

Author's Note: Originally written for the **HODOWE: Poisson d'Avril (April Fools' Day) Challenge** and evokes the idea of things being other than they seem.

It is a sequel (sort of) to my fanfic story [IGNIS FATUUS](#), itself a sequel (again sort of) to my fanfic story [CHIMERA](#), and thus reading the prior stories in this trilogy is recommended.



Great feelings will often take the aspect of error, and great faith the aspect of illusion.

Robert Burton

Getting rid of a delusion makes us wiser than getting hold of a truth.

Ludwig Borne

OF ILLUSION AND DELUSION

BY [LAH](#)

Transcript of U.N.C.L.E. post-trauma interview
Professional Psychiatric Examiner: Dr. Vincent Pirelli, M.D.
Subject: Napoleon Solo, Section II, Number 1

April 2, 1965

Thanks to the efficiency of my secretary, all my personal notes are contained in italicized type within this transcript; thus clearly separated from the original recorded substance of the conducted interview. ~~VP

On order from Alexander Waverly, Section I, Number 1, Continental Chief of The United Network Command for Law and Enforcement, North American Division, the Subject, Napoleon Solo, was placed in a relaxed, semi-conscious state via use of Command-approved hypnosis and chemical techniques.

Examiner: Are you quite comfortable, Mr. Solo?

Subject: As comfortable as can be expected under the circumstances.

Examiner: Lumps in my couch?

Subject: No, just general discomfort about you looking for lumps inside my head.

Examiner: I promise to use a gentle touch as part of my professional couch-side manner.

Subject only grunted in response.

Examiner: You are aware of why we are conducting this session, aren't you, Mr. Solo?

Subject: Yes.

Examiner: So why don't you tell me the reason?

Subject: You already know the reason.

Examiner: Indulge me, Mr. Solo. We psychiatrists like to hear what our patients believe on such scores.

Subject sighed quite loudly, I must assume in frustration.

Subject: Because I don't remember exactly how I got these slashes on my hands and arms.

Examiner: But you have a vague idea?

Noticeable hesitation before Subject answered.

Subject: Courtesy of Thrush, I've no doubt.

Examiner: But you recall no specifics?

Subject: If I did I wouldn't be here, now would I?

Brief pause in conversation here.

Subject: Listen, Doc: Honestly it's not such a big deal. I mean, these slices in my flesh aren't exactly pleasant, but they aren't life-threatening or career-ending. They'll heal just like a thousand other wounds I've received in the course of my job.

Examiner: Most without any outward scar. Yet wouldn't it be to your advantage as an U.N.C.L.E. agent to know the exact cause of these 'slices in your flesh' as you do with all those previous wounds?

Noticeable hesitation before Subject answered.

Subject: I suppose.
So how do you propose we get at that revelation?

Examiner: Tell me what you do remember about when you first discovered those gashes on yourself.

Subject: I was outside headquarters. How I got there, I don't know. I think I walked from somewhere, but where I also don't know.

Examiner: Did you get the impression it was a long walk you made from wherever to U.N.C.L.E. HQ?

Subject: A very long walk, but...

Subject halted in his answer, as if reconsidering it.

Examiner: But?

Subject: Look: you did ask about my impression of things, right?

Examiner: Most definitely.

Subject: Well, at the time I had an impression it had been a long walk in the sense it was a journey from a not usual place.

Examiner: Not usual in what way?

Subject seemed to concentrate quite intently on how to answer.

Subject: Not usual in the sense of being strictly physical.

Examiner: So a mental place?

Subject: Well... not exactly.

Examiner: Then how not strictly physical?

Subject: I'm not sure I should answer.

Examiner: You think I might judge your response in some way?

Subject: Probably, but it's not really that. It's just...
Well, it involves a past mission, a rather odd one, and I'm not sure you are cleared to know about that.

Examiner: Be assured Mr. Waverly has provided me carte blanche with regard to necessary security clearance to actively pursue this matter. So you can speak freely.

Subject: Okay.

Brief pause in conversation here.

Subject: Late last year there was this defecting Thrush scientist who contacted Mr. Waverly with regard to what he termed a menace to humanity too dangerous for even Thrush to play at controlling. He wouldn't name that menace directly; just insisted Mr. Waverly send a top team of agents to see a 'limited demonstration' firsthand.

Illya and I were assigned to the mission and were directed to the private lab of a Dr. Rimheac. We were left waiting there some two hours before a man we had to presume was Rimheac announced over a loudspeaker – he never actually appeared in person – that we were to witness an exhibition of a 'chimera'.

Examiner: Did he explain why he used that term?

Subject: He never honestly explained anything.

Examiner: So what happened?

Subject: That's just it, Doc: nothing happened. There was a blindingly intense electrical arc within the precincts of the lab and then the lights went out, both literally and figuratively, as both Illya and I were knocked out cold by the charge. When we came to though, we were still alone in an empty lab.

Examiner: I see. Did Dr. Rimheac later explain to Mr. Waverly what precisely had gone on?

Subject: Never had the chance. He was exterminated by Thrush that very day, likely even while Illya and I were both lying unconscious on the floor of his lab. From what Mr. Waverly could find out from his sources though, Rimheac's elimination had nothing to do with his possible defection to us. Thrush just wasn't satisfied with whatever scientific work he had been doing for them.

Examiner: So what has this to do with your current injuries?

Subject: Honestly, I don't know. I just felt... when I came to myself outside Del Floria's yesterday... that there was some kind of connection.

Examiner: Between the two incidents?

Subject: Yes. No. More some kind of connection to Rimheac's chimera.

Examiner: But you said yourself there actually was no chimera.

Subject: I didn't say that exactly.

Examiner: You did say that you and Mr. Kuryakin were alone in an empty lab the entire time—

Subject interrupted me rather impatiently here.

Subject: I can't explain what happened in that lab. I can't explain what happened yesterday with regard to these cuts I got somehow. Yet there is an image that flashed unbidden into my consciousness both times.

Examiner: What sort of image?

Subject: Just the image of a little girl: a sad, lonely, desperate golden-eyed waif of a girl who reaches out to me and draws me by the hands through a wall of glass that is separating us.

Examiner: She smashes through the glass to get to you?

Subject: No. Well, the glass does get smashed, but not by her reaching toward me. Somehow her hands pass easily right through, but the pane is subsequently shattered by my hands when she pulls them toward her. And I know that is physically impossible, Doctor, so you don't have to remind me of that.

Examiner: Physical impossibilities matter little when it comes to illusions.

Noticeable pause in conversation here, so I forwarded the next question because this seemed to be from where the verbal awkwardness originated on the Subject's part.

Examiner: You don't think she was... is... an illusion?

Subject: Has to be, doesn't she?

Examiner: Perhaps not. What you describe is admittedly rather an aggressive action for an illusion.

Subject: It wasn't aggressive.

Examiner: She pulled your arms through a sheet of glass. From where I'm sitting, it seems very much like aggressive behavior to me.

Subject: Because you're sitting on the wrong side of the glass.

Examiner: Want to explain that?

Subject: Not particularly. But I'm no stranger to aggressive actions, Dr. Pirelli. So do believe me when I say this was not such. It was more... a display of determination.

Examiner: Couldn't she just say something to you to make that apparent?

Subject: No.

Examiner: Just no?

Subject: Just no.

Examiner: Still, whether hers was intended as an act of aggression or not, it could well explain those cuts of yours, several of which were found to have bits of glass adhering to them when you were initially treated.

Subject: How could it explain any of that? The mission involving Rimheac and his supposed chimera was six months ago. So the girl... She couldn't be... physical. I mean, it's more like... she's something spiritual inside me.

Examiner: Yet perhaps she is... or was... indeed physical. Perhaps a quality in her simply tapped into your soul so deeply, that her material nature has blurred in your perception into something more. Something beyond the commonplace...

At this point I was interrupted, without so much as a courtesy knock, by the entrance of Mr. Waverly's assistant into the precincts of the room. It is highly irregular for a hypnosis-aided psychiatric interview to be intruded upon in such a manner, but I knew Mr. Waverly was present behind the one-way window of the observation booth. Thus I immediately realized this disruption had received his personal authorization.

Miss Johnson handed me a typed summary of information that had apparently been uncovered with regard to Mr. Solo's injuries. A reliable source had provided details of the agent's heavy drugging during an interrogation at the hands of Thrush, a turn in events that had resulted in the disoriented man smashing both arms up to his elbows through a window in the cell where he was afterwards imprisoned. How Mr. Solo, in such extreme straits of incapacitation, subsequently escaped captivity, that source couldn't say with any degree of certainty, however.

The Section I, Number 1 had handwritten a note on the summary sheet instructing me to deliberately bring this information into Mr. Solo's conscious mind and then remove him from under the effects of the therapeutic hypnotic state. My professional opinion on this decision is being withheld from this transcript for the present. However, I will note here that, at the time immediately subsequent to his entrance yesterday into U.N.C.L.E.'s New York headquarters displaying the injuries in question on both his hands and both his arms, Mr. Solo's blood tests showed no remnant evidence of any form of chemical substance.

Transcript of U.N.C.L.E. post-trauma interview
Professional Psychiatric Examiner: Dr. Vincent Pirelli, M.D.
Subject: Ilya Kuryakin, Section II, Number 2

April 2, 1965

I again make particular mention that, thanks to the efficiency of my secretary, all my personal notes are contained in italicized type within this transcript. Thus are they clearly separated from the original recorded substance of the conducted interview. ~~VP

On order from Alexander Waverly, Section I, Number 1, Continental Chief of The United Network Command for Law and Enforcement, North American Division, the Subject, Ilya Kuryakin, was placed in a relaxed, semi-conscious state via use of Command-approved hypnosis and chemical techniques.

Examiner: Wouldn't you be more comfortable lying down on the couch, Mr. Kuryakin?

Subject: I am fine where I am.

Examiner: You'll get a crick in your neck, leaning your head back on the top of the chair like that.

Subject: Doctor, is this session going to commence beyond such banalities as whether I sit or lay? Choose chair or couch?

Examiner: Of course it will, Mr. Kuryakin.

Subject: Then I suggest expediently moving it forward onto a more relevant topic.

Examiner: Such as how you received that nasty gash on your forehead?

Subject: Seeking information about the how of that is why I was commanded by Mr. Waverly to participate in this psychiatric interrogation, isn't it?

Examiner: It's not a psychiatric interrogation, Mr. Kuryakin. It's simply a methodized means to aid your mind in recalling events it is not registering consciously.

Subject: You describe it how you wish and I'll describe it how I wish.

Examiner: Yet you will cooperate?

Subject: As I want this over with as quickly as possible, yes I will cooperate.

Examiner: Well, that's a start.

Subject only grunted in response.

Examiner: All right then: let's state upfront what we do know.

Subject: An admirable idea.

Examiner: Yesterday afternoon Mr. Del Floria heard a loud thud against the door to his dry cleaning shop. When he went out to investigate the noise, he found you lying unconscious face-down upon the steps. In fact when he opened the door, he realized what had hit the barrier must have been your head.

Subject: It seems you have the pieces of the puzzle all already put in their proper places.

Examiner: You came to almost immediately, even before Mr. Del Floria could summon medical personnel from inside headquarters via his intercom system. You insisted you were fine and would make your way to Medical under your own steam.

Subject: Which I did.

Examiner: Indeed, Mr. Kuryakin. Dr. Marston cleaned and sutured the cut on your forehead—

Subject: And subsequently screened for a concussion and found none.

Examiner: True. Yet you remembered nothing on how you came to be unconscious at Del Floria's door. Nothing of how you received that gash—

Subject: Likely from hitting face-first the wood of the door to the dry cleaners.

Examiner: There was glass in the wound. There was not so much as a hairline fracture in the glass of Mr. Del Floria's door.

Subject shrugged.

Examiner: Mr. Kuryakin, you seem to be resisting any rational delving into this matter.

Subject: I'm not. I just don't have anything to offer by way of rational explanation.

At this point I decided to try a rather unconventional tack by mentioning the incident that Mr. Solo had brought up in his post-trauma interview earlier today.

Examiner: I'm going to remind you that I have full security clearance granted me by Mr. Waverly in my attempt to get to the bottom of this particular instance of amnesia from which you are suffering.

Subject: I don't need that reminder. I fully understand the scope of this type of psychiatric examination.

Examiner: All right then. I am going to ask you about a recent mission to which you were assigned with Mr. Solo.

Subject: You know we're fulltime partners now, right? So basically all my recent missions have been assignments with Mr. Solo.

Examiner: I intend to be specific.

Subject: Good thing. Otherwise we could be here well into the night.

Examiner: About six months ago you and Mr. Solo were delegated by Mr. Waverly to attend a demonstration at the lab of a supposedly defecting Thrush scientist by the name of Dr. Rimheac, yes?

Noticeable pause before the Subject responded.

Subject: Yes.

Examiner: What was the nature of that so-called demonstration, Mr. Kuryakin?

Subject: Nothing.

Examiner: Excuse me? You mean to say that Mr. Waverly sent his best field team off on a wild-goose chase?

Subject: Not intentionally I'm sure, but how it wound up nonetheless.

Examiner: So nothing at all happened during that demonstration?

Subject: There was some type of electrical failure or short, resulting in an arc of light, and that was all.

Examiner: Didn't the effects of that electrical failure or short knock both you and Mr. Solo unconscious for a time?

Subject: Not unexpected.

Examiner: And you remember nothing else from that particular demonstration?

Again the Subject paused noticeably before responding.

Subject: There was... I had... a hallucination of sorts.

Examiner: What sort of hallucination?

Subject: There was this little girl, about twelve years old or so by the looks of her, behind this wall of glass.

Examiner: Why was she behind a glass wall?

Subject: I don't know. I can't be sure. But I think it was for protection.

Examiner: Her protection?

Subject: No, ours.

Examiner: Yours and Mr. Solo's?

Subject: Yes.

Examiner: What else can you tell me about this little girl?

Subject: She was rail-thin. She looked like she was starving. And her eyes...

Pause in conversation here, as if Subject was seeking for words.

Examiner: What about her eyes?

Subject: They were huge, golden in color, and they seemed almost to glow.

Examiner: And that was the extent of your hallucination, as you call it?

Subject: No.
My fist rests on the glass where her forehead presses to the other side, and then suddenly it is her fist smashing through the pane and making contact with my forehead.

Examiner: An act of violence against you?

Subject: No.

Examiner: No?

Subject: I know more of violence than most human beings will ever experience in a thousand lifetimes. And this wasn't any form of violence.

Examiner: Then what was it?

Subject: A show of force.

Examiner: I see. Yet it was her fist that shattered the glass?

Subject: Yes, of course it was, Doctor. There was no way through to me but to break it.

Examiner: So she made her show of force?

Subject: Yes.

Examiner: Is that how you got that gash on your forehead, Mr. Kuryakin?

Subject: How could it be, Dr. Pirelli? That mission was months ago. And the girl was surely nothing more than a delusion.

Examiner: Are you certain of that? Perhaps there is more to her than a mental trick of the light. Perhaps she is real and your conscious mind prefers not to accept it. Perhaps...

At this point the session was interrupted by a rap on the one-way window where Mr. Waverly was again monitoring in the observation booth. I initially ignored the tap but, as I took up where I had left off in my series of suggested possibilities to Mr. Kuryakin, another knock – louder and more insistent – was made upon the window. Concerned that these ambient noises might result in some consternation in the Subject, I summoned my nurse to remain in the room with Mr. Kuryakin while I went into the observation booth to talk with Mr. Waverly directly.

The Number 1 of Section I bid me to end the session post-haste as he didn't believe the current turn in conversation to be in any way relevant to the issue regarding his agent's lack of recall of the particular injury received on the preceding day. I argued strenuously for the continuance of the hypnosis-assisted interview with Mr. Kuryakin, but to no avail. Mr. Waverly assured me there were other means he could pursue to get the needed answers, and that those would be sufficient onto the purpose.

Accordingly I returned to the interrogation room and brought the Subject out of the therapeutic hypnotic state and back to full awareness.

April 2, 1965

Office of Section I, Number 1

U.N.C.L.E. Headquarters in New York City

Alexander Waverly sat alone before his huge revolving desk. He had asked his assistant to hold all his calls and keep away all visitors. Then he'd depressed the button that locked the pneumatic doors against even authorized entry. He needed complete privacy for the interim.

The smoke of his Isle of Dogs 22 tobacco blend filled the air as he held the stem of his pipe firmly in his teeth while cradling the bowl lightly in the fingers of one hand. The bluish haze circling about him helped him to concentrate; thus it was when he had to focus most that he puffed that haze into its heaviest surrounding curtain. Right now the smoke screen was so thick, it was nearly opaque.

Mr. Waverly was studying a report he had open on the desk before him. It was a standard yellow and black U.N.C.L.E. folder recounting the facts of a Section II mission. The title page within that portfolio read: THE RIMHEAC/CHIMERA AFFAIR.

Poring repeatedly through the few scant pages of details, he ruminated upon what was known... and what remained unknown.

His agents had been in some danger, true. Yet again they always were on every mission. It was simply the nature of the job. And in the end, in this case they had not been truly harmed. Exactly as had been promised.

And surely, with Rimheac now securely out of the way, it could go no farther.

With a sigh, he glanced speculatively at the final page in that folder. As a Continental Chief there were always certain decisions to be made that were less than comfortable. This had been one such. But all was over and done now.

To one side of the open report were neatly stacked the typed transcripts and audio tapes of this morning's post-trauma interviews he'd had his assistant requisition from the office of Dr. Vincent Pirelli, the Head of U.N.C.L.E.'s Mental Health Department here in New York HQ. Releasing the bowl of his pipe, Mr. Waverly decisively swept that nearby pile into the open maw of a machine under his desk, subsequently activating the foot pedal that set the device to its work of devouring the unerringly deposited store. Within minutes the acid dispersed by the mechanism upon the fragile paper and celluloid would commit it forever into a state of irretrievable nothingness.

Waverly then placed his pipe within the nearby ashtray as he took a pen in his opposite hand. With a flourish he added but two words to the last page of the open report.

Demonstration complete

Then he dated and initialed the entry, closed the folder and locked it away amongst his confidential files.

—THE END—

