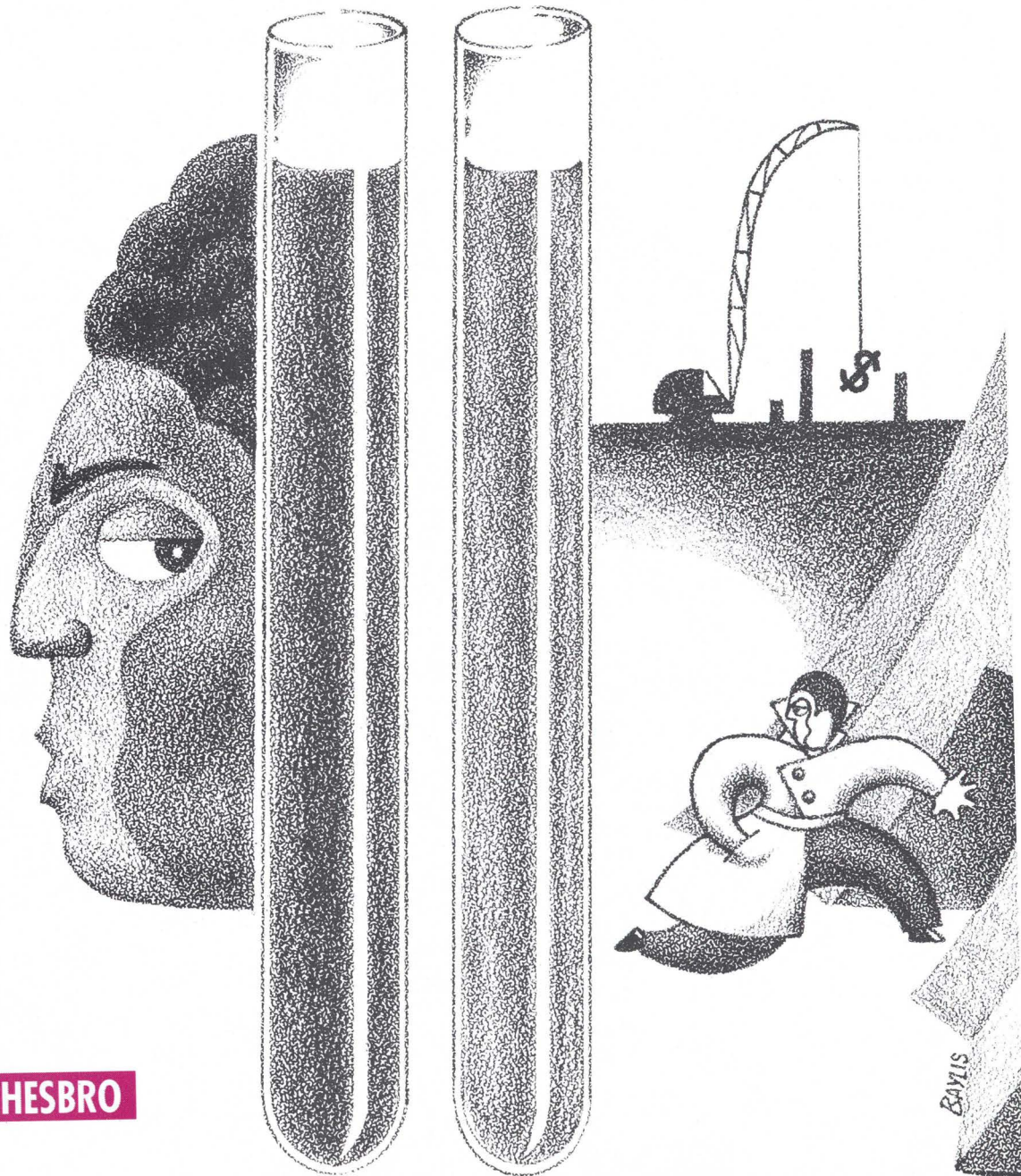
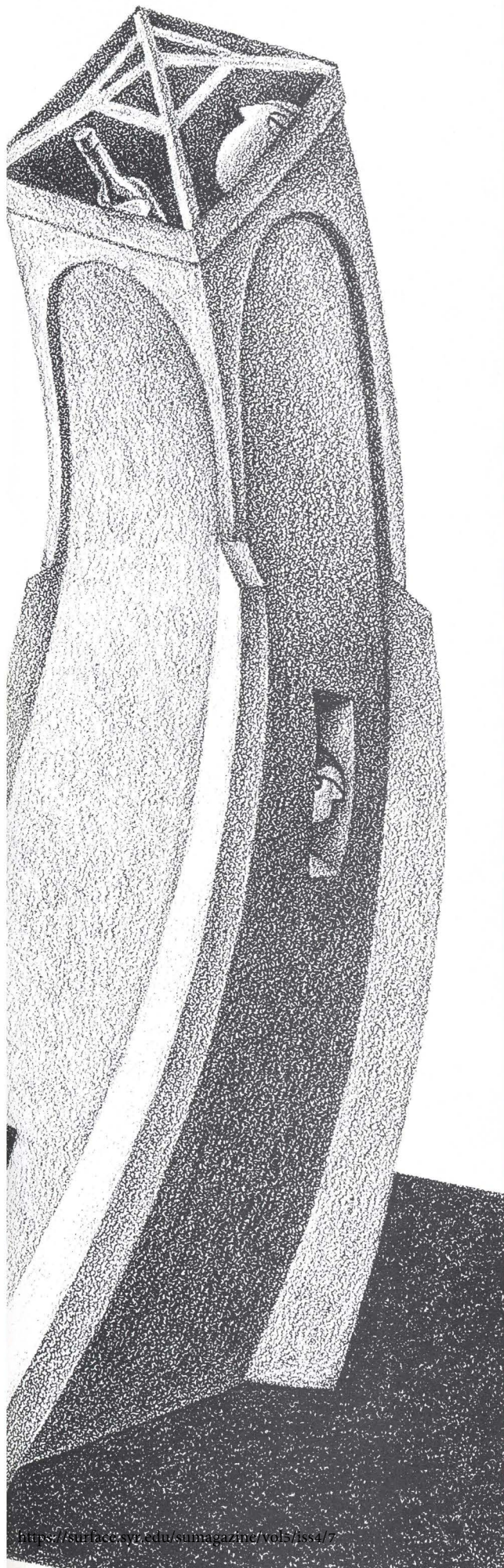


MYSTERY!

KEY 16 THE TOWER



BY GEORGE C. CHESBRO



Pam came
to Cassidy
College to study
the roots of
fundamentalism,
and discovered
instead the
fundamentals of
greed and
deception.

Pam's scars hurt. Although the wounds had been inflicted more than two decades before, the stripes of puckered flesh on her back and belly still stung when she was stressed, which was certainly the case now as she looked down from the window of her fourth-floor office on the scene below her.

On the grass quadrangle in front of the Pinnacle of Prayer, where Horace Cassidy had been in seclusion for almost exactly a week, the plastic wreaths and black bunting marking off the site for the proposed monument to Joseph, the savagely murdered son of the former mining engineer and televangelist up in the tower, had been trampled by a throng of reporters and camera crews. The media had been milling about for almost two hours, hoping for an interview with, or at least a glimpse of, the mysterious businessman who had pledged one million dollars to help keep Horace Cassidy's Creation Park going up, and his college for fundamentalist, Charismatic Christian youth from going under.

Now it seemed their patience was to be rewarded, for a long, gray limousine suddenly appeared around a bend in the driveway, pulled over to the curb at the walk leading to the tower's entrance. The door on the passenger's side opened, and a tall, rangy man got out. Although it had not rained for weeks, and was quite warm, the man wore a raincoat with a large, floppy collar he had drawn up around his face to hide his features. He pushed his way through the crowd of reporters, hurried toward the door to the Pinnacle of Prayer, which was being held open for him by two fresh-faced students. When he was a few steps away from the entrance the man stopped and, as if sensing Pam's gaze on him, turned and looked up at her.

Pam gasped when she looked down into the familiar face with its firm jaw, high cheekbones, piercing dark eyes, and thick black hair. The man, the collar of his raincoat still hiding his face from the people on the ground, grinned at her and winked, then abruptly stepped into the marble tower.

"Damn him," Pam murmured, clenching her fists in frustration and rage as she quickly turned away from the window. "He has no right. *Damn* him."

She strode stiffly back to her desk and began returning the complex questionnaires she had been working on back into her briefcase. It wasn't working anyway, she thought, and winced as pain flashed along the network of scars on her body. The conditions that had enabled her to carry on her research were threatened by the emotional chaos pervading the campus. The ritualistic murder of Joseph Cassidy in the desert north of Creation Park, combined with the dramatic ascent of the college's aged founder to his Pinnacle of Prayer to await dollars or death, had plunged virtually the entire student body into a state of religious hysteria, altering the Charismatic Christians' body chemistry as well as their perceptions, hopelessly skewing Pam's data. She had not yet gathered sufficient data to satisfy her research design, and if she did not complete her project on time, it was unlikely that she would receive any more of the meager grants that had kept her going this long. She would be rejected for tenure in the fall, her academic visa would be revoked, and she would have to return to South Africa.

She would rather die than be forced back to a homeland, where there were no uses at all for a cultural anthropologist, and life itself was a wound.

She started and wheeled about at the sound of a single, sharp knock on her office door. Before she could say anything, the door swung open. The Reverend Richard Cassady and his wife, Rita, strode into the room. They stopped just inside the entrance and stared at her with the mixture of hostility and suspicion to which Pam had grown all too familiar during her one-month stay on the campus of Cassady College. Now she thought she detected something else in their eyes, and in the set of their pinched features: triumph. It made Pam decidedly uneasy.

"Hello," Pam said, and smiled tentatively. The Cassadys had always seemed to Pam more like twins than husband and wife. They dressed alike, always in stark combinations of somber colors and white; they had the same thin, almost gaunt, bodies, the same tension in their faces, the same kinds of pale eyes she had never seen reflect either warmth or humor.

Unlike his father, Pam thought, Richard Cassady displayed almost a total lack of charisma, which probably explained why the son had failed so miserably at carrying on the televangelism and fund raising for the college when Horace Cassady had retired to devote all his time and energies to the construction of Creation Park, a planned educational and entertainment complex, that now lay sprawled, incomplete, across 15 acres of desert to the north, reminding Pam of nothing so much as fossil bones of the great dinosaurs these people denied could be more than a few thousand years old.

"You needn't bother packing up your briefcase, Dr. Marishee," Rita Cassady said coldly, arching her neck slightly. "You've already harmed our students enough, abusing them with your blasphemous questions, and even asking them for blood and urine samples. Your work is disgusting and obscene, and it stops now. You came here under false pretenses; you fooled my father-in-law, but you can't fool us. You'll be leaving now, and you may not take any of the fruits of your exploitation with you."

"False pretenses?" Pam asked quietly.

It was the man, in Pam's estimation the weaker of the two, who answered. "Dr. Felikan was supposed to be welcomed at your university. That was the agreement you made with my father. Dr. Felikan was rejected from your campus, so now we have to ask you to leave ours."

Pam slowly shook her head, willing herself to continue speaking in a soft, deliberate tone, fearful that her normal speaking voice could quickly soar out of control into shouting. "I did not come here under false pretenses. I asked your father if I could come here to continue my studies, and he granted his permission. The exchange was his idea, not mine; he appealed to the chancellor of my university, and the chancellor agreed to accept Dr. Felikan on campus for the semester I was here as a kind of academic experiment. He thought it might be interesting to have a 'Creationist scientist' on campus for a semester. I thought from the beginning that it was a bad idea, and I said so."

"He was thrown off the campus!" the woman snapped.

"No, Mrs. Cassady. I've been in touch with my colleagues, and I know what happened. Dr. Felikan agreed to accept a post as a visiting lecturer in the philosophy department. His courses in Creation Science were listed in the catalog, but nobody signed up. You can't force students to take courses they don't want to take, and which aren't required."

"Their minds were poisoned!"

"No, ma'am. My university accepts only top students, and those students' days are filled preparing for careers in medicine, engineering, and the sciences. They consider Creation Science a joke, and they found Dr. Felikan amusing.

Some might have taken his courses if they thought they had time for fun and games, but they didn't. I predicted that would happen."

"That's blasphemous!"

"It's the truth. You can't just declare something to be scientific because you want it to be, Mrs. Cassady. Creation Science isn't about science at all; it's about faith."

"You're prejudiced," Richard Cassady said.

"No, Reverend. The simple fact of the matter is that Dr. Felikan couldn't attract students to his courses because they don't share his *faith* in Creation Science."

The man raised a trembling index finger, pointed it at her. "You're a humanist!"

"I'm an anthropologist. My religious faith—or lack of it—has nothing whatsoever to do with my purposes here, which involve studying fundamentalist Christians as a group."

The woman raised her eyebrows slightly. "That's what you told my father-in-law, Dr. Marishee, and he believed you. But you lied when you said you were neutral in your feelings toward religion in general, and our faith in particular."

Pam felt the anger rising in her, threatening her control. She balled her hands into fists and pressed them in hard against her stomach, resisted glancing over her shoulder at the papers that were so important to her. "I'm a respected authority in my field, Mrs. Cassady, and that field is comparative religion. I've traveled all over the world, studied more fundamentalist groups than you can name—the Dakwah Islamic movement, Sikhs, Hasidic Jews, movement Catholics. I've asked the same kinds of questions of all these people, taken blood and urine samples when it was permitted. I haven't always been successful in gaining access to the groups I've wanted to study, but my good faith has never been questioned."

"Perhaps those people weren't aware of some of the things you've written," the woman said, her mild tone belied by the hard glint in her eyes. She withdrew a sheet of paper from her purse, unfolded it and held it out for Pam to see. "Do you deny that you wrote this, Dr. Marishee?"

From where she was standing, Pam could not read the text of the photocopied newspaper article, but she could make out the distinctive masthead of *The Guardian*. It was enough. She knew she was lost, knew she would be leaving Cassady College that afternoon with her field work incomplete. She lowered her gaze, backed away a step. "No," she said quietly, "I don't deny it. But that was written a long time ago."

"Do you deny that you wrote that all religion is superstition that may have served a useful purpose in ordering primitive societies, but that is now an evil and murderous and outmoded thing responsible for more death, cruelty, and wasted lives than any other facet of human existence? Did you not describe God as a 'kind of Santa Claus for grown-ups'?"

Only when she was certain that she could speak without a sob in her voice did Pam look up. "Yes," she said in the same soft, even tone. "But I wrote those things 15 years ago, and I believe I manage to be more objective now. The anger you detect in that article could have to do with the fact that the white tribe that rules my country uses its own brand of religion to justify its every outrage and cruelty, including the brutal whipping of a little black girl who became separated from her servant mother and got lost in a Whites Only area. If you deny me the fruits of my research, I may have to return to that hell."

"Then you'd best pray for God's help, dear."

Pam felt her rage rising within her until she could taste it like bile at the back of her throat. "I know who gave you that article, Mrs. Cassidy!" she snapped.

"Who?" Richard Cassidy said in a puzzled tone as he turned to look at his wife, who had stiffened slightly.

"The same man who's talking to your father up in his tower right now, Reverend," Pam said quickly. "The same man who brought your father the money. I don't know what he's told all of you, but he's not who he says he is."

Rita Cassidy flushed with anger, while her husband simply stared at Pam, the same puzzled expression on his face. "You know Mr. Denkler?" the man asked.

Pam smiled thinly. "Mr. Denkler?"

"William Denkler."

"And what is it that Mr. Denkler claims he does for a living, Reverend?"

Rita Cassidy said quickly, "That's none of your business."

Richard Cassidy said, "He owns a factory that makes ladies' undergarments."

"I love it," Pam said with a short, bitter laugh. "Your mysterious Mr. Denkler's real name is Perry Parker, and he works for the Department of Defense in their research and development division. He gave that letter to Mrs. Cassidy to discredit me. I don't know why, but I can assure you that it bodes no good for your father, or for Cassidy College."

"That's ridiculous," the woman said curtly. "This article was sent to me anonymously by someone who obviously wanted us to know that you're against religion, and against us."

Richard Cassidy glanced at his wife, then back at Pam. He shook his head slightly. "What would someone from the Defense Department want with my father, Dr. Marishee? For that matter, what did he want with you? How do you know him?"

"You'll have to ask him what he wants with your father, Reverend. As for me, he's been trying for the past three years to get me to accept DOD funding for my research into common patterns of thought in fundamentalist religious groups; they seem to think my work could be important to what they call 'defense planning strategy.' That could mean anything. I'm more than a little suspicious of government-sponsored research and development. I refused, because acceptance of their money would mean they could control my research and its publication. Perry Parker and I are old . . . acquaintances. I don't know what he's up to now, but he's no philanthropist, and the interests of the Department of Defense aren't necessarily yours. I just wanted to study you; he wants to use you for some purpose."

"Enough of this nonsense!" Rita Cassidy snapped as she abruptly walked forward into the room, brushing past Pam. She went to the desk, snatched the questionnaires from Pam's briefcase, collected the others from the desk-top, then strode stiffly back to where her husband was standing. "We'd like you to leave the campus today, Dr. Marishee," she continued as she took her husband's arm and turned him forcefully toward the door. "Goodbye."

Richard and Rita Cassidy really had no right to abort her program or order her off campus, Pam thought as she listened to the couple's footsteps receding in the hallway outside her office. It was Horace Cassidy who had invited her. Still, under the circumstances, she knew it was useless to argue or fight against the combined wills of Richard and Rita Cassidy, and the deviousness of Perry Parker. There was nothing to do but go home—which might not be home for much longer.

She felt better by the time she'd showered, dressed in casual clothes, packed, and taken a taxi to the airport. In fact, she had not realized how oppressive she had found the atmosphere surrounding Cassidy College until now, when

**Horace
Cassidy
might be
hopelessly
dotty, Pam
thought, but
he had
welcomed
her to his
home and
college.
He deserved
to be warned.**

she was away from it. She had mailed copies of earlier questionnaires back to her office; she certainly didn't have anywhere near all the data she would have liked, but she might still be able to construct a valid statistical profile of the Cassidy College student body, and there were the early biosamples she had obtained that could be matched against this profile.

If she had any regrets, it was that she was leaving with personal unfinished business. As far as she was concerned, Richard and Rita Cassidy and Perry Parker deserved each other. But Horace Cassidy was another matter. The old man might be hopelessly dotty, Pam thought, but he had welcomed her to his home and college, and given her free rein to do her research. He deserved to be warned that he was being manipulated by the DOD, even if he didn't believe it.

Pam changed her reservation to a later flight, put her baggage into a storage locker, and went out of the airline terminal to hail a cab to take her back to Cassidy College.

She had the driver let her off at the edge of the campus, so as not to attract attention, then walked through the chill, dry, desert night air to the quadrangle. She had assumed that Horace Cassidy would have returned to his living quarters, and might even be asleep. Thus, she was surprised to see that lights remained on in the dome of the tower, and that upwards of 50 students, many holding candles, were gathered around the base of the tower in what appeared to be a prayer vigil.

It meant that Horace Cassidy was still in his tower, and Pam did not understand why; nor did she understand why she experienced a sudden, unmistakable sense of foreboding. The structure had always reminded her of the tower in the tarot deck designed by Smith and Waite, and she wondered if anyone else at Cassidy College was aware of the resemblance.

Her scars burned.

The old man had shown her an alternate route to get into the tower, and she used that underground passageway now. She paused at the bottom of the spiral staircase that was at the core of the tower and listened, but she heard no sounds from above. Thinking that Horace Cassidy might be asleep, and not wanting to startle him, Pam ascended the staircase slowly, her sneakers making no sounds on the concrete steps. She came to the top, stood in the open doorway of the largest room in the dome and smiled grimly.

In the center of the dimly lighted room, Perry Parker sat at a small table, his face and hands brightly illuminated in a cone of light cast by a red gooseneck lamp set up on the far edge of the table. He appeared to be totally absorbed as he slowly leafed through what looked to Pam like a lengthy legal document. Suddenly, apparently sensing her presence, he stiffened, thrust the document into a thin leather portfolio, which he snapped shut, then looked toward the doorway.

"Pam!"

Pam crossed her arms over her chest, stepped into the room. "Hello, Perry."

The man's lips drew back into a taut smile that reflected no warmth or humor, and that did nothing to mask his shock at seeing her. "I'd heard you'd left cuckooland."

"An agent who works for the R and D arm of DOD should be very careful what he describes as cuckooland, Perry. Why aren't you pestering some virologist to build you a new disease, or accidentally killing a herd of sheep? What the hell are you up to here, and why did you have to torpedo my research project?"

"You came up here to try and warn Cassidy about me, didn't you?"

"Where is he?"

The dark-eyed, dark-haired man jerked his thumb in

the direction of a closed door behind him. "He's in there on a cot sleeping off a snootful."

"What?"

"The man's a closet alcoholic, lady. With that red nose of his, I'm surprised you never guessed. The man comes up here to drink. I think maybe that's the real reason he built this tower in the first place; he wanted a hideout where he could booze it up without anybody bothering him. Naturally, he thinks he has God's personal approval."

Pam shook her head in disbelief. "How do you know all this?"

Parker laughed softly. "You have your means of research, I have mine. As a matter of fact, the Reverend Cassidy and I have been rather close for some months now."

"And Rita Cassidy put you next to him, didn't she?" Pam asked in an even tone, watching the man's face. "She may be a bitch, but she's no actress. She damn well knows who you are; I could see it in her eyes when I challenged her about that old *Guardian* article you slipped to her. Whatever's going on, you two are in it together. Are you sleeping with her, Perry? Is that how you set this up?"

Suddenly the smile vanished from Perry Parker's lips, and a hard light glinted in his black eyes. "Easy, Pam, easy," he said softly. "Let's keep this friendly." He paused, glanced at his watch. "You should be leaving; it's for your own good. Old Horace isn't going to believe anything you have to say. You may be a pretty face, but I'm the one who supplies him with his Scotch malt whiskey."

"Perry, it's very hard to be friendly toward you when what you've done is likely to get me shipped back to South Africa. I need my data from here to round out my statistical profile."

Parker abruptly rose from his chair. He put the leather portfolio under his arm, went to the closed door and listened for a few moments, then walked over to Pam. "You've got only yourself to blame," he said with quiet intensity. "You kept turning down our requests to have first access to your raw data. If you'd listened to me, you'd never have had any problems with funding, and you'd have had your green card by now."

"But *why*, Perry? You've always known how I feel about DOD-sponsored research; it's what comes from being born the wrong color in a country that insists on keeping live smallpox virus in stock just in case we ever get *too* uppity. Since when have you people been interested in anything but the hard sciences anyway? Why pick on me? I'm not the only one studying fundamentalist sects. You can pick up dozens of sociological journals and read about people like this until you go blind."

Again, the tall man with the cold, dark eyes smiled thinly. "Ah, yes, but the DOD isn't interested in reading speculations on a 'fundamentalist temperament,' or being told that zealots tend to link religious ideology to national identity, or that they use sacred scripture to justify violence. And we certainly know how effective these movements are at organizing popular anger. We know all about that. So do you. You've been less than truthful with us, Pam. You've always been after bigger game. You've been hunting in Nobel Prize territory, trying to establish that there's an actual genetic basis, a kind of disease model, for religious faith. You want to demonstrate that some people—fundamentalist types, in particular—come down with religious fervor like others come down with Huntington's chorea, or Tay-Sachs disease. You intend to demonstrate that religious faith is actually the result of a kind of physical affliction. That would be most useful information, particularly if an actual genetic marker could be found."

Somehow he knew, Pam thought, and

she felt the blood drain from her face. "You bastard," she breathed.

Parker shook his head. "The tragedy—or farce—of you refusing to accept our funding is that it was actually cheaper for us to bribe the laboratory technicians who are doing your blood work and urinalysis to keep us clued in on exactly what kinds of tests you were ordering up. Then, of course, we put some of our own people to work on the same kinds of tests. By the way, it seems your disease model is correct. Building on your work, and using a Cray computer you'd have had access to if you hadn't been so stubborn, we've found what we think is the genetic marker for religious faith; we think it's somewhere on chromosome four, very close to the marker for schizophrenia."

"It's my work, Perry," Pam whispered, hoping the defeat she felt in her heart couldn't be heard in her voice. "I won't let you get away with just stealing it."

"I'm afraid you have no choice. You'll be returning to South Africa eventually, and when you get back to your university you'll find that much of the data you've collected over the past few years is now classified; you can't get at it."

Pam bit the inside of her cheek to keep from shouting—or screaming. "God, Perry, what are you going to *do* with the information?"

"Now that's a question that might better be answered by a medical researcher, a virologist or biologist, no?"

"Are you going to kill more sheep, Perry?"

"A lot of these sheep are killers themselves, Pam, as you're well aware. They blow up airplanes, march their kids across mine fields, use poison gas, and think it's all just dandy because they have a special dispensation from God. They take hostages and torture them. It might not be a bad idea at all for someone to try and come up with a biochemical agent—a vaccine, if you will—that would enable us to herd these killer sheep in a different direction."

"You mean manipulate them; killer and non-killer alike."

"As you like. You know R and D's motto: Do unto others just in case they're trying to do unto you."

"And you intend to use the students and faculty of Cassidy College as laboratory animals to help DOD search for the religious gene marker and develop means of exploiting it. Just how long do you think you're going to be able to fool that old man in—" She suddenly stopped speaking as a chill went through her. She pointed to the leather portfolio under the man's arm. "That's a will you've got in there, isn't it? You've sold him some kind of story, and now you're waiting for him to come around so that he'll sign it. It's his death warrant. Oh, my God."

"Leave now, Pam," Perry Parker said in a low voice.

"Did you kill Joseph Cassidy so that his brother—and, most important, his wife—could inherit this whole operation, Perry? Is that how you plan to turn this college into a DOD research facility?"

"We're not assassins, Pam."

"Spare me."

Parker smiled, shrugged. "I'm not an assassin."

"Then don't kill the old man, and don't let anybody else—"

She stopped speaking when she saw the distressed look on Perry Parker's face as he stared at something behind her. She turned, and was startled to see a thoroughly bewildered-looking Richard Cassidy standing in the doorway. He glanced back and forth between the two of them, then down at the pistol in his hand.

"I, uh . . . I thought I heard voices up here. I'm sorry about the gun. After what . . . happened to my brother."

He paused, looked up again. Now suspicion glinted in his pale eyes. "What are you two doing up here? Where's my father?"

Pam glanced at Parker, who gave a brief shake of his head—a clear warning, which Pam intended to heed; suddenly she was very much afraid of this man.

The click of a woman's high heels on the concrete staircase was faint at first, growing louder as the footsteps came closer. A few moments later Rita Cassady, head down and apparently deep in thought, entered the room. She stopped, looked up, gasped and clutched the small beaded purse she carried to her chest.

"Perry?" she said in a hollow voice. "What's happened? What's going on?"

"Jesus H. Christ," Parker said, and turned his head away in disgust.

"Perry?" Richard Cassady said, slowly turning to his wife. "Why did you call this man 'Perry'?"

Rita Cassady swallowed hard repeatedly, then looked at Perry Parker. For the first time, Pam could clearly see the madness in the woman's eyes, marbled with panic. "You have to do something, Perry," Rita Cassady said in a hoarse whisper.

The agent from the Department of Defense merely shook his head.

"Give me that!" The woman shouted, and abruptly grabbed for the gun in her husband's hand.

And then Pam realized the truth. "No!" she shouted at the gaunt man in the dark suit. "If you give her the gun, she'll kill your father and me! That's why she's here! If you look in that purse she's carrying, I think you'll find the same knife she used to kill your brother! She wants you to inherit your father's operation, because she's sure she'll be able to control it! She and this man planned it together! If you don't believe me, ask her to show you what's in the purse!"

**"No!" she
shouted at
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man in the
dark suit.**

**"If you give
her the gun,
she'll kill
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and me!
That's why
she's here!"**

Richard Cassady stared wide-eyed at Pam, clearly shocked; but he held the gun away from his wife when she grabbed for it again.

"You fool!" Rita Cassady screamed, starting to beat at her husband's head and shoulders with her frail fists. "There are tens of millions of dollars at stake here! If you let your father keep pissing it away in that hole in the ground—!" She abruptly bit off the sentence, and her face, when she turned back, reminded Pam of the expression on a child's face when the child has been discovered in a particularly shameful act. "Help me, Perry," she whispered in a voice that was barely audible.

Parker grunted, and started walking toward the door. "I don't know what you're talking about, lady. I'm gone."

"Wait!"

Pam wheeled around, and was startled to see the disheveled, haggard figure of Horace Cassady standing in the open doorway of the room where he had been resting. In his right hand, he held a thick, heavy cross that was the color of gunmetal. After her initial shock, Pam's reaction was to wonder how much the man had overheard; the haunted look on his face was her answer.

The old man walked unsteadily across the room, pushing aside both Perry Parker and Rita Cassady. He gripped Pam's arm and led her to the doorway, then used his other arm to draw his son close to him.

"Did you help kill your brother, Richard?" Horace Cassady said, leaning so close to the other man that their foreheads were virtually touching.

Richard Cassady's mouth opened and closed. He swallowed hard, managed to say, "Father, I don't understand any of this."

"I believe you," the old man said after a pause. "Give this woman back all her papers, Richard, and help her bear witness to what's happened here. Cooperate with her in any way she wants. It's God's will. Goodbye."

And then, displaying surprising strength and quickness, he pushed them both out through the doorway. The last thing Pam saw before the steel panel that had been hidden in the wall slammed shut across the entranceway was Horace Cassady holding up the heavy cross he carried and pressing what appeared to be a button embedded in its handle.

Suddenly the entire tower seemed to be filled with clicking sounds—electric relays being activated, closing. And suddenly Pam understood why the former mining engineer who had exercised such close control and personal supervision over the construction of his Creation Park had been so certain he was going to die if his wishes were not fulfilled.

Richard Cassady was pounding with his fists at the steel panel, shouting his father's name.

Pam wrapped her arms around the man's waist, pulled him away from the panel and toward the staircase. "Come on! We have to get out of here! He's wired the whole place with dynamite!"

Together, they raced down the stairs, out the front entrance. Shouting, pushing and pulling, they struggled to move the students outside away from the base of the tower to safety.

Creation Park was the first to go, multiple explosions lighting the night sky and raining debris down over the campus of Cassady College moments before the dome of the tower disappeared in a thunderous flash of fire and smoke.

GEORGE CHESBRO

The Man Behind Mongo

Think of the rich tradition of mystery serial novels, and Spade and Hammer are certain to come to mind. But *Mongo*? That is the moniker of George Chesbro's heroic protagonist, the dwarf detective with a doctorate in criminology who has starred in seven Chesbro novels.

A 1962 SU graduate in special education, Chesbro taught mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed students near his Nyack, New York, home until 1979, when he began writing full-time. He has written 16 books, including the "Mongos": *Shadow of a Broken Man* (1977), *City of Whispering Stone* (1978), *An Affair of Sorcerers* (1979), *The Beasts of Valhalla* (1985), *Two Songs This Archangel Sings* (1986), *The Cold Smell of Sacred Stone* (1988), and (brand new) *Second Horseman Out of Eden*. He also wrote the *Chant* spy series under the pseudonym David Cross.

The character of Mongo was intended to be satirical, but Mongo acquired his own influence and respect. Mongo's appeal, says Chesbro, is that he is successful despite a physical limitation: "He was after what we're all after—respect and dignity—so I couldn't make fun of Mongo. I afforded him dignity, and now Mongo's paying the rent."