

# Chapter 41

## BREAKING THE VESSEL

I CREPT DOWNSTAIRS on stocking feet. The moon was bright and carving shadows on the kitchen walls. I tiptoed to the cellar door and turned the knob. A floorboard creaked. My heart leapt to my throat. I waited till the pounding in my chest had stopped and rolled my inner eye. Why was I acting like a sneak? Forbidden rooms are locked. Chancery was open. Marion had shown me round my first day at the Farm.

I palmed the wall inside the door for switches. Finding none, I set a cautious foot one dark step lower. Right away the lights came on—fluorescent tubes, stuttering and buzzing till the gas inside them settled. I stayed in place until the cellar was completely lit, then carried on.

When Marion had brought me down, all I'd registered was steel shelving filled with rugged banker's boxes—nothing to suggest it as a place for answers. If instead there'd been tall folios in flaking calf-skin, piled helter-skelter and exuding old-book smell, I might have come here sooner. But until Luke mentioned it, I hadn't given Chancery a second thought.

I had trouble shaking off the feeling I was skulking. Even after several minutes' poking round, I still expected someone to call sharply from the kitchen *Who's down there? What are you doing?*

Little strips of Dymo tape identified the contents of the shelves:

*Property, Accounts, CISAP, SPR, Cassandra Island, Projects, Members.* The lower shelves were given over to *The Bad Guys*—metal trunks in flaking army green with MKULTRA F-RK, 2561-G and BRAZIER blazoned on the sides.

*Property* went back to 1921, when the farm was sold at auction to one Wallace Carver. Its boxes held surveyors' maps, building permits, property appraisals, tax assessments, and an archivist's wet-dream of documents pertaining to the purchase of the woodlot, squabbles with the township over lot lines, bickering with neighbours over fences, and compensation paid out for some troublesomely errant goats.

*Accounts* revealed a pack-rat's horde of annotated household spending, farm equipment rentals, service contracts, long-expired warranties and bills of every kind including coal deliveries.

*SPR* was mostly correspondence. *CISAP* held a lot of painful promo copy out of 1960s journals welcoming practitioners of "humanistic Therapies" to "Dialogue and Share" in an environment where they'd be "close to Mother Earth" and could "Partake of bringing Forth the Bounty of the Soil."

*Cassandra Island's* records were identified by gold stars on the lids. Almost everything inside was photocopied: blueprints, zoning applications, financial statements, stock analyses, AGM minutes, shareholders letters, quarterly reports. Only the brochures and annual reports were the originals. A quick glance through confirmed that Dr. Colton hadn't lied; the place was in the black.

*Projects* had been grouped according to adhesive DayGlo dots, and labelled with a hyphenated number done in Letraset. Lists of letter-digit combinations had been jotted underneath.

*Members* boxes occupied the most amount of space. Several had been stamped DECEASED. Four had question marks in red. All were stencilled with a letter-digit combination like the jotted lists in *Projects*. DayGlo dots were lined up underneath. Below each dot were hyphenated numbers, terminating with an -R or -S, written out by hand

Beside the stencilled letter-digit strings were three thick lines,

stacked vertically. Mostly, all three lines were broken by a small gap in the middle—the trigram, *K'un*, from the *I Ching*. Where they weren't, all three lines were solid: the trigram, *Ch'ien*. *K'un* and *Ch'ien* are like the *Book of Changes*' yin and yang. *K'un* is passive and receptive. *Ch'ien* is active and creative. Empaths and transmitters? It made sense.

Tucked beneath the trigrams were two numbers, left and right. The left hand one comprised two digits, while the right hand one was always 1 or 2.

At first blush, all the *Members* boxes looked about the same. There were, however, differences. KN1533RC had a gold star but no coloured dots. Others had the dots without the stars. Some had both. A symbol like a pair of boldface letter I's appeared on two—Gemini, the Twins. Unsurprisingly, their stencilled strings began with DA and LA.

If the starting letters were initials, probably the terminating letters were as well. Assuming KN1533RC—gold-starred like *Cassandra Island*'s lids—represented Kirin Neemes, RC at the end most likely stood for Roy Calhoun, the member who'd inducted her from the retreat. That fit with GF at the end of Luke's and my identifiers: Garrett Finnestad.

Kirin was the newest member and her box was free of DayGlo dots, suggesting that the colours represented *Projects* categories longer-standing members had been part of. A quick check either side of KN1533RC confirmed it. The hyphenated numbers written underneath cross-referenced the Letraset on similarly colour-coded *Projects*. Elegant. Chancery was its own index.

DA0318GF was on a middle shelf. The sturdy cardboard box was double-length, divided by a pasteboard insert. The front half held official papers: birth certificate, medical and early school records, documents pertaining to my status as an orphan. All were photocopies. Any place my name would have appeared had been blacked out.

In addition to the records was a stack of Duotangs. The ruled sheets inside were filled with penmanship identical to that of the

original of what was now *The Rules*. I flipped through them with the same dumb fascination that had held Narcissus captive to his own reflection. Book reports, history papers, English essays, science projects, math exams... More than once, I whistled through my teeth—less at what I'd written than at Marion's unflinching setting of the edu-bar to max. Compare and contrast Eliot and Browning? Heady stuff.

The back half of the box was filled with notebooks: inexpensive Hilroys, and six more costly Moleskines. The Moleskines sat on top, each one labelled with a year in gold. *Diaries*? It couldn't be. A record of my missing years set down in my own hand? I slipped the soft elastic off the first one with the feeling in my stomach that a roller coaster gives as it goes rattling toward the starting peak.

Anticipation's little train cars didn't barrel down the other side—they reached a puzzling plateau. Instead of words in my own hand belying or confirming Dr. Colton's tales, not only were the pages crammed with someone else's writing, it wasn't words at all. The notebook's contents looked like formulae for changing lead to gold, or the musings of a physicist turned loosed on the ephemeris. Page after page of hieroglyphics, festooned with tiny numbers, the script so dense in places it was almost solid blue. Only dates were recognizable—disturbing, since the quantity of entries, often several times per day, made me feel as if I'd stumbled on a stalker's journal written out in code.

The Hilroys were as mystifying. The covers all had coloured dots and hyphenated numbers from the *Projects* boxes. The entries were like those inside the Moleskines—dates and times with lines of gibberish—but here, the handwriting was mine. I recognized the carefully barred 7s, and the slashes through the zeros. Log books of some kind? I took a couple over to the *Projects* section, verifying DA0318GF was written on the boxes where the numbers and the colours matched.

I slipped the lid off a magenta-dotted box, #049-126. The contents weren't as organized as DA0318GF, just binders, steno pads and scrawled-on legal tablets. A folder had been tucked along one

side. Inside it was a molecule diagram, all hexagons and letters, and a formula like  $H_2O$  but vastly more complex.

I tried the box beside it. The same, except the molecule was different. Magenta projects—drugs? Not where I was going to find what I'd come looking for.

Puce came next. As with the magenta boxes, every one had folders with descriptive sheets:

Perceptual restriction (visual) . . .  
 Perceptual restriction (mixed mode) —  
     tactile-auditory . . .  
 Perceptual restriction (comprehensive) —  
     fall-off (emp./p.v.) . . .

That didn't seem right, either.

Lime-green had do with sleep, judging from the frequency of words like *hypnopompic*, *REM* and *hypnagogia*. Deprivation/interruption seemed to be a common theme.

Ochre was the opposite of puce—increased stimulation of the senses, linked with meditation.

Meditation/sonics (330-660Hz), stage five,  
     visionary p.v. . . .  
 Meditation/EM spectrum ( $\pm 560m\mu$ ), stage two,  
     empathic sensitivity . . .

I knew before I opened it the box in mauve contained what I was after. The only member ID on the front was mine. I'd have spotted it right off if I'd stayed focused on the outsides of the boxes only.

The interior held less than all the others, just a dozen or so supple leather quartos like the journal Dr. Colton had been writing in. But it wasn't his cribbed script inside. The hand was flowing, almost calligraphic.

*Ref: #817-221*  
*Category: mauve*  
*Type: applied*

*Phase: gamma (radical)*

*Subject: DA0318GF*

*Lead: JWS2251*

*Subject is an adolescent male empath (PV type-2, index 78); one male sibling (dizygotic), also primary (trans., PV type-1, index 84). Anomalous telepathy confirmed.*

*Accelerated gamma of #817 series (memory dereferencing/reallocation) warranted by circumstances.*

*Ratified (plenary). Disclosure and subject-compliance requirements met.*

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*Cassandra Island  
Paxton*

*The exigencies imposed on us by L&D at last  
provide an opportunity to implement our work on...*

“David? Is that you?”

Mr. Shen’s voice from the kitchen made me start. I closed the quarto quickly and returned it to the box.

“Yeah, it’s me.”

“Luke said you might be down there.”

“Isn’t he in bed? It’s one-thirty in the morning.”

“He told me earlier. And only if I couldn’t find you elsewhere. I tried your room a minute ago.”

I replaced the lid on #817-221 and took it to the bottom of the steps. Better brazening it out than acting like a thief.

“Was there something in particular you wanted?” I called up.

“Just to let you know that Kirin will be dropping Roy off later than expected. Sometime early afternoon. You can sleep in if you want to.”

“Thanks.”

He watched me cart the box upstairs.

“Found what you were after?”

“I wouldn’t know. You tell me.”

“Robert rather hoped you wouldn’t come across my notes till later.”

“Then perhaps he should have put them somewhere else.”

“That’s not his way.”

“So Luke keeps telling me.”

Some awkward seconds passed. My arms were getting tired. I set the box down on the kitchen table.

“What’s in here Dr. Colton doesn’t want me knowing?”

“Not ‘knowing’, David. Misinterpreting.”

“Like what?”

“If I told you, would you read the contents anyway?”

“Of course.”

“Then there wouldn’t be much point.”

“What are all the funny symbols?”

“Ah—the psychics’ code. Ancient Chinese secret.” In the darkness, I could only hear his little smile.

“Please, John, no more riddles.”

“As you wish. They’re an evolving language for describing what a psychic grasps in his or her own mind, as well as in the minds of others. Not ‘what someone’s thinking’, more like ‘how they’re thinking it’. Parsing thoughts without respect to meaning. Mentation, as it were, devoid of content.

“And now, I’m off to bed. As you’ve pointed out, enigmatic gets to be a strain.” He tapped the box. “Don’t stay up too late.”



I spread the quartos in a semi-circle on the floor. The lamp behind the rocking chair reflected off the satiny black covers. There were ten in all, with thirty or so daily entries each—approximately one per month between the summer of my sundering from Luke and the birthday gift of finding out that six years of my life were gone.

“*Your loss was self-inflicted,*” Dr. Colton said. “*You voluntarily*

walled off six years, and, with our help, ensured that what you'd done could never be repeated."

He made it sound so simple, so straightforward. Who knew? Perhaps it was. But the pages I'd already scanned were thick with Mr. Shen's "emerging language", the Rosetta Stone for which lay buried with my other memories.

Not all the pages, though.

*Cassandra Island  
Paxton*

*The exigencies imposed on us by L&D at last provide an opportunity to implement our work on memory dereferencing. Sadly, it is bought at the expense of laying down our hopes for #412 – again. Perhaps it's for the best. Concerns were being raised about a "psychic weapon" back when #412 was active. Empathy-enhanced imprinting through telepathy would have made a tool too easily misused, as L&D have shown – a plough too ready to be forged into a sword.*

*I have other regrets. I'm very fond of D, even though I can't agree with R that L is the sole architect of their delinquencies. D's been a joy to know; I'll miss the quickness of his thought.*

### Day 1

*Arrived Dawe's Lake 19h00. Ferried to C-I by T, who returns tomorrow, then weekly with supplies. D exhibiting expected dissociative symptoms following reading of R post-GF (automatous mov't, apathy, mechanical speech).*

### Day 2

$$\begin{array}{l} \overset{\text{LST}}{\underset{0730}{\supset}} \delta \Delta C^{11} \times m^{-3} \uparrow \tilde{\Phi} 7^{-4} \otimes^8 \searrow \overline{4} \times N \overset{\circ}{\ominus} 2 f \left\{ \Omega \sim \sigma^6 \right\} \div \Lambda \nearrow 2 \overset{8}{\equiv} \Sigma^2 N \Psi(3) \\ \overset{10}{\nabla} 5^{-} | 6 \left\{ \supset \right\}_4 \oplus \uparrow \uparrow \overset{9}{\ll} \Sigma | 8 \pm | 9 | \times \lambda^6 \equiv \ddagger || \uparrow \dots \end{array}$$



The hieroglyphics carried on, broken into chunks like verse. Each one was prefaced by the symbol  $\supseteq$  or  $\subseteq$ , with digits underneath and LST above. Local Sidereal Time? Marion had told me once astrologer's preferred it, and the digits looked like times of day.

Eleven pages later, at Day 9, *Worried about this* was scribbled in the margin with an arrow to some circled symbols in the facing stanza.

On the next page, just before Day 10, a longer annotation finally appeared:

*D still merely tractable. Speaks only when spoken to. Picks at his food (not normal). Multistable artefact from open reading of R not collapsing. Have written R. Will post with next deliveries.*

Afterwards, the psychic shorthand carried on with jottings in the margins.

**Day 12:** *betrayal × trauma-matrix – Self? R? L? (ambig.)*

**Day 15:** *R's grief replicating here (arrow to a symbol) and here (arrow to a symbol) Open reading ill-advised?*

**Day 16:** *No, I was right. Event cathexis → synergy → total moral disengagement. D had to see.*

Between Day 20 and Day 21, a second longer entry:

*Mail from R. As I feared, open-reading comprehensive, holophrastic, synchronous. D shell-shocked. Suspending prep. Summer holding. D best left on his own.*

For the next few pages, there weren't as many blocks of symbols—typically, just two per day with margin notes: “*D vanishing for hours at a stretch... Leaves slow to turn this year... Spending more and more time at the shore... Still not initiating dialogue...*”

*Warm weather holding... Appetite back (note: T—more bacon)...  
D offered to clean up today... ”*

Then, at Day 36:

*Found D on the spit today. Turned around and  
smiled as I came up. Not unexpected; trend of daily  
×2 readings indicates re-assertion of primary  
independent constant. Fault not R's. D simply too  
receptive.*

*Almost ready to begin.*

Three more days of gibberish with just one observation: *L* (arrow to a symbol) *proscribed?* *D will not talk about this*—and the writing stopped. I leafed through to the end but there were only empty pages.

The quarto following picked up the thread.

#### Day 40

*JF's theoretical work on memory displacement (#809, 811, 812 et al.) shows that declarative mnemonic artefacts are, in fact, percepts made explicit by surrounding psychogenic fields. In other words, the artefacts are reified; cohesive memories require a context-matrix (“vessel” or “container”) for their content to emerge.*

*If the matrix cells are deconstructed (“the vessel broken up”) and merged with unrelated background fields, the content of the memories cannot be retrieved until the cells are reassembled.*

*D presents two types of artefacts to be dereferenced/ immersed: episodic-contiguous (Farm, 6+ yrs.), and semantic-integrated (LA0318GF, “L”). The procedure is the same for both, viz.*

*target → tag → dereference → immerse*

*but as dereferencing of semantic-integrated memories risks destabilizing the surrounding fields, I feel it best to start with the contiguous 6 years.*

“*The artefacts are reified*”—like that picture of a mace made up of just the little spikes and yet the ball they’re sprouting from appears as if by magic? Or like pages crammed with symbols spiked with little observations? Would some sort of meaning magically appear?

Following Day 40, the arrangement of the hieroglyphs began to look like dialogue. First, there’d be a stanza headed JWS-. Afterwards came two more blocks, the first one introduced by D-. A conversation between minds?

Margin notes became more frequent, so terse they made no sense at all. However longer comments, in plain English, broke the chunks of psychic-speak.

**Day 46:** *Flue smoking. D up on the roof to check. Squirrel nest. Chinking crumbling; have given D the project of repairing.*

**Day 51:** *Dissoc. react. post-reading R beneficial to our purposes? D more easily perceiving mind-map as discrete.*

**Day 59:** *T here with a chainsaw; felled and bucked two trees. Will have D split.*

**Day 61:** *D entering the stage-3 meditative state as easily as breathing now.*

**Day 64:** *Never mentions L; not hiding, either. Ambiguous – regions are protected. As if gathering L to himself.*

**Day 70:** *Targeting of scalar fields (Farm years) better than we could have hoped for. D’s fluency remarkable. Association matrices are temporal-affective; permits indexing eventicles and intervals.*

**Day 74:** *Today, D seems truly back to his old self. Suspending work.*

**Day 77:** *Still no remorse or guilt about GF. Poss. bleed from L?*

**Day 80:** *Needs a challenge. Will start training for stage-4 med. state (for tagging).*

**Day 85:** *D increasingly distracted between 14h00 and 19h00 LST. L percept appears to be emergent. Spontaneous? D seeking L? Poss. vice versa? Have written R.*

**Day 92:** *Mail from R: L's neuroleptics holding, psychism/telepathy disabled.*

**Day 98:** *Watched D playing with a Rubik's cube. Solution times < 2 min.*

There were notations, too, concerning weather and the change of seasons.

*Storm last night; fall is upon us...  
Cobalt sky this morning; frost...  
Colours yellower this year than last...  
"Mists and mellow fruitfulness..."  
Last leaves off the poplars...  
November sky; Dawe's Lake steely grey...  
Skin of ice around the shore...  
T's next delivery his last until the lake is frozen  
(ketchup!!!)...*

The snow arrived, then more of it, then yet still more. Mr. Shen seemed happy with my progress.

**Day 107:** *D extremely apt at stage-4 meditative state. Have decided to accelerate the tagging and dismantling of declaratives around his training re. camouflage (footprint). Procedurals must hold if*

*learning to be rendered autonomic.*

*Hypnosis in a stage-4 state leaves artefacts, but will supply instruction to immerge. We need to see how D reacts to trivial mnesic gaps.*

*Will begin full tagging of Farm memories in the New Year.*

Christmas came Day 118. T provided us with turkey, high-bush cranberries and venison. My gift to Mr. Shen, apparently, consisted of not noticing I'd lost my memories of learning how to camouflage the psychic footprint.

Whatever targeting entailed, my skill at it had Mr. Shen impressed. January's notes (approximately journal five) were larded with "*D's fluency in isolating, D's ease at finding, D's mastery of highlighting*"—all in conjunction with the tagging process, something Mr. Shen referred to as "accountants' work".

Somehow I doubted it.

Cabin fever started to set in in journal six.

**Day 159:** *D distracted. Claims winter is least favourite time of year. Asked if there was any way of going into Paxton. Compromised by asking T to take him for a spin out on the lake on his Ski-Doo.*

**Day 170:** *Still moody. Tagging of Farm memories complete. By-product is that D is now more difficult to read, like a jigsaw puzzle laid out but not snapped together. Sense impending work's the real problem, i.e. targeting of L.*

*Despite success so far – perhaps because of it – beginning to have doubts. Still no indications of remorse or guilt. No antagonism, either. D almost seems to be enjoying this.*

Question marks with arrows filled the margins for another week. Then, at Day 177, Mr. Shen grew eloquent.

*We were aware that D cathected play with L, but am honestly astounded by how much. The libidinal investment colours every memory he has of growing up. D need only target that, and whole arrays appear. L-objects are fore- and background multistable, and “glow” when D accesses them. Thus, no need for discrete tagging; D can separate the L component easily, like taking out a single image from a composite made up of stacked transparencies*

*D worshipped L while the two of them were at the foster home, which means that L (D’s container for idealized behaviour), once immersed, will leave a field D can fill authentically with real anterior longings for approval and/or defiant-individuation. Thus no discontinuities—L as an imaginary friend.*

*While this facilitates our task, D’s skill at accessing cathectic indices (“glow”, above) has started propagating through the tagged Farm memories – in effect, a trail of breadcrumbs. I’m concerned. D remains co-operative, but his acquiescence troubles me. Have written R.*

For the next ten days, Mr. Shen went back to being elliptic.

**Day 187:** *D expressing interest in the final stage.*

**Day 192:** *Beginning work on altered stage-5 meditative state. D req’d to stay receptive to external stimuli and prompts.*

**Day 198:** *D proving adept. Enthusiastic, even. Asked again about oblivial hypnosis of the final stage. Demonstrating willingness to go along?*

*D so fluent now I can’t be sure.*

The next long entry was at Day 200, near the start of the eighth journal. My eyes were getting gritty and I needed to go whizz, so I

padded to the bathroom, then the kitchen for some instant coffee. The clock above the sink read four-fifteen.

Don't stay up too late.

Yeah, right.

**Day 200:** *Mail from R. Concurs. D's skill is worrisome, even if he isn't laying groundwork for an end run. So far, our work conforms to and confirms all models, practical and theoretical, and indications are immergence implemented under deep oblivial hypnosis will succeed entirely. But...*

*R proposes something like a tripwire, indexed to a key event (temporal-affective). Suggests the fire that resulted in our finding D&L.*

*Have written with ideas.*

Dr. Colton answered back eleven entries later.

**Day 211:** *R rejecting soft proposals. Recursion loops might set up resonance within immergence fields (Präganz → Law of Similarity). D needs to "shy away from," not "replay."*

*However, R's suggested psychogenic neural overstimulation strikes me as extreme – esp. if activated by proximity to physical locales, as R sets forth as well. Pain that leads to blackout isn't a deterrent, it's a sentence. We intend that D forget, not suffer for a crime he can't remember.*

The season changed again. “*Lake ice broke last night... path down to the spit a mudslide... robins this morning... buds swelling on the maples... picnic on the rocks...*”

Meanwhile, the correspondence carried on.

**Day 225:** *R firm – best if D discouraged via negative experiential feedback. Reluctantly agree.*

*I've been so focused on our work and D's alarming skill I've missed the obvious: D not showing any fear.*

**Day 233:** *R concedes – need not be irreversible. If ever L no longer in the picture, D potentially an asset. Have written R detailing means whereby if D gets certain proof of that eventuality, the tripwire will cease to hold.*

**Day 242:** *Go-ahead from R. Wish there were another way. Non-disclosure contravenes our bylaws. More simply, I have never lied to D, and we still have much to do that I would rather not be clouded by deception.*

The eighth book ended. I laid it on the pile beside the chair and sat back, rocking. The same bird I'd been hearing every morning cheeped experimentally. Minutes passed with just his lonely call. I bent forward and picked up the next instalment.

Whatever qualms were troubling Mr. Shen, he'd elected to exclude them. Journal nine was business.

**Day 246:** *Targeting/tagging of both memory groups complete.*

**Day 252:** *Beginning prep. for reinterpretation of psychism → notional acumen.*

**Day 255:** *Isolating geographics.*

**Day 261:** *D fully receptive to oblivial sugg. in stage-5 state.*

**Day 267:** *Prep. to generalize artefacts from Children's Aid → helper agencies.*

**Day 273:** *Found D crying in the woods. Stress of work, or gravity of situation setting in at last? Grief? I would not want to face what he's agreed to*



– tantamount to murdering his memories of L, and, in a sense, committing partial suicide.  
Complimented his enormous strength in seeing this thing through.

**Day 277:** *Have explained how we'll proceed. Immergence must take place by steps. I envisage  $\pm 7$  days. D will experience intense confusion as his memories dwindle. To counteract anxiety, I'm administering Xanax (Alprazolam). D asked if, day to day, he'd be aware of what we're doing. Assured him he'd remain compliant and unafraid.*

*We'll begin tomorrow.*

*Ave, D.*

The next six days had only one notation: *T on Wed. to imprint Toronto.*

Then nothing.

I reached for the remaining quarto and thumbed through. There were no days, no margin notes, no longer entries. Only hieroglyphs. Pages upon pages of them till the very end.



My coffee had gone cold. The bird outside had gained some company. I reached up for the reading lamp and turned it off. The room turned deep blue monochrome.

I gathered up the journals, returned them to their box and took them to the dresser. I'd put my laptop by the swivel mirror, so I booted up while I was there and in the semi-darkness went online to check on Xanax. What state had I been in that final week? Unafraid, or simply unprotesting?

The drug was indicated for severe, acute anxiety. In addition to the usual rogue's gallery of nausea, vomiting and dizziness, one potential side effect was full amnesia. Some joke it would have been if after ten months working at it I'd forgotten how to go about

forgetting.

What makes us dig for things we'd rather not uncover? What draws us to the places every ounce of good sense tells us to avoid? Navel-gazing *Schadenfreude*? Anticipation of a masochistic thrill? Some sort of imp?

While I was online, I checked my email in Toronto.

**To:** david@ase.ca  
**From:** mackenzie@pet.csis-scrs.gc.ca  
**Subject:** Re: Not enough

David --

> ...Dr. Colton claims to know me, as do several  
> others.  
  
> ...they claim they have the power to restore  
> my memories.  
  
> ...unwilling to do anything that might arouse  
> suspicion.

Unacceptable. Whatever else is going on, you will continue to report to us.

You may recall I handed you some photographs to look at when I came to your apartment. I ran your fingerprints. Fascinating what the AFIS database turned up. See attached jpgs.

CSIS has no mandate over this, but the matter will go straight to the police if we don't hear from you.

--

Subira MacKenzie

I wasn't logged in graphically and had to ftp the jpgs to my laptop. There were seven altogether, black-and-white, pitilessly detailed in a harsh, forensic flash: Eliot Pierce, livid on his playroom's concrete floor, head turned sideways, vomit on his chin.

Next to him, its oval lenses gleaming like a pair of soulless eyes, the flaccid gasmask death's head that had killed him.