

**T**hey left the motorway just after crossing the Border into Scotland, bearing left onto the road for Dumfries, both of them heartily sick of the tailbacks created by a succession of roadworks in the miles since Manchester, where they had spent the night. Doyle's quick check of the road map told them that although it was a good bit longer, this route would avoid Glasgow, where the road reports said there were yet more roadworks, and rejoin their originally planned route up Loch Lomondside northwards.

Bodie relaxed slightly after the strain of the crowded, slow-moving motorway, allowing his mind to engage autopilot as the car speeded up.

"Want me to take over?" Doyle asked quietly. The offer broke their established pattern of two-hour driving shifts; it was little more than an hour since Bodie had relieved him, but that hour had been horrendously difficult.

"Nah, I'll manage, thanks," Bodie said. "I'd've been glad to let you get your paws on the wheel if we hadn't been able to get off the motorway, but this road's quiet enough."

"Mmm. Nice countryside, too." Townbred though he was, the artist in Doyle appreciated a certain amount—just about a fortnight would be long enough—of the rural scene. Two weeks from now he would be perfectly happy to be heading back south to the concrete jungle of London, but for the moment he was just looking forward to a leisurely tour of the Highlands of Scotland.

They had no definite plans. May was early enough in the season for there to be plenty of B & B rooms available, and if they found an area they liked, with plenty of good walking—for they couldn't allow themselves not to exercise—they could stay there.

They hadn't gone far before they hit a stretch of winding road where they caught up with a long stream of traffic. Bodie braked gently, his speed dropping to an eminently law-abiding twenty miles per hour, and he took a long, deep breath.

"Raaay." There was an accusing note in his voice.

"Hey, come on mate, this isn't my fault!" Doyle said. "The road report didn't say anything about holdups on this road—unless you heard something I didn't."

"Didn't need to hear anything, did I?" Bodie growled. "We're barely doing twenty, mate. I'm going by the evidence of my senses."

"We've maybe just caught up with something slow-moving."

"Like a snail?" Bodie muttered as the brake lights of the car in front flashed red and he too braked to a halt.

"There's been nothing going in the other direction for a

**BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY**  
**BY JAY TRENT**

while,” Doyle said after a moment.

“So two snails have stopped for a chat.” Bodie drummed his fingers on the steering wheel.

“That won’t help,” Doyle said. After a few moments, he added, “Hey—that’s a pretty big snail!”

A very large lorry appeared round the nearest corner, coming towards them extremely slowly, and crept past them with barely an inch to spare. There was a long line of traffic behind it.

“Now that’s good driving!” Doyle said admiringly as the vehicles in front of them began to move.

Bodie grunted as their speed increased to around twenty-four miles an hour. “I’ve seen worse.”

“Come on, mate, you’re just jealous.”

“Doyle, I know one thing. I’ve done a lot in my life, and there are a lot of things I’d still like to do. Driving a pantehnicon like that isn’t one of them.”

“Oh, I dunno.” Privately, Doyle agreed, but sheer perversity led him to disagree with his partner. “Could be fun, watching everyone driving something smaller doing their damndest to stay out of your way.”

“Didn’t think you were that much into power games, sunshine,” Bodie commented as the traffic speeded up to a respectable forty. Within seconds they passed a layby where a heavy lorry carrying a wide static caravan was parked, with a police car parked immediately in front of it.

“There’s your snail,” Doyle said happily. “And yes, it does have its home on its back!”

“Nah,” Bodie replied, his voice gloomy although his spirits had lifted the moment the traffic had speeded up. “Can’t see that lorry getting into that caravan.”

Doyle groaned.

About half an hour later Bodie pulled into a layby. “Time to swap over, sunshine.”

“Okay.” They paused briefly to stretch the kinks out of their legs before re-entering the

car, and Doyle pulled quickly out of the layby.

“Scared that lorry’ll catch up before you get going, mate?” Bodie asked.

“Not at all,” Doyle replied mendaciously, “but time’s getting on and I’d like to reach somewhere we can get something to eat before that bottomless pit you call a stomach starts rumbling.”

They drove into a small town and Doyle promptly pulled up beside a small restaurant. As he switched off he muttered, “But I’ll bet that lorry catches up with us while we’re in here.”

“Trying to tell me you’re not hungry?” Bodie demanded.

Doyle grinned as they walked through the door. “Wouldn’t say that, mate, I could fancy a plate of fish ’n’ chips.”

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But Doyle turned out to be right about the lorry; while they were eating, the police-escorted static passed. Doyle grunted. “Might be worth seeing if there’s another change of route.”

“No guarantee that it wasn’t the way that thing’s going,” Bodie, confident in the knowledge that Doyle was the one who would have to cope with being stuck behind it, replied with a patience that was meant to be infuriating. Doyle, knowing that, was careful not to respond.

They drove on, and to Doyle’s secret glee, never did catch up with the static caravan, wherever it had gone.

Eventually they crossed Erskine Bridge and headed up the side of Loch Lomond. That road too was narrow and winding, but to Bodie’s disgust the traffic was moving smoothly.

“Luck of the devil!” he muttered. “Have a pact with ’im, have we?”

“Nah, mate, it’s the reward of clean living,” Doyle retorted.

They reached Arrocher, where they spent the night, and in the morning carried on northwards.



∞ **CI5** ∞

They drove into Invergair in the early afternoon, found a parking place in the main street close to the local Tourist Information Bureau and looked round.

“Looks a nice place,” Bodie commented.

“Might be an idea to spend a couple of days here,” Doyle suggested.

“Why not?”

They went into the Bureau.

“Can I help you?”

Bodie turned a charming smile on the woman at the counter. “We’re looking for a room for a couple of nights.”

She reached for a booklet and consulted it. As she did, she said, “We’ve got a few rooms inside the town, and a couple a mile or two outside it.”

“Outside town sounds good,” Bodie said.

“There should be a twin room available at Craigdhu, three miles out, or...two single rooms at Kiloran, five miles out. The twin room is slightly cheaper.”

“We’ll take the twin,” Bodie told her.

“I’ll phone and make sure they still have it.” She reached for the phone, checked the number in the booklet, and dialled. “Mrs McLeod? Cathy at the Tourist office. Is your room vacant? Right, it’s two gentlemen—Mr—” She glanced at Bodie.

“Bodie and Doyle.”

“Mr Bodie and Mr Doyle. Fine—they’ll be right with you.”

She gave them directions and they set off again.

There was only one place where a junction offered a little difficulty; rather than hold up the two cars behind him, Doyle drove straight on. When the other cars both took the sharp left-hand turn he had passed, he realised that he had gone the wrong way. Committed to an extremely narrow road, Doyle had to drive nearly half a mile before he found a possible turning place, just grateful that for once Bodie chose to make no audible

comment, though the look on his face was one of smug superiority that was almost more annoying than a snide comment would have been. He made the necessary turn, and drove back to the junction; this time he made no mistake. They turned up a road beside a Forestry workshop that looked, at a passing glance, as if it was a garage and maintenance depot, ended up in a group of Forestry Commission houses and found their B & B.

Their room was pleasant, north-facing, with a view over a low wooded ridge towards a higher ridge beyond. As she showed them to it, Mrs McLeod said, “Have you come far today?”

“From Arrocher,” Doyle told her as he put his case down.

“Not too far, then. Your bathroom is in here—” She opened a door in the hallway beside the bedroom. “I’ll leave you to get settled. Would you like a cup of tea?”

“That would be lovely, thanks.”

“And would you like an evening meal? I can do that for an extra £2 each a night. There are two or three places you can get a good pub meal but none of them are within walking distance.”

They glanced at each other. “If it’s not putting you out?” Bodie said.

“Not at all. It’s just a case of cooking a little more than I’d do anyway. I’m afraid you’ll have to eat with my husband and me...”

“That’s no problem for us,” Doyle told her. “It’s nice getting the chance to talk with the people where we’re staying.”

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Over a cup of tea, they broached the subject of possible routes for longish walks.

“Och, there’s plenty of those round here,” she told them. “If you go up the hill behind the house you can get about two miles to a good viewpoint, though you have to come back the same way. Have a word with my husband tonight—he works for the Forestry, and he can tell you several long walks.”

“That’s good.” Doyle yawned, and quickly apologised.

“It’s the fresh air,” Mrs McLeod told him. “It’s amazing how sleepy it can make folk.”

“If there are several good long walks in the area, we might want to stay on for several nights,” Bodie said.

“You’ll be very welcome,” she told him.

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They walked up the road behind the house, finding that from it there were some magnificent panoramas that made Doyle’s fingers itch for his drawing pad, left in his case, and he promised himself that before they left he would bring it up here and get a few sketches. Soon they found themselves entering an area of well-grown trees that cut off the view. A side road, closed by a padlocked gate, cut away to one side. They ignored it, carrying steadily on uphill beside a small stream, past another gated track where they lost the stream, until quite suddenly they left the established woodland, finding themselves in an area of young trees that were not high enough to cut off the view. Another couple of hundred feet brought them to a trig point above the trees, from which, as they had been promised, they got a magnificent view towards the sea.

As they stood gazing round, Bodie slipped a companionable arm round Doyle’s shoulders; Doyle leaned back with a contented sigh as Bodie nuzzled his neck.

By mutual consent they moved a little way downhill and sank down into a heather-lined hollow where they were completely hidden from view, rolling into a comfortable embrace, their mouths meeting gently at first then more hungrily. Doyle wriggled a hand between their bodies and began to unfasten Bodie’s shirt, rubbing a hand over his mate’s chest as each button gave way.

Although it was only May it was warm there on the hillside with the sun shining down on them, the little hollow creating a suntrap. They undressed one another and

made love slowly—each completely at ease with the other, knowing well what caresses his mate most enjoyed—until, finally sated, they lay back, still naked and soaking in the sunshine.

Bodie, predictably, moved first, his years in Africa making him fully aware of the dangers of sunburn—even from the relatively weak sunshine of a British spring—on skin that for some months had been covered by clothes.

“Come on, sunshine, get your clothes on!” he said as he began to dress.

Doyle opened sleepy eyes. “Ah, come on,” he muttered. “s the first chance we’ve had to get the beginnings of a decent suntan. Another half hour—”

“Could leave your prick too sore to make love for the rest of the week,” Bodie told him. Reason might not work on his sometimes-obstinate partner, but he knew the one argument that would.

Doyle grunted, letting Bodie know that he didn’t really believe him but would humour him. Dressed again, they headed back down the track.

∞ **CI5** ∞

Over the evening meal, Calum McLeod gave them details of several forest walks within half an hour’s drive, pointing them out on a map. They had already seen enough to know they both found the area attractive. A quick glance between them was enough to confirm that they were in agreement, and they promptly extended their stay from two nights to a week.

After dinner Doyle collected his sketchbook and they drove some three miles to the shore. They wandered over a wide stretch of sand left almost completely dry by the outgoing tide, stood for some minutes watching the water creeping in again, then returned to their car. Bodie leaned back against it, relaxing, while Doyle sketched rapidly, getting several impressions of the sands and the hills behind rather than concentrating on

one more polished picture. It wasn't until Doyle muttered something about the failing light that they realised with some surprise it was after nine pm, and drove back to the house.

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They spent the next three days exploring the area, walking for enjoyable miles; they saw deer a couple of times, shy roe that paused long enough to register their presence before darting gracefully away, and once they saw a squirrel. On the second day a huge, long-necked grey bird rose flapping slowly from the water's edge as they approached and several times they saw wheeling birds that Doyle speculated audibly might be eagles.

They bickered amiably as they went, and at their rest halts either Doyle sketched busily or, if they found a really secluded, sheltered spot, they relaxed, making love with the ease and lack of urgency of the comfortably established lovers that they were. Past were the days when their urgency to reach orgasm made them rush; they took their time, pleasuring each other, allowing arousal to mount slowly until it peaked, bringing them both to shuddering climax. They had to be careful, though, that they found really secluded spots, because several times they met people walking dogs.

Over the evening meal on the third day, Doyle remembered the birds they had seen.

"Grey, with a long neck and a long beak," he said.

"That's a heron," McLeod told them. "There are quite a few around here—they nest in the trees a couple of miles down the road."

"And every day we've been seeing quite big birds gliding around without flapping their wings—I wondered if they might be eagles?"

"Buzzards, more like," McLeod replied. "They're a little smaller than eagles and much commoner, but it's hard to tell the difference when you just see them flying."

They were just finishing their meal when the phone rang. McLeod answered it, grunted,

said, "I'll be right there," and glanced at his wife. "The alarm's gone off," he said, and sat down to pull on the boots he had taken off barely two hours earlier.

Bodie and Doyle looked at each other, but said nothing till McLeod closed the front door behind him.

"Alarm?" Bodie asked casually.

"Och, it'll be nothing," Mrs McLeod assured them. "The Forestry has a magazine up the hill; you passed the track leading to it when you went to the viewpoint up there—" she nodded up the hill "—and there's an alarm on it. It's forever going off for no reason—any kind of freak weather can set it off. Calum's the worker who lives nearest, so he gets the call to reset it and go up with the police to check it's all right. He'll be back inside half an hour."

"What does the Forestry need explosives for?" Doyle asked.

"Sometimes when they're making new access roads into the hills they need to blast away some rock, or do some quarrying for stone to surface the road. They don't keep a big stock, but it's convenient for them to have a little on hand."

"Makes sense." Bodie nodded, dismissing the subject. "Ray, you said you'd like to do some sketching up the hill—I don't feel like doing anything too energetic tonight, ten minutes' walk up there would do me nicely."

"Sketching?" Mrs McLeod said.

"Come on, sunshine, show the lady," Bodie said.

Doyle scowled at his mate, but obediently produced his sketchpad. Mrs McLeod admired the pictures and correctly identified several of them—"And I'm sure Calum will know the others," she finished. "Are you an artist, then, Mr Doyle?" Although they had talked a lot over meals, the subject of work was one that had not been mentioned.

He shook his head. "Did a couple of years at Art College, but I wasn't really good enough to make a career of it—apart from teaching, and

I didn't want to teach. I just potter a bit when I get the chance. We're civil servants."

She looked from one to the other. "You both look very fit to work behind a desk," she commented.

"Ah, well, we like to keep active," Bodie said. "Do a lot of running and a bit of martial arts."

Doyle retrieved his drawing pad. "Well, if I'm going to get anything drawn tonight, we'd better get going," he said.

Bodie laughed, and with a cheerful, "See you!" to Mrs McLeod they headed out.

They were only a couple of hundred yards up the hill when a police car drove past with Calum McLeod in the back seat. He waved to them as it passed; they walked briskly on until they reached the first of the potential viewpoints Doyle had mentally noted, and he leaned his pad on a fence post and started to draw, as usual choosing to sketch an impression of the scene rather than attempting a detailed piece. When he returned home he would take his time to produce a more polished picture, using his sketches as a guide.

Five minutes later the police car came back down the hill at what seemed to be a fairly reckless speed. Only the driver was in it. It halted beside them; the driver gestured them over.

Bodie moved round to the driver's door while Doyle finished capturing the last details of his sketch.

"You're on holiday here, sir?"

"Yes—got here three days ago. We're staying with the McLeods."

"Aye, Calum said that. Any particular reason you came here?"

"We were just heading north, got to Invergair, liked the look of the place, and got the McLeods' address from the Tourist Information."

"Mind telling me where you're from?"

Doyle reached Bodie's side in time to hear the last question. "London," he said.

"What do you do?"

They looked at each other, realising that there had to be some reason other than curiosity behind the questions. "We usually just say civil servants—but actually we're with CI5," Bodie replied.

"Can you prove that?" There was a slightly different, almost urgent, note in the policeman's voice.

"Well, we don't have our IDs on us right now, but they're down at the house."

"Mind letting me see them?"

"Not at all. Now?" Bodie asked.

"If you don't mind."

They got into the car and it continued down the hill, stopping in front of the McLeods' house. Doyle got out. "You stay here, Bodie—I'll get the IDs." He moved quickly into the house.

Mrs McLeod came out of the kitchen as he entered and took the stairs two at a time. "Is there something wrong?" she asked.

Halfway up the stairs, he paused and glanced back. "I'm afraid there might be," he said. "The police car went up the hill but when it came down again it only had the driver in it. Now the police want proof of our identities—luckily we have it to hand." He carried on up the stairs, went into their bedroom, retrieved their IDs from their cases and ran downstairs again.

The police driver gave a soft, relieved sigh when he saw the IDs.

"Right," Doyle said briskly. "Now we've established who we are, can you tell us what the problem is?"

"You knew Calum McLeod had been called out because the magazine alarm went off?"

"Yes. Mrs McLeod said they were always getting false alarms."

"This time it wasn't," the policeman said grimly. "This time it was for real. The magazine has been broken into and the explosives stored there have been stolen."

The police had already reported to Invergair by radio, and while the driver went back to collect some more men to check the area, Bodie and Doyle drove up the hill to the gate leading to the magazine. It was open, so they followed the track some quarter of a mile until they reached a small metal building. Calum McLeod and the second policeman appeared from behind it when they heard the approaching vehicle.

Bodie held out his ID so that this policeman could see it. "Your colleague told us what's happened," he explained without going into any detail. "We've offered to help."

"CI5! But what are CI5 men doing here?"

"Just what it looks like. We're on leave. But as our boss is fond of telling us, the bad guys never rest. What's missing?"

Calum McLeod glanced at the policeman, who looked just a trifle overawed, and, unimpressed by the credentials of the men he had shared several meals with, answered for him. "The road squad's been using explosives this last couple of weeks, so there wasn't much left—a couple of dozen sticks of gelignite at most, but they've gone and so have the detonators for them."

"Any sign of how whoever broke in got away?" Doyle asked. In some ways, at heart he was still a London cop.

"That's the queer thing, Mr Doyle," McLeod told him. "The only road out is the one past the houses, and nothing came down it, I'd swear to that. You went up there the other day—saw for yourselves it just goes up to the trig point, so nobody could have driven that way."

"There is the other track—the one that follows the stream?" Bodie said.

"It's a dead end too. Just goes on about a mile to the loch. It's used by the local angling club; they're the only ones with a key. Apart from the Forestry, that is. But it's too bright and too calm for anyone to be out fishing tonight."

"We should check to make sure there are

no cars there, though," Doyle said. "Where can we get a key?"

McLeod produced one. "The Forestry lock is the same one that's on the gate to here," he said.

The policeman found his voice at last. "Calum, if you take the gentlemen to the loch, I'll carry on checking here."

"Right, Donal."

Calum McLeod got in the front with Doyle while Bodie sat in the back. When they reached the second gate, McLeod got out; by the time he had reached the gate, Bodie was close behind him.

"Wait a moment, please." Bodie studied the chain, noting that it was composed of two short lengths with two different padlocks placed in such a way that when either one was open, the other acted as a link holding the two bits together. "Two padlocks? Two different keys?"

"Yes. It's quite common where several different organisations use one road. Some chains can have nine or ten padlocks—almost more padlock than chain. It just depends on how many groups need to use the road." He grinned. "It wouldn't be the first time I've had to try two or three locks before I found the one my key fitted."

"I see." Bodie grinned back, then examined both locks. "Well, it doesn't look as if anyone has tried to force either of these. You can unlock it."

As they returned to the car, McLeod said, "We might as well leave it open—we'll be coming back in just a few minutes."

Doyle grunted, accepting the comment, and drove on with due care—the track was rough, potholed and with a fairly high ridge running down the middle.

The 'car park' was little more than a widening of the track; there was room for three, perhaps four cars to park and turn. Doyle stopped a couple of yards from it and all three got out.

The ground was baked hard.

“No way of knowing if there are any new tyre marks,” Doyle commented gloomily. “But then anyone parking here would have to go back the way we came, and it’s not a road for speeding... How long between the alarm going off and you getting up here, would you say?”

“Ten, fifteen minutes—I’d to wait for the police coming from Invergair. But the alarm is controlled from a shed at the back of the Forestry workshop, beside the houses, and I was there within five minutes. I’d have seen anything that came down the road.”

“So whoever it was didn’t have a car to hand,” Bodie muttered.

“It certainly looks that way,” McLeod agreed. “But they couldn’t have come up the track here and cut through the Forest either; most of the fishing is done from a boat, and all three boats are still tied up. That track—” he pointed to a path that wound away, following the water’s edge “—only goes on for about a hundred yards. There’s a good fishing spot at the end of it, but after that the sides are too steep and the trees too close to the water.”

They got into the car and drove carefully back. McLeod relocked the gate and they returned to the magazine to find that the police car had returned with three more policemen.

There was a brief flurry of introductions, with Bodie and Doyle flashing their IDs again to confirm their identities despite being assured that it wasn’t necessary. They spread out, examining the ground although it was almost certain they would find nothing in the way of tracks. Bodie examined the open door of the magazine looking for marks that would show how it would be opened, and finding none.

Doyle wandered about a hundred yards, past a huge pile of gravel and a tractor, wondering if the thief might just have gone to ground close to the magazine and was waiting until everyone left to make a leisurely way down the road on foot, and noticed a very rough, narrow track that gave the impression of being seldom used winding away down the

hill and disappearing among the trees.

“Mr McLeod! — Where does this path go?”

McLeod joined him, staring at the track in dismay. “Damn! I’d forgotten about that one! We don’t use it much now—it dates from when the area was planted, about ten years ago. It’s used once, maybe twice a year when we’re spraying. It goes down two or three hundred yards then widens into a firebreak, then after a bit it goes in among the trees again—comes out on an access road about a mile away. But you’d have to know where you were going to be able to follow it. It’s easy to miss where it goes into the trees, and if you just follow the firebreak you end up miles into the hills.”

“So someone who knew that track—” Bodie, who had joined them, said.

“—could be long away by now,” Doyle finished.

McLeod shook his head. “They’d be halfway to the access road before we even got up here and realised there had really been a break-in. If they had a vehicle waiting—”

“They’re well away,” Bodie said.

“Well, there’s nothing more we can do here tonight,” the policeman called Donal said. “The light’ll be going soon.” He looked at the two CI5 men. “Will you come down to the police station tomorrow morning? About nine?”

“Yes, of course,” Doyle replied. They headed for their car; McLeod carefully closed and locked the magazine door, then got into the car with them and they drove back down the hill.

Mrs McLeod met them at the door as the three men walked up the path, clearly worried. She took one look at her husband’s face. “Serious?” she asked.

McLeod nodded. “It wasn’t a false alarm,” he said grimly.

“Well, I’ve got the kettle boiled—tea?”

“Mrs McLeod—you’re a life-saver!” Bodie told her.





∞ **CI5** ∞

Bodie and Doyle said little until they said goodnight and headed for bed. Once in the privacy of their room, Doyle said, "I didn't want to say anything in front of the McLeods, but there's something fishy about this, mate."

Bodie nodded. "The lock on the magazine was opened with a key."

"And since only someone who knew that path could follow it..."

"It has to be an inside job."

∞ **CI5** ∞

They left for Invergair at about quarter to nine, having been assured by McLeod before he left for his work that there would be no difficulty in finding the police station—"It's opposite the Tourist Information Bureau"—or a parking place nearby, and slightly to Doyle's relief—he was, after all, used to the non-availability of parking in London—they quickly discovered that their host was correct. Leaving the car just yards from the police station, they walked in, identified themselves at the desk and were immediately shown into an upstairs room where several police constables and a couple of civilians were already gathered.

It soon transpired that the police were convinced that the theft of the explosives had been carried out by the IRA, and they were just happy that the magazine had been nearly empty. "There were only twenty-three sticks of gelignite left—and the detonators for them, of course," one of the civilians said.

"Not that we've had much trouble from the IRA," the senior officer present, Inspector Buchanan, admitted. "We're really too remote here—but even Glasgow doesn't have much bother. It's as if they see us as—well, related, so not a justifiable target."

"Not that I'm disagreeing with you, sir," Doyle said quietly, careful to speak as if he genuinely wanted the information, "but what would the IRA want with two dozen sticks of dynamite?"

"I don't quite follow you, Mr Bodie."

"He's Bodie—I'm Doyle. Why would the IRA want to pinch a few sticks of dynamite? They've got access to all sorts of sophisticated weapons, including semtex. They don't need to nick it either, they've got the funds to buy as much as they want."

"He's right," Bodie agreed. "Jelly is small beer to them. Doesn't do nearly enough damage."

"Do you have a theory, then?" Buchanan asked a little stiffly. They realised he was annoyed that his theory was being dismissed, but that he was professional enough to accept the comments of men whom he knew would see far more of terrorism in a month than he was likely to see in his entire career.

"No. But there was no sign that the magazine was actually broken into; it was opened with a key. How many people have access to a key?"

The civilian who had already spoken answered. "Rankine—in charge of the Forestry road squad. There's actually only three keys; I hold one, Calum McLeod has one because he's the first one contacted when the alarm goes off, and the other one is kept at the workshop. Anyone needing access to pick up dynamite usually gets the key from there, and returns it when they've finished with it."

"Is it there, or is it missing?" Doyle asked quietly.

"It's there," Rankine replied. "I checked—Calum made the same comment to me this morning about it being opened with a key." Doyle nodded, unsurprised that the Forestry worker had reached the same conclusion that they had. "And before you ask, this one is mine." Rankine reached into a pocket and tossed a small mortice key onto the table. "Calum will have his safe too; he is the magazine's security officer after all."

"Is there any chance at all that someone could have got a copy made?"

"Not locally. You can get a yale cut locally, but anyone wanting to get a mortice made has

to go to Oban or Glasgow. Anyway, as I said, the key is taken from the workshop by the driver any time explosives is needed. He goes up, collects what he needs, and returns the key when he passes the workshop on his way to wherever they're working. None of the drivers would have the opportunity to get a duplicate made even if there was someplace in Invergair that cut keys."

"And you know all your drivers well? They've been with you for a while?"

"They're all local men, and they've all been with us for at least five years."

"What about the men in the workshop?" Bodie put in.

"Mostly local as well," the other civilian replied.

Doyle looked enquiringly at him.

"Tom Duncan, Head Forester. A couple of the men were transferred to Craighdu when repairs and maintenance of vehicles for the area was centralised here last year. Before that they were at Caol, about ten miles to the south; one has been employed by the Forestry for nearly thirty years, the other was halfway through his apprenticeship, and both were willing to move here. Three others preferred to take redundancy—two of them have moved to Glasgow, the other one started up a small repair garage in Caol."

"So you'd say that you do know all the men quite well?"

"Yes," Rankine said firmly.

"Any idea what their politics are?" Doyle asked.

"Mixed, I'd say, mostly with SNP leanings," Duncan replied. "But none of them are particularly politically minded—we'd quite a job getting a shop steward for the union. Eventually the men drew a name out of a hat to fill the position."

"Mm. Willingness to be a shop steward is usually a pretty good indication of political awareness," Doyle agreed. "No trouble-makers?"

"There's one that's a bit short-tempered,

rather too inclined to use his fists when he's got a drink in him, but everyone locally knows that; they watch what they say to him in the pub on a Saturday night. He sometimes gets into a fight with a visitor who's also had enough to make him stropo—he's been fined three or four times. But when he's sober he's a good worker, and he's a Saturday night drinker—I wouldn't really call him a troublemaker."

"Aye, I'd agree with that," Buchanan said. "He's fine when he's sober."

"So what you're saying then is that all your men have been with you for some years, none of them are politically active or likely to get involved in anything that would stir up trouble, but even if any of them were, none of them has had the opportunity to get a duplicate key to the magazine," Bodie summed it up.

Both civilians nodded.

"Would any of them know from day to day how much explosives was in the place?" Doyle asked.

"Not really," Rankine replied. "Hamish knows—Hamish Stewart; that's the driver who's been picking up the explosives for the job we're currently doing. He's been reporting to me how much he's removed each day and how much was left. Calum McLeod knows because he's the security man for the magazine. My secretary knows because she has to keep the record of what's been used, but Morag's been with me for nearly eleven years, and discretion is her middle name."

"When did Mr Stewart last pick up explosives?"

"First thing yesterday morning. He went up at eight, drove back down at half past and returned the key to the workshop, then went on with the explosives to where the new road is being put in. Before he left the workshop, he phoned Morag and told her he'd taken six sticks and detonators for them, and that left twenty-three sticks in stock. That tallied with her record."

"How many different drivers pick up

explosives?" Bodie asked.

"They all have at one time or another—we've got four on the road squad—but Hamish is the one who always does it now. He went on a course for the safe handling of explosives." Noting the expression on Bodie's face, he added, "Health and safety. They run some one-, two- or three-day courses in the safe handling of chemicals, machinery and so on. Most of our workers have taken one or more of them."

"Makes sense," Doyle commented. "Theoretically jelly is safe enough as long as the detonators are kept well separate but it's just as well to have someone with a bit of training in charge of it."

Bodie grunted, and Doyle knew he was mentally comparing a short course learning how to handle the stuff safely with the concentrated training they had had in explosives—including disarming something against the clock. However, all he said was, "I think we ought to have a word with your driver—Stewart, you said his name is?"

"Hamish Stewart, yes. I'll have to drive you there myself—there's no way I could describe where the road squad is working and leave you to find the way yourselves."

"Thanks."

"What about the other drivers—the ones who don't pick up explosives now?" Doyle asked.

"Yes," Buchanan agreed. "We really should have a word with them, too. And the men in the workshop where the key is kept. Anyone who has had reason to be anywhere near it."

"I suppose you must," Rankine muttered. "Oh, I know, I know. But we're not going to get much work done today if you're questioning everyone. And they're not going to like it—the idea that they could be under suspicion."

"Which is why I think Mr Bodie and Mr Doyle should be the ones to do the questioning—if you don't mind, gentlemen? The men all know us, and it could make for

fairly bad blood if..."

"And we're ignorant strangers here. I take your meaning. Yes, we'll do it," Bodie assured him. "It shouldn't take long."

∞ **CI5** ∞

They went to the workshop first.

The workshop foreman, warned by phone to expect them, was looking rather sour as Rankine led Bodie and Doyle in. "This is Dougal Grant," Rankine said. "Dougal, help Mr Doyle and Mr Bodie as much as you can," he added unnecessarily. "I'll wait for you in the car," he went on with a glance at Bodie, and went out with an air that spoke fairly eloquently of retreat.

Grant took them to a well-equipped garage section where the six mechanics were working. "Murdo McDonald, Dave Duncan, Neil Forbes, Ian Robertson, Hughie McLean, Jock McBride," he rattled off so fast that it was clear he didn't intend his visitors to remember which man was which, or even the names.

Bodie's lips twitched slightly; he had concentrated on the first three names, well aware that Doyle would concentrate on the second trio. Between them they could put a name to each face.

Doyle displayed his ID. "We're in CI5," he began. "We got involved in this by accident, but because we normally do a lot of anti-terrorist work, Inspector Buchanan asked for our help. You've all heard what happened last night," he added. "Someone broke into the magazine up the hill using a key, and stole the explosives. I'm not giving away any secrets when I say the police view is that this was done by someone acting on behalf of the IRA.

"What we need to know is if there is any pattern to the way work is done here that an IRA agent could identify and use.

"According to Mr Rankine, the key to the magazine was collected as usual yesterday morning by the driver assigned to collect the explosives. Did anyone see the key taken and returned?"

There was a moment of silence, then Grant said, “Hamish—Hamish Stewart, that is—collected the key just before eight.”

“Was everyone here at that time?” Doyle asked.

“Yes—we start at quarter to eight. It usually takes about quarter of an hour for the men to get their instructions for the day.”

“Right. What about having it returned?”

“I didn’t see that. One of the other drivers reported problems with a slipping clutch when he came in yesterday afternoon. We didn’t have time to do anything with it last night; I went out to it this morning just after Hamish collected the key and I was working on it till mid-morning.”

Doyle looked round the semi-circle of sullen faces. “Did anyone see the key brought back?”

“I did,” McLean said grudgingly. “Around half past, it was, same as usual. He hung it on its hook and phoned Morag—that’s Mr Rankine’s secretary—like he always does. Then he went off to Carn Breac.”

“That’s where they needed the explosives?”

“Aye.”

“What about Wednesday?”

The seven men looked at each other. Finally, McBride said, “I saw it brought back on Wednesday, and it would be about half past eight.”

“Tuesday?” Doyle knew it was unlikely anyone would remember further back than Monday. Forbes had taken the key from Stewart at the gate on Tuesday, and made the phone call to Morag for him, because on Tuesday Stewart was running late. “When he went to get his car in the morning he found he had a puncture, so he didn’t get here till about quarter past eight. He came back down the hill at twenty to nine—only took twenty-five minutes instead of half an hour because a lorry went up to get gravel and he didn’t have to relock the chain at the end of the road.”

“What about Monday?”

“He didn’t come in for the key on Monday,” Grant said after a short pause. “They didn’t need any explosives that day.”

“Fair enough. What about last week?”

Nobody could remember exactly, or was prepared to admit remembering, though Grant muttered something to the effect that he didn’t think Hamish had collected the key more than one day but he couldn’t remember which.

Doyle gave a mental shrug. Three days was, after all, long enough to confirm the pattern they had already been told. “Have any of you been up to the magazine recently?”

“I have,” Grant admitted. “One day a couple of weeks ago one of the land rovers broke down when it was up there, and I went up to deal with it.”

“Right. Anyone else?” He glanced round unthreateningly.

“I don’t even know exactly where it is,” Forbes, who looked older than the others, admitted, and McDonald, who looked very young and a bit scared, said, “I don’t either.” Doyle glanced from one to the other, not really believing them but knowing it was hardly important enough to accuse them of lying.

“Once the key’s returned, where’s it kept?” Bodie, who had said nothing up till then, asked.

“There’s a hook in there—” Grant began.

“Can you show us, please? I don’t think we need to waste anyone else’s time, do we, Doyle?”

“No, I don’t think so. Thank you,” he said to the group. “You’ve been very helpful.”

Grant took them back to a small room that was clearly a staff room; there was a small cupboard nailed to the wall, and Grant opened it.

Inside was a triple row of hooks, with keys on several of them. Most were clearly keys for various vehicles, but one, at the end of the top row, was a small mortice key and Grant indicated it.

“And everyone knows that’s where it’s kept? Even other Forest workers?”

“Yes, but of the ones here, Neil and Murdo don’t even know where the magazine is, like they said—they came here from Caol not that long ago, and they don’t really know the area. The others know where it is, but none of them ever have any reason to go up to it. And while the various drivers know where it’s kept, none of them have any reason now to come into the staff room.”

“Not even to visit the bog?” Bodie asked. “There has to be the odd time one of them gets caught short while he’s here.”

“There’s a separate one beside the garage,” Grant said.

“Mm. And what if someone needs a van key?”

“If someone needs the keys to a vehicle he doesn’t usually drive, one of us usually gets the key for him,” Grant replied.

Doyle grunted. “Well, thank you, Mr Grant. We won’t take up any more of your time; I think you’ve told us everything we need to know.”

They spoke to him for a few seconds more, not wanting to leave too abruptly, then rejoined Rankine. Bodie slid into the front seat while Doyle went in the back. As they drove off, Rankine said, “Well?” in a voice that somehow reminded both men of a hopeful puppy.

Suppressing a chuckle, Doyle said, “None of them could tell us anything except what we already know—that Mr Stewart picks up the key around eight and returns it roughly half an hour later. Everyone who goes near the place, though, seems to know where the key is kept.”

“Well, yes, but all the keys are kept there, including a couple of spares for the gate padlocks. You’d have to know which one was which to know which was the magazine key.”

“Except that’s the only mortice key there.”

“No, the garage has a mortice key too, but it wouldn’t be hung up during the working day.” He fell silent as he drove up the road, while his passengers tried to relax and failed,

both of them conscious of how bad Rankine’s driving was. They were both relieved when the car turned off the main road up a rough track; the speed dropped and the quality of driving improved quite considerably.

∞ **CI5** ∞

Rankine stopped beside four other cars about three miles up the track. “Best to walk from here,” he said.

It wasn’t far. About half a mile and they reached the spot where the road squad was working, and Rankine beckoned one of the men over.

“This is Hamish Stewart,” he said. “Hamish, Mr Bodie and Mr Doyle are acting for the police.”

Doyle moved a step forward to begin questioning Stewart, who looked him straight in the eye with the attitude of a man who has nothing to hide.

“Can you tell us exactly what you did yesterday?” Doyle asked.

Stewart paused for a few seconds, clearly marshalling his thoughts. “We all start at the workshop at roughly quarter to eight, and if necessary report to our immediate boss for instructions. Even if we’re on a continuation of yesterday’s work we report there because we usually leave our own cars there and go in Forestry vehicles to wherever we’re working. I reported in yesterday at about five to eight, because I’d been told the night before that we’d be needing explosives the way we have most mornings over the last couple of weeks, and I knew that was my first job. I’d had a look at the outcrop we needed to blast away and knew how much we’d need. I saw Dougal—Grant, that is—and collected the key, drove up to the magazine, took the six sticks of gelignite and detonators for them, put them in the secure container I had for them, returned the key at around half past eight and then drove here; got here just after nine. We set the explosives and detonated it—” He pointed out to them where the explosives had been used; the debris

from it was still being cleared, with the driver of a tractor scooping up buckets of loose rock and depositing it in the back of open trucks.

“We were here till half past three, when we packed up for the day—got back to the workshop for four, because Tom—Tom Robertson—said his clutch was slipping and he wanted to tell Dougal about it. He’s the driver assigned to take everyone but me to and from the workshop this week. I always travel independently if I have explosives. With his van having a slipping clutch, though, we knew we’d all have to make our own way to work today. That’s why there are some cars back at the turning point.”

They spoke next to the three labourers who were shovelling rocks into big piles for the tractor to scoop up. One of them acted as spokesman for the three. None of them could drive, he said; they depended on the official lift. All three lived in Kiloran, near Steve Hutton, who took them in to work in the morning and home again at night. Because Carn Breac, where they were working, was on the opposite side of Kiloran from the workshop, Hutton had been going direct to and from the site rather than reporting in at the workshop then going back past Kiloran again to reach where they were working. Since it was almost certain that the thief had had access to a car, it automatically left them clear.

Doyle spoke next to the other three drivers.

“You don’t handle explosives now?” he asked.

One of them grinned. “And thank the Lord Harry for that!” he said. “Oh—I’m Steve Hutton. I hated it when I had to go for it—it terrified me, so when we were told we’d have to go on a course if we wanted to go on handling it, I said no thanks.”

The second man nodded. “Andy McGillivary. I wasn’t as scared as Steve, but I never liked handling it either, so I was quite happy to stop. Okay, Hamish gets a small bonus when he has to go for it, but as far as I’m

concerned the extra money isn’t worth the risk.”

“It’s not that risky,” the third one put in. “I’m Tom Robertson.”

“Robertson?” Doyle asked. “Any relation to Ian in the workshop?”

“He’s my cousin.”

“I see.” Doyle looked thoughtfully at Robertson, weighing the tone of his voice. “You don’t think handling explosives is risky?”

“Well, not if you’re careful. Dammit, I’ve had far more experience in handling explosives than Hamish—twenty years I handled the stuff, more than twenty years, and he’s only been working with it for about seven years.”

“But you could have gone on the course. Why didn’t you, then?”

“What difference does a bit of paper make? If they didn’t believe I could handle it safely after all the years I worked with it, then bugger them! The instructor wasn’t even thirty. Damned if I was going to be insulted by being patronised by someone young enough to be my son! All it needs is commonsense care.”

Doyle nodded. “It certainly needs that,” he agreed. He glanced at Bodie. “I don’t think we need to bother anyone any more.”

The two CI5 men reported back to Inspector Buchanan, saying that in their opinion it was going to be very difficult to determine which of the men was telling less than the complete truth.

“We’re quite sure one of them is sitting on the stuff, for whatever reason,” Doyle said, acting as spokesman. “What we can’t determine is how he got the key. We don’t have witnesses for Mr Rankine’s use or non-use of his key, but I’d say that risking his job for twenty-three sticks of jelly is something not worth considering. If he was going to nick the stuff, he’d have done it when the magazine was fully stocked. And the same goes for Mr McLeod.”

“They would both probably have been in a position to disarm the alarm, too,” Bodie added. “That would have given either of them

plenty of time to drive there, collect it, drive away, reset the alarm—nobody would have been any the wiser until the first day Mr Stewart went up to get some explosives. Mr McLeod told us that sometimes when there's been a false alarm, if the weather conditions are such that it keeps going off, the alarm can, with police approval, be left unset for some hours." His tone made it a question.

Buchanan nodded. "I know it's not strictly according to the book," he said unhappily, "but we're fairly short-staffed here. Dealing with what has up till now been false alarms caused by the weather can tie up manpower we don't always have available. At least once we were late responding to a fairly serious road accident because the only available car was up at the magazine responding to a false alarm."

"Mr Rankine and Mr McLeod would both be in a position to know that, too, and that would also be an ideal time to carry out such a theft. No, we're not considering either of them as the thief. They've had, and ignored, too many better opportunities for it to be them."

"You've no ideas at all?"

Doyle shook his head. "We're not mindreaders, Inspector. We tend to say our boss is, but even he needs something to work on. CI5 is good, but placed as we are here... At home we've each got several grasses who could find things out for us. Here we have nobody."

"No suspicions?"

Doyle shrugged. "I didn't believe everything the mechanics said, but I reckon a lot of that was resentment at being questioned. They weren't actually obstructive, just totally ignorant, and I don't think they could have said anything useful anyway, but I didn't altogether believe they knew nothing. On the other hand, I don't think they had anything to do with it either. One of the drivers resented not being allowed to handle explosives but he'd chosen not to take the necessary course.

I don't think that's enough motive to pinch any, and anyway, it's a long time since he last had occasion to have the key."

"I see." Buchanan leaned back in his chair. "Well, I can only thank you for coming in and helping us. As I said earlier, if we'd had to question the men, it would have caused a lot of ill-feeling locally. Are you here for much longer?"

"We're booked for another five nights—after that we might move a little further north or we might just extend our stay a couple of days, depends what we feel like. After that we'll have to head back south. If we'd been able to come up with anything to tie this to the IRA, we'd have reported it to Mr Cowley and he would probably have left us here with instructions to co-operate with you. As it is there's nothing that obviously links the theft to any terrorist group, so he'll expect us back on the eighteenth."

They left the police station and returned to their car. Bodie slid behind the wheel and glanced at his watch. "Still early enough to have a bit of a walk," he commented. "Anywhere you'd particularly like to go?"

"Nah—let's just get back to Craighdu. We can take a wander back up the hill there before dinner—I didn't get all the sketching done up there that I wanted. We can have another look at the magazine tonight, too, though I don't think we'll find anything."

∞ **CI5** ∞

Next morning over breakfast Bodie said, "I could do with a good long walk today." He glanced at McLeod. "You mentioned a longish walk—beside a burn, wasn't it?"

"The Oran Burn." McLeod nodded. He went to the bookcase in one corner and took the map from it. "Look—if you go up the main road to Kiloran and drive up this side road for a couple of miles you come to a sawmill. Turn up this track—there's parking a few hundred yards up it and there's a clearly marked footpath for about five miles up the side of the

river. The track's actually there for the fishers—the Oran's a good salmon river, for all it's called a burn. There are several good pools all along it, but about four miles up from the car park there's a really big one; the salmon lie in there until there's a spate, then they go on upstream to the spawning grounds. The water's low just now, so the spring run fish will be lying in the pools."

"A ten-mile walk? Sounds good," Bodie said.

"Four hours or so... Is it worth me taking my sketch pad?" Doyle asked.

"It's pretty open—that bit of the glen was left under natural woodland because the fishers need open ground, and fishing licences for the Oran are worth a fair bit," McLeod said. "It could be worth taking it. Some of our visitors are keen photographers and they've spoken quite enthusiastically about some of the shots they've taken on that path." He shrugged. "When you're surrounded by scenery all day you tend not to notice it much, or feel any need to record it."

"Because you see it again tomorrow?" Doyle guessed, and McLeod nodded.

"You might be able to get a sketch of someone fishing," Bodie suggested.

"Hardly," McLeod commented. "The water's too low. Nobody'll be fishing until there's a bit of rain."

"I'll make you up a piece," Mrs McLeod told them unnecessarily as they ran up the stairs to get ready—she had given them a packed lunch every day.

Ten minutes later, when they descended the stairs again, she was waiting with a nicely sized, neatly wrapped packet. Thanking her, Doyle slipped it into his day pack, fastening it as they walked briskly to their car.

They found the car park with no bother. There was already one car there.

"A hopeful fisher?" Bodie suggested.

"McLeod seemed to think that's unlikely," Doyle said. "It's more likely someone walking a dog," he added, reminding

Bodie of the several people they had seen with dogs on every walk they had taken since their arrival apart from the very first one up the hill behind the McLeods' home.

They set off up the clearly marked path, a path uneven enough that they had to watch their footing, but good enough that they could maintain a good pace. They walked briskly, glad of the chance to stretch their legs properly after their relatively sedentary previous day. With the possibility of encountering someone walking a dog they went circumspectly, to all appearances nothing more than good friends.

After about an hour, when they had covered a good three miles, Doyle paused at a scenic corner. "Let's take ten, Bodie—I'd like to draw this."

"Okay." Bodie glanced round, selected a convenient rock and sat nibbling on a sandwich as he watched his mate, happy that Doyle was enjoying himself. Doyle too seldom had the time, or got the opportunity, to sketch like this, and it was something he did like doing. If he had been just a little more talented he would undoubtedly have made a career from art, Bodie reflected; as it was, although he was very good, he had the honesty to know that he lacked that final touch of ability that separated the very good from the brilliant, and the pride and integrity not to settle for second best. Bodie could only be grateful for that. If Doyle had become an artist they would probably never have met.

Doyle sketched busily for some minutes, paused, studied what he had drawn with a critical eye, pencilled in a few more lines, then closed the pad and slipped it back into the day pack. "Okay, mate, let's have a sarnie," he said as he sank to the ground beside Bodie's rock.

They ate in a comfortable silence. As soon as they had finished, however, Bodie got to his feet, still restless. "Come on, Ray, let's go."

They walked on, only to stop again a few minutes later, glancing at each other, as they heard a dull explosion not far ahead of them.

"Explosives?" Doyle exclaimed. "They're



surely not working on a Saturday?"

"Wouldn't have thought so," Bodie agreed. "Come on!"

They broke into a steady jogging run, aware of the uneven ground and how easy it would be to injure themselves by being too precipitate. In addition, they had no idea how far away the explosion was, and both knew it would be a mistake to rush too headlong into a possibly dangerous situation.

Ahead of them the trees were thinning. They slowed to a walk then, as they reached the edge of the trees, both stopped just behind a tree.

They found themselves overlooking a pool in the river, and a man who was crouched at the downstream end of it. They couldn't see him clearly but he appeared to be busy.

He seemed to be alone, but they knew better than to take any chances. A quick glance at each other established that Bodie would remain in hiding while Doyle approached the man.

Doyle walked forward, his gaze shifting steadily round the open ground. There was still no sign of anyone else, but he knew better than to relax his vigilance.

As he neared his quarry, he realised that there was a net slanting across the water at the point where the pool flowed back into the river. The man was intent on picking up something and as he put it in a basket at his side Doyle realised that it was a fish—a fairly large fish. Two more steps and he could see at least one more floating, belly-up, downstream towards the net, and in the same moment he recognised the man retrieving the fish.

"Good afternoon, Mr Robertson."

The Forestry driver jumped, clearly taken completely by surprise.

"Who—Oh, Mr...Doyle, isn't it?"

"That's right. On your own, are you?"

"Yes."

If anything, the answer was too fast. Doyle chose to take it at face value though he suspected that the man might have an

accomplice somewhere not too far away, possibly his cousin. Without taking his eyes off Robertson, he beckoned Bodie forward.

Bodie looked at the net, the belly-up salmon that had floated to bob against it, at the basket of fish, and tutted reprovingly.

"Tsk, tsk. Any fisher who's paid quite a bit to fish here won't be too pleased with you, Mr Robertson. Stick of dynamite in the pool, was it?"

"Nobody's fishing here while the water's so low," Robertson protested. "And as soon as there's any rain to move them, some fish'll move upriver into here, and nobody will be any the wiser." He looked from one to the other. "Okay, I know I'm poaching, but the local hotels are all desperate for a bit of fresh salmon and the Forestry doesn't pay that well; a fiver a fish and I've got a nice wee bonus. It's not that bad—lots of fishers come up here and flog the water all day and don't catch anything, they expect blank days when they're after salmon..." His voice trailed off as he realised that neither of his listeners was looking in the least bit sympathetic or understanding.

"What about the dynamite?" Bodie asked, a touch of menace in his voice.

"Dynamite?" Robertson managed to sound puzzled. Bodie and Doyle glanced at each other, mentally awarding the man full marks for his acting ability.

"Dynamite, Mr Robertson. Specifically, the twenty-three sticks that disappeared from the magazine a couple of days ago," Doyle put in with an almost naive tone of helpfulness.

Robertson shook his head. "I don't know anything about that," he said, but there was a trace of uncertainty in his voice that Bodie was quick to exploit.

"We heard the explosion, Mr Robertson. And those fish—" he nodded at the salmon still bobbing against the net "—have been either killed outright or stunned by the shock waves of that explosion.

"Don't try to deny it," he added as Robertson opened his mouth. "We know an

explosion when we hear it.”

Robertson’s whole body slumped hopelessly as Doyle went on, “All that we don’t know now is how you got hold of a key. I assume the remaining twenty-two sticks are in your house?”

“Yes.” All the fight—not that there had been much—seemed to go out of the man.

“And the key?”

One look at the unsympathetic glare on both men’s faces killed any urge Robertson might have had to deny knowledge of it. “The clutch on my van was slipping. I’d to go into the staff room to see Dougal, and put my piece bag down while I was telling him about it. He took a minute to go out to the van with me and look at it. There wasn’t anybody else about by then. I left him still checking it. On the way to my car I went back in for my piece bag and saw the key. So I borrowed it, and left my bag in the workshop to give me an excuse to go back later. Then I left my car at the foot of the track from the magazine and walked up, took the dynamite and went down the track. I knew the alarm would go off as soon as I touched the door, so there wasn’t much time—I knew Calum would be up just as soon as the police could arrive. I did think of re-locking the door so that Calum would think it was a false alarm, but it’s an awkward lock and I didn’t think I could afford to waste the minute it would have taken. But anyway, when I went to the workshop for my bag and put the key back, there was nobody about.”

“How did you get into the workshop?” Doyle asked.

“The keys are all interchangeable. All the drivers have a key for the garage. It fits the staff room door too.”

Bodie and Doyle glanced at each other again. “This isn’t the first time you’ve dynamited a pool, is it?” Doyle asked.

Robertson looked for a moment as if he would deny it, but then he shook his head. “I used to nick the odd stick before this course nonsense came in, when we were all able to

go up for it. Not often,” he added, too hastily. “Maybe twice, three times a year when the water was low like this—I’ve never been greedy about it. What I got on Thursday would have done me several years. And dynamiting a pool doesn’t harm the river the way poison does. I wouldn’t poison a river.”

“But it’s still illegal, isn’t it?” Bodie said softly. “Plus there’s the theft of the jelly. That’s serious, that is.”

Robertson looked from one to the other. “Look, if I give you the rest of it—you could say you found it stashed in the Forest—can’t you forget about this? I mean...it’s my job...and there’s not really any other work around here...”

They looked at each other again. “It’s not exactly bribery,” Doyle mused, “because he isn’t offering us anything. But it is trying to get us to abet a felony...”

“And that in itself is a crime, Mr Robertson,” Bodie finished.

“You’d better retrieve that fish—and your net—can’t leave it fixed across the river like that, can we? Then we’re going to take a little trip to the Invergair police station,” Doyle finished.

Robertson looked helplessly at him, and obeyed.

∞ **CI5** ∞

They were quite late getting back to Craighdhu, where McLeod greeted them with a cheerful, “Had a good day, then?”

Doyle said slowly, “Yes and no. We found out who took the jelly.”

“Who?”

“One of your drivers. Robertson. He was using it to dynamite a pool on the river. He had a couple of dozen salmon he was planning to sell to local hotels.”

McLeod nodded slowly. “You’ve reported him, of course?”

“We had to. If it had just been the poaching we probably wouldn’t have bothered, but you can’t have dynamite lying

around in someone's garden shed even though he was storing it in a tin. At least he had the sense not to keep it in the house."

"No. No, you can't." McLeod sounded a little restrained.

"If you would rather we left...we'll understand," Doyle added. "We know you must feel awkward about having us here now that we've—well, arrested—one of your fellow workers."

"Not really. Everyone's been edgy—we knew it had to have been a Forestry worker who'd taken the gelignite, which meant pretty well everyone was under suspicion. Everyone'll be glad you've found who it was. Tom Robertson isn't much liked, even by his cousin—there won't be anyone resenting his arrest. I'm just sorry your holiday has turned out like this—sort of a busman's holiday."

"It didn't take much out of the holiday," Doyle assured him, "and it was risk-free; normally we'd have expected to be shot at. He gave in very easily, really."

McLeod looked at Bodie, who nodded. "Very easily. I'd just as soon it hadn't happened—but the way it turned out, we got lucky. We were in the right place at the right time. Robertson was greedy. If he'd waited two or three weeks before using the jelly he might have got away with it."

"Especially since nobody around here bothers too much about the odd fish being poached," McLeod agreed. He looked from one to the other. "Well, just by being here you've solved our little problem far faster than I expected when I found the magazine door swinging open, and I can only thank you on

behalf of all of us."

"Just doing our job, Mr McLeod," Bodie assured him.

∞ **Cl5** ∞

They soon discovered that McLeod had correctly assessed the reaction of the Forestry workers. During the evening several of them phoned to express their gratitude for the speed with which they had tracked down the thief, thus lifting suspicion from everyone else. The only surprising thing was the speed with which word of Robertson's arrest had got round. Even Ian Robertson phoned to express his shame that one of his family should do such a thing—though Doyle still half suspected that he was Tom Robertson's possible hidden accomplice.

The rest of their leave passed uneventfully. At the beginning of the week they took the ferry to Islay, where they went in search of the Bowmore distillery. An organised tour took them round the distillery, and after tasting the finished product they bought a bottle of whisky there for Cowley as well as bottles for themselves—Bodie, whose turn it was to drive, muttering darkly as he gave Doyle most of his free dram.

"Never mind, sunshine," Doyle grinned as he downed it, knowing that Bodie wasn't seriously miffed. "It's not lost what a friend gets."

"I'll expect payment for it," Bodie told him. "Later, when we can get a bit of privacy."

"Now that sounds a good idea," Doyle admitted. And when, later, they did get a bit of privacy, he did pay for it...with interest. ∞