

THE MAN WHO TASTED ASHES

Algis Budrys

THE CAR HE'D stolen was a beautifully groomed thing: all polished lacquer and chrome, with almost brand-new dual tread whitewall tires on the nicked wire wheels. But the transmission was bad, the brake drums scraped, and there was a short circuit in the wiring somewhere, so that he had to keep over sixty miles per hour or the generator would not charge at all. He would have stolen another one if he could, but he had got onto the turnpike before he realized just how unreliable this one was. If he changed cars at a restaurant, it would be reported and the police would stop him when he tried to leave the turnpike.

No, he was trapped with what he had. Hunched over the wheel of his roaring cage, the yellowish headlights reflecting white from the lane markers, Redfern swept his eyes systematically over the instruments: ammeter, fuel gauge, oil pressure, water temperature, speedometer, odometer. He thought of himself as doing it systematically, every ten minutes, like a professionally trained driver. Actually, he was dividing his attention almost equally between the road and the odometer. A hundred and ten miles covered, seventy miles to go, ninety minutes before the ship was due to take off, with or without him, average speed required: 42.62, approx.; round off to allow for stopping the car at the exit toll booth, for covering two miles of back roads, for leaving the car and running an unknown distance across a weed-grown field to the ship's airlock--they would take off on schedule with him six inches from the slamming airlock door; they would not stay themselves a microsecond to accommodate him--say fifty miles per hour, average. Then allow for speedometer error. Say fifty-five miles per hour, indicated, average. Allow for odometer error. Say sixty miles per hour, indicated, average. Allow for unforeseen delays. Sixty-five miles per hour.

Redfern's foot trembled on the accelerator pedal. His thigh ached from hours of unremitting pressure. His car flashed by signboards, wove continually around immense trailer trucks in the slow lane. His mind raced to keep up with the changing figures on the odometer. He wished he weren't feeling a slight miss in the engine whenever he eased up on the accelerator. He cursed the car's owner for his false-front prodigality with wax and whitewalls.

He looked at his watch again. Four in the morning. He turned the radio on, ignoring his fear that something else might happen to the car's wiring.

"--And that's the news," the announcer's professionally relaxed voice said. "After a word about United Airlines, we'll hear, first, Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, followed by--"

His watch was slow.

Five minutes? Fifteen minutes? How long did the news take?

He held the watch to his ear. It was an expensive one, wafer thin, beautifully crafted, left over from his younger days--he could barely hear it running. Was it running at all?

Redfern was a leathery man, his yellowish-white hair brushed back from angular temples, a scruffy Guards mustache over his nearly invisible lips. His suits were made for him by a London tailor, from measurements taken in 1925; they were gored and belted in the backs

of the jackets. Outdoors, he wore a Burberry and carried a briefcase. People who saw him on the street in Washington always took him for someone with diplomatic connections. But since Redfern was always seen afoot, these connections perforce had to be minor. Was he an assistant attaché of sorts, perhaps? At his age? Looking at Redfern, people would wonder about it.

People. But the man who'd sat easily on the edge of Redfern's lumpy bed in the wallpapered hotel room--that man, now...

That man had coal-black hair, broad, flat cheekbones above a sharply narrowing chin, oval, maroon-pupiled eyes and cyanotic lips. He smiled easily and agreeable across the room.

Redfern sat in the one chair, sipping at the water tumbler half- full of gin. The bottle his visitor had brought up was standing on the bureau. His visitor, who had given the name of Charlie Spence, was not drinking.

"You don't look like a Charlie," Redfern said abruptly over the tumbler's rim. "You look as cold as ice."

Spence laughed, his small mouth stretching as far as it could. "Maybe I'm made of it," he said. "But then, you're nothing but a lump of coal. Carbon." He brushed his fingertips together.

"But then," Redfern mocked sharply, "I don't pretend to be gregarious."

"Oh, I don't pretend--don't pretend at all. I *am* gregarious. I love the company of people. I've been moving about among them for several years, now."

"All right," Redfern said sharply, "we've already settled that. Let's let it be. I don't care where you come from--I don't really care what you're made of. It may surprise you, but I've thought for some time that if people were coming to this world from other places, they'd be bound to get in touch with me sooner or later."

"Why on Earth should we try to get in touch with you?" Spence asked, nonplused.

"Because if you people have been coming here for years, then you're not here openly. You've got purposes of your own. People with purposes of their own generally come to me."

Charlie Spence began to chuckle. "I like you," he laughed. "I really do. You're a rare type."

"Yes," said Redfern, "and now let's get down to business." He gestured toward the bureau top. "Pour me some more of that." Alcohol affected him swiftly but not deeply. Once it had stripped him of the ordinary inhibitions, he could go on drinking for some time before his intellect lost its edge. Since he always took two aspirins and went straight to bed at that point, it was not a serious sort of weakness. But without his inhibitions he was a very unpleasant man.

"It's a simple business," Charlie Spence was saying a little later. "The ambassador will land at National Airport and be met by the usual sort of reception committee. Red carpet, band, dignitaries, and so forth. But the red carpet will be a little shabby, the band won't be first-rate, and the reception committee will not be quite as high-ranking as it might be. After all, the ambassador's country is definitely on the other side of the fence."

"Yes," Redfern drawled. "The protocol of prejudice."

"Oh, no, no, nothing deliberate," Spence said, with a hand raised. "Diplomats pride themselves on equal courtesy to all. But the employee in charge of caring for the carpets simply won't do his best. The band won't play with any great enthusiasm. And any of your officials who happen to be ill, with colds or similar afflictions, will honestly decide their health precludes the effort of attending. This is simply human nature, and any snub will be completely unintended."

"I heard you the first time. What's all this to do with me?"

"Well, now," Charlie Spence explained, "the ambassador's not from a particularly large nation in their bloc. It seems doubtful they'd bother to send along any of their own security police. The only guards present will likely be American Secret Service personnel, extending courtesy protection."

"Yes."

"So. In the first place, the ambassador is really a small fish. In the second place, no American, even a trained professional sworn to his duty, is apt to be quite as devoted to the ambassador's life as he would be to that of, say, any American congressman. Those two factors represent a potential assassin's margin of safety."

"And what're you meddling in our politics for?" Redfern growled.

"*Your* politics? Redfern, my dear fellow, it may or may not be your planet, but it's most assuredly our solar system."

The neck of the bottle finked against the lip of Redfern's glass. "And I'm your assassin?"

"You are."

"What makes you think I'll do it?" Redfern cocked his head and looked narrowly at Spence.

"A compulsive need to mead e in human history."

"Oh?"

Charlie Spence laughed. "You were cashiered from your country's foreign service in nineteen hundred and thirty-two. But you've never stopped mixing into international situations. Gun running, courier work, a little export-import, a little field work for foreign development corporations...and, now and then, a few more serious escapades. Don't tell me you don't enjoy it, Redfern. It's a very hard life, all told. No one would stay in it as long as you have if it didn't satisfy his need for power."

Redfern pinched his lips together even more tightly, in the fleeting reflex with which he always acknowledged the truth. "I wasn't cashiered," he said. "I resigned without prejudice."

"Oh, yes; yes, you did. Being unpleasant to one's superiors doesn't disgrace a man--it merely makes him unemployable. Except for special purposes that don't require a pukka sahib. And here I am, as you said, with a special purpose. Ten thousand dollars, on completion, Redfern, and the satisfaction of having started World War III."

Redfern's eyes glittered. "All over one little ambassador?" he asked carefully.

"Over one little ambassador. In life, he's not considered worth the trouble of protecting him. And no one but a rather stout and liverish woman in the Balkans will mourn him in death. But when he dies, his side will suddenly discover a great and genuine moral indignation. Why? Because they will be truly shocked at such a thing happening in America."

"World War III," Redfern said ruminatively.

"Exactly. You'll shake the ambassador's hand. An hour later, when he's already safe inside his embassy refreshing himself after his trip, he'll fall into a sudden coma. The embassy will close its doors, issue a misleading statement, and call its doctor."

"Yes."

"Very well. The embassy staff has taken routine steps, and waits for the ambassador to recover. But, just to allow for all eventualities, the unofficial courier service is already transmitting a notification to the government at home. The doctor examines the patient and discovers an inflamed puncture on his right hand. Another message goes home. The ambassador dies, and tests indicate poison. Obviously, it was hoped the puncture would go unnoticed and the cause of death, which resembles cerebral occlusion, would be mistaken. But the tiny needle must not have been quite sterilized, by accident, and the clever doctor has penetrated the scheme--and another message goes home, before the American State Department even suspects anything serious."

"Hmm. I'll simply shake his hand?"

Charlie Spence reached into his pocket. "Wearing this." He held out a crumpled something, the size of a handkerchief. Redfern took it and unfolded it. "A mask," Spence said. "Drawn over your head, it will mold new features for you. It'll be devilish uncomfortable, but you won't have to wear it long."

"It'll make me look like someone entitled to be on the field?"

Spence grinned the grin of a Renaissance Florentine. "Better than that. It will give you the composite features of six people entitled to be on the field. You will look like none of them, but you will look superficially familiar to anyone who knows any of them. The subsequent questioning of witnesses will yield amusing results, I think."

"Very clever. Good technique. Confuse and obscure. But then, you've practiced it a long time." Redfern pushed himself abruptly out of the chair and went into the adjoining bathroom, keeping the door open. "Excuse me," he said perfunctorily.

"Lord, you're a type!" Charlie Spence said. "Will you do it?"

"What?" Redfern said from the bathroom.

"Will you do it?" Spence repeated, raising his voice.

Redfern came out, picking up the gin bottle, and sat back down in the chair. He tipped the bottle over the glass. "Maybe."

"I've told you too much for you to back out now," Spence said with a frown.

"Rubbish!" Redfern spat. "Don't try to bully me. You don't care what any of the natives tell each other about you. There are dozens of people living off their tales about you. It's to your advantage to hire native helpers wherever you can--if they're caught, who cares what wild tales they tell? You'd be insane to risk losing one of your own people." He looked sharply into Charlie Spence's eyes. "I don't suppose you fancy the thought of a dissecting table."

Charlie Spence licked his lip with a flicker of his tongue. "Don't be too sure of yourself," he said after a moment, in a more careful tone of voice.

Redfern snorted. "If I acted only on what I was sure of, I'd still be an embassy clerk."

"And you wouldn't like that, I suppose?" Charlie Spence, recovered, was looking around the room. "Sometimes? At night, when you can't sleep?"

"I want an out," Redfern said brusquely. "I won't do it without accident insurance."

"Oh?" Charlie Spence's eyebrows quivered.

"If I'm caught in the field, I'm caught and that's it. I'll protect you."

"Professionalism. I like that. Go on--what if you get away from the field?"

"If I get away, but there's trouble, I want a rendezvous with one of your ships."

"Oh, ho!" Charlie Spence said. "You do, do you?"

"I'll cover my tracks, if you think it's important, but I want a rendezvous. I want to be off this planet if there's trouble. Change that--I want to be off it in any case, and if there's no trouble, I can always be brought back."

"Oh, ho!" Charlie Spence repeated with a grin. "Yes, I'd think you *would* want to watch the next war from some safe place." It was easy to see he'd been expecting Redfern to lead up to this all along.

"Have it your way," Redfern said ungraciously.

Charlie Spence was laughing silently, his eyes a-slit. "All right, Redfern," he said indulgently. He reached into his card case, took out a photograph of a dumpy blonde woman and a string-haired man on the porch of a middle western farmhouse, and carefully split it with his thumbnails. Out of the center, he took a bit of tissue paper, and stuck the front and back of the photograph together again. Replacing the card case in his pocket, he handed the slip of paper to Redfern.

"Dip it in your drink," he said.

He watched while Redfern complied, but kept his eyes away from the short handwritten directions the alcohol brought up. "Don't repeat the location aloud. I don't know it, and don't want to. Memorize it and destroy it. And I tell you now, Redfern, if the ambassador doesn't die, there'll be no ship." He smiled. "For that matter, you have no guarantee there'll be any ship at all."

Redfern growled. "I know."

"Lord, what meager hopes you live on, Redfern!"

"You're through here now, aren't you?" Redfern said.

"Yes..." Charlie Spence said with pursed lips.

"Then get out." He took the palm hypodermic Charlie Spence handed him in its green pasteboard box, and closed the hotel room door behind his visitor.

Thirty-five miles to go. His watch now read 4:30. It hadn't stopped, but was merely slow. If he'd thought to have it cleaned by a jeweler, last year or even the year before that, it would be accurate now. As it was, he had less than an hour, and he would be off the turnpike fairly soon, onto roads that were paved but had been laid out in the days of horse-drawn wagons.

He tried another station on the radio, but that was playing popular music. A third was conducting some sort of discussion program about water fluoridation. And that was all. The rest of the dial yielded only hisses or garbled snatches from Minneapolis or Cincinnati. His ammeter showed a steady discharge as long as the radio was on, no matter how fast he drove. He turned it off and steered the car, his face like a graven image. He was seething with anger, but none of it showed. As an adolescent, he had made the mistake of equating self-possession with maturity, and had studiously practiced the mannerism, with the inevitable result that he had only learned to hide his feelings from himself. He was the prisoner of his practice now, to the extent that he often had to search deep to find what emotion might be driving him at any particular time. Often he found it only in retrospect, when it was too late.

That lunch with Dick Farleagh this afternoon...

It had been difficult even to reach him, a call to the embassy-- "*Who* shall I tell Mr. Farleagh is calling? Mr. Redfern?" and then the barely muffled aside, a whispered "Oh, dear." Then the pause, and finally, with a sigh: "Mr. Farleagh will speak to you now, Mr. Redfern," as though the secretary thought a bad mistake was being made.

"Dickie," Redfern said heavily.

"What is it, Ralph?" Farleagh's voice was too neutral. Obviously, he had taken the call only out of curiosity, because he had not heard directly from Redfern in nearly fifteen years. But he must already be regretting it probably he didn't like being called Dickie, now that his junior clerk days were well behind him. Redfern ought to have thought of that, but he was in a hurry, and hurry, like liquor, always took away his social graces.

"I have to speak to you."

"Yes?"

Redfern waited. Only after a moment did he understand that Farleagh had no intention of meeting him in person.

"I can't do it over the telephone."

"I see." Now the voice was crisp, as Farleagh decided he could meet the situation with

routine procedure. "I'll ask my secretary to make an appointment. She'll call you. Can you leave a number?"

"No, no, no!" Redfern was shouting into the telephone. "I won't be fobbed off like that!" His words and actions were registering on his consciousness in only the haziest way. He had no idea he was shouting. "This is too important for your blasted conventionalities! I won't put up with it! I have to see you." His voice was wheedling, now, though he did not realize that, either. "Today. No later than lunch."

Farleagh said with quiet shock, "There's no need to rave at me. Now, take hold of yourself, Ralph, and perhaps we can talk this out sensibly."

"Will you come or won't you?" Redfern demanded. "I'll be at the Grosvenor bar in an hour. I'm warning you you'll regret it if you don't come."

There was a long pause, during which there was a sudden buzz in the phone, and the sound of Redfern's coin being collected. In a moment, the operator would be asking for another dime.

"Are you there?" Farleagh asked with maddening detachment. "See here, Redfern--" now the tenor of his thinking was unmistakable in his voice, even before he continued--"if it's a matter of a few dollars or so, I can arrange it, I suppose. I'll mail you a check. You needn't bother to return it."

"Deposit ten cents for the next three minutes, please," the operator said at that moment.

"I don't want your blasted money!" Redfern cried. "I have to see you. Will you be there?"

"I--" Farleagh had begun when the operator cut them off.

Redfern stared in bafflement at the telephone. Then he thrust it back on its cradle and walked briskly out of the booth.

He waited in the Grosvenor bar for an hour and a half, rationing his drinks out of a sense that he ought to keep his head. He was not a stupid man. He knew that he always got into quarrels whenever he'd been drinking.

He rationed his drinks, but after the first one he did so out of a spiteful feeling that he ought to, to please that stuffed shirt Farleagh. He already knew that if Farleagh appeared at all, their meeting would not do the slightest good. Hunched over his drink, glowering at the door, he now only wanted to be able to say, afterwards, that he had made the utmost effort to do the right thing.

Farleagh came, at last, looking a great deal beefier than he had when he and Redfern were in public school together. His handshake was perfunctory--his maddeningly level gray eyes catalogued the changes in Redfern's face with obvious disapproval--and he practically shepherded Redfern to the farthest and darkest table. Obviously, he did not relish being seen in a public place with a man of Redfern's character. Redfern drawled: "You've gone to fat."

Farleagh's eyes remained steady. "And you to lean. What is it you want, Redfern?"

"If it isn't money?" Redfern's mouth curled. He turned and signaled to a waiter. "What will you

have, Dickie?"

"None for me, thank you," Farleagh said in an impassive drone. "I'm pressed for time."

"Are you? You've no idea, do you, that I might be on a close schedule myself." Redfern glanced at his watch. The ambassador's plane was due at National Airport in two hours, and there was a great deal still to be done. "You've kept me waiting." He waved the waiter away in sudden irritation, without ordering. "Now, you listen to me," he told Farleagh. "I'm going to be at a definite place and time tonight. Here." He flicked the balled bit of tissue paper across the table into Farleagh's lap.

Farleagh picked it out and transferred it to a side pocket. He would have been a very bad diplomat if he had ignored it. But it was plain he was merely providing for an extremely remote possibility. "Redfern," he said, "if you're attempting to involve my government in some scheme of yours, that will be the end. You'll have gone too far."

"*Our* government, Dickie," Redfern almost snarled. "I still carry my passport."

"Precisely," Farleagh said. "I'm sure the American authorities would deport you, at our request. If you stand trial at home, you'll not get off easily."

"There's nothing in my past record that breaks the law at home."

"There's a great deal about you that breaks laws more popular than those in books."

"Damn you, Farleagh," Redfern said in a voice he did not know was high and almost tearful, "you'd better be there tonight."

"Why?"

"Because if you aren't, and I do get involved in something, it'll be found out soon enough that you could have been there. I warn you now, Farleagh, if I go down, it won't be easily. Perhaps it won't matter to you if your career's smashed. I tell you now, there's a great deal more involved in this than your career."

Farleagh was still not taking his eyes away from Redfern's face, nor moderating the set of his mouth. He gave the appearance, sitting there in his expensive suit, with his graying black hair combed down sleekly, of enormous patience nearly at an end.

"Very well, then!" Redfern exclaimed. "I don't care if you believe me or not." He thrust his chair back. "But if someone gets ill who shouldn't, today, you'd better believe me!" He stalked away, his Burberry flapping from his arm, his briefcase banging into the backs of chairs, his face an unhealthy red.

He drove vengefully, in a rage that included the car and the radio, his watch, Farleagh, Charlie Spence and the world.

Five o'clock, by his watch. He turned into the exit ramp with a squealing from the tires, and one part of his mind was hoping there would be a blowout, just to prove something to the car's owner. He touched the brakes almost reluctantly, and at the same time cursed their criminal softness. He fumbled on the seat beside him for the toll ticket and searched in his nearly empty wallet. He had had to spend a good deal of money today--more than he'd expected, for the drug and the explosive. It had never been his intention to steal a car, but

rental had been out of the question. He knew, and damned the fact, that another man might have gotten better prices with his suppliers. But what sort of logic was there in making up to criminals; slapping their backs and buying them drinks, talking to them on an equal basis, when he could not even see the need to do that sort of thing in his dealings with respectable people?

He slapped the ticket and his two remaining dollar bills into the toll attendant's palm, and accelerated again without bothering even to look toward the man. He had seen no sign of drawn-up police cars anywhere around the toll plaza. That was the important thing, the only important thing at the moment.

Now that he was off the turnpike, he forgot he had been so afraid of being stopped for automobile theft. It had been another in a succession of thin-edged risks which could be shown to extend back to the beginning of his independent life. He forgot it as he had forgotten his fears concerning all the others--as he had forgotten that he had been afraid something would go wrong at the airport this afternoon, or that he would be caught as he hung about in Washington for hours afterward, until he was sure the embassy was acting as if something were wrong behind its doors.

As he drove now, forcing his car around the twisting mountain corners, he had other things to be afraid of.

Farleagh might not be there--might have been stubborn, or unaccountably stupid, or simply too slow, in spite of the margin Redfern had allowed him. He looked at his watch again as he turned off onto a dirt track leading almost straight up the hill. Five-twenty by his watch. He had perhaps five minutes.

He took one deep breath--one, and no more, just as he had done at the airport gate this afternoon, and as he had done on other occasions in his life--and drove the car into a tangle of shrubbery just past a mortared-stone culvert that was his position marker. He shut off the ignition and sat as if stupefied by the engine's silence. Almost instantly, the headlights were no more than a sickly orange glow upon the leaves pressed against the car's grille. He shut them off, picked up his briefcase, and abandoned the car. Burch flapping around his thighs, he trotted across the road and plunged down a slight decline into a stand of tamaracks. It was dark except for the remaining light of a low halfmoon seeping through the overcast.

He moved with practiced efficiency through the trees, keeping his direction by paralleling the brook that had trickled through the culvert, until he emerged without warning into an open and long-neglected field, choked with proliferating brush, entirely surrounded by evergreens, with the spaceship, tall as an oil refinery's cracking tower, standing in its center.

The airlock door in the side of it was open. Redfern began to force his way through the brush, toward the extended ladder which connected the airlock with the ground. There was a single light in the lock chamber. No other lights were visible--the ship was a complex silhouette of struts and vanes, given the reality of depth only by that open door, and what that door might lead to, Redfern could not really guess.

As he struggled up to the ladder, he was arming the satchel charge in his briefcase.

There was still no sign of life from inside the ship. But as he climbed the ladder, hoisting himself awkwardly with his one free hand, the ladder began to retract with the sound of metal sliding into metal, and other mechanical sounds resonated out of the hull, like generators

coming up to speed, and relays in a sequence of switching operations. He looked up and saw the airlock door quiver and begin to turn on its massive hinges.

With a strained motion of his arm, he threw the charge overarm into the airlock, and let go the ladder. He heard the briefcase thump to the deck in the dock chamber, while he himself was falling ten or twelve feet back to the ground. When the explosion came, he was sprawled on the ground, rearing up on his out-thrust arms, and he stared in fascination at the flame-shot billow of orange smoke gouting through the still half-open lock.

He rolled, off to one side, as the outer door rebounded from the hull. He was afraid it might fall on him, but then he saw it was still hanging, like a broken gate.

The starting-noises inside the ship came to a complete stop. He had done what he had hoped to do--breached the hull, and activated the safety cut-offs in the controls. The ship was caught, earthbound, possibly not for very long, but perhaps for long enough.

The brush crackled and plucked at his passage. He could not bring himself to look away from the ship, and he blundered through the undergrowth with his arms behind him, feeling his way. The light in the airlock chamber was off now, but something was still burning in there, with a dull smoldering red flicker.

A hand placed itself flat between his shoulderblades. "All right, easy now, sir," a voice said.

He turned convulsively, his face contorted as if by pain, and made out a tall, huskily built young man in a narrowbrimmed hat, who was holding a short-barreled revolver in his other hand. The brush was parting all around him--there were many men here--and suddenly a portable floodlight shot up a beam to strike the airlock.

"We were just about ready to send a man aboard when you crippled them, sir," the young man said with his trained politeness.

"Is Farleagh here?" Redfern demanded.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Farleagh's back among the trees, with the chief."

A man had stepped up to the base of the ship, where the ladder had rested. Like Redfern's young man, he wore a civilian suit as if it had been made by a uniform manufacturer. "Aboard the ship!" he shouted up through cupped hands. "Can you hear me? Do you speak English? This is the Secret Service."

There was a grating sound up in the lock chamber, as someone forced open the balky inner door. Then a man stumbled up to the edge and looked down, his white coveralls smudged and a strained look on his face. He squinted at the Secret Service man.

"Jesus Christ, yes, I speak English," he said in outrage. "Who threw that bomb? This is a goddamn Air Force project, and there's gonna be all kinds of hell."

"Oh, no, you don't!" Redfern shouted, mortally afraid things could still go wrong. "It won't wash--not with me to testify against you."

The Secret Service man at the base of the ship turned his head in Redfern's direction long enough to show his exasperation. Then he pointed his pistol up at the man in the lock. "Jump down, you."

There was the sound of someone heavy coming toward them through the brush. After a moment, Farleagh said: "There you are."

"Hullo, Dickie." Redfern grinned at Farleagh in the spottily reflected light. "Now you know."

"Know what?" Farleagh asked heavily.

Redfern shifted his feet nervously. "Why I got myself cashiered years ago. You see I knew they were coming here--at least, I believed they were--and I decided what sort of human being they would be mostly likely to contact."

Rage crossed Farleagh's face at last, and shocked Redfern. "Stop it, Redfern," he said savagely. "For once in your life, admit you're the sort of man you are."

After that, no one seemed to look at him. An improvised ladder was brought up, and Secret Service men went into the ship and came down again escorting sullen, blue-lipped men.

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