"WHAT you're saying," said Callan, "is that you want me to go over to New York and knock off a Mafioso."

"Precisely," said Hunter. Calmly, Callan told himself: Calmly and reasonably. No use losing

your temper. "In other words you want me to go to the place that's got more C.I.A. men to the square foot than any other place in the world except Washington, make sure they don't see me while I find this Mafia geezer—separate him from his bodyguard—I take it he does have a bodyguard?"

" Bound to," said Hunter. "And then come back here-You do want me to come back?" "Very much,"

Hunter.

yelling.
"You do rather go on about the C.I.A.," said Hunter. Hunter.
"I know I do," said Callan. "It's the way I'm made. I can't help it. You annoy them and they fire guns at you. . . . It upsets

me."

He looked round Hunter's office; the Sheraton table, the little Degas dancer, the Aubusson carpet, all remembering the days when the pound was still worth money. The Mafia seemed a long way away—but they weren't, not if Hunter decided to bring them close. Callan looked at the

FILE ON A DEADLY DON ...

'I want this man dead: See to it...

by JAMES MITCHELL

"Even though his bodyguard and the C.I.A. will
use every trick they know
to stop me." Despite himself Callan found he was
valling.

"Even though his bodylast. "So the target's
a gangster and I'm a
hit-man. But this isn't
Gangbusters— whatever
regists this geore's in hit-man. But this isn't Gangbusters — whatever rackets this geezer's in wouldn't matter a damn to you. If you want him dead he's done something political—and if you're on to it the C.I.A. will be too—and they don't like us on their patch any more than you like them on ours."

Hunter said: "You were never a fool, David." "Only once," said Callan, "when I got into this game."

Hunter ignored it, reached out for the red file and opened its cover.
"Peter Valence," he read. "United States citizen. Has homes in New York.

red file on the sofa table's gleaming walnut surface, and tried again.

Florida, and Rhode Island.

Estimated wealth—fifteen million dollars. He pays taxes on a third of it—road hauliers and a chain of bakeries, more or less legal. He is also what is called a don—a Mafia chief. The rest is vice—prostitution and what I believe is called porn—"

"Pornography's too long a word for the ones that need it," said Callan. "No doubt," said Hunter.
"That doesn't concern us. He is also very active in the heroin market."

"That does concern us?" "Burma," said Hunter.
"Thailand, Even mainland China. Wherever the poppy grows. He buys in bulk, and does the refining himself.
But South-East Asia is
where he goes shopping.
And Red China knows it of course they do.
"He's one of their best customers, and a dollar

customer at that And now and again he gives them something extra—what is called, I understand, sweetening the deal. And one of the things he gave them was our man in Shanghai. He lasted two days, but he told all he knew—and he told all he knew—and he told all he knew—and he little winter amusement, and knew a great deal . . . All because this man sweetened a deal. Like giving a tip to a waiter."

Hunter closed the file and handed it to Callan.
"I want him dead. David."
he said. "See to it, will

HE file was an inch thick, and most of it conjecture. The only facts were that Peter Valence was fifty-three years old, had had an expensive education in business and accountancy, and had been baptised Pietro

had been baptised Pietro Valenti.

His father, Luigi "Scusi" Valenti, had worked for a while with Capone, but had moved on to New York. Capone's attitude had made no sense to him, it seemed. Making money was far more important than killing.

Even so, he was known as "Scusi" (Excuse me), because that was the word he used

Florida, it seemed, was for a little winter amusement, and Rhode Island provided a little nostalgic summer fun to celebrate his birthday, but most of the year he stayed in New York and chased another million to add to the 15 he already had, and where he stayed was the apartment block he owned—and the ones who looked after him were his yery own security service. To kill a man was easy, thought Callan. It was to get next to him that was difficult—and to get away was sometimes impossible.

E went over to Notting Hill, to Lonely's favour-lite boozer. After a hard day's intellectual exercise, the little man's company could be very restful. And sure enough there he was, on his own as usual, nursing a half and a packet of crisps as if they had to last till Christmas. Callan ordered, and went over to him, and Lonely looked in incredulous surprise at the pie and pickles and the pint of light and bitter in front of

him. Callan raised his whisky glass. "Cheers," he said. "Oh ta, Mr. Callan." said Lonely. "Ta very much."
The pie went in seconds. "You not working then?"
Callan asked.
"Work?" Lonely's voice was bitter. "There's no bleeding point, Mr. Callan."
"I thought thieving was the only growth industry we had left."
"Growth?" said. Lonely

"Growth?" said Lonely.

"Growth?" said Lonely.

"How can you have growth when the mugs is skint? Three jobs I did last night, Mr. Callan. Really grafting. And what do I end up with? Eightly-nine pence and a set of fish knives—and the knives was electro-plated." He chewed moodily on a pickle.

"I'd do better on the dole."

"Why don't you then?"

Lonely swigged at his beer, then looked at Callan, reproachfully.

"I have my pride, Mr. Callan," he said. "And anyway—where would I get the stamps?"

"Nick them," said Callan.

stamps?"
"Nick them." said Callan.
"That's about all there's left to nick in this country," said Lonely. Then he added, unexpectedly, "Let them cat cake."

"I beg yours?"
"A queen said that." Lonely explained. "Like historic she was. Her subjects had no bread—so let 'em eat cake. she says. They cut her head

off."

"Who told you that?"

Callan was fascinated.

"You did." said Lonely.

"In the Scrubs."

Callan sought enlightenment. "What's it got to do with nicking insurance ment. "What's it got to do with nicking insurance stamps?" he asked.
"It's the same thing, innit? Posh word for barmy."
"Ironic," said Callan, but you ring a bell or some "can't you ring a bell or something?"
"I know your holidays."
said Lonely. "If you don't like the way I niff you shouldn't have suid it."
"What about my holidays."
"Duffing blokes." said Lonely. "Croaking them even. You're physical, Mr. Callan. Always were. And you can't help it—any more than I can help niffing."
It took a long time to persuade the little man that a holiday was a good idea. And maybe it wasn't but it was the only idea Callan had. Valence had a house in Newport, Rhode

Island, and most of the year it was just a tax loss, but once a year Valence opened it up and gave a party that lasted for days.

A Gatsby party. Twenties stuff, Girls in cloche hats, men with spats, vintage motor-cars and booze served in coffee-cups. There'd still be bodyguards, but with any luck they'd be a bit more relaxed than usual, and if he could wangle an invitation, there'd be no problem about getting close to his target. Lonely's cake might come in handy too. Valence's one weakness was pastry—maybe that was why he owned a bakery he owned a bakery

was passed why he owned a chain.
"I agree absolutely," said Hunter, "but how do you propose acquiring an invitation?" said propose acquiring an invitation?"

"Valence likes cars," said Callan. "The real vintage stuff. Pierce-Arrows, de Sotos, Isotta Fraschinis. To get the cars he has to invite the owners. All you've got to do is get me the right car."

"And how would I do that?"

"Buy it," said Callan.

"Good God." said Hunter. appalled. "Have you any idea what the damn things cost? In dollars?"

Hunter and Lonely, thought Callan, singing duets. The country must be in a mess

Callan, singing duets. The country must be in a mess. In the end Hunter settled for a vintage Rolls, and paid for it in sterling, and had it shipped.

went by Jumbo, and if they hadn't Callan doubted whether Lonely would have gone. But the chance to add such a plane to his collection was too much for him, and he went—in terror, but he went.

Over and over Callan Over and over Callan

than the ones supplied by the U.S. embassy, that the one little job required of him was totally devoid of risk—and worth five hundred under-valued pounds—and at last Lonely relaxed, and ate and drank and watched movies—and was hand. and drank and watched movies—and was happy.

He had a nasty spasm going through immigration at Kennedy, but the air-conditioning had broken down anyway, and nobody noticed. Not in New York: not in summer time. Not with the garbage collectors on strike.

By the time they joined Spencer Percival FitzMaurice at the car-park he'd almost recovered, but the sight of the big Barbadian upset him again: it always did.

FitzMaurice was massive, and lightning fast, and about as black as you could get, and

as black as you could get, and even Mr. Callan treated him as an equal. Duff you with one

It was a Gatsby party ... vintage cars, girls in cloche hats ...

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finger the darkie could, thought Lonely, and reacted yet again. Callan hustled him into the hired Buick, and turned the air-conditioning on full while FitzMaurice coped with the luggage, then drove them into New York.

HEY had a suite at the Plaza, and Hunter, had squawked about that too. but Callan had been firm. Geezers who own vintage Rolls-Royces don't inhabit Broadway fleapits. Gallan gave Lonely dollars, told him what beer to drink and sent him out to explore before opening the box FitzMaurice had ready for him, extracting the woven holster and 357 Magnum.

Magnum.

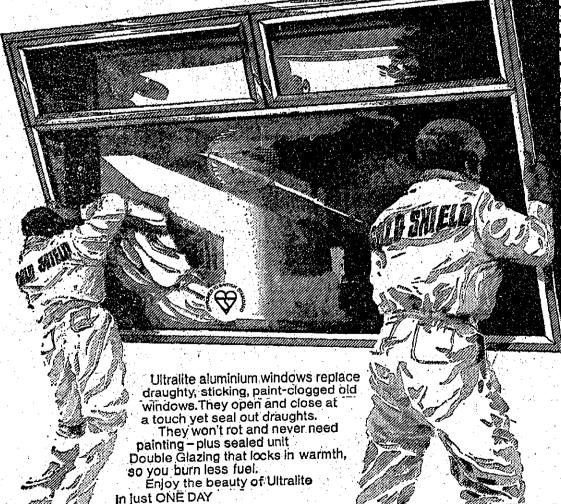
He put them where they belonged, practising the lunging draw until its swiftness satisfied him. He sat down then, and realised how tired he was. Plane trips: ... and planning and fear waiting at the end.

"So now you've got all your clothes on." FitzMaurice said. like you said. Valence wrote the day it came out." He handed Callan a letter. "Yeah," said FitzMaurice.
"They got real good stabling for the niggers. Clean straw

"No sir" said FitzMaurice,
"No sir, boss. This sin't no
spade kill. No way." Then the
jeering note left his voice.
"You can do this job. David."
he said. "And I can't. All I
can do is cover for you."
"Maybe you could pray
too." said Callan.

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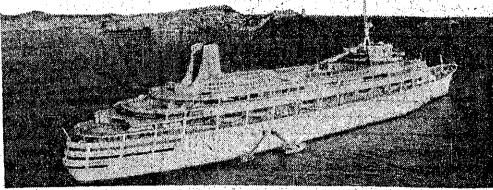
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