***Chapter 17***

***City Hall***

***Prefatory Note:* I have placed Gilbert’s Office within Philadelphia’s Department of Human Services (as it is called today), inside City Hall. The present address of the DHS is 1515 Arch Street, which is about as close to City Hall as one can reasonable be, without actually being inside the building.**

**Note that this is no ordinary building. In 1876 it was designed to be the tallest building of its day; the Eiffel Tower surpassed it during its 30 years of construction. It is still the heaviest masonry building of all time; there is always something heavy about this city! It holds the tallest statue, of William Penn, on its summit. And if it were not the case that most of the artwork is invisible from the street, it might well vie with the Garnier Opera in Paris as the most ornately grotesque.**

**I feel justified in this slight transposition of the protagonist’s headquarters (his title of Assistant Supervisor is also an invention) because, as stated in the Preface, this is a Philadelphia of the mind, a interpolated patch of time between the summer of 1981 and whenever this story is doomed to end, if it even does. R.L.**

**###############**

**At 8:30 AM on the morning of January 12, 1981 Gilbert Fabre did a sprightly cakewalk through the corridors of Philadelphia’s grandiose and quaint City Hall, tramping with the air of being the recipient of a new lease on life. To the astonishment of all his co-workers and subalterns, he was coming to work half an hour early! The frayed briefcase he’s been using for 3 years, and would continue to use until it literally fell apart , oscillated in his right hand; the other gripped with marked enthusiasm that morning’s copy of the New York Times.**

**On the incoming train from New York that morning Gilbert had scrawled a number of comments and reminders to himself. He was returning from a glorious 6-day vacation in New York City. Getting off at Suburban Station, a few blocks from City Hall, he’d gone directly to his offices without making a detour to his home in Germantown.**

**Brimming with self-satisfaction, an emotional landscape he rarely witnessed, he ticked off the events that had demarcated his vacation: friends visited, memorable concerts, an afternoon passed in the record collections of the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts …. (listening to early Casals recordings!) …**

**Most significantly, capacities of heart and mind were open to the possibility of major changes in his ambitions and routines. Emigrating to New York was not outside the range of possibility. He could get a job anywhere in his profession. His work record was sterling. Why wait until retirement in more than a decade? In no way did he feel duty bound to remain in the city where he’d lived since the age of 10. What tribute could be better suited to his discovery of new freedom than a clean break with the past?**

**His secretaries noticed the change at once. Fabre had accumulated a reputation over 2 decades for unapproachability. On those most exceptional occasions when the mask dropped, the vibrations reached as far as the mayor’s office. Randolph Starkie, 2-term Democratic mayor in our fictional Philadelphia learned from the City Comptroller, over lunch, that Fabre had cracked his first smile in a decade.  
 “Well; maybe this is the City of Brotherly Love after all!” went the report of his only comment. On this very special day, Gilbert Fabre observed himself to be swept up, if only momentarily, by the oceanic emotion of loving all mankind! He had certainly not intended the deaths of the victims of his Academy hoax; nor was he about to waste time blaming himself for the accidental consequences of a bungled practical joke. Fabre, as strong in rationalization as he was in guilt, had spent a lifetime defending his emotions from his intellect, the more so in matters of conscience.**

**Indeed he was convinced that he’d made peace with the world. It was time to light up a cigarette, (not only for the gratification of the protagonist but also for the pacing of this narrative.) As he walked into his office he dropped a note on his secretary’s desk instructing her that he was not to be disturbed for the next half hour. Then he closed the frosted glass door that isolated his demesne from the rest of the universe.**

**The New York Times tossed onto his desk was left opened to a photo of Rafael Montoya being led to his arraignment in the Federal Building on Foley Square in New York. The accompanying article described his attempted escape to Canada and his arrest in the airport at Montreal. A “highly placed” source in the FBI was quoted as saying that they did not consider Montoya the ‘ringleader’ but only of being under suspicion of involvement in the “conspiracy” leading up to the bomb hoax. As to the nature of this conspiracy the article had nothing more to say: the NY Times is not in the habit of embroidering its sober facts.**

**Fabre paced restlessly back and forth, kicking at the torn carpets on his office floor. He went into the small bathroom set in an alcove and washed up. Then he opened his suitcase and pulled out a shirt and suit to replace the clothing rumpled clothing he’d been wearing on the train. He laughed: it was of cardinal importance that a welfare official never look like a welfare recipient!**

**After he’d washed up and dressed, his hair slicked back and tie in place, Gilbert Fabre went to the window of his eyrie in City Hall and looked out onto the rectangular inner courtyard of City Hall. The cities tour guides never forget to remind the crowds that follow them, that Philadelphia’s City Hall is an architectural wonder unique in the world, let alone America. “Sure!” he smiled, speaking aloud: “Like the gargoyles on Notre Dame!” Only the pigeons were conveniently positioned to fully appreciate its wonders!**

**A vendor, an immigrant from Syria pushing a cart heaped with roasted chestnuts, entered the courtyard from the northern entrance, and took up a position near the center. Along both sides of the walkways were several gypsy children. Their begging was accompanied with cute antics, with many charming feints of hunger and misery. They showed up promptly every morning at 9. Depending on his mood, he sometimes called in the security guards to have them chased away. Today he was more amused that upset. He did not feel like hating anyone.**

**Fabre returned to his desk, sat down, dawdled for something like 10 minutes with the cord of his telephone receiver. Force of habit prevailed over tolerance; with moderate reluctance he lifted the receiver and contacted the chief security officer. He instructed him to harass the gypsies a bit, but not to chase them away or arrest them. Then he returned to the window to watch. A few minutes later two security guards existed from one of the turret doors and approached the children. This was an old game; the young gypsies wandered away, chatting and laughing, preparing for their inevitable return at lunchtime. This was an inter-generational game that had been played for almost a century.**

**Now the chestnut vendor stood alone with his cart. The day was glacial. The vendor from Damascus, a short, pudgy man with rough features and dark grey skin, removed his hands frequently from his pockets and blew on them; in the ice-sodden air his breath emerged in puffed clouds. This was his week-day station until 10:30 AM. By that time almost all of the staff and personnel of the city’s administration had arrived. Then he wheeled and dragged his cart over to the Reading Terminal a few blocks away at 13th and Filbert, where he would remain until 2 PM or even later.**

**Tracking down or speculating on the trajectories of the neighborhood’s characters was one of Fabre’s favorite diversions. He knew, for example, that the gypsy children were now be warming themselves in the basement of the Horn and Hardart’s cafeteria at Broad and Market. If they didn’t make it back by noon it was because their parents or uncles were there to replace them.**

**They were all members of an extended family squatting in a first floor apartment at 12th and Spruce. He knew quite a lot about them: they were on the welfare rolls. Another reason, he reflected, for him to take a personal interest in their mendacity!**

**Sitting back down behind his desk, Gilbert Fabre pulled up a few blank sheets of paper and a fountain pen from his suit pocket. He didn’t write anything down for awhile, as he began mentally composing the letter he wanted to send to his estranged former wife.**

**His smile turned from wry amusement to self-deprecation. “Well, maybe I am a bastard after all … but I still deserve something from life!” Although they’d been separated for 12 years and divorced for 10, Fabre was taking the bold step of asking her to come back to him. He’s not realized before how so much buttressing to one’s morale there was to be found in one simple, forceful, ruthless act of vengeance!**

**“Dear Harriet”, he began, “You are no doubt congratulating yourself for your wise decision to move to a more congenial climate. Philadelphia’s weather is rarely anything to boast about. The temperature has been in the low teens for almost a month.”**

**Gilbert leaned back in his easy chair. Semi-aware of his automatic motor gestures he scratched idly on his desk blotter with his pen. Watching the gypsy children had resurfaced an old memory, from the 60’s.**

**In 1963 the aged Igor Stravinsky came to Philadelphia to conduct the Philadelphia Orchestra in his tone poem “Persephone”. A group had been formed students from various music schools in Philadelphia that, after the concert, would try to approach Stravinsky backstage.**

**The guard at the door had allowed them to stand at a backstage entrance and wait for the great composer to come by, which he did in the company of his wife, Vera, and a protectorate formed from his associates.**

**Patrick Clancy, never strong on embarrassment, had been the one to cry out “Mr. Stravinsky!” The response had been swift and brutal. The guard who’d left them in shoved the students back onto the street, swearing: “I did you guys a favor! Get out!"**

**In his declining years Stravinsky was totally managed by his wife. Vera had fended off the public; her face in a set posture of vanity and disdain she literally dragged him from the stage to a dressing room.**

**..” I received your pictures of our children just after Christmas. They all look very healthy and happy, as I know they must be under your care. You must be surprised to find that I take such an interest in them. I’m actually becoming more open with people, less defensive…”**

**Fabre recalled how he’d turned away in horror and disgust at the 8-page fold-out of photographs of the Academy disaster in the Evening Bulletin. It reminded him of some of the stories coming out of Vietnam in the 60’s and 70’s, spectacles of dead bodies lying in the streets in wars around the world.**

**When his mother died he was 12. He’d been asked to enter the death chamber of his mother. A mistake, surely, yet it was the last chance to see her alive. What cold comfort it was to him then, to know that his father was still alive and well, determined to make life bitter for him!**

**He tried not to think of his father. Through his inner ear there floated the strains of Schubert’s lied from Die Winterreise: *Der Doppelganger* . He leaned back, amused. Wasn’t that Schubert’s old *Leiermann* out there, standing in the snow with his cart full of roasing chestnuts, birds pecking about his feet? His 4 years of music study had been the only happiness life had ever given him:**

**“It would give me great pleasure if you would consent to come to Philadelphia and pay me a visit. Bring the children with you, of course. The house is big enough to hold everyone. Or if you like I could put you up in a hotel. I think you will find me a changed man…”**

**“How do you do, Mr. Stravinsky!...” It had to be Patrick Clancy who’d found the nerve to speak up at the moment when the great composer entered the back corridors of the Academy from the stage. The aged genius had perked up, an expression of delight on his face. “Just like old times!” he must have thought. Bewildered, he lowered his head. Instantly, Vera, Stravinsky’s wife had stepped between her husband and the students; and, soon afterwards, they were accosted by the burly doorman, brusque and uncouth, little interested in what meaning there might be to a music student to exchange even a few words with one of the greatest composers in history. He grabbed two of them by the shoulders and hustled all of them out the door.**

**“You wasn’t supposed to be here in the first place! I did you guys a favor. Now get out!”**

***… black, hungry eyes, greedy for life, glowing with their premonition of death, peering without recognition from vast caverns in a candlewax face; hands shriveled like pruning hooks, her breath harsh, like water pushing through rusted pipes. Thick odors of decay and body wastes overwhelmed a room which, though brightly lit, seemed black as a subway, damp, foul, hideous with monsters…***

***….Bodies sailed out of the balconies, some jumping, others tripping, a few thrown, to death or serious injury on the ground below…. Orchestra musicians, among them the Concertmaster, were trampled to death. Precious instruments were pulverized, hands and arms fashioned by decades of arduous training crippled beyond recall…***

***… Bodies lay, sprawled and unconscious, in the aisles … piled one on top of another in the rows and aisles, as hundreds of persons raced over them, trampling and crushing those too weakened to rise up. Over the hour of the evacuation the death toll would rise to over 50...***

**Fabre rose up out of his chair, reeling, physically nauseated. Staggering about the room he clutched at the furniture for support. Hating himself for his weakness of will-power, the need to justify himself at all costs took the uppermost place in his mind.**

**How weak he appeared to himself, when he most needed a show of strength! Where was his character, his pride? Regrets were a waste of time, sheer foolishness. The catastrophe was**

***not his fault* ! He’d only intended to ruin the concert, not to kill anyone! Natural catastrophes and man-made accidents occur all over the world; one shows concern for them but one doesn’t lose any sleep over them! He slammed into the cabinet bathroom in an alcove of his office and splashed water into his face. When he came out again he’d recovered his composure sufficiently to walk back to his desk and re-occupy his chair. However the pages of the newspaper holding the photographs were folded up and thrown into the trash-basket. He did not deserve to be put through that ordeal again.**

**The truth of the matter was that he was *finally doing something with his life*! For the first time he was striking back at the world that had oppressed, tormented and persecuted him all his life! Mistakes are always made at a new beginning: *Now,* *at last!* , *he was giving as good as he got*! And he was not ashamed! He was not going to be cowed by irrelevant, indeed pointless guilt!**

**Once again he reminded himself that he’d calculated how the amount of time it would take to evacuate the auditorium; he’d never imagined that the crowds would panic, not these genteel, mature, intelligent lovers of great music; nor that … *that imbecile* *woman!*  would scream that the bomb was under the bleachers… Of course that’s what he’d told her. One isn’t responsible for the stupidity of others!**

**But what about the people who died, trapped in the elevators? He thought about this. Cattle, he concluded: they were just cattle. They were just committing suicide! Lemmings, running off cliffs. No sensible person could blame him for their idiotic behavior. At most he was guilty of a nasty practical joke. My God! *He* hadn’t killed anyone!**

**“*I didn’t kill anyone!*” he yelled, then shut up, fearing that the secretaries might overhear him. He stepped out of his office and looked in the ante-chamber. They were still out on their coffee-break. Silently he closed the door behind him.**

**His reflections after he’d once more seated himself at his desk were half-spoken, half-muttered: “I suppose they think I’m going to break down, call the nearest police station and confess. I suppose they think I’m like Raskolnikoff in Crime and Punishment. Confess to what? That I’d shown the world I wouldn’t take it anymore? That I intend to live, to live!”**

**Then a new thought occurred to him: what if he were in danger of being found out? Guilt gave way quickly to anxiety: How could his phone call be traced? In a detective story, maybe: never in real life. It’s unlikely even that a recording had been made of it. The whole incident had come like a bolt from the blue, totally unexpected, unprecedented. It could hardly have been the normal business of the Academy of Music to monitor phone calls to the Box Office.**

**Yes – but – what about? Decades of work with welfare cases had confirmed his prejudices (nor were they always so) concerning the stupidity of the Philadelphia police force. He knew there were a few bright minds among them, even a bit of imagination here and there. Suppose the police were to begin investigating individuals known to have a grudge against the Philadelphia Orchestra? Suppose they were to interview Susan Spiegal? Aldo Falcone?**

**They might tell the investigators about the repeated phone calls that had risen in intensity through autumn from an increasingly frustrated and embittered person who couldn’t understand that a musical organization, like any other organization, has to make choices which aren’t personal reflections on the people they turn away.**

**Yes, but in fact most of those calls had been fielded by their secretaries. Neither of them had any reason to feel harassed or harangued by this odd public official, whoever he was. I never threatened either of them, unless the anger in my voice could be interpreted as a threat. Of course people do sometimes react that way.**

**That ass, Falcone! Once more his anger boiled over. There are always risks. Life always involves taking risks. He chuckled:**

**-I’ve thrown them my *Jibaros de la Violenzia*! His laughter was heart-felt, yet somewhat forced. The comic name! The rhetoric! Like a chunk of meat to a ravenous dog; and they gobbled it all up!**

**Let them chew on that for awhile. Well … I may have to do more than that… maybe a real bomb the next time … make sure nobody gets hurt , just a way to “re-affirm” the “existence’ of my Jibaros!**

**“Existence precedes essence!” he cried, laughing aloud. His spirits had revived. He contacted his secretary on the Intercom and asked her to bring him a sandwich and cup of coffee.**

**Then he reminded himself, with a bitter spasm of fear, that one always leaves clues. All delays were costly. He’d been kidding himself for too long, allowing his euphoria to cloud over the need to reinforce the security measures he’d already taken. Not a day, not a minute could be wasted. The elaborate cover-up which had been meticulously planned months before had to be put into effect immediately.**

**After he’d finished his snack he reached over to his telephone to dial the number of the Philadelphia headquarters of the FBI.**

**“Hello? Hello? Put me through, please? This is Mr. Gilbert Fabre, Assistant Supervisor of Human Services. Yes. I want to speak to Officer Derek Kennedy. ”**

**There was a delay of a minute or more as the remnants of Fabre’s request wandered capriciously through the networks of the federal bureaucracy. He used the interval to flip through his appointment book: lunch with anti-poverty officials in a restaurant in Chinatown; visit to a community welfare office in South Philadelphia; backlogs of paperwork left over from the holidays…**

**“This is Agent Derek Kennedy. Hello Gil: what can I do for you?”**

**“Hello Derek. Your guys must be up over your heads in work these days.”**

**“Gil, you can’t imagine! Compared to us, your life over in City Hall is a picnic. The days of busting pot smokers and chasing peaceniks are gone! We’re going for the real criminals these days. Have you been following the Congressional investigations in the papers?”**

**“I was reading about them for a few weeks, Derek, before the next scandal broke: ABSCAM is a hell of a lot more interesting!” This ludicrous farce had been delighting Philadelphians for months:**

**“Don’t forget, Derek: “Money talks, bullshit walks!’ It won’t be long before some of my best friends are behind bars!” The notorious bribery, kick-back scandal, embroidered with many ludicrous entrapment skits would continue to send prominent politicians to jail for awhile.**

**“Yes Gil: but here at the FBI you could say: ‘Entrapment talks while due process walks!’ ”**

**“What keeps you busiest, Derek? Terrorists wielding fake bombs, or G-men impersonating Arab sheiks?”**

**“A bit of both, really. We’re mostly concerned with the skeletons rattling in our own closets.”**

**“I didn’t know there were that many.”**

**“Well, there are, and this time they’ve found a big one! Start looking at the papers. You’re going to see jail sentences being handed down *inside* the Bureau. At the same time we’ve got to go to Congress to ask for more money to fund the ATD.”**

**“ATD? What’s that stand for?”**

**“Anti-Terrorism Division.”**

**“That’s what I wanted to ask you about, it’s the reason I’m calling. I’ve just been reading the front-page article in the New York Times. This Academy thing makes me sick. Have you got your man? This Montoya guy, he’s guilty, isn’t he?”**

**“No way, Gil; not by a long shot.”**

**“ No? That’s what the New York Times said. He’s your primary suspect. ”**

**“It’s a standard tactic. We solved a trade union murder case 3 years ago in the same way.”**

**“I remember. Some information technology union. You arrested someone with an odd name…”**

**“Ignaz Chedrikoff.”**

**“That’s right: Chedrikoff. But he was innocent.”**

**“Eventually, yes. The courts let him go; but we never thought that Chedrikoff was guilty. He did have some connections with second-rate Mafia, and he’d done some “chores” for the union’s managers. He wasn’t our man, but he was close enough to the kind of person we were looking for.**

**Arresting Chedrikoff had the effect of making other people started going underground. When we flushed them out, the real culprits were found.”**

**“What happened to Chedrikoff?”**

**“Oh, we had to release him, but we kept him behind bars for some time, it may have been as much as a year. Don’t waste any tears on him, Gil; he had enough on his conscience. Just routine. Rafael Montoya falls into this category Arrest somebody, anybody, just to scare the people we’re really looking for. “**

**“But look here, Derek! I thought that it was taken for**

**that thinks that the HIPR did it. Weren’t they getting even for being chased away from the Academy that night?”**

**“Gil, everything we’ve looked at from that angle keeps**

**coming up negative. It just doesn’t add up. The “hippers” are disciplined Communists. There’s nothing that a Communist isn’t prepared to do, the Bureau knows that better than anyone else, but there’s got to be some ideological angle, helping the cause of oppressed peoples around the world, marching in the vanguard of the proletariat; bullshit like that.”**

**“This thing has all the ear-marks of the work of a lone crazy, you know what I mean?”**

**“What about the *Jibaros de la violenzia*?**

**Kennedy snorted: “Could be. Don’t know anything about them. Look, Gil, is there anyone else on the line?”**

**“Just a minute” Fabre pushed a button to speak to his**

**secretary. He instructed her to field all incoming calls until further notice, and not to pick up the receiver herself. If something really important came up, she should knock on the door. Then he returned to the phone “Go ahead”**

**“We’ve got agents infiltrating the hippers, like we do**

**with all the commie organizations. Some of our men even try to incite the hippers to perpetrate this kind of violence. They’re always uncovered and bounced back onto the street, often in ways that you and I would not consider terribly polite.**

**If there were any terrorist in the HIPR I’d know about**

**them. No, Gil, it’s not them. If it is these *gibayroes,* they’replaying their own violin.”**

**“Not the cello?”**

**“Now there’s a guy with a weird sense of humor. No, it’s not the cello! You’ve got to hand it to them, or whoever it is, these *gibayroes* are clever. It’s incredible that we don’t know a thing about them. Nor do any of the law-enforcement agencies in Puerto Rico. If a foreign ethnic buys so much as a stick of dynamite in our country, we know about it sooner or later. By the way, Gil: you speak Spanish, don’t you? What does “*gibayroe*”, or “*gibbero*” mean?”**

**“It’s not a Spanish word, Derek, it’s native to Puerto Rico. I know what it means because I work with the Puerto Rican community every day. A *hee-bah-ro* is a kind of glorified country bumpkin. That’s right: you might call him a *‘spic hick!’*” Raucous laughter at both ends of the phone line.**

**“*Spic hick*! That’s one I’ve got to remember. I’ll share it with the boys at headquarters. So they’re calling themselves something like – let me see – the ‘Spic Hicks of Terrorism’! The SHT wouldn’t you say? But they’ve left out a letter.”**

**“I’ll give you some more background on this, Derek. There’s a 3 century-old mythology associated with the jibaro. It may go back all the way to Columbus. They even wear a special 10-gallon hat. Politicians make sure to wear it when they stump their rural constituency, when they want to look like friends of the people; that sort of thing.”**

**“Got you, Gil. When a woman does that here, she wants people to think she’s Bella Abzug!”**

**“Same idea. The romance of the jibaro makes him out to be a kind of popular revolutionary, a modern day Robin Hood. In reality he spends most of his life in pig-shit. You could also consider them down-trodden unwashed peons.”**

**“Makes sense when you think about it, Gil. Typical commie line.. making a popular hero out of some illiterate ignoramus, the sort of thing that goes over well in Cuba … mixed up with Karl Marx’s call to violent revolution. For the life of me, I still can’t figure out what they’ve got against Pablo Casals. He doesn’t look like a capitalist imperialist to me: just a nice man who played the cello. What’s your take on that?”**

**“Yes, Derek, I can understand that. Marxists hate culture. They think of paradise as a place where you spend 10 hours every day producing consumer goods, 4 hours eating them, and the rest of the time going to re-education camps! Maybe a bit of folk music on Sundays, because all the churches are closed and there’s nothing else to do.**

**“Casals was the greatest musician of the 20th century. You know how much I love music, Derek: I know what I’m talking about. That’s enough for any orthodox commie to find some reason for hating him.”**

**“Looks like you’ve got it all worked out, Gil. Why don’t you come over here and work for the Bureau?”**

**“Don’t think I haven’t considered it. Civil servants are a conservative lot. I’m stuck on my career ladder I’m afraid.”**

**“Fair enough. Are you calling for any particular reason?”**

**“In fact, Derek, I do have a vague purpose in mind.” The conversation up to this point had helped Fabre organize his proposal:**

**“Derek; this attack on the old Academy absolutely turned my stomach. It’s still giving me nightmares. I’ve been a music lover all my life. When I picked up the papers on Sunday I actually vomited! I hope they find and kill the guy who did it! When I think about it I still get nausea; like right now, even as I’m talking to you, I’ve got that sick feeling in the pit of my stomach.**

**It’s a *crime against humanity* Derek, that’s what it is! Why I’ve got associations with that grand old building that go back to my teens! I’ve subscribed $1000 to the Academy reconstruction fund. Believe me, there are plenty of other uses I could make of the money.”**

**“I know you do, Gil. I’m impressed.”**

**“Bear with me, Derek, I’ll come right to the point. Over the years I’ve accumulated hundreds of contacts in the barrios. You and I know that every spic in Philadelphia is on welfare.”**

**“Just Philadelphia? I thought it was the world!”**

**“Well, some of the money has to go to the niggers. What I mean to say, Derek, is that I have all sorts of ways of putting pressure onto the Hispanic community in this city. I can cough up pretty much any neo-Tupamaros they’ve got hidden away in their cellars. You’d be amazed how quickly they’d hand over their home-grown ‘revolutionaries’ once it looked as if they might have to work for a living!”**

**“If I understand you correctly, Gil, your office wants to work with the Bureau.”**

**“That’s right. It’s my own idea, and it’s all on my free time. Nothing would give me greater satisfaction than putting these bastards away behind bars for life.”**

**“I think that’s a great idea, Gil. I’ll send an agent around to your office this afternoon. Then we can all get together over lunch somewhere to work out the details. When will you be in today?”**

**“Say between 3 and 5. Actually, I’ve got an appointment in South Philadelphia at 2:30, so let’s say after 3:30.”**

**“Consider it done. Is there anything more you wanted to discuss?”**

**“That wraps it up, Derek. Sometime after 3:30 then. Talk to you later.”**

**“Bye, Gil. Say - before you hang up: what’s that “welfare” joke going the rounds? Something about the Jews taking over the country?”**

**“Yes. One of these days the Jews are going to own the whole United States. The government is going to have to go into debt to them just to keep up the payments to the spics and the niggers!”**

**“That’s the one! Thanks, Gil. I’ve got to get back to work. Bye.”**

**They hung up. Fabre was not exceptionally prejudiced against any one group of people; he just didn’t have much love for anyone. Hanging up, he went over to his filing cabinets and pulled out an armload of documents. Then he strode into the reception area to hand them to his secretary:**

**“Elizabeth! I want to see every file on every welfare recipient in the**

**area of Kensington south of Allegheny Avenue!”**