

The Great Wall of Mexico

by John Sladek

1. Washington Crossing the Yangtze

His predecessor had kept tape recorders running in every room, catching his "thoughts" as he paced. But then his predecessor, Rogers, had always been a flamboyant action-man leader, the first Secret Service agent to be elevated to the position he guarded with his profile. His career spanned a few headlines:

GBM SAVED FROM SHOOTING
HERO BODYGUARD TO RUN FOR SENATE
SEN. ROGERS WILL RUN
ROGERS WINS!
ROGERS ASSASSINATED

Before the assassin could confess, the police station at which he was held blew up, along with a fair piece of Mason City surrounding it. The FBI found the cause to be a gas leak of an unusual type. On succeeding to the office of Great Seal, our man promoted the investigating agent, K. Homer Bissell, to bureau chief.

Our man kept his thoughts on specially printed forms:

Presidential Notes

PN/1/1776

President

Date:, 199.

General Subject:	Committee/ Commission/ Cabinet Referral:	Presidential Remarks:
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There were also memoranda, agenda, briefs and résumés always stacked on top of the elegant polished* desk. The Great Seal liked to be well supplied with business at hand. It enabled him to expedite and finalize things with obvious efficiency at any time, ready to deal with work and get it out of the way before he relaxed, working hard to play even harder, making his guiding principle Throughput.

