

CHAPTER 8

MANHATTAN, NEW YORK

After the failure to reach Grigoryev and the troubling answering by an unknown Russian speaker, Victoria Prescott spent a sleepless night. Did this mean the Russians had found him? If so, what did that mean? Morning did not relieve the anxiety. Her only outlet was to explore Grigoryev's material. By that evening, she completed a first review gaining a solid familiarity of its breathtaking scope. So engrossed, she hardly broke for meals prepared by Isabella or the stunning view of Central Park.

The details of the nuclear theft by this Dratshev character left her shaken. Unlike uncovering a previously unknown Soviet spy from fifty years earlier, this presented something of frightening immediate implications. To think that the Russians and the Iranians both concealed this for years added another sinister aspect.

A more disturbing thought struck her. Did the U.S. know or at least suspect? They undoubtedly embarked on a crash program to determine if what the journalist Reynolds suggested was true. Perhaps they had signals intercepts beyond those few cell-phone conversations between Garnitsky and Dratshev and the two incriminating photographs published by Reynolds. Yet all the major powers including the U.S., Russia, China, the UK, and France still signed an agreement with Iran. Did only Russia

ENDGAME

know the truth, or did the U.S.? If so, did the U.S. keep other allied nations in the dark?

Weighty stuff. Prescott's field of expertise as a Russian expert specializing on the modern Soviet era left her with a cynical view of the venality of all governments. Given confidential information, those in power most often used it to further their own agendas. Agendas invariably tainted by bias or politics often resulted in concealing information from other agencies within their own government.

That included the United States. Her research revealed the sordid details and rationalizations of countless officials bent on using or distorting confidential information. Her own breakthrough project resulting in her book *Critical Mass* a perfect example. President Roosevelt concealing the Manhattan Project from Congress and his own vice president. The personal experience of FBI directed harassment toward her for revealing evidence of a previously undiscovered Soviet spy making the agency look bad. Once the evidence became uncontestable, they mounted a concerted effort to shift blame to military security inadequacies. A public relations campaign waged by senior FBI officials and FBI historians specifically to shift blame of the treasonous army officer to the Manhattan Project commander General Leslie Groves. All about an event fifty years earlier.

If something bad happened to Grigoryev, this information still must get to the U.S. government. Something bad like what? She hesitated to contemplate his possible death. Had he suffered the same horrible fate as the Russian defector Litvinenko years ago in London? Or like his brother-in-law, taken his own life? Best not to dwell on such distressing thoughts. Could be reasons for his failure to make contact but the Russian voice answering his cellphone dispelled any real hope. Not practiced in this sort of thing left her nothing to do but wait and hope Grigoryev might call with an explanation. Not clear what her next move should be, especially if Grigoryev never called.

One thing for certain, she would not share this whole affair with her father until she could reconnect with Grigoryev and let

him plead his own case. If his fate were otherwise then it would not matter. Right now her explanations would only trigger fatherly advice to stay clear of the matter. Certainly, he would counsel that duty demanded turning over the information on the nuclear weapons theft to the proper U.S. authorities.

As much as Hamilton Prescott despised Donald Trump and his entire administration, he remained a traditionalist. A believer in the nation's fundamental elasticity to survive the virulent infection presented by the Trump presidency. He may be right, however she was not sure she wanted to become a witness, involved again with the FBI. While not a lawyer, she knew enough of the legal jeopardy minefield by even speaking to the FBI. Their threats of intimidation experienced twenty years ago made personal what she saw in today's headlines.

She resolved to spend the weekend with her father catching up on family matters. Their last visit was at Christmas. A tough time for the family. Mother died of cancer the previous year. At seventy-seven, Hamilton Prescott was in reasonably good health but the loss of his wife of fifty years left an emotional void. Her cover story then of the unplanned trip was to consult with her current research project collaborator, her father's former state department colleague, Josef Novak. She had unexpectedly come into possession of some astounding new material that she must review with Novak right away. *Decided to spend the weekend in New York with you then train down to Washington to confer with Josef on Monday.*

Share the voluminous trove of financial double-dealing buried in the files she assumed came from Grigoryev's brother-in-law with Novak. As Professor of International Business at the School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University outside Washington, Novak possessed the financial expertise to make sense of the Russian material. But she had no intention of sharing any part of the material with the U.S. government. That was her material with the potential of another groundbreaking work like the *Critical Mass* project. Her first amendment right best exercised before the government could clamp some odious restriction to

ENDGAME

seize the materials under some FISA court order claiming national security. Especially given the uncertainty of this bizarre administration. A White House at odds with its own intelligence agencies, the FBI, and even the State Department left doubts about how new information involving Russia might be received.

Prescott did not intend becoming either a pawn or victim in that destructive internecine conflict within the Executive branch. Nor would she disclose to Novak the conclusive evidence of missing nuclear warheads now in the hands of Iran. He would advise the same course of action as her father. That remained Grigoryev's bargaining chip to play. If he was still in the game.

Realizing that obligation to reveal the confirmation of the missing Russian nukes would fall to her if something happened to Grigoryev, prompted setting a decision deadline. She would give it no more than two weeks. The theft occurred four years ago so a few more weeks should not matter. If she heard nothing from Grigoryev by then she must assume the Russians got to him. Dead or buried incognito in some Siberian prison.

A plan came into focus. Why not release the material regarding the stolen Russian nukes to the media? Anonymously, but along with the source documents? Perhaps approach the journalist-author Mark Reynolds for assistance? Give him the material regarding the theft. He would fall all over himself given incontrovertible evidence of his earlier assertion. He would know how and where to make such an extraordinary story internationally public. That would satisfy her ethical obligation while deflecting attention away from her as a mere peripheral player of convenience. If nothing changed in two weeks that became her plan.

Still implicated but with the material made public, the U.S. government could not exercise legal intimidation. As to the other incriminating material on the elaborate financial corruption of the Putin regime, she would keep that to herself sharing only with Novak. That did not carry the same national security implications as missing nuclear warheads in Iranian hands.

"So what precipitated the sudden trip to consult with Josef?" Hamilton Prescott said to his daughter over coffee in his study.

The elder Prescott returned to New York Saturday morning. Brightened by seeing his daughter, she nonetheless could see advancing age intruding on his vitality.

"Some interesting material related to my current project of post-Soviet Russia. A trove of insider information. New financial stuff on what I'm calling the 21st century rise of a new autocratic kleptocracy shaping the Russian state under two decades of Putin rule. The technical economic stuff is Josef's expertise."

"Like everything else, follow the money," her father said.

She smiled. "Exactly. I'm trying to integrate these financial underpinnings to characterize the evolving political structure."

"And like everywhere, the internal political environment determines a state's international conduct. So how did you come by this new information? An insider source you said?"

"Yup."

With no further comment from his daughter, he raised an eyebrow. "Care to be more specific, Victoria?"

She would not lie to her father, however she was not ready to be entirely candid. Associating with a Russian spymaster in today's charged environment would itself alarm him. Certainly no mention of his defection apparently gone wrong. For that matter, avoiding mention of stolen Russian nuclear warheads. Parental concern would invoke his admonition to turn everything over to the government. That in turn would lead to unwelcomed questioning by government types. Why her? What was her association with this Russian intelligence officer? An endless ordeal perhaps jeopardizing her academic career.

"My own *Deep Throat*. Highly placed."

"And the motivation for this whistle-blower?"

"Hates Putin. Same sort of hostilities surrounding Trump by a lot of U.S. career bureaucrats."

The most effective untruth steered as close as possible to the truth. The unsaid details however left her feeling guilty for creating the false narrative to her father.

"And why would this person know of your interest and then favor you over some media outlet?"

ENDGAME

"Because father, this whistle-blower is my old benefactor Colonel Grigoryev of the Russian SVR. Actually, he's a general now. Had high hopes for a brighter Russian future twenty-years ago when he helped me by opening up old NKVD and GRU archives.

"Christ, Victoria, you've been communicating with a Russian intelligence officer? A bit dicey with all this Russian related flap going on don't you think?"

"He contacted me. Couldn't very well turn away such an offer."

"I meant dicey for him. Risking career and probably a lot more because he's disenchanted with Putin? Is there something more to this, Victoria?"

She should have known to prepare a better half-truth. Her father came from the big leagues of political intrigue during his tenure at the State Department.

"I asked him what he expected me to do with this information. Grigoryev said the information released first from an academic source would give greater weight when made public in the media. Said he alone knows the actual source. Thought of me as the prime instrument to make this public. His hope is to damage those close to Putin and inflict a scandal large enough to erode Putin's popular domestic support."

"And this material has the potential for that?"

"Maybe, but I'll need Josef's expertise to understand the scope of what I have."

Hamilton Prescott finished his coffee setting the cup back on the saucer with deliberation.

"That all sounds pretty thin, my dear. As your father, just be careful. You're an academic not an investigative journalist. Don't trust intelligence types. They are self-righteously duplicitous, whether ours, or especially the Russians. But I won't press you further. I intend to enjoy your company this weekend."



Although distracted with no further contact from Grigoryev and the dire implications of someone else answering his burn phone, she enjoyed the weekend with her father as best she could. Something to sustain her as she navigated the expected minefield ahead.

Before her father returned to New York, she reread Mark Reynolds' book *Shell Game*. This time to immerse herself in the mechanics of the criminal financial empire created by the defunct corporation Martinelli Global. Particularly the material on their Russian partner Moscow Capital Partners. After disposing of the oligarch Nikolai Krasin, Grigoryev said Putin embarked on his own venture. This time maintaining absolute control over the process. Her cursory sampling through the voluminous files confirmed the need for expert assistance.

The picturesque campus of Georgetown University dominated by its iconic Healy Hall, occupies a hill on the north side of the Potomac River a mile west of downtown Washington D.C. Professor Josef Novak occupied a typically cramped faculty office. In his case, compensated by a grand view of the Potomac from his window.

Victoria Prescott phoned Novak early Monday morning. "I'll be at your office by noon, Josef. I'm in New York at the train station right now."

"New York? Noon? I have a faculty working lunch today, Victoria. Busy afternoon schedule as well for that matter. Can't this wait till tomorrow?"

"Not to be indelicate, Josef, but you'll wet your pants when you see what I have."

Years younger than his friend Hamilton Prescott, Josef Novak looked older. Short and slightly stooped, he looked the archetypical disheveled academic. Prescott loved him as an uncle. A brilliant analytical mind tempered with a warm collegial demeanor. Willing to share his vast knowledge, collaboration with Josef Novak balanced the more impetuous aggressive style of Victoria Prescott.

ENDGAME

Novak did not read Russian fluently. Relying on translation software to do the bulk of the work, this often resulted in a stilted syntax that could confuse the meaning. Therefore, it fell to Prescott to translate summaries of some of the more revealing documents to produce a truer reading. Knowing this, she came to Washington armed with selected translated material.

After giving Novak the same cover story about the acquisition of the material she gave her father, she presented her first exhibit. Sitting next to him in his cramped office, she pulled up a document on her notebook screen.

"This is my translation of a summary report by another whistle-blower close to Grigoryev, His brother-in-law actually. The original is below.

"This guy is employed by the federal security service, the FSB. A financial expert. Part of team tasked with creating a shadowy Kremlin directed financial network."

To avoid explaining Lytkin's death, she referred to him in the present tense.

"A secret financial network? For the Russian state?" Novak said.

"Not exactly. Although it involved state funds and state controlled banks, it did not benefit Russian economic interests. Intended for the personal financial benefit of the ruling elite of the United Russia Party and key government appointees. The project is under Putin's direct control."

The United Russia Party created by Putin in 2001 currently controls 75% of the seats in the Russian parliament. A center-right party advocating no coherent ideology other than fervent Russian nationalism. Cynically, it embraces a range of political views provided only in support of Vladimir Putin. So dominant is United Russia, Russia functionally is a single party state. With a strongman at the helm, Putin has systematically consolidated power and crushed political opponents while largely silencing media opposition through coercion and even violence.

"And the purpose?"

“Josef, don’t be naïve. For the purpose of amassing wealth for ranking members of the current regime. Putin’s funding scheme compensates his power base to insure their support. Just like any Third World despot. This entire data dump I’ve been given reveals a level of corruption beyond imagination.”

Prescott chose Stepka Lytkin’s own long summary concerning schemes running through the Russian nuclear energy industry as her starting point. This particular avenue struck her particularly relevant in light of Putin maintaining secrecy over the nuclear warhead theft. The nuclear energy sector represented Russia’s showcase technological enterprise. The state corporation Rusatom runs all military and civilian nuclear operations. A trillion ruble per year industry.

Created in 2007 under Putin’s direction, the agency controls 360 businesses and research facilities. Two of its board of trustees actually held titles as assistant to the President of Russia. Prescott made the connection that its creation coincided with the Putin regime’s entanglement with the oligarch Nikolai Krasin as exposed by the journalist Reynolds.

According to Reynolds’ stolen electronic files from Krasin’s Moscow Capital Partners, the scheme was to privatize certain unprofitable state-run enterprises to obscure the costs. In particular, looming environmental problems stemmed from decades of Soviet era indiscriminate practices for dealing with nuclear waste. The problems with the Hanford nuclear site in the State of Washington paled compared to the worsening scope of Russia’s problem east of the Urals.

The Putin regime’s stopgap was to coerce Krasin into taking over operation of poorly performing nuclear enterprises. Get the losses off the state’s books. In compensation, Krasin’s other enterprises received highly profitable government no-bid contracts as offsets.

Within the publicly traded holding company RusEnergy, Krasin created a new subsidiary called Rusatomic to be the loss leader in a larger profit scheme. Even the name played on its

ENDGAME

common misassociation as just another state-owned Rusatom operating unit.

Of course, everything fell apart with the downfall of Krasin and Moscow Capital in the scandal of the New York based international corporation MGI. While Putin understood the enormous potential for illicit economic gain derived from the Russian nuclear industry, it also represented international prestige. With consolidation of vastly increased power to the office of President, Putin concerned himself less with such details as masking losses in state enterprises. The Russian flagship nuclear energy sector when coupled with the Russian nuclear weapons arsenal, greatly inflated Russian international stature beyond its more modest GDP ranking of only eleventh in the world.

Reading through the summary, Novak commented, "Ah, Sergei Terekov, appears in this cast of crooks."

"Yup. Putin needs skilled business and banking types to manage his criminal empire. Especially if he wants to run with the big dogs on the international stage."

"Eloquently phrased, my dear. Putin destroyed the old oligarchs of the 1990s like Berezovsky and Khodorkovsky, guys he couldn't control. Products of the waning years of the Soviet Union and the subsequent Yeltsin era. Terekov is a new breed. Just as ruthless as the original oligarchs and clever enough to adapt to the changing political environment. Recognizes that Putin now represents the power in Russia."

"Precisely. I've scanned this whole data dump, Josef. Among the complex financial dealings, which are more up your alley, it paints a picture of Putin's team engaged in all sorts of corruption. Unprecedented in scale. We have names and documented evidence of their conspiracy."

"Is this principally Russian internal corruption or something broader?" Novak said.

"Can't tell, but some of the material suggests sophisticated financial dealings internationally. That's what I need you to explore. Ultimately we'll need to run down a lot of rabbit holes to corroborate all this stuff."

"Think this material changes the premise for our project, Victoria?"

The working title for their project was *Post-Soviet Russia – Dictatorship by Another Name*. The premise being to define where the increasingly authoritative rule of a single political party might take Russia while controlling a heavily state-influenced market economy. How did these domestic factors impact Russian international relations? While all authoritarian regimes suffer corruption, Grigoryev's material suggested Russia was moving closer to a Putin dictatorship.

"I don't know. Grigoryev paints this as a state-run criminal enterprise. Maybe this is the framework of 21st century Russian state corruption. But the scary implications come when Putin serves out his final fourth presidential term. Then what?"

After Novak read Lytkin's lengthy summary, he commented with an uncharacteristic expletive, "Sonofabitch. What's really scary about this, we're talking about an enormous nuclear industry with a troubling history. Think Chernobyl technology and operating protocols. Marketing Russian technology internationally for illicit gain brings into question all sorts of environmental and safety concerns for the world."

If Novak only knew the extent of Russian nuclear insecurity, Prescott thought.

"Lot of work ahead, Josef. However, let's start with Terekov and his Eurasian Energy Industries. Look at these documents I've translated," Prescott said as she brought up preselected documents on her computer.

"To your point, you can see by this that Terekov moved in to replace the defunct Rusatomic private contracting management of significant parts the Russian nuclear industry. Particularly waste management and fissile fuel reprocessing."

"Yes of course," Novak said. "That oligarch Krasin caught up in the downfall of Martinelli Global."

Prescott said, "Cost Krasin his life. Officially, hung himself in a jail cell. Not likely a suicide. Putin could not afford Krasin going to trial. What do you know about Terekov?"

ENDGAME

Novak was an expert on Russian economics. “Well he’s the big player in Russian natural resources development. Came on the scene soon after Putin came to power. An interesting footnote, Sergei Terekov holds an actual graduate degree in mining engineering from St. Petersburg Mining University. Unlike Putin’s questionable PhD. from the same institution.

“Terekov may have first met Putin in St. Petersburg during Putin’s earliest political involvement in his home city’s municipal government. After the abortive 1991 coup against Gorbachev, Putin left the KGB becoming head of a committee promoting international relations and foreign investments for St. Petersburg.

“With the demise of Krasin’s financial empire, Terekov’s Eurasian Energy picked up not only the Krasin assets but quietly moved in to fulfill all the government contractual connections held by Krasin owned enterprises. Terekov at the time dominated the Russian minerals and metals sectors. According to estimates, he acquired the assets of the defunct RusEnergy for ten percent of their true value. Apparently, Putin manipulated this secret underreported transition asserting national security interests. It also helped obscure the Krasin public relations debacle.”

Prescott said, “Putin’s way of also avoiding the fallout of his regime’s association with Krasin?”

“Probably. From your summary, it suggests Putin’s functionaries have since taken direct control. They won’t have a repeat of the Krasin affair.”

“Well this material suggests some new twists from what Reynolds uncovered with the stolen material from Krasin’s Moscow Capital Partners.” Prescott said.

“If I remember correctly from his book *Shell Game*, that insider that breached the Russian affiliates’ databases was murdered. What about this new whistle-blower?”

Prescott said, “Also dead. Shot himself rather than face arrest I’m told.”

Novak looked at her with a grim expression, “And do I guess your benefactor once again is this spy chief Grigoryev?”

"Yes."

"And he's still with the SVR?"

Prescott nodded. "A general now. The number-two guy at the foreign intelligence service."

"Victoria, I know you too well. Something more is going on. You're saying he gave you this stuff so he can embarrass the Putin regime to which he is a ranking intelligence official? Come on. Why you? Not for old times' sake, so what gives?"

Since Novak was a partner in this, only fair he should know the gravity.

"Okay, Josef. But only you're to know. I did not tell Dad quite everything. The actual source for this is Grigoryev's brother-in-law. For security reasons, Grigoryev kept the stolen electronic files."

"And the brother-in-law is dead? What about Grigoryev?"

"The brother-in-law and Grigoryev knew they were playing a dangerous game. They intended to defect using these damaging files as bargaining chips to the U.S. for asylum. Unfortunately, the brother-in-law slipped up. Cost him his life and triggered Grigoryev's immediate escape from Russia."

"Jesus Christ! And?"

"I met Grigoryev last week in Paris. He handed over the stolen files. Wanted me to enlist Dad's help in arranging his defection. Didn't trust approaching Western intelligence operatives for fear of Russian infiltration, or simple bureaucracy wrangling."

"So your father is working on that?"

She shook her head no. "Afraid not. I tried to establish contact with Grigoryev when I returned to New York. Something there has gone wrong as well. I fear the Russians may have gotten to him."

"My god, Victoria, what have you gotten into?"

"Since I can't establish contact with Grigoryev I didn't go into all the troubling details with Dad."

"And if Grigoryev does not surface then what?"

ENDGAME

“Then we make public this damaging information on the Putin regime. Drive a sharp stick in the eye of that malevolent little shit. Sure as hell not going to turn it over to the U.S. government.”

She still manipulated the entire truth to keep her options open. No mention of the nuclear warhead theft evidence, nor mention of an unknown Russian voice answering Grigoryev’s burn phone.



Prescott and Novak spent the remainder of the afternoon digging into the detailed supporting materials to Lytkin’s summary of the illegal manipulations of Rusatom.

“Now this is interesting,” Prescott said. “This bank, SLT Bank. According to our *Deep Throat* source, it’s 65% owned by Terekov. Through alternate shell entities apparently. Here’s the kicker. The remaining 35% is owned by the trustees of state-run Rusatom, and by Vladimir Putin personally. Ownership is obscured through various offshore legal shell entities then funneled through shares in a Russian hedge fund run solely for the benefit of the Putin regime.

“You’ll have to try to untangle all these artificial business connections, Josef. Is that possible given these are offshore tax haven companies and Russian legal entities?”

“The offshore companies are a roadblock of course,” Novak said. “However, everything leads from and then back to Russia. Russia may be corrupt but records exist. Confirming shareholders by name may not be as easy as in the West, but there exists a paper trail even if difficult to read.”

“*Deep Throat* claims the illicit flow of money to these officials comes in the form of unusually high dividends.”

“A form of money laundering. Excessive profits through what I assume are all sorts of illegal manipulations in collusion with the government become legitimate dividends to the bank’s shareholders. Pays the graft to these senior government func-

tionaries, but the real black money is concealed in larger scams I would think."

"You're right. Like this. In a special piece of legislation passed by the Duma, majority controlled by Putin's United Russia Party, Terekov's SLT Bank enjoys specific authorization to borrow from the Russian Central Bank at half the prevailing interest. Ostensibly intended to compensate Terekov Holdings in their contractual arrangement to manage problematic state nuclear waste recycling. However, according to *Deep Throat*, the borrowed money goes well beyond just those earmarked operations. Terekov therefore borrows at half the interest rate to fund operating capital for his entire financial empire.

Prescott took a break to sit in on a late-afternoon scheduled lecture by Novak. A break from this emotional roller coaster ride of the last week. Nothing resolved, only worsened. No clear path to pursue without uncertain pitfalls. Stubbornly she resisted telling the whole story to her father or Josef Novak hoping to find a clear path.

The outlook for Grigoryev seemed bleaker with the passing of every hour. His plight a sickening gnawing. Their once again brief intimacy awakened long buried feelings only to end in despair.

Returning to Novak's office, Novak said, "How long will you be staying in Washington, Victoria?"

"A few days at least. Enough to familiarize you with the scope of this data."

"Well in that case, Martha will insist you stay at the house. In fact, I'll call her. She'll be delighted. Then let's leave early to beat the beltway traffic. Don't know about you but I could use a drink."

"Okay. But let me show you one more exhibit. You asked earlier if this was principally internal Russian corruption. I want to show you something that appears to add a different dimension beyond simply colluding with Terekov.

"Are you familiar with the hedge fund of Gordon Investments?"

ENDGAME

"Of course. A major hedge fund. You're saying they're involved with the Russians?"

"According to *Deep Throat* more than involved. I prepared a summary of sorts but it only identifies a bunch of names I culled from various documents. Complex stuff. Again, there are these stubborn offshore tax haven corporations and banks. You'll need to connect the dots.

"Sounds a whole lot bigger than the Trump and Kushner mere financial coziness with the Russians."

"Gordon Investments? That is interesting. Real estate hedge fund. Rapid growth, even competing successfully with this long-running bull stock market. Consistently profitable. Multi-billions in assets."

"*Deep Throat* claims it's a repository for laundering Russian money on a vast scale. The starting point is creating various Russian legal entities, corporations, partnerships, trusts, whatever. Any method to obscure individual ownership involving enterprises generating illicit profits. With government collusion, I might add. These Russian entities then invest in various offshore investment funds, for example in the Cayman Islands. Those Cayman Island shell corporations then invest in a United States Fund of Funds. An FOF. I've never even heard the term."

"Gordon Investments is an FOF. I'll explain the meaning later. Go on," Novak said.

"Well Gordon Investments then invests money in what are termed underlying real estate hedge funds."

"So you're saying the origin of this dirty money is the by-product of Russian corruption. Laundered first through the opaque Cayman Islands corporations then further washed through Gordon Investments as it invests in these underlying hedge funds."

Prescott said, "Seems like a lot of trouble when you control most everything like Putin does."

"How much does this *Deep Throat* say is invested through this scheme?"

“Not sure about this particular scheme, but he estimates the total amount laundered abroad by the current regime to be at least \$100 billion maybe as much as \$200 billion over the last several years.”

Novak looked at her with a look of surprise.

“It’s quite simple, my dear. To launder that kind of money you need a much bigger environment than Russia offers. You’ve certainly have captured my interest. Now let’s get out of here and have that drink.”



After another day huddled with Josef Novak, it was now a week since leaving Paris. The further she explored the stolen FSB data the richer the material. Complicated legal and financial maneuvering while beyond her expertise in deciphering, still painted a damning mosaic of unprecedented corruption. With Novak’s partnership, this could be not only another academic coup but also a headline-dominating exposé.

This complex web of the Putin regime’s financial corruption would take months to unravel then organize into understandable form. She and Novak must also explore the backgrounds of the large cast of characters. More a journalistic endeavor. The larger academic project however involved relating this to what had become of post-Soviet Russia. How did you characterize the current regime? What happens when Putin departs office? Will he depart? How might the West respond to a criminal state with a massive nuclear arsenal?

Of more immediate concern was turning over the information confirming Iran now possessing advanced thermonuclear warheads. Maybe missile-capable? Did Iran’s current missiles possess sufficient range to present a viable immediate threat? A truly scary thought.

She must give over that information to the U.S. government. Doing that would drop her into not only an awkward situation, but could threaten her ability to control and use the corruption

ENDGAME

information on the Putin regime. Even Grigoryev warned her about that. Her experience with the FBI in 1999 left a lasting resentment. When she went public with her book *Critical Mass* about the discovery of previously undiscovered Soviet spy the FBI acted as if it were under criticism for something that occurred fifty years earlier.

Do not trust the FBI to act fairly. This was more complicated than just turning over the material. Yet ethically she must share this information on the nuclear warheads. Obviously, she needed help. With her father as the obvious choice, she preferred not to drag him into this unknown snake pit. Not fair to burden Josef Novak with that problem either. Keep his involvement to deciphering the technical maze of Russian financial corruption.

Her best option seemed obvious. Seek out Mark Reynolds. This was his story. He would jump at the chance to validate his assertion about the theft of the Russian warheads. Let Reynolds make the facts public. Put Putin in a terrible position while perhaps taking the scrutiny off her. What could the U.S. government do once the information was public?

Recounting Reynolds' book *Shell Game*, he would know what to do after all he went through dealing with the FBI and the Justice Department according to his account. Reynolds grasp of international financial crimes might also prove useful.