

24. Tied in a Red Silk Bow

Lieutenant Leif Balder, the homicide officer investigating the November 13 murders in Oxford for the Oxford Constabulary, sat pouring over the personal papers of Professor Englemeyer, the antiquarian and cryptographer who had cracked the cipher of Roger Bacon's Voynich manuscript. Lieutenant Balder was puzzling over an entry in Professor Englemeyer's diary, dated September 25, "Antoine LaRue, representative from Paradise Laboratories, Inc., offers me £30 million to take my work on Roger Bacon to their facility, £15 million now and £15 million when the job is finished, they say in about two months. The queerest meeting I've ever attended. Actually paid me £10,000 for the meeting, in exchange for which I had to sign an agreement not to disclose the proceedings to anyone. Technically, even confiding the story to these pages is a breach—but I can't resist. It's my diary, after all! LaRue wouldn't even tell me what it was all about. Have to admit, I was tempted, all that money! But it is quite criminal, stealing research from the University. I'm a little too old to become a felon. And, with the exquisite discovery Larry and I are cooking up—did anyone say, 'Nobel Prize'?—obviously I shan't rock the boat, no matter what the inducement."

"Larry," Lieutenant Balder knew, was Professor Lawrence Putterman Kinmore, the genetic researcher who was turning Roger Bacon's rude ideas into a working longevity formulation. Professor Englemeyer seemed oblivious to the fact, but it was evident that Paradise Laboratories was being funded by people with an avid interest in this genetic research. They certainly weren't offering to spend thirty million pounds because of their curiosity about Englemeyer's antiquarian studies!

But what, Lieutenant Balder wondered, was Paradise Laboratories? And who was Antoine LaRue?

Lieutenant Balder began an in depth investigation, starting by questioning the people who had been on duty in staff positions on campus the day LaRue had come to call on Professor Kinmore. He questioned Karalla Bunsen, appointments secretary for the Claremont College Faculty Administration Office, who occupied a small office in the Faculty Administration Building, where the meeting had taken place. Bunsen was a pleasant but harried looking woman in her mid-thirties, whom LaRue found sitting at her desk ploughing through a sheaf of papers.

Lieutenant Balder was in luck! Bunsen not only remembered the meeting. She was able to provide him with a description of LaRue: A dapper man of modest height, in his late forties, with handsome, regular features and thick, wavy black hair, wearing an expensive looking, dark, three-piece suit.

Because LaRue had arrived in a limousine, he hadn't been visible to anyone, such as the guard at the quad gate, who passed his car through, into the restricted parking area. But, also because he had arrived in a limousine, his coming had attracted some attention; and, consequently, Lieutenant Balder was able to locate two students who remembered the seeing the car parked in the restricted area outside the Faculty Administration Building. One of them told him that he remembered that, during the very time that LaRue was in the building, a student photographer been taking photographs with a camera set up on a tripod about forty feet away. When Lieutenant Balder identified the student photographer, he found that the boy, out of curiosity about a visiting dignitary, had turned his camera on LaRue and snapped a few shots of the man as he came out. One of those photographs, when cropped and blown up, provided a slightly fuzzy but serviceable portrait of the man Lieutenant Balder was trying to find.

While Lieutenant Balder was pondering ways in which he might pursue his search, Antoine LaRue, still plying his extended mission to advance Donnelly's plot for global

dominion, stood before a roaring fire in the main member's sitting room of Boodles, London's most exclusive men's club, founded in 1762. As usual, he was sipping an ancient cognac from a crystal glass, which he had ordered from the house's amply stocked cellars.

“Antoine!”

LaRue heard his name called from behind and turned to see Perceval Plumber, Chancellor of the Exchequer, whom he had come to Boodles to meet, beaming down at him from a towering height, with a broad smile.

“Perceval!” said LaRue, “Good to see you. You are looking well, as always. Let's get away from this fire. I'm starting to burn up, myself!”

They retreated from the fireplace and found a pair of high backed, tan leather chairs, in an area softly lit by two silk-shaded floor lamps, next to the old, paneled, highly polished, dark wood wall.

Boodles, St. James's Street No. 24, named for the club's original head waiter, stood a few hundred feet from the Stableyards, the Royal compound that included St. James Palace, the residence of the Queen Mother. Ian Fleming, LaRue knew, had been a member of Boodles, and, he thought, with amusement, that this put LaRue, as a visitor, in the position of one serendipitously following in the footsteps a man who had invested his mental energies devising intricate, cleverly plotted tales about attempts to seize global dominion. Of course, Fleming's contrivances had been merely preposterous fiction; while his own plans were as real as anything could be.

“How is the General doing?” asked LaRue, referencing a British officer, whose identity was unknown to him, with whom Plumber was acting as a liaison.

“He’s tiptop,” answered Plumber, “for an old man. A bit edgy, you know, but tiptop. I’m a bit edgy, too, I’m not above mentioning. I do hope your organization knows what it’s about....”

Even though LaRue knew that Plumber enjoyed influence, reputation, and independent wealth, he nevertheless regarded the man with sympathy. Plumber was in his early sixties. At the age of fifteen, endowed with the thick blond hair, the jutting jaw, the dimpled chin, and the athletic body of a movie star, standing over six feet two inches tall, and gifted with a graceful manner, an affable sense of humor, and an aristocratic pedigree, Plumber had begun winning the favors of women in numbers and variety that transcended even the fantasies of lesser men. Plumber’s father had been Chancellor of the Exchequer and Plumber’s uncle was Viscount Burnsdale, one of the richest men in the United Kingdom. Although not very clever, Plumber, owing to these family connections, had been pushed through Eton and Cambridge and, ultimately, tapped to fill the post as head of the treasury that his father had vacated many years earlier.

Plumber had lead an indulgent life, LaRue was aware; but, recently, he had begun feel the ravages of age, and, worse, he could see that the years had robbed him of his beauty. He was still trim and fit, and he still affected an infectious smile. But his hair, once his glory, was receding, thin, and mostly gray. And his powerful jaw had lost its hard definition, leaving him the jowls of an aging man. To Plumber, who had never emotionally outgrown adolescence, the twilight of his body was a nightmare of horrendous, unthinkable proportions. That was why, when LaRue approached Plumber on Donnelly’s behalf, Plumber had agreed to turn traitor. It was worth any price—the chance to recover his youth again!

“We know what we’re doing,” LaRue assured Plumber. “Try to keep calm. Your part is simple, after all. Important, but simple. All you have to do is keep communications open between us and your General, until we’re nearly ready to move. Then, of course, you’ll put us in touch with each other, and you can bow out entirely. And, when the smoke clears, you’ll be twenty years old again!”

A broad smile flashed over Plumber’s face, excitement lit up his eyes, and, for a moment, LaRue glimpsed an intimation of the bold charm that had ravished so many girls and women over the decades of Plumber’s younger years.

“Ah!” answered Plumber, putting his hands up and rubbing them together. Then, he dropped his hands, his expression suddenly became serious, and he went on, “I go for this blindly, Antoine. I don’t even know who you are or what you’re doing.” LaRue opened his mouth to speak, but Plumber held up his right hand, as if to say “Stop,” and continued, “Never mind, now! I’ve heard your explanations. I’m not smart enough to know if they make any sense or not. Yes, that’s right! I’m quite aware that I’m not terribly bright. But I know I’m playing the traitor, eh, what? No doubt about that, now, is there?”

LaRue made no answer, because there was no answer he could make.

“A bit late for scruples, eh?” Plumber asked, rhetorically. “Don’t worry, I’m not having any. And, for all I know, you people are all right. I mean, who’s to say Her Majesty’s government is so bloody holy? From what I’ve seen, a change mightn’t be a soddin’ bad notion, what? I mean, what am I doing in office, anyway? If not for Uncle Henny—that’s Lord Burnsdale, to you—and the example of my patrimony, of course, I’d be clocking in every morning as a clerk at Harrods.”

“We were going to get some numbers today,” said LaRue. “How many troops can the General guarantee to deliver?”

Plumber shook himself and stretched, as if to clear his mind of his melancholy reflections.

“The General says, five thousand men on the ground,” answered Plumber. “This includes mobile artillery and a tank battalion. Additionally, he’s secured a pact with an air squadron commander. So we’ve also got twenty fighter planes, ten heavy assault helicopters, and ten large transport cargo planes. Oh, and no missiles. Not yet, at any rate.”

“Very good,” answered LaRue, mentally evaluating the totals he had been given, measuring them against the requirements of Donnelly’s strategic plans for the British Isles. “But tell the General to keep after the missiles. They’re an important deterrent. We want to bring this off without bloodshed, if at all possible. That means we have to have the capability of striking a killing blow.”

“The General already understands what you want,” Plumber told him. “But I’ll repeat it to him, anyway.” He paused, then continued, “A ‘killing blow’? What a sweet way you have with words, Antoine! Well, does that wrap it up, for now?”

“Yes,” LaRue said, placing his empty glass on a nearby end table, and standing. “Thanks for meeting me, Perceval.”

“Not at all, old chap,” Plumber replied. “You’ll notice, I didn’t take a drink while we were talking? Business is business, and all that sort of thing! Well, now I can get potted. Care to join me in that noble enterprise?”

“I’d love to,” said LaRue. “But ‘I have miles to go,’ as the American poet says. Enjoy yourself. And don’t be too upset. You are doing the right thing, Perceval, even if you don’t know it.”

“Am I?” asked Plumber. “Well, ‘Now matter, child, the name,’ as a British poet says, ‘Sorrow’s springs are the same.’ He meant old age and death. Right or wrong—Antoine, I want to be young again!” He paused, looking up at LaRue with the empty, wide eyes of an expectant child, and added, “You’ll see to that, won’t you Antoine?”

“I’ll see to it,” LaRue assured him. “You have my word, my Lord. I won’t let you down.”

LaRue let his car go and walked the streets of Mayfair. He was a Swiss national but had been educated in English public schools and never felt more at home than in the heart of London’s exclusive drags. LaRue loved the upscale shops and pedestrians, the sense of being a part of a timeless world, in which manners and money were a given and in which thoughts of discord and vulgarity seemed to have no place. He wondered, indeed, to what extent Donnelly’s revolution would, or, indeed, could disturb this tidy, well-entrenched, aristocratic realm. One thing he knew was that he needed the money that Donnelly’s work was paying him, because his family had lost its wealth; and, without money, the fairyland charms of the life he adored would vanish, for him, like a beggar’s daydream.

LaRue slipped his cell phone from his pocket and called Penelope Louat. Recently graduated from Oxford with a degree in modern English literature, Penelope had returned to London to rejoin her family. She was the classic English rose: Blonde, pale, soft, and demurely provocative. She was his ideal girl: Well brought up, gay, and radiant with refined, delicate beauty that made his heart jump. LaRue had met her during his previous trip to England on

Donnelly's behalf, when he had visited Oxford in his failed effort to enlist Professor Englemeyer in Donnelly's cause.

LaRue and Penelope arranged to meet in the lobby of the Grosvenor House, one of the row of grand hotels on Park Lane, across the street from Hyde Park.

"Still trying to find a post?" asked LaRue, slicing into his veal entrée, as they sat together in the Grosvenor House's most elegant dining room, which looked out on Hyde Park from across the boulevard.

"I am," answered Penelope, drinking from her wine glass. "My father doesn't think much of the plan, but Mother is in my corner! I think public relations is a perfectly respectable place to start my career."

"Respectable?" said LaRue. "I should think so! Nothing wrong with working, and nothing wrong with doing that sort of work, either. Your father must be one of the most old-fashioned men in the world."

"He is," admitted Penelope. "Can't blame him for it, though. If you knew how he was brought up! If you had known his parents! He's pretty liberal compared with them. Remember, he did send me off to Oxford, on my own! But how about you, Antoine? How's your business going? When you were last in England, you told me you were raising money for some big project. Did that ever come off?"

"I'm still working on it," LaRue told her. "If we succeed, I'll make quite a bit of swag, you know. I'll be quite well-fixed, in fact."

"How glorious!" exclaimed Penelope. "Although you don't seem precisely down on your heels, just now, if you'll pardon my saying so. Many of my friends can't afford limousines to follow them around everywhere!"

LaRue smiled.

“Don’t believe everything you see, sweetheart,” he advised. “That’s business, you know. It’s not really my car. Sorry.”

“Don’t say you’re sorry to me, Antoine LaRue!” chided Penelope. “You know I like you. I don’t care about your car! You must think I’m awfully silly!”

“No,” answered LaRue, “I don’t think you’re silly at all. In fact, I’m trying to be serious with you. Money does matter, after all. Even a child like you should be able see that. And, well, Penelope, the way I feel about you...I mean...the way....” He broke off in mid sentence, looking at her and trying to find the courage to continue. “What I’m trying to say is that I think you’re truly special, Penelope. I’ve never met a woman like you. I’d like to spend more time with you, so we can get to know each other better.”

“Why, Antoine,” Penelope responded, “that’s so sweet! Of course, we can get to know each other better!”

“But what I’m trying to say,” LaRue went on, “is that, well, I’d like to be in a position to call on you, socially, to meet your parents, and, maybe, someday, to see if we might want to really be together, on a longer term basis, I mean.”

“You sound almost as if you’re proposing!” said Penelope. “Forgive me, if I misunderstand you!”

“No,” answered LaRue. “You understand me. And I know it’s too soon to propose. I’m not entirely daft. But I wanted you to know—my intentions.” He paused, relaxing into his armchair. “Well, that’s it. I said it. So now you know why I was talking about my financial prospects. I wanted you to know that I’ve got some.”

“OK,” responded Penelope. “You’re a very serious young man. ‘Call on me, socially,’ ‘meet my parents,’ indeed! Well, your notions are fine with me. I’ve never had a better time with anyone than the hours we’ve spent together. I’d guess that’s a good sign for the future, wouldn’t you?”

“Yes, a good sign!” agreed LaRue. “But you call me a ‘young man.’ I’m also not so young as you, not by a long way. And I wondered how much that might matter to you.”

“It matters,” said Penelope, “because I’m attracted to older men. I’ve always felt that way. I always had a secret crush on the most handsome professor at Oxford!”

“Lucky for him!” exclaimed LaRue.

“I said, it was a secret crush,” Penelope explained. “I’m afraid it never brought him any luck! Nor me, either, for that matter.”

LaRue was relieved to hear this. For it was painful for him to imagine Penelope’s porcelain cheek being smudged by the fingers of another man.

“Then,” LaRue crowed, folding his serviette and tossing it on the table, pushing back his chair, and standing, “let’s go to Asprey’s!” He walked around the table to help Penelope from her seat.

“Asprey’s?” asked Penelope, as he drew back her chair, and she joined him in standing. “What’s at Asprey’s?”

“Yes!” LaRue said, answering her questions in turn, as they began walking from the dining room together, arm in arm. “A tasty but beautiful gift for a tasty and beautiful girl.”

“If you mean me,” answered Penelope, “I think not!”

“And I think so,” said LaRue. “I’m leaving town again, tonight. More of the same business. I want to get you a small keepsake. Indulge me, and let’s pick it out together.”

“A small keepsake, then?” questioned Penelope. “OK. You’d make me feel mean to refuse.”

Bond Street, in the heart of Mayfair, the creation, in 1686, of real estate baron Sir Thomas Bond, is where all that is finest, most luxurious, and most expensive in London is to be found for sale. Old Bond Street and New Bond Street were the "very good part of town," described by Fielding in Tom Jones, where fashionable loungers first paraded in the train of the Duchess of Devonshire in the early eighteenth century; where Byron dallied at the Alfred Club, and where Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton, Laurence Sterne, Boswell, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and Sir Henry Irving also clustered to enjoy themselves over centuries past.

In LaRue’s mind, the most fascinating Mayfair attraction was Asprey’s of Bond Street, established in 1781, and still dedicated, in the words of the store’s manifesto, to providing "articles of exclusive design and high quality, whether for personal adornment or personal accompaniment, to endow with richness and beauty the tables and homes of people of refinement and discernment." Asprey’s dominance was the consequence of an imperial strategy of buying up, one by one, neighboring establishments offering the best products and craftsmen’s skills, in a vast range of specialties, until there was scarcely any luxury item that wasn’t in Asprey’s stock or that couldn’t be created to order in Asprey’s workshops.

As LaRue and Penelope approached the entrance, the twin semi-circular, swing doors were pulled back by liveried doormen, and, there they met with a large room filled with a gleaming, glittering, expanse of luxury fare, in gold, silver, leather, mahogany, teak, and ebony, and items such as Limoges porcelain, Baccarat glass, and jewelry set with precious stones, including such baubles as tiaras blazing with hundreds of carats of “brilliants.”

On the right of the main room was contemporary sterling, jewelry, watches, and miscellaneous small items, such as money-clips, crystal paper weights, enameled compacts, a folding pocket toothbrush in a 14 carat telescopic holder, and smoking accessories, including jeweled cigarette cases, shagreen covered lighters, and Chinese cloisonné novelty match cases. Beyond this collection of sundries, past an archway, stood the magnificent Gold Room, featuring such items as 18 carat models of an oil rig and popular vintage racing cars. The Gold Room, in turn, lead to a room populated by figures of birds and animals done in gem-encrusted, precious metals, fashioned in Asprey's workshops, three floors above.

To the left of the main room, also on the ground floor, were the porcelain galleries, and, beyond them, the leather-goods department. Asprey's began its adventure into the provision of luxury items for the London upper classes as a purveyor of sumptuous wood or leather dressing cases, furnished with dozens of silver-topped jars, pots, brushes and button-hooks. It still supplied the finest range of bags, wallets, desk-sets, and attaché cases as could be found anywhere on Earth.

“I admit,” said Penelope, looking around and smiling, “I love Asprey's! When I was a child, my mother used to bring me here on holidays, to shop for the family. And to get my presents, of course! There are a lot of memories for me here.”

“I saw an old photo, from the turn of the last century,” LaRue told her. “The customers used to come in carriages—broughams, phaetons, even dog-carts!—always attended by footmen, of course. The men wore silk hats and, often, those old-fashioned long, black frock coats. Did you know that, in those days, the social year was divided into two seasons? From just before Easter, until Cowes, or yacht racing season—named for a harbor in the Isle of Wight—I don't

know if you know that Crowes is the unquestioned world capital of yacht racing—and, then, from October to Christmas.”

Penelope seemed torn between minding her manners by listening to LaRue’s historical account and allowing herself to be dazzled by the fairyland stretching around them. But LaRue was so happy that Penelope was happy, that he didn’t care if she heard him or not.

“Oh,” said Penelope, “I shouldn’t have let you bring me here! There aren’t any small gifts at Asprey’s. Or, rather, the smaller they are, the more expensive they tend to be!

“Listen, sweetheart,” answered LaRue, “I’m on an expense account. My employers expect me to be buying gifts for our clients. I just met with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at Boodles, and I’ve sent him a backgammon set, purchased here, yesterday, as a matter of fact—carved in walnut, with solid gold and ivory pieces—that’s costing me over five thousand pounds!”

“You’re sending Percy a backgammon set fit for a maharaja!” exclaimed Penelope. “Oh, yes, I know him! Or my father does. Quite a tall gentleman. Not bad looking for an older man.”

LaRue knew how Plumber would have winced if he could have heard such words of damning praise from the lips of a young girl. So she had met Plumber! English society was a smaller world than he had reckoned. He had best keep that in mind and guard what he said more carefully.

LaRue took her right hand in his. “Yes, Percy’s getting his. So let’s have a little fun ourselves! They don’t care about the money, really they don’t. Just whether I produce results. So a bauble for you won’t even make a blip on the screen. It could have been for Plumber’s wife for example. Anyway,” he squeezed her hand and continued, “it will give me such pleasure and

hurt no one! Allow me a little light-hearted larceny, please, just to celebrate our new—well, whatever it is!”

“Are you a barrister?” asked Penelope. “You persuade with a magical turn of words—I might say, with a ‘twist’ of words! But never mind that now.” She paused, her eyes lighting up, and added, “OK, let’s go! Where do you suggest we start?”

Even the munificence of a Donnelly expense account was unequal to the higher ticket items in Asprey’s display cases and on Asprey’s shelves. But with tiny treasures tucked everywhere, throughout three extensive floors of merchandise, LaRue was confident of finding a present within his budget that would please his new love.

“I found something!” Penelope called out to LaRue, scarcely raising her voice, for he was standing only about twenty feet away, perusing a display case filled with exquisite writing implements. “If you can afford it! Come, take a look.”

LaRue walked over to where Penelope stood, faced by a young, attractive female clerk in a blue suit, on duty behind the counter.

“Look,” Penelope said, holding out an object in her right hand for him to see. “What do you think this is?”

LaRue looked at the thing she proffered, which appeared to be a small notepad, covered with English bridle leather, with gilded edges on the notepaper, gold corner pieces, and a gold plated pen slipped into loops at its side.

“It’s a beautiful notepad,” LaRue answered, looking up at her, “one of the nicest I’ve ever seen. But, I’m sorry, Penelope, I had something a little more—special in mind. This just won’t do, I’m afraid.”

“Ah!” exclaimed Penelope. “So you were fooled! You don’t get it!”

Penelope took the object into her left hand and slipped out the pen from its loops with her right. Then she folded back the top cover. Inside, LaRue saw what appeared to be the pad of paper itself, and he looked at Penelope with consternation.

“Wait!” Penelope said, folding up what appeared to be the top sheets of the pad. Beneath, as she turned back the pages, was revealed a miniature console, with a full set of buttons on the top half and a circular grill set into the bottom half. “You see? It’s a telephone! It’s a secret telephone! Here, you hold it,” she urged, closing the telephone and placing it back on the counter.

LaRue picked up what he now knew to be a cellular phone, marveling at its lightness and the details of its construction. He folded back the padded English tan cover, opening it again. It looked exactly like a small, leather-bound notebook. And, when you opened it, you came to a few replaceable writing pages that completed the disguise. But, beneath these pages—and revealed only when the pages were turned back and tucked into the opened cover—lay a telephone.

“You don’t actually have to open the cover to use it,” Penelope explained. “Once you’ve placed your call, you can close the cover and talk right through it! And you can answer a call, just by turning the pen the right way. You can also just leave it on the table and have it pick up any sounds in the vicinity.”

“You sound as if you’re planning on becoming a spy,” laughed LaRue.

“Maybe I am,” answered Penelope, a mischievous look on her face. “Maybe I’ll have to, to find out what you really do for a living! But its real use is when you’re in museums and places like that, where you’re not supposed to have a cell phone. You can step off to the side and

use this, and no one would even know about it!” She paused, then continued, “I just love it! I think it’s sweet.”

The salesgirl had stood by, with a discreet smile, saying nothing. Finally, she spoke up.

“Are there any questions about the notebook telephone that I could answer for you, sir?” the salesgirl asked. “It comes with a three year guarantee on parts and labor. And it’s more than a super clever package. It’s the best cellular telephone money can buy. It also has light gathering pipettes woven into the borders, so it never needs a charge if you use it in a well lit area. And, of course, Asprey’s will inscribe the lady’s initials on the cover, in gold, free of additional charges.”

“Can’t pass up that free monogram!” quipped LaRue, slipping his wallet from his left breast pocket. “It’s yours, my dear!”

LaRue paid cash for the telephone, nine hundred sixty six pounds, then replaced his wallet in his jacket.

“You’ll have to give me the number,” LaRue said, when the salesgirl had left them, and they stood before the gift wrapped signature lilac flowered parcel that had been prettily tied in a red silk bow and left for them on the counter. “Now that I know you’ll be toting this thing around,” he added, picking up the small box, “I’ll be sure to check up on you.”

Penelope came near, put her arms around LaRue, raised herself on her toes, and kissed him gently on the mouth.

“Thank you, Antoine!” Penelope said, releasing him. “Yes, we’ll use it to keep in touch.” Her eyes sparkled, as she looked up at him; and, then, lowering her glance, she added, “That was sort of what I had in mind.”

Just then, LaRue's cellular phone rang, and Penelope saw him flinch with annoyance. But, handing Penelope the gift box, he pulled out his phone, held it to his face, and answered it.

"LaRue here," he said quietly into the mouthpiece. "Yes, sir. I understand, sir. I'll see to it, immediately." Then he clicked off the phone and replaced it in his pocket.

"Well, that's that!" LaRue said to Penelope. "I told you that I had to go tonight. Well, that's changed. I have to go now. Right now!"

LaRue had time to swing the car around and drop Penelope off at the offices of Snelling & Demonwailer, an old public relations firm, where she intended to make an inquiry regarding the prospects of employment. But then he was off to see Viscount Vyvan Harmsworth Northcliffe, third wealthiest man in the British Isles, and head of a publishing empire that owned all the largest circulation newspapers in London, the Daily Mail, the Daily Mirror, and the Evening News. Lord Northcliffe had questions. And Donnelly's forces, who were gathering their allies from every corner of the Earth, couldn't afford to keep him in suspense.