

Callan



"WHAT you're saying," said Callan, "is that you want me to go over to New York and knock off a Mafioso."

FILE ON A DEADLY DON...

'I want this man dead: See to it...'

by JAMES MITCHELL

"Precisely," said Hunter. Calmly, Callan told himself: Calmly and reasonably. No use losing your temper. "In other words you want me to go to the place that's got more C.I.A. men to the square foot than any other place in the world except Washington, make sure they don't see me while I find this Mafia geezer—separate him from his bodyguard—I take it he does have a bodyguard?" "Bound to," said Hunter. "And then come back here—You do want me to come back?" "Very much," said Hunter. "Even though his bodyguard and the C.I.A. will use every trick they know to stop me." Despite himself Callan found he was yelling. "You do rather go on about the C.I.A.," said Hunter. "I know I do," said Callan. "It's the way I'm made. I can't help it. You annoy them and they fire guns at you. . . . It upsets me."

red file on the sofa table's gleaming walnut surface, and tried again. "All right," he said at last. "So the target's a gangster and I'm a hit-man. But this isn't Gangbusters—whatever rackets this geezer's in wouldn't matter a damn to you. If you want him dead he's done something political—and if you're on to it the C.I.A. will be too—and they don't like us on their patch any more than you like them on ours."

Florida, and Rhode Island. Estimated wealth—fifteen million dollars. He pays taxes on a third of it—road hauliers and a chain of bakeries, more or less legal. He is also what is called a 'don'—a Mafia chief. The rest is vice—prostitution and what I believe is called porn—"Pornography's too long a word for the ones that need it," said Callan. "No doubt," said Hunter. "That doesn't concern us. He is also very active in the heroin market."

customer at that. And now and again he gives them something extra—what is called, I understand, sweetening the deal. And one of the things he gave them was our man in Shanghai. He lasted two days, but he told all he knew—and he knew a great deal. . . . All because this man sweetened a deal. Like giving a tip to a waiter. Hunter closed the file and handed it to Callan. "I want him dead, David," he said. "See to it, will you?"

each time before he pulled the trigger on a victim—and he'd pulled the trigger 19 times. And Pietro, it seemed, was a true son of his father. He too, in his turn, had said "Scusi" before he pulled the trigger, though nowadays he held his minions to say it. Florida, it seemed, was for a little winter amusement, and Rhode Island provided a little nostalgic summer fun to celebrate his birthday, but most of the year he stayed in New York and chased another million to add to the 15 he already had, and where he stayed was the apartment block he owned—and the ones who looked after him were his very own security service. To kill a man was easy, thought Callan. It was to get next to him that was difficult—and to get away was sometimes impossible. . . .

him. Callan raised his whisky glass. "Cheers," he said. "Oh, ta, Mr. Callan," said Loney. "Ta very much." The pie went in seconds. "You not working then?" Callan asked. "Work?" Loney's voice was bitter. "There's no bleeding point, Mr. Callan. I thought thieving was the only growth industry we had left."

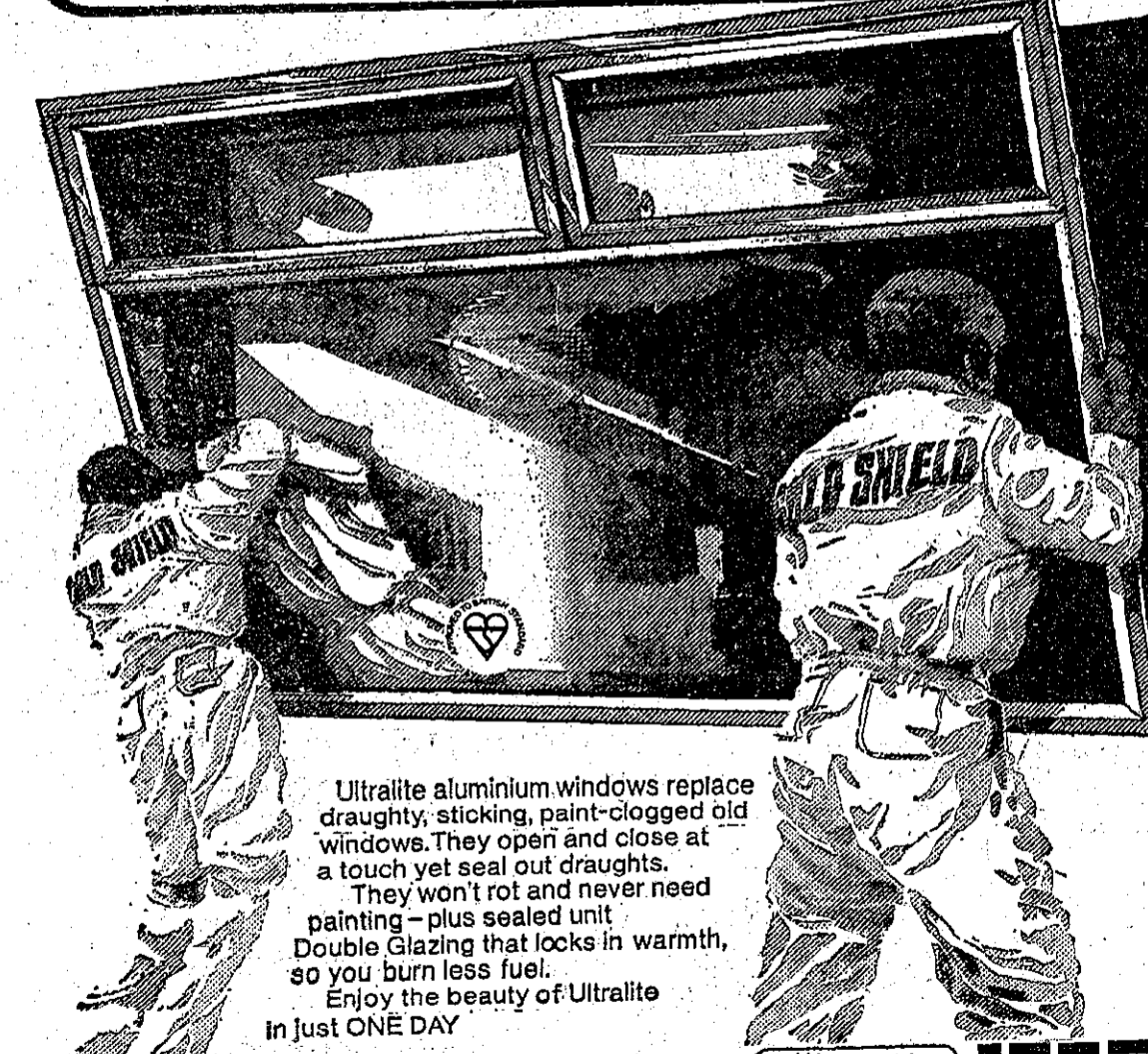
Island, and most of the year it was just a tax loss, but once a year Valence opened it up and gave a party that lasted for days. A Gatsby party. Twenties stuff. Girls in cloche hats, men with spats, vintage motor-cars and booze served in coffee-cups. There'd still be bodyguards, but with any luck they'd be a bit more relaxed than usual, and if he could wrangle an invitation, there'd be no problem about getting close to his target. Loney's cake might come in handy too. Valence's one weakness was pastry—maybe that was why he owned a bakery chain. . . .

It was a Gatsby party . . . vintage cars, girls in cloche hats . . .

finger the darkie could, thought Loney, and reacted yet again. Callan hustled him into the hired Buick, and turned the air-conditioning on full while Fitzmaurice copied the luggage, then drove them into New York.

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