews who mean no harm.

TSIVIA: It's his mind that's warped.

JOHN: You're confused and your head 's in the toilet. We don't like it when you take it out on the Jews.

TSIVIA: We should plug him into the wall.

ARLEQINO: No, no!

JOHN: Plug him in. *(Plug)* There you go.

TSIVIA: The Lord is God; the Lord is one. *(Shock)*

ARLEQINO: Oh! Dann!

TSIVIA: Shock therapy. Now he's inspired. Let's hear what he has to say.

ARLEQINO: No!

TSIVIA: Come on, the world is waiting.

ARLEQINO: Drop dead!

JOHN: Slap him again.

TSIVIA: Okay. (*Slap*) Talk.

ARLEQINO: We want a Christian State, God bless America, and a man of god shall lead it, a representative of the Lord Jesus -- divinely ordered for the proper way of life, which is to say Jesus is our Savior, and he shall appear in the sky and destroy the godless and the armies of the unbelievers, and the day will come which will be the Last Day, and we will rise, and be transformed, immortal and free in eternal bliss anon and forever.

TSIVIA: Eternal means forever.

JOHN: Well, good luck with that.

TSIVIA: Jeez what a jerk.

ARLEQINO: And all the unbelievers will be crushed like grapes.

JOHN: Whoa!

ARLEQINO: And the wine thereof shall be fed to the pigs.

JOHN: This person is up there in the clouds. This clown is electrified.

TSIVIA: Maybe we should amplify him more.

JOHN: Maybe he'll die and go to heaven right in front of us.

TSIVIA: Maybe he'll be electrocuted.

JOHN: Maybe he'll explode into smithereens.

TSIVIA: Maybe he'll turn into slithery muck.

JOHN: Let him talk now.

TSIVIA: Cats got his tongue.

JOHN: Let's hang the sonofabitch.

TSIVIA: Let's amp up the power. (*Amp*)

JOHN: There you go.

TSIVIA: How's that?

ARLEQINO: I see light, a great light, a light that is no longer light, but a manifestation of his awful majesty, coming to

smite the infidels and the apostates and the Jews. Glory be!  
Glory! His truth is marching on! Yes!

JOHN: Finished? (*No answer*) We had a group once, you probably never heard of it, it was called *Nakam*, Hebrew for Revenge, we poisoned the water, but nobody died. They got sick but nobody died. A nation of murderers survived.

TSIVIA: I got a few of them myself, though no one knows. Stealthily and privately. No one knows.

JOHN: Everything fades into nothing, everything is eaten by mice, dust of the fallen is in the air we breathe.

TSIVIA: Yes. No one hears us, no one is listening.

JOHN: What happened was this –

TSIVIA: Nothing happened. Nothing is hidden in everybody's closet. Nothing at all. You could say it's the end of days. Why? because the mass murder of our people closed the door. The door of History is closed.

JOHN: Amen. I'll get them all.

TSIVIA: Stop that kind of talk. I won't participate. This one is enough. He'll stand for the rest.

JOHN: Then we part ways.

TSIVIA: Bye, bye.

JOHN: You go your way and I'll go mine.

TSIVIA: So long.

ARLEQINO: Ha!

TSIVIA: Shut up, you!

JOHN: Okay. He pays the price for them all. Al the liars and hypocrites and murderers.

TSIVIA: Agreed.

JOHN: Big job.

TSIVIA: Yeah.

ARLEQINO: Yeah, yeah.

JOHN: Be quiet.

TSIVIA: Then I'll stay.

JOHN: Good. String him up. Nobody is watching, nobody cares.

TSIVIA: Wire?

JOHN: Wire. The electrical will spark like poison darts.

ARLEQINO: No!

TSIVIA: Wait. He wants to say something.

JOHN: Tell, tell.

ARLEQINO: Don't hang me. Unplug me from the wall.

JOHN: Talk. Talk, or we'll turn up the power.

TSIVIA: And then we'll hang you.

ARLEQINO: We lined 'em up on ditches and blew out their brains, and gassed them, and starved them to death, and decapitated them, and burned them alive, and tortured them, and smashed them against walls, and poisoned them, and worked them to death.

TSIVIA: You had nothing else to do?

ARLEQINO: It was glorious and fun, to do our duty and fuck their beautiful teenage girls. Every day we had our choice. The best of the best. Otherwise, we'd never get laid.

TSIVIA: Those were the days.

ARLEQINO: You bet.

JOHN: Let's tear his tongue out.

TSIVIA: Let's break his teeth.

JOHN: Slap him again. (*Slap*)

TSIVIA: Say thank you.

ARLEQINO: Thank you.

TSIVIA: We're letting you live a few minutes more.

ARLEQINO: Thanks a lot.

JOHN: One shithead won't even the score, but we'll have our day, as it were, as it happens, *selah*.

TSIVIA: What?

JOHN: *Selah* --The Old Testament word – the pause that summarizes.

TSIVIA: Is what?

JOHN: I just said.

TSIVIA: Say it again.

JOHN: The pause that summarizes.

TSIVIA: Again, and a gun.

JOHN: The Survivors wept and walked thousands of miles, starving and in rags, through Vilna and Warsaw, Bucharest, and Paris, to Southern France, to the shores of the Mediterranean -- on their way to the Holy Land. But deep down in the deepest unconscious sensation of themselves was rage, rage, and no forgiveness, and the absolute necessity for Revenge. And I feel it now, even now in the second generation. And when our people tried to return to their homes, they were murdered on the spot. Those righteous Christian killers will pay with their lives.

TSIVIA: All of them?

JOHN: All of them.

TSIVIA: No. Just this one. Like we agreed.

JOHN: Then I send them an everlasting Curse. If not them, their progeny, down into the future of the genetic line so long as there is a line.

ARLEQINO: The Curse is on you, my friend, down to the 20th generation.

TSIVIA: We won't be here. And neither will you.

ARLEQINO: Arlequin is immortal.

JOHN: Good luck on that. Man is a stupid creature, stupid and deluded. He thinks he's something. He thinks he's real and not imagined. Right, my friend?

ARLEQINO: I'm not your friend. I am Arlequino and I cannot die. I am timeless. Wherever there is a stage, there am I. My line is secure. My genetics are solid. No one remembers the deeds of the Fathers, no one remembers the slaughter of innocents, but my progeny is fine, prosperous, and free and well disguised, and no one 's the wiser.

JOHN: God. A living nightmare.

ARLEQINO: Nothing is as nothing does, nothing defecates on the living room floor.

JOHN: This clown is nasty and dangerous.

TSIVIA: This operation takes energy and thought, and time is running out.

ARLEQINO: We had smashed into the Soviet Union, and we were at the gates of Moscow. The Russians retreated into the woods. Winter came and we froze to death, lost hands and feet and ears and mouths and our balls froze so we could never screw our wives again. They were screwed anyway by the avenging Russian Army who raped the women and girls.

TSIVIA: Continue., Fool.

ARLEQINO: No one will ever know, the Earth spinning through space as it sheds its burden of human life. Buried underground are the bones and sighs of the dead. Even so –

JOHN: Before we scalp you and slice your head off.

ARLEQINO: I was with the Red Army partisans in Belarus. There were Jewish groups in the forest, raggedy and hungry and poorly armed.

JOHN: How did you deal with them?

ARLEQINO: We spurned them or fought with them. Killed some in battle.

TSIVIA: Why?

ARLEQINO: The Commanders did not like Jews.

TSIVIA: There were many Jews in the Red Army.

ARLEQINO: Occasionally we let some in, Jewish Communists or excellent Fighters.

JOHN: Nasty.

ARLEQINO: Lower the electrical.

TSIVIA: No. Remember, you're on TV.

ARLEQINO: Oh? Where's the camera?

TSIVIA: Video Tape. Right up there. So, fix your hair and straighten out your face. (*A. does so.*)

JOHN: There you go.

ARLEQINO: I never agreed to be exposed on television.

TSIVIA: For all the world to see.

JOHN: A mean scar on your *punim*. Looks like a burn.

ARLEQINO: Fuck you.

JOHN: It's a deep forever mark on your soul forever.

ARLEQINO: Tell her why you're on the run, John.

JOHN: I said already.

TSIVIA: No, you didn't.

ARLEQINO: When the war was over, we were afraid of the Jews. The avenging horde of the Jews. All over Germany we crouched in fear. But it never happened, the retribution never came.

TSIVIA: Our people were murdered on the thresholds of their homes. I got some of them in my travels. Creepy Poles

and Ukrainians and Rumanians. Dumb farmers and creepy shopkeepers. Fat accountants and dirty illiterates.

ARLEQINO: I don't think so. The locals took over the homes and stores and land from the Jews. They got away with it. Free housing, free land. And their children are proud of themselves to this day.

TSIVIA: No need to pose, no need to comb your hair or adjust your warped personality.

ARLEQINO: No.

TSIVIA: You could button your shirt.

JOHN: I always feel dirty, myself, after a serious conversation because of the incidents of self-praise coming uncontrollably out of my mouth.

TSIVIA: Me as well. I endure the same.

JOHN: Me, I'm one of those people beaten into modesty, thrashed into humility by the older kids in the town, Jewish kids, in fact, so I had to punch it out with them bloodied like a lamb or a goat.

ARLEQINO: What's the point of the camera?

TSIVIA: Obviously. So, we have a record, so we have a reference, so we take our stand historically.

ARLEQINO: Historically? I thought history was over.

JOHN: Well, it turns to dust in the long run.

TSIVIA: The eyes are a camera. Have you ever thought about that? The eyes are a camera, and my life is a movie.

ARLEQINO: No, I never thought about that.

JOHN: Life is a movie, and I am a camera.

ARLEQINO: And I am a result of all the movies ever made.

TSIVIA: God, what a prick. Let's do him.

JOHN: We can't do this one by one. We need a bigger attack. We need an historical event, a boil on the surface of the planet.

TSIVIA: He is one twig, one iota, one element in the cauldron of fire, of righteous revenge. That's it and that's all.

JOHN: All right, turn up the juice.

ARLEQINO: Don't amp me!

TSIVIA: Then tell. What happened at the end of the slaughter?

ARLEQINO: Europe was on fire. War criminals roaming the land. Refugees walking South. Beggars and thieves and cons and murderers everywhere. You had to kill to make your way, find a path. Mainly I killed Jews. They were not interested in fighting. They wanted to go home. Confusion reigned.

JOHN: Not true. We had Avengers who went after the Guards and S.S. Jewish-American tanks crossed the German border and opened fire.

TSIVIA: We see that your face is burned.

JOHN: Half his face is blackened.

ARLEQINO: Yes. A teenaged boy threw a firebrand at me. I got him in a headlock and broke his neck.

TSIVIA: A Jewish boy?

ARLEQINO: Don't know. You couldn't tell in those days. Not at first. People wandering, all races and types and origins, wandering toward oblivion. Survival was all.

TSIVIA: Your face is arranged for the camera?

ARLEQINO: It is.

TSIVIA: Very good.

JOHN: I had boils as a child. Boils and eczema and lice. Built up my inferiority complex, plus a grievance against my betters, whoever they were, plus anger and withdrawal.

TSIVIA: How so?

JOHN: I clenched it in my body and refused to speak.

TSIVIA: And now?

JOHN: I am speaking now, as crows gather in the trees and wires ding outside my window. They have a lot to say. Like get out of my way or take a hike.

TSIVIA: Let's get back to our prisoner of war, Arlequino, who shall serve as an example for future generations.

JOHN: Much is unknown. Vengeance was taken. Isolated events. Individually or in small groups. Hit and run. Snipers.

TSIVIA: The Jewish Brigade?

JOHN: I can't say.

ARLEQINO: Ha!

TSIVIA: Had you experienced any of that clown?

ARLEQINO: Yes, we were aware that we were being hunted down by members of the Jewish Brigade and some from the

Irgun, but it was predominately the partisans and fighters from the ghettos and survivors from the camps. Young people. Palestinian Jews made up the Brigade.

TSIVIA: Continue.

ARLEQINO: Water.

TSIVIA: Give him some water.

JOHN: No water.

TSIVIA: Speak.

ARLEQINO: Water.

JOHN: Here you go. *(Splash)*

TSIVIA: Cold?

ARLEQINO: Cold!

TSIVIA: Give him a towel.

JOHN: Here's a towel.

ARLEQINO: Thank you very much.

TSIVIA: Say more.

ARLEQINO: I'm done.

JOHN: More water and electrification.

TSIVIA: That could kill me!

JOHN: Very likely.

TSIVIA: Speak up.

ARLEQINO: I got to my home near Nuremberg. It was still standing. You could buy and sell on the black market. The women had turned to prostitution. The Red Army had raped them all. It was hard to tell the truth from a lie. The lie about the invincible Reich, the lie about the Jews, the industrials getting away with slave labor and murder. Hiding in plain sight.

TSIVIA: I can't bear this.

JOHN: There's more. The smell of death was everywhere. People defecating in the streets, into ditches. Continual rape. Criminals and lost children wandering together on the roads. Survival was the mode, though there were predators and retards from the Soviets and the Germans and the labor camps – our only thought was Revenge. Survival, yes, but always, in the background, thoughts of revenge.

TSIVIA: I lived a nightmare, running away, you run, run, run, and you never get there.

JOHN: We met in Lublin. Gradually a small group of men and women was formed, by itself, organically, young people like us, partisans, and ghetto fighters, we wanted revenge. We found each other as though drawn by a magnet. Do you remember?

TSIVIA: How could I forget?

JOHN: That was long ago. But we will never forget. We will never forgive.

TSIVIA: I do forget.

JOHN: She was one of the fiercest of our fighters. She survived the Warsaw uprising, battling in the sewers. She escaped and joined partisans associated with the Soviets. In Belarus.

TSIVIA: There was an officer who kept trying to rape me, an ugly stupid man drunk with power. We ran into a Jewish group of avengers, and I slipped away and joined them. We fought the Germans and the Ukrainians and Poles, right-wing Czechs, Europe's war against the Jews. And now we are taking steps.

ARLEQUINO: How so?

JOHN: Beginning with you. As we explained already. We'll squeeze you until you burst. We'll electrocute you. Plug hm in.

ARLEQINO: No!

TSIVIA: He's already plugged.

JOHN: Then amp him.

ARLEQINO: No!

TSIVIA: I like his face, basically. The burn gives him an innocent look. You feel sorry for him and want to ease his suffering. You ever feel anything like that? Any kind of compassion or empathy? *(Silence)*

JOHN: Electrocute him.

ARLEQINO: Wait! We were well taken care of. Better than the regular Army, we rotated in and out. We had one goal, to exterminate the Jews of Europe. We had help from the local populations.

JOHN: May they live in Hell.

TSIVIA: Not a bad life, eh? S. S.?

ARLEQINO: The crème de la crème.

JOHN: Slap the sonofabitch. (*Slap*)

TSIVIA: And?

ARLEQINO: We didn't understand the magnitude of the situation. Though most of the Jews gave up themselves and didn't fight, we didn't have the means to do our job correctly.

TSIVIA: And we, the slaughtered?

ARLEQINO: They could not understand that what was happening to them was happening. Right up until they end, when death released them, they didn't know why. That it was because they were Jews. Even now it is incomprehensible to me. At the time they couldn't believe it. You can see the bewilderment on their faces, their sorrow and martyrdom. They prayed to God and remembered their ancestry and the endless persecution.

TSIVIA: But we are still here.

ARLEQINO: Yes. Now what?

JOHN: How about another water treatment?

ARLEQINO: No!

JOHN: Give him a kick. (*Kick*)

TSIVIA: That was fun.

JOHN: Good. Another one.

TSIVIA: Yeah. *(Kick)*

JOHN: Kick him in the ribs.

TSIVIA: Will do. *(Kick)* You feel that?

JOHN: Speak up.

ARLEQINO: Yes!

JOHN: Next thing is the door.

ARLEQINO: What?

JOHN: The door to Hell. Back where you came from.

TSIVIA: Can you believe what's happening?

ARLEQINO: No!

TSIVIA: I'm enjoying it immensely, myself.

JOHN: It's happening. Am I right? Yes, or no?

ARLEQINO: Yes!

TSIVIA: Tell us about the mark on your face.

ARLEQINO: No!

JOHN: We know what happened. There was a girl in a room, in a Jewish town in Poland, a room in the house of a tailor.

TSIVIA: Always a tailor!

JOHN: A sexy young teenager, she was spared for a minute. The rest of the family had been shot to death in a nearby canal. The girl was playing for time, trying to find a way to save her life. So, she flirted, and caught your eye. You held a bayonet to her throat. She caught your eye. This is really happening. You hesitated. Her lovely throat, silky and inviting. There was a kerosene lantern nearby. You threw her down and started to unzip your pants.

ARLEQINO: She was only a child, after all. Then she plowed the burning lamp into my face and ran.

JOHN: The scar remains.

TSIVIA: Hopefully the girl survived and lives a good live somewhere.

JOHN: Was that it?

ARLEQINO: No. She ran across the river and into the trees.

TSIVIA: That was me. Run, run, run.

ARLEQINO: Her feet were bare. She wore no shoes in the freezing cold.

TSIVIA: I ran through the frozen forest until I died and went to Heaven.

JOHN: Say more.

TSIVIA: It was snowy white. And then I saw blood on the white sky and awoke.

JOHN: And then?

TSIVIA: I ran.

JOHN: And then?

TSIVIA: ***Nakam.***

JOHN: You hear that?

ARLEQINO: What?

JOHN: It is the thunder of Conscience.

ARLEQINO: Yes.

JOHN: Truly?

ARLEQINO: No.

JOHN: Plug him in.

TSIVIA: He's plugged already.

JOHN: Turn it up then.

ARLEQINO: Wait! I was visiting a camp with a dozen captured Jews. I heard shots. I had to get rid of the captives. I killed them all. A Rabbi and his cohort. First, they got down on their knees and prayed to their God. I shot each of them in the head. Then I ran toward the shots. There was a breakout going on. I joined the guards in putting it down. We got all of them but one, who ran away into the forest. One of the leaders was a young fellow, a teenager, who ran into a metalworker shop and hid behind some machinery. I had him cornered. He stood up with a burning torch in his hand. I fired my pistol. At the same time, he blew the fire at my face. I spent time in a field hospital. When I was released, I started walking. The Russians were coming. Our comrades fought on, but some of us ran away, toward the Homeland.

JOHN: How many have you murdered for that insane ideology?

ARLEQINO: I wasn't counting.

TSIVIA: He was not counting.

JOHN: Start counting now.

TSIVIA: Count to a hundred.

JOHN: Count to a thousand.

TSIVIA: Try six million.

JOHN: Start now.

TSIVIA: One two three. Four five six. The Nazi scientists got away with it.

JOHN: That's the way it goes in the world.

TSIVIA: We'll get them. Every one of them.

JOHN: We'll poison their food.

TSIVIA: Seven eight nine, we'll chop them into pieces and burn them in a pit.

JOHN: Nine ten, we'll drown them in a coal mine.

ARLEQINO: The Righteous, they took off their clothes and recited the Benedictions and walked into the gas chambers.

TSIVIA: Are you Catholic?

JOHN: He's Italian.

TSIVIA: He's a Catholic.

JOHN: Are you sorry? Is there a burning in your chest?

ARLEQINO: No chance.

JOHN: Well then.

TSIVIA: At the bottom of a well.

JOHN: Drowned in fire up to his head.

TSIVIA: Dead.

JOHN: No redemption for this fellow.

TSIVIA: Only fire.

ARLEQINO: We put them in a mine shaft and threw grenades in there and smoke bombs and a firestorm.

JOHN: Where was this?

ARLEQINO: I don't remember.

JOHN: Hit him.

ARLEQINO: In the mountains.

TSIVIA: You had a good time?

ARLEQINO: Yes. Nothing was left in there. No remains. All burnt up. Happened frequently – whole villages walked into the gas chambers singing the *Shema*. Why? They couldn't eat un-kosher food.

TSIVIA: I think they had a martyrdom complex. The Sacred Chosen People faithful to *Adonai*.

JOHN: We'll avenge them now.

TSIVIA: This clown is small potatoes.

ARLEQINO: One potato two potato.

JOHN: He's not a clown, he's a retard. Smack this dumb Nazi murderer, smack him hard. (*Smack*)

TSIVIA: Next, we'll go after your family. We know where they are and what they do.

JOHN: They have nice little lives. Walking around town free as buzzards, smiling, and laughing like kewpie dolls. Happy, happy. You have the hammer?

TSIVIA: Yes.

JOHN: They have no idea – the hammer is coming. The revenge of the Jewish people is on its way.

ARLEQINO: I have no family. Burned up in an American firebomb.

TSIVIA: Well. Daylight bombing.

ARLEQINO: The war was lost.

JOHN: There you go. Smack him again. (*Smack, whimpering.*) Shut up.

TSIVIA: Let him cry. By the way, you grew up kosher?

JOHN: No.

TSIVIA: What then?

JOHN: I grew up secular, under a rock, screaming and yelling and tearing each other to pieces. No hope there.

TSIVIA: Sorry.

JOHN: Never mind. And you?

TSIVIA: My father was a doctor, a learned man. My mother was a high school economics teacher. They got caught in a roundup and disappeared. Ashes in a pile of ashes, ashes

next to an oven, bodies going up in smoke. Ashes. We are breathing them as we speak.

JOHN: What are you doing?

TSIVIA: I'm going to strangle him.

JOHN: No. My turn first. Then the hammer.

TSIVIA: Your turn, John. Tell them what you did.

JOHN: As part of the British Army, we were not allowed to take revenge. In any event, we were restrained. But there was a squad, a secret squad of ten. We went out in pairs or alone and did our duty. We had a list provided by survivors and partisans. We went after the killers in secret -- some we strangled, some we drowned and some we shot. I felt no remorse whatever. *(ARLEQINO: chokes)*

JOHN: Let him choke.

ARLEQINO: Aah!

TSIVIA: Choke, motherfucker.

JOHN: Whack him. *(Whack)*

ARLEQINO: Yah!

TSIVIA: I don't have much left. Some good memories, some bad. We will never get even. The balance remains unrestored. But this guy has got to go. He stands for something, something Evil.

JOHN: Everything is electricity, from the top of my head to my toes, from sea to shining sea.

TSIVIA: *Selah*. It's incomprehensible. A high culture in Central Europe.

JOHN: One criminally insane individual can hypnotize a nation.

TSIVIA: *Never again*.

JOHN: It can happen again. It's a species problem. Evolution gone awry. God made a mistake. There are many in every generation. Homicidal maniacs seeking absolute power.

TSIVIA: That about gets it: (*ARLEQINO closes his eyes.*)

JOHN: Bring on the hammer.

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**Murray Mednick**  
**Los Angeles. 1/23**





