

## #6 - Weinberger, Press 1, Press 2, The Bug

WEINBERGER *leaves the hall, pursued by two members of the PRESS and, after a moment, THE BUG, carrying a camera.*

PRESS 1: You sure laid it on thick, Harry.

WEINBERGER: Meant every word, boys. (the PRESS *scoffs.*)

PRESS 1: We heard that Schwartz died from the Spanish flu. (WEINBERGER *scoffs.*)

PRESS 2: Would be ironic, though. A guy who tried to help the Germans ends up dying from the disease that may be a German plot.

WEINBERGER: What?! One, my clients' leaflets did not say one word in support of Germany. And two, the first cases of the Spanish flu in America appeared in Boston among U.S. *sailors.*

PRESS 2: But maybe the Germans gave it to them. (WEINBERGER *groans.*)

PRESS 1: The Huns have started epidemics over there. Why would they be gentle on America?

THE BUG: Are you saying our own troops are responsible for half a million American deaths?

WEINBERGER: I'm saying get your heads out of the cloud of hysteria and use your common sense. The Board of Health has rightly suggested we limit large gatherings of people in order to reduce the danger of infection. Yet no one even considers canceling patriotic parades or Liberty Bond rallies.

PRESS 2: Are you saying the Bond rallies spread the disease?

THE BUG: He's too smart to say it outright.

WEINBERGER: You don't have to. I'd be facing 20 years already if I were a poor Jew like my clients.

PRESS 1: Well, you'll be poor soon enough if you keep taking cases like this.

PRESS 2: Yeah, Harry, why do you even bother? (*ready to write.*) On the record.

WEINBERGER (*incredulous*): Because I *believe* what I'm fighting for.

THE BUG: And what's that?

WEINBERGER (*stops, faces them*): Justice. (*a beat; they stare at him.*) Yes, justice! And to me justice means liberty, and liberty the rights of the individual, and the rights of the individual, limits on the power of the state—

*PRESS 2:* Come on, Harry!

*WEINBERGER:* —which by its nature seeks absolute control over its people / by repressing free, honest thought.

*PRESS 2:* I'm not writing this. Seriously, Harry, I need something a little less technical.

*WEINBERGER:* All right, say it like this. Say Harry Weinberger does what he does because he loves to fight. A Jew growing up in an Irish neighborhood had better be able to throw a punch.

*PRESS 2 (scribbling):* That's more like it.

*WEINBERGER (somewhat to himself):* Sometimes I think I would rather fight than eat. That's one thing you get at night school that you don't get at Harvard. Even in this case, as stacked as everything is against me, I guarantee you I will win *something*.

*PRESS 1:* Hold on, what's stacked against you?

*WEINBERGER:* The jury for one.

*PRESS 2:* Seems a fair jury to me.

*WEINBERGER:* Are you blind? They're all in business. Not a single laborer among them. Maybe if that happened once, fine, but every single sedition case gets juries like this. If you guys would do your jobs you'd find out why this is.

*PRESS 1:* What, investigate the US Attorney's office?

*PRESS 2:* No thanks. I like my job and plan to keep it.

*WEINBERGER:* My mistake. I thought the press was free.

*PRESS 1:* We are! We just don't choose to waste our time following every wild idea that comes along.

*THE BUG:* Are you suggesting the prosecutors have a crystal ball that tells them who to challenge during selection?

*WEINBERGER:* They have something.

*PRESS 1:* You're going off the deep end, Harry. I suppose you think Judge Clayton is against you too — (*WEINBERGER scoffs incredulously.*) —but he isn't!

*PRESS 2 (imitating Clayton, with delight):* "If we have got to meet the puny, sickly, distorted views of anarchy, let us meet them right here and now."

*WEINBERGER*: And you guys find nothing wrong with a judge saying that?

*PRESS 2*: Your clients *are* puny and sickly.

*THE BUG*: I like the girl though.

*MOLLIE* appears wearing a red silk Russian tunic and a black armband. She is sitting in a chair at the defense table, staring straight ahead, like an icon of herself. *THE BUG* takes a photograph of her, then shows it to the others as they speak.

*PRESS 2*: Oh, the girl is great copy. She looks like the daughter of Czar Nicholas.

*PRESS 1*: She's something different all right. When the Bailiff says "All rise!" she just sits there like a rock. The marshals behind her could lift her up with one of their little fingers, but they just stand there staring at her back, holding their breath until everyone sits down again.

*PRESS 2*: It's like they're scared of her.

*WEINBERGER*: Maybe they are. Maybe they should be.

*THE BUG*: Are you scared of her?

*WEINBERGER*: No. But I've never met anyone like her. She objects to everything I try to do for her and the others. I explain the reasons why, and she understands perfectly, maybe better than any client I've ever had. But still she objects. (*MOLLIE slowly turns and looks at him.*) The way she looks at me, she makes me feel almost...*unclean*. (*MOLLIE turns away.*)

*PRESS 2*: That's cause you're a slob, Harry. The next time I have dinner with you I'm bringing a bib.

*WEINBERGER* (*snapping out of his reverie, moving away*): Why don't you bring some money instead? Now go away, all of you, so I can turn my brain back on.

*PRESS 1*: You'd have a better chance if you just left it off.

*WEINBERGER*: I probably would.