

Angie Grecca was a quick-thinking man who believed in planning ahead. When he made a buy, he made it well in advance. He wanted none of the urgency that drove the users who waited until the last minute. With his bags safely in his pocket he always had a steady hand. He could even bargain with the pusher and make his buys at a better price. Angie Grecca planned ahead, and that way he always had everything under control.

He glanced at his watch and knew it was almost time for a fix; he did it by the clock rather than by his loins. He yawned and walked up the stairs to his room and laid out his stuff. Angie Grecca was proud of the fact he made his own equipment. But unlike the equipment of the others, his was always sterile. No hepatitis, or tetanus, for Angie Grecca, no abscesses on the arm. He carefully selected a well-boiled needle and an eyedropper, being careful not to touch them where it mattered. He assembled them with the sterile rubber components, and laid the outfit down on a Kleenex. He emptied the contents of a bag into the bowl of the spoon and added a bit of sterile water. He watched the horse dissolve as he warmed the mixture over his alcohol flame. His movements were slow and steady, another advantage of always planning ahead! Never wait until the hands begin to shake.

It took Angie Grecca ten minutes to get ready, and he loved every minute of it. He wrapped his belt around his upper left arm, twice, slipped the end through the buckle, and gripped the end between his teeth. With both hands free he drew the broth up into the eyedropper, tested its temperature with his finger, and slipped the needle into a distended vein. There were other marks on his arm, but they were all small and well healed; Angie Grecca used nothing but the sharpest needles.

He settled back in his chair, squeezed the rubber bulb a bit, and then drew some blood back up into the glass tube. He liked to delay it, play it a little. He waited for the feeling of gentle lassitude to begin. It did not, so he worked more fluid back and forth into the vein, and waited. Nothing happened. He sat up and shot it all in. There was no result.

Angie Grecca did not panic; he had another bag, and he immediately began to work on it. He moved more quickly, but carefully still, his thoughts on Vince Corda, the pusher who had sold him the horse, sold him a blank bag, all milk sugar. When Angie Grecca took the belt in his teeth this time, he bit down on it hard, thinking of Corda. Nobody ever played Angie Grecca for a sucker, and Corda was going to be one sorry slob.

Angie shot half the bag in one squeeze, waited for the feeling that did not come, and shot the rest. Nothing, and that was all he had. Angie took the time to rinse the equipment and wrap it in the cloth and drop it in a pocket. He went out and walked the two blocks to Washington Square and went in to Podlofski's Mod Shop and said, "I need a buy, Pod. Now." His voice was raspy.

Podlofski looked at him with a practiced eye and said, "You in bad shape Angie. I dunno that I can do anything for you. You see if—"

Angie managed a smile and said, "I got one pusher on my list right now, Pod, that just sold me a coupla blanks. He's gonna get his, quick. Don't make me add you to my list, so stop playing around. Now." He wiped away perspiration.

Podlofski dipped his head quickly and pulled a bag out from a pile of women's underwear beneath the counter. He handed it to Angie and said, "Ten dollars."

Angie's smile showed more teeth, but he handed over the ten and said, "I'll take the use of your john for a few minutes for that money." And he walked around the counter, pushed aside the protesting Podlofski, and went into the bathroom and laid out his paraphernalia. In a minute and a half he shot the bag. Nothing happened, and he slowly dropped his paraphernalia, one item at a time, into the wastebasket and went out to the front of the store. Podlofski started to say something, but Angie picked up a large incense burner and smashed it into his face. Podlofski crumpled to the floor, and Angie stood over him and said hoarsely, "I don't know what you guys are up to, but you don't pull none of it on Angie Grecca." Podlofski was unconscious.

His right triceps was twitching as Angie got out to the street. A block away he walked into the station and up to the desk sergeant and said, "My name is Angie Grecca and I got some trouble."

"Yeah, Angie. I see you do. We'll send you over to the hospital."

"Before you do, I wanta blow the whistle on a couple guys. Vince Corda, Podlofski. Pushers. I'll testify against them. You pick them up, I'll testify, anytime, anywhere. You understand? They cheated me. I'll testify."

The sergeant made notes, and another junkie walked in, perspiring, nose running, gasping. While he was blurting out his story, a third walked in. The sergeant sent them all over together in the same wagon, and when they were herded into Admissions they found six more junkies in more or less advanced stages of withdrawal symptoms. Even the police officers were astonished. "What the hell's going on? We got half the users in the Thirty-fourth Precinct here. Somebody send in a bad shipment?"

Angie heard him and began to wonder. The doctors were making quick checks and segregating them into groups and arranging for the guards to stand by. It was going to be a bad few days for everybody. Among the doctors was a little man in a jacket and baggy slacks. He looked very much out of place. Even through his increasing nausea Angie noticed him—funny little guy with a button of a nose, not old, kept his head tilted back as though he were looking down his nose, even though he didn't have one.

They took Angie to one side and the intern said to the nurse, "I want this one on methadone for a few days; he's going to testify." She nodded and quickly came back with the pill. Angie gratefully popped it down with a little water. His nausea grew. The intern nodded to the nurse, and she got another. Angie took it, waited a few moments, and threw up the water. He began to shiver, and his back hurt, and the stomach cramps came on. The intern, a puzzled look on his face, went over him again. When the hot flash came, Angie saw the little man with no nose watching him closely. The intern spoke quietly to the little man and sent for a hypo with something and shot it into the muscle on Angie's upper left arm. It did nothing, nothing at all. The little man spoke to the intern and left, and the intern watched Angie with wide eyes. Through his cramps and spasms Angie knew that in some way he was a special case.

The next four days were bad ones for Angie. His habit was one of long standing, and the spasms that wracked him, the diarrhea and vomiting, the chills and fever, the screaming need for horse made him wish he were dead. For four days he wished he were dead, although they kept telling him, "Stay with it, Angie. Nobody ever dies of heroin cold turkey in a hospital. Stay with it, boy. Another day or two."

When the worst was over the police took Angie's statement about Vince Corda and Podlofski. In another few days he was well enough to leave. He walked out the door and headed back to his flat, eight pounds lighter than when he went in. A block from his flat a car pulled up to the curb and a husky man in a tight suit and a cauliflower ear hustled him into the back seat. Another man waited in the back seat looking, acting and talking much like George Raft in the old movies.

He said, "Angie, I want to ask you. Why did you blow the whistle on Vince Corda and Podlofski? They were good boys, hard working. Now, why did you do that?"

Angie Grecca stood by his principles, and though his stomach crawled within him, he said defiantly, "They sold me bad goods, plain sugar, after I paid them good money, too. Nobody cheats Angie Grecca. Nobody."

The George Raft type said, "Angie, that ain't true, it just ain't true. I happen to . . ."

"Don't tell *me*. I shot three bags in the space of half an hour. I know sugar when I get it. It was nothing. Them guys is robbers."

"I happen to know that shipment was better than anything we ever had. Biggest one we ever had, too. We was all surprised at how much got through, good pure stuff. And here you go and blow the whistle on two good boys. Angie, we got to take you down to the river. Sorry, but we just got to do it." He waved to the driver to move off.

Angie's stomach twisted into a very small, very hard knot, but he never lost his cool. He said, "You're making a mistake. That stuff was no good, I tell you." He had a thought.

"How come all them other guys was in the hospital with me if that stuff was good? I never seen so many guys in cold turkey before." He caught a quick glance between George Raft and the triggerman,

and knew he was on to something. "I saw something else funny at the hospital, too. I think you guys've been had by the Feds." He stopped talking.

George Raft waited a decent interval, then said, "What else did you see at the hospital, Angie?"

"I want out of here if I tell you. Now wait." The triggerman had turned toward him and had reached for his neck. "Wait. I'm telling you your stuff was no good. All the guys with the habit will tell you. Me being at the bottom of the river won't change that. You must a lost more than Corda and Podlofski. Now let's just talk about it like gentlemen, and forget about the river. O.K.?"

George Raft thought about it, and then waved the driver over to the side of the street. Angie could see the river two blocks away. When the car stopped Angie said, "There was a strange guy there at the hospital, little guy, about thirty-five, no nose, and he had Fed written all over him. He was watching us, giving orders to the docs. He knew what was going on all the time. You find that little guy and ask him a few things. He knows what's going on."

George Raft thought, a long time this time, then he said, "All right, Angie. We'll let you go this time, but I want you to find out who that little guy is and what he's doing. You do that, and you won't have to go to the river for now. But you blow this, and in you go."

"But I don't know nothing about these things. How am I gonna find out who he is, and all like that."

George Raft waved at the driver who put the car in gear, but Angie said, "Wait a minute, wait. All right. I'll do it." He began to think. "Look, this is going to be a big deal. I'm gonna have to hire me some private eyes, and like that. Where do I get the money?"

"I'll give you all you need. But Angie, you won't fool around none, will you? Because if you do, we'll find you, and when we get done with you you'll wish you had gone right to the river this morning. You understand, Angie?"

Angie nodded, and George Raft handed him a large roll of bills and said, "As of right now, Angie, you're working for me. You do good, and you'll be all right. You blow this—"

Angie nodded, and hopped out of the car, and walked back to the hospital. Might just as well get started right away. The intern said to him, "Didn't expect to see you back here so soon. You need detoxification already?"

"Wise guy," said Angie. "I wanna find out something. Who's the little guy who was hanging around here while I was in cold turkey. All you guys was talking to him all the time, doing what he said. Who was he?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"He seemed like a good guy, like he knows what it's all about."

"Yes," said the intern. "He knows. That was Dr. Linden Grey, out of the Alexandra Research Center, up in Stamford. He's a chemist."

"You mean he's not a regular doctor?"

"That's right. He knows a lot about medicine, but he's not a regular doctor. He's a Ph.D., a chemist."

"In Stamford, you say? In Connecticut?"

"Yes. High Ridge Road. He's interested in narcotics users. Why don't you stop out and see him?"

Angie Grecca nodded and walked out up to Grand Central and caught the next train for Stamford. He was surprised at how close Stamford was. He caught a taxi out to the Research Center, and walked in the front door. The receptionist looked at his wrinkled clothes and his pallor and his generally seedy appearance and said, "The employment office is just down the hall. Go right on in."

Angie Grecca was used to going along with events to see what developed. The employment girl said to him as he came in the door, "The only thing open is a bottle washer. We call it a glassware maintenance engineer. You interested?"

Angie nodded, and she filled out the papers, and he signed them. An hour after he got off the train at Stamford, Angie Grecca was an employee of the Alexandra Research Center, washing laboratory glassware just down the hall from the laboratory of Dr. Linden Grey. In the hour or two left in the afternoon Angie learned about caustic solutions, rubber aprons, ultrasonic cleaners, chromate solutions, and hot water, especially hot water. He found a room in town that evening and blackened his moustache and shaved off his eyebrows and bleached his hair. When he saw Dr. Linden Grey the next morning, the

doctor did not recognize him.

"What kinda work you do, Doc?" Angie believed in the direct approach.

Dr. Linden Grey looked down his nose that wasn't there, his head tilted back, looking with bright blue eyes at Angie. "Little of this, little of that," he said. "You new around here?"

"Yeah."

"My name's Linden Grey. Friends call me Lindy." He stuck out a hand.

Angie shook it, thinking what a friendly little cuss he was. Angie said, "My friends call me Angie, Lindy. What do you mean, 'little of this, little of that'? Don't you got a line of some kind?"

Grey's bright eyes sparkled, and he turned and tilted his head at a large, white oven-like affair in the laboratory. "I'm a chemist most of the time. And watch yourself with the glassware from this lab, Angie. Don't ever cut yourself with it. We try to clean it up before we let it out of here, but you know how it is. We miss a few."

"What's on it?"

"Well, maybe some poisonous stuff. Nothing too bad though."

Two bright-looking young people came into the laboratory. One of them was a blond girl, and her voice bubbled as she called out to Dr. Linden Grey, "Well, Nobby, in early again I see. Trying for another one, are you?"

"Yeah," said her companion, "let's get the last one wrapped up before we launch into another one. How're you this morning, Nob?"

Angie Grecca was a bit annoyed at the interruption; he had hoped to learn more from Dr. Linden Grey. But he responded politely when Grey introduced the bouncy couple as his associates. Grey used the title "glassware maintenance engineer" to describe Angie's job, but Angie quickly said, "C'mon, Doc. I'm a bottle washer." And as he shook hands, Angie could tell that the bouncy couple liked what he said.

Angie said, "I thought your name was 'Lindy'. These people call you Nob. Am I in the right house?"

They all smiled, and the blond girl said, "Private joke, Angie. Lindy here is going to win the Nobel Prize before too long. We just call him 'Nob' while we can."

Angie shrugged. "Don't know what the Nobel Prize is, but it must be good. Got work to do. See you around." He went over to the counter near the sink and began to transfer glassware from the wire holder to his cart. He moved quietly, making little clatter, and he got his reward. He heard Grey say to the others, "The slides came back, the ones from Turkey and Marseille. Come on over tonight, about seven, and I'll show them."

There was some quiet, close talk that Angie could not hear, but he was not concerned. In midmorning he found time to go to a telephone book and locate Dr. Linden Grey's home address. Right after work that evening he went to the Stamford Library. The Reference Room librarian turned out to be a stoutish, youngish woman who quickly made Angie feel that the most important part of her day was to supply him with the information he needed. He quickly learned much more about Nobel Prizes than he really wanted to know, but when he walked out, he was impressed. Angie felt that the bouncy couple had not really been kidding about Dr. Linden Grey and the Nobel Prize.

Angie had time to rent a car before seven o'clock, and it was while he was waiting for the papers to be filled out that he had the call. Just standing there, waiting for a form to be filled out, when the yearning unexpectedly swept over him. The longing, the need, the feeling in his loins that he needed Dame Horse, needed her bad. It was not the same as when he had the sweats. No goose flesh, no backaches, no chills. Just a longing, strong, imperative. He struggled, and thought about the bottom of the river, and in a moment he began to push it away from him. But the yearning stayed with him until the girl laid out the papers for him to sign. With other things on his mind, the power of the call faded, and by the time he had driven to Grey's neighborhood and parked the car a block away, he was in control again.

It was dusk as Angie strolled around the corner, looking everywhere except at Grey's house, blending in with one or two other strollers. He slipped into a stand of arborvitae and watched a car pull into Grey's driveway. As the bouncy couple went around to the front door to be let in, Angie went around to the back and quickly found himself a hiding place in the bushes near an open window.

He listened to the three of them chat as Grey set up a projector and screen. Then Grey went to the

kitchen to get some beer before they settled down to watch the slides. Their conversation made more than enough noise to cover the sounds Angie made when he took up a position from which he could see the screen and hear plainly everything that was said.

A colored slide of an airplane sitting in an airport came on the screen, and Grey said, "There's my luggage going aboard—two suitcases, and the ten cylinders at twenty pounds each, right out in the open. We classified it simply as 'liquid fertilizer', and nobody asked any questions. Flew right to Ankara, got in at night the way we'd planned. Here's a shot of the lights of Ankara at night as we came in. And this one I made as Ambassador Oliphant and one of the Turkish ministers of health came out to meet the airplane.

Dr. Linden Grey shook hands with United States Ambassador Oliphant at the bottom of the stairs. The ambassador said, "Dr. Grey, I'd like you to meet the Turkish Minister of Health, Mr. Bayar. He has assured us of full cooperation in this matter. In fact we would all like to meet right now to iron out the last details, if you're not too tired."

"I'm fine," said Grey, "and I would like to meet now, too. The sooner we start, the sooner we'll get results." He shook hands with the minister, and the three of them watched while the ten cylinders were placed in the trunk of the ambassador's car. They drove to the United States Embassy and sat down around a table in a comfortable meeting room.

Mr. Bayar said, "I can't tell you, Dr. Grey, how vital to human welfare my government considers your work. We are all overwhelmed by the scope and sweep of your intellect. Your name will go down in history as the man who has done more for mankind than any other. We cannot tell . . ."

Grey held up his hand, in deep embarrassment, and said, "Please, Mr. Bayar. First, it was largely luck on my part, and second, it is really a mixed blessing, like almost everything else in this life. Morphine has been a very useful drug when handled right, and men will now have to get along without it. This is a high price to pay."

Bayar waved a deprecating hand. "There are substitutes, plenty of synthetic substitutes, and the good far, far outweighs the price. No, Dr. Grey. This is a towering accomplishment."

The ambassador saw how Grey felt, and so he said, "Well, shall we make our plans? Mr. Bayar, will you tell Dr. Grey how you feel this should be handled?"

"Yes, certainly. Dr. Grey, we will take up a rather large airplane to spray the fields in Turkey. Fifteen of our people will go with you on the first trip to observe what you do. Once they've learned, we can dispatch smaller airplanes to spray the rest of the fields and to seed the air currents we've plotted to reach the critical regions of China, India and Pakistan. In a week, the virus ought to be everywhere we want."

Grey held up a hand. "Please, Mr. Bayar. Do not call it a virus; the name is too menacing. People may panic when the information is released later if they think they've been exposed to some sort of hostile virus. It isn't really a virus anyway. The name for it is 'pseudovirion.'"

"Oh. I thought it was a virus." "No. It really is a gene wrapped in a virus-like coat. That's why it's so small, about one millimicron in diameter. No extraction processes will remove it, but it's not a virus. We call it PV, the abbreviation for pseudovirion. We think it's important not to use the name virus."

"Very well, Doctor. PV it is, from now on. All our airplanes are equipped to discharge the trickles of liquid in the form of aerosols having the stated diameter you specified. Why that exact diameter?"

Grey said, "So the droplet will fall to the ground in a reasonable period of time without spreading over too wide an area."

Bayar nodded and said, "I see. One more question, although I only ask it because the prime minister wanted me to make one last check. You are certain, are you not, that the material is harmless to human beings? I must make assurances again. Oh, I begin to see the importance of not calling it a virus. That must have been what worried the prime minister despite all the assurances from you and your government."

Grey nodded. "Many of us have been exposed to the pseudovirion. We know exactly what the effects are, and they are totally harmless."

"Good. I will relay that information, along with the fact that the material is not a virus. That should do it. Now, will you be ready to start in the morning?"

Grey nodded, and Bayar said, "We'll put your tanks under guard for the night. We have, by the way, followed your suggestion of telling everyone save a very few that the material in the tanks is a new and vastly improved fertilizer on which we are experimenting. So even if word leaks out, it should be harmless. All right, gentlemen, see you in the morning."

There were no major problems the next day. A warming mantle did not function properly, and so the tank that carried the PV suspension did not at first build up enough pressure to form droplets of the right size. A few adjustments took care of it. Then the outlet end of the discharge tube turned out to be positioned incorrectly in the slipstream, but that was easily corrected.

The airplane carried the latest electronic navigational gear, and the navigator was able to pinpoint each poppy field. One pass, on the upwind side of the field, discharging a few grams of the PV suspension was enough. Guards on the official government fields started to raise their rifles as the airplane swept low over the field, but the plane was gone before anyone could open fire. In the remote mountains, it was different. The mountain men were more alert, and several of the guards got off a shot or two at the plane as it swept low. There were no hits. And the poppy fields still got their share of PV.

Back on the ground after the day's run, Grey and the other scientists discussed improvements in the method of dispersing the PV. The next day Grey stayed on the ground and studied the proposed distribution system over the Jaldak and Shote regions. The Turkish government planes completed their work in Turkey that day. Over the next few days the operation expanded, seeding the winds to reach even the Nanking poppy fields. Then the time for good-byes.

Mr. Bayar held a small, quiet farewell party for Dr. Linden Grey. After the intensive efforts of the preceding few days, everyone was tired.

Mr. Bayar said to Grey, "Are you certain you will be safe in Marseille?"

"Oh, yes. Only the premier and two or three people in the Ministry of Health know what is happening. You need acetic anhydride to convert morphine to heroin, and there are only three manufacturers of acetic anhydride in the country. We'll be able to seed the entire supply with PV. Should be no problem. Should be easier than the far more intricate operation you ran here."

They drank a few quiet toasts, and parted. The next morning Grey flew to Marseille with the remaining half a tank of PV.

In his preliminary meeting with the French officials, Grey found that seeding the acetic anhydride supply in the area had already been planned for him. It was a simple matter of having an insurance inspector check the storage tanks and add the few ounces of PV suspension. But one of the three inspectors had a question. "Will this substance, this PV, survive being put in acetic anhydride? After all, acetic anhydride is strong stuff."

Grey nodded. "Yes, it will. And once in, it will pass through the entire acetylation of the morphine, and enough of it will remain with the diacetylmorphine, the heroin, so the user will get it."

"Will it have any effect on the man who does not use heroin?"

"None at all."

And so the seeding of the storage tanks was completed that afternoon.

The French were not as gracious to Dr. Grey as the Turkish. They politely thanked Grey for putting the illegal chemists out of business, but Grey had the impression that the French authorities were really more interested in putting a stop to the non-taxpaying chemists than in abolishing the synthesis of heroin.

The airplane trip home was uneventful, and after a day at home to get rid of his desynchronization, Dr. Linden Grey showed up at his laboratory.

Dr. Grey turned off the bulb in the projector, but left the fan running to cool things off. When he went to a corner to turn on a table lamp, Angie Grecca quietly slipped out of the bushes. He quickly found the car and sat in it and stared out the windshield at the darkened street ahead. Heroin destroyed! He shook his head, unable to see the size of what Dr. Grey had done. No more lovely poppy fields, all gone, rotted away with some virus, or—what had he called it?—PV? Even the boys in Marseille, out of business, poisoned. And the siren wail came on then, the longing, the need. He had been a fairly good man, only doing what he had to do, so why couldn't—why shouldn't—he keep his little habit. It was a nice habit, he knew how to handle it, he didn't hurt anything with it. The tears welled to Angie's eyes with longing for

the good Dame Horse. How he needed her now; he deserved her. But there was the matter of reporting to George Raft; there was a river to avoid. Blowing his nose, he started the car and drove to a corner phone booth and dialed the number. When he asked for George Raft, and told who he was, the gruff voice said, "Where are ya?"

Cautiously, Angie said, "A corner phone booth."

"Well, go to ya room. The Boss's waiting for ya there."

Angie hung up and slowly drove to his rooming house and slowly parked the car and slowly went up the stairs, knocked, and went in.

"Sit down, Angie," said George Raft, "and tell me what you know."

Angie was low. He needed a hit, a heart, something. He looked at George Raft and saw the bottom of the river in his face, and he didn't care. He said, "It's all over, Boss, the whole bit, done. This little guy here I told you about has ruined the business. He threw a virus, or something on all the opium fields, Turkey, India, China even. He had all them foreigners working with him, too. He ruined it where they grow it and he ruined it where they work it up, in Marseille. I don't know when I'll see any good horse again. It's all gone." Angie leaned forward and put his face in his hands. The next thing he knew he was yanked to his feet by one of the muscles with George Raft, and Angie got a stinging slap across the face. He stood, looking at George Raft who was cleaning his fingernails, waiting for another slap, not caring.

George Raft said, "Angie, you're not telling it like it is. I don't like to keep reminding you, but we got a place all picked out for you, at the bottom of the river. Now you tell me like it is, huh?"

"I told you like it is. You don't like it, lump it." Slap. "And as far as I'm concerned, you know what you can do with the bottom of the river, too. I've had it with you and your muscles. I did what I told ya."

"Hold it." The muscle's hand had been raised for another slap, but George Raft looked up and stopped it. He looked at Angie Grecca and saw no fear in his eyes, no sense of lying. He waved the muscle to a chair and said thoughtfully to Angie, "O.K., Angie. I thought you were putting me on, but maybe not. Maybe you don't know what's been happening the last two days. Sit down, and I'll tell you." Angie sat.

"You been telling me the heroin's been ruined. But I happen to know it hasn't been ruined. I had some guys examine it, the best guys money could buy, and it's real horse. It ain't been ruined at all. Yet when a junkie takes a hit of that same stuff, nothing. So they done something to it, all right, but I don't know what. You hear? It's the same old heroin, but it don't work no more. You know anything about that?"

Angie was puzzled, and slowly he became interested. He thought back over everything he had heard that evening, but it didn't help. Slowly he shook his head. "I don't know nothing about that. But I bet I know who does. That Dr. Grey, *he* knows. I'm sure he knows."

"Can you find out?"

Angie nodded, and the more he thought about it, the faster he nodded. This was something for him, too. Unless somebody found out what was going on, it looked as if he could never again look forward to the sweet caress of Dame Horse, and that was a thing he did not want to think about. So Angie nodded and said, "I can find out."

"How long do you think it'll take?"

"How do I know? I been moving real good, so far, haven't I?"

George Raft nodded. "O.K., Angie. I think I'll hang around this town for a day or two. I got a big investment. You find out for me real quick what's going on. I'll make it right for you if you do it quick."

Angie hardly heard him. He vaguely nodded and turned away, wondering how he was going to get the information he wanted from Dr. Linden Grey. There had to be a way, but he needed to think it out.

George Raft stared at him a moment, then got up and said, "O.K., Angie. I'll be over at the Roger Smith. See you," He and his muscles left.

Angie slowly undressed and went to bed. He intended to lie there and think about his problem; he always did good thinking just before going to sleep. But he was tired, and without realizing it, he slipped off into a deep sleep and did not wake up until the sun burned in his window. He dressed and left and ate breakfast thinking about the problem, but he had not solved it by the time he entered the glassware

wash-up room and put on his apron, mask and gloves. He put in a good hour's work, and then pushed the glassware cart to Dr. Grey's laboratory to pick up some more glassware, and to look around in the hope that something would turn up.

Dr. Grey stood in a corner of the lab talking to several laboratory personnel including the bouncy couple. There were four strangers with them, scientific types, and by moving closer Angie learned that a meeting was about to begin. To kill time, Angie began rinsing out some of the glassware right in the lab and carefully stacking it on his cart. He carefully emptied the water from the jackets of some of the glass columns and poked out some of the granular solids that had collected at the outlets. The meeting started in the adjacent conference room, and Angie worked industrially right near the door. He suddenly became aware that two men were standing quietly behind him. He turned casually to look at them.

Each was about forty, each was dressed in an unobtrusive dark suit, with a white shirt and quiet tie, each wore black shoes, each looked in the pink of physical condition and stood alertly on the balls of his feet. One look was enough for Angie, and the blood drained from his face as he recognized them. Feds.

One of them said, "Why don't you join us, Angie?"

"Why, I uh—"

The other took him by the arm and said, "It's all right, Angie. Come on in and join the meeting." The other stepped to his other side and the two of them half carried him into the meeting room. They stood him near a chair.

Dr. Grey looked up at him and said, "Morning, Angie. I hear you were at my house last night?"

Angie could not speak to him; his mouth hung open. The two men gently guided him into a seat, and then sat down themselves. The man at the head of the table said to Angie, "My name is Paton. After we learned you were in Dr. Grey's house last night, we did some checking. Now, we know you went through detoxification last week, and we know you have a contact with Johnny Mafiosa, and we know you turned in a couple of his boys a few days before that. But we don't know what you are after here. Suppose you tell us."

Angie gulped and tried to think of something to say, but he could not. When he thought of telling them what he was really after, all he could see was the bottom of the river again.

Dr. Grey said gently, "Angie, I thought that all you wanted from us was information on what has been happening to the heroin. Is that right?"

Angie's face flooded with relief, obvious for all of them to see. He gulped and nodded. Dr. Gray continued, "You're on a spot because you turned in those two hustlers, and you've got to turn over information?"

Angie nodded again, feeling better all the time. They already knew, so he had not told them after all. George Raft couldn't hold that against him. He looked around, more relaxed now, his mind functioning clearly again, and he realized there was no hostility in the people around him. Quick to sense an advantage, he said, "Yeah, Doc, I'm in a spot. Can you tell me what you done to the horse?"

Dr. Grey glanced at Paton and then said, "Yes, Angie, we can tell you. That's what this meeting is all about. We're going to tell several science reporters what's, been going on, and you can listen in. Tonight the news will break in the International press, but we'll let you and the underworld in on it a few hours early; you'll hear it with the reporters. O.K.?" Angie nodded, dumb again, and Dr. Grey continued, "One thing, Angie. Please don't make a big thing out of this when the reporters get here, unless you want your name in the papers, too. O.K.?"

Angie nodded and sat back and relaxed. The others talked softly among themselves, and in the peacefulness of the moment Angie began to feel the call again. The oddity struck him. Sitting there in the middle of the Feds and these big brains who had done something to the heroin, he had to get the urge for a hit. It was almost funny, but the humor did nothing to cut down the need. And the need was growing and beginning to make him restless when the first reporter walked in. Angie could tell he was a big shot from the way he looked around and did not seem glad to be there. He wore tinted glasses. The others arrived, five in all. Each of them had that same odd manner of wanting to be somewhere else, and none of them smiled. Paton said, "Please sit down, gentlemen. I'll be brief." He waited while the group took chairs and looked challengingly at him. Paton stared back at them a bit longer than necessary, long



enough to make the situation slightly uncomfortable. Then he said, "We have called you here to announce that Dr. Grey and his group," he nodded toward the end of the table where they sat, "have accomplished a feat which has eliminated the effects on the human body of heroin, morphine or any morphine derivatives, and methadone."

Angie frowned when he heard it. Now he knew. He didn't know how, but it didn't seem important either. In his bones he felt that his days of play at the syringe were over. The five science reporters looked blankly at Paton, uncomprehending. Paton said, "You did not understand what I just told you. Mankind can no longer respond to the opiates as a result of the work done here over the last few years." He waited until he saw a glimmering of intelligence appear in the eyes of the reporters. They straightened in their chairs, and two of them even took out small pads of paper and placed them in front of them, apparently getting ready to take notes. Paton leaned back and said, "Dr. Grey will explain what he's done." He nodded at Grey.

Without preamble Grey said, "Six years ago my colleagues here," he nodded toward the bouncy couple, "found an enzyme that quickly reduced morphine to a series of biologically inactive degradation products. The enzyme can float in the human bloodstream, and it will then destroy all morphine in the bloodstream before the blood can carry the morphine to the central nervous system. As we explored it further we found that the enzyme also acts on heroin. Heroin is merely diacetyl morphine. We found out that the enzyme will destroy all opiates, and we were able to isolate the exact sequence of atoms it attacked. It attacks the quaternary carbon and the two adjacent carbons along with the tertiary nitrogen. So it also destroys methadone. It even has a slight effect on LSD which has a closely related structure. So then we . . ." He stopped, noticing the completely blank look on the faces of the science reporters. He shook his head and said slowly, "Let me put it this way. We found an enzyme that can float harmlessly in the bloodstream and at the same time quickly destroy all opiates. You can think of it as an opiate destroyer. Call it opiase. Understand?"

They understood, and several began to make notes. Angie understood, too. He could see that dame horse was growing less reliable every moment. One of the reporters said, "How do you make the user take the enzyme?" It seemed like an intelligent question, and Angie thought he knew the answer. You mixed the enzyme with the heroin, that's how.

Dr. Grey said, "Well, that's the next part of the story. The discovery of the enzyme came at a time when my own work on viral infections had produced some interesting results. We found a material to implant a gene in the nucleus of the cell it infected, and no more. The gene controlled protein production of various kinds. So we built it to control production of the enzyme. That's all there was to it." The reporters stopped making notes and looked up, the usual blank look on their faces. Angie was puzzled, too, and when Dr. Grey saw that Angie was puzzled, he realized he had not made it clear enough.

He said, "Let me put it this way, simply. We made a material, a pseudovirion, that implanted a new gene in the human chromosome. O.K.?" He waited for the nods all around. "That gene's sole function was to make an enzyme. O.K.?" The nods came. "That enzyme destroyed all opiates in the human bloodstream. O.K.?" The reporters were getting a bit resentful, but they nodded. "So anyone infected with the pseudovirion can never get the slightest effect from any of morphine, heroin, codeine, dihydromorphinone, dihydrocodeinone, oxycodone, thebaine, metopon, pethidine, ketobemidone, alphaprodine, trimeperidine, piminidine, methadone—shall I name some more?" The blank stares were back, but Angie had quit listening once Dr. Grey had got beyond codeine. Mild stuff, codeine, but it would do in a pinch. And even that was denied to him now; Angie knew he had been infected. The yearning came again, worse this time, because he now knew he could never assuage it.

Dr. Grey continued, "We did some traveling and seeded all the illegal poppy fields we could locate—doused them all with the pseudovirion. We also got access to the crude opium and crude morphine in Marseille and infected it with the pseudovirion before the chemists could diacetylate the morphine and make heroin out of it. In that way we passed on the pseudovirion to all the users. It forced them to undergo withdrawal and made it impossible for them ever again to get any effect from a shot of any of these narcotics. That's about it. That's where it stands today." He fell silent.

The reporters looked at one another, and one of them said, "Wasn't it pretty high handed of you to

go around infecting people at your own whim? Where are the rights of the individual?"

Dr. Grey looked down at Paton, and then looked down at the tabletop right in front of him, and slowly shook his head. Paton spoke up. "We have eliminated harmlessly one of man's most pressing modern problems, and your only comment is to question whether we've violated individual rights." Now he shook his head. One of the reporters started to speak, but Paton raised his hand and said, "I gather you don't appreciate what you heard. It was the *illegal* fields that were infected, the *illegal* morphine and opium that was infected. Heroin is illegal the world over, wherever it is found. Every user was in violation of the law.

That's how he got infected. To say it violated his rights is the same as to say his rights were violated by arresting him when he used it. His act of use was illegal, and that's how he got the harmless infection."

The reporters made notes, and Paton said, "I'm surprised one of you hasn't raised the question of what the pseudovirion does to legitimate uses of morphine. Doctors can't use it any more for deadening pain, say, in terminal cancer."

"I was just going to bring that up."

"Sure. Well, we took a consensus of medical authority, and we learned there are enough substitutes. Morphine will be missed, but not badly."

"Well," said one reporter, "I'm not sure I buy your arguments. I may not run the story, at least not yet."

Paton said, "That's all right; it is certainly up to you. We asked you here to give you an advance announcement. We did not prepare a handout because you are all leaders among the science reporters and we thought you'd want to write your own stuff. However, that's up to you. Tomorrow's issue of the journal *Science* will carry a complete scientific explanation of everything we've done here. I understand the entire issue will be devoted to it. So you can wait and study it before you publish anything." He looked around. No one said anything, so he stood up and said, "Well, that's it gentlemen. Thank you for coming." The reporters filed out quietly, and Angie began to follow them. His face was sorrowful, reflecting the longing he felt. Dr. Grey put a hand on his arm and said softly, "Is it really that bad, Angie? It's for the best, you know." Angie looked at him sadly, and said, "I had a good habit, Doc. I managed it, used it right. It was a good habit, gone now." He shook his head sadly.

Dr. Grey comforted him, talked to him for a few moments, then watched him walk slowly away.

Angie went to his room and sat down quietly while George Raft and his muscles watched him. "Well, well. Whatcha find out?"

Angie looked up, startled, and then said, "Oh, yeah. Well, Big Boss, you gotta find a new line of work. Narcotics is all gone now. You know what that Doc's gone and done? He's given everybody a virus, see?" And Angie told the whole story. George Raft asked many questions, and finally understood what had happened. He sat quietly for a long time, and then sighed, and stood up and said, "All right, Angie, you done good. Here's some dough." He tossed a bundle of bills into Angie's lap, but Angie paid no attention. George Raft said, "I need a drink. See you around, Angie." He headed for the door.

Angie stirred himself and looked up and said, "You better hurry if you want that drink. This Doc, he's a pretty smart guy. He just told me he's got another virus now, and he's gonna release it soon."