

F.B.I.

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...San Francisco also had its own Angry Brigade: The Symbionese Liberation Army. A couple of days after I arrived, they kidnapped newspaper heiress Patty Hearst.

In April, she helped them rob a San Francisco bank. In May, a SWAT team gunned down leader Donald De Freeze and five other members in L.A. Patty wasn't among them. The San Francisco cops and the FBI stepped up the search encouraging people to report unusual characters moving into their neighborhoods.

A couple of days later they showed up at my place.

Nob Hill was a fairly respectable area, but I was surprised that somebody considered *me* worth a call. Maybe it was the odd hours I kept. I preferred working at night. When the downstairs doorbell rang around lunchtime I was still in bed.

Since very few people knew where I lived, I buzzed in whoever it was and waited at the apartment door in my bare feet.

As the two men came up the stairs it occurred to me they might be Jehovah's Witnesses. I was struck by the plaid pants. Not something you see very often in England I thought. "FBI" announced one of them. Especially on a police officer.

They came in, arranged themselves side by side beside the door

and flipped their badges. Reference material I thought. I leaned in for a closer look.

"We're making enquiries about the Patty Hearst kidnapping," said one of them. "Have you seen any strange or unusual people in the building lately?" A tricky question under the circumstances. "No" I said.

He handed me a stack of about thirty black and white photographs secured with a rubber band. About the size of baseball cards. Mostly pictures of black guys. "Have you seen any of these people?" he asked. Things were beginning to blur. I explained that I'd only just arrived in San Francisco but he insisted I look anyway.

"Well this is Donald DeFreeze" I said. "He's dead. " "That's OK," he said, "just keep looking." Which I did. Until his partner suddenly pointed to the wall above my drawing table and announced:

"That's Patty Hearst's grandfather! And so's that! And that's Hearst Castle. And...." And he was right. There were also pictures of cops, terrorists, atomic bombs and dead people. And replica guns on the table.

When I looked back they were both reaching for the hips of those pants.

It was an odd sensation. Fact and fiction appeared to have intersected one another. Two versions of a similar idea were in the same room together. One real, one imaginary. The cops were part of the real part...and so were the guns. But then again, even that was strange. I was

English. Cops with guns was something I'd only read about, or seen in the movies. And I'd *never* seen cops in plaid pants. It was like a dream. For a moment I didn't feel like I was anywhere at all.

"What exactly do you do?" asked one of them.

"I'm an illustrator." I said, "working on a book...about Randolph Hearst...Randolph Hearst senior... a kind of science fiction story...by William Burroughs...he wrote it years ago..."

There was a beat then the moment passed. The idea went its separate ways. The hands came off the pants.

One of them pointed to the Ah Puch artwork – the picture of the vigilantes running through the woods. "What's happening there?" he asked. "It's a time in the future," I said. "when law and order breaks down." He studied it for a while then turned to me with a concerned, knowing expression. "Frightening," he said.

As they left, he handed me an FBI wanted poster. Of the five people shown only one was still alive - Patty Hearst. "If you see any of these people let us know." he said. At this point anything's possible I thought.

There was no cryptic advice this time, but I did have a second quote for the back of the book:

"Frightening."

-The FBI