

Dewey gets ready to roll

After going with Phelps to a secret underground chamber, Dewey learns that he is to follow the Webster family tradition of working in espionage.

As agents Stan and Dan licked their wounds, there was an awkward silence. Phelps spoke up.

“As we were discussing, the computer cards carry the instructions for the computer. Miss Hanrahan and the others have been working on a top-secret computer program that will break the language code of one of our adversaries. The problem is that the messages that we need to decrypt are several hundred miles away. We need you, Dewey, to take these computer cards to that secret destination.”

“Why me?” Dewey asked. “Ah didn’t ask to join the family business!”

“No one would suspect you were carrying anything so important,” Phelps said. “You appear to be an everyday guy from Tennessee who’s taking a trip. There’s nothing that would make anyone think you are carrying anything that’s top secret.”

Dewey looked squarely at Phelps. “So, because ah look like a dumb hick from Tennessee, yew think nobody believes I can do anything important,” he said.

“Oh, no Dewey,” Phelps said. “You’ve shown that you’re quite capable of doing ... interesting and unusual things.”

“Interesting and unusual things? Ah whipped yer best agents and held off the Army and you call that interesting and unusual? Let me tell you this: ah’ll do this mission, if for no other reason to convince you that I’m not just some stupid hick. Of course, ah also want to serve mah country.”

“Excellent,” Phelps said.

“That’s my little brother!” Huey exclaimed.

“So, am ah doing this alone?” Dewey asked.

“Not quite,” Phelps said. “Miss Iminov will accompany you. She again will pretend to be your companion. She also is quite a capable agent, so she can help you out if things go badly.”

“Ah can handle mahself,” Dewey said. “Ah don’t trust her.”

Irisha slowly walked toward him. She stopped and put her hands on his chest. “Dewey, darling,” she cooed. “I know you think you have a right to be mad at me. I didn’t like what I had to do. We all have orders to follow. But I do like you. I had fun with you. It’s going to be fun again,” she said with a wink.

“Ah suspect that someone is going to tell the enemy about us and they’re gonna be after me,” Dewey said. “It ain’t gonna be easy. Yew better be good at what yew do,” he said.

“Watch this,” she said. She grabbed the unsuspecting agent Dan and flipped him over her shoulder. He landed with a thud on the floor.

“Not bad,” Dewey said. “Ah prefer a more direct approach, however.”

“That’s why we will make such a good team,” she said.

“Hmmm,” Dewey mused. “Ah still don’t trust yew. But I’ll give yew a chance.”

“When do we leave?” Irisha asked.

“The code will be ready tomorrow morning,” Phelps said. “Oh, there’s someone else who will be going with you. Bring him in!” Phelps yelled.

The door opened and in came Musial, Dewey’s dog.

“Musial! What are yew doin’ here? C’mere boy!” Dewey said, his face lighting up.

“Why, ah left him with the neighbors back in Tennessee. How did he get here?” Dewey asked.

“We, uh, brought him here and gave him some special training,” Phelps said. “He should

be quite helpful. I'll fill you in later on what he can do."

"Where's mah pickup?" Dewey said.

"It'll be ready in the morning," Phelps said.

"We've made a few ... modifications to it."

"Hell, there was nuthin' wrong with it. Maybe it needed a tune-up, but it'll outrun just about anything out there," Dewey said.

"Dewey, bailing wire does not hold up forever. We, uh, 'enhanced' the engine and added a few features to the old pickup," Huey said.

"Well, that all sounds good," Dewey said. "Ah need to get some rest. Ah also need to visit a department store," he said.

"I'll take you there," Huey said.

Huey and Dewey left the secret outpost and headed toward the military base. They found a department store, where Dewey came out with a bag, which he clutched tightly to his chest.

"What's the deal with the bag, Dewey?" Huey asked. "You're acting like it was a state secret."

"Ah need to keep this secret, even from you, Huey," Dewey said. "It's part of my plan to succeed in the mission. Kin we stop at an alterations shop?"

"Sure, I know of a good one. Why do you need alterations?" Huey asked.

"That's part of mah secret plan," Dewey said.

Dewey stayed in the alterations shop for an hour, while Huey worked out some calculations in a notebook. After an hour, Dewey came out, again clutching the bag tightly. They headed for Huey's house.

"Huey, why are you doing this to me? And why did yew wait until now?" Dewey asked.

"Well, Dewey, we were waiting until we thought you were ready. We've been watching you. We haven't been spying – we've left a lot of things private. Recent events showed that it was time," Huey said.

"Just what are yew talking about?"

"Well, your divorce freed you up. I also was impressed at the way you handled the divorce. Hiring that mob lawyer was unorthodox, but it showed resourcefulness. You would not have lost

the farm anyway," Huey said.

"Why is that?" Dewey said.

"Well, Dewey, in addition to it being the family farm, there is government property there," Huey said.

"What are yew talking about? All there is out there is farm equipment and a couple of barns," Dewey replied.

Huey went on. "When you were at USC, we did a little work on the farm. You may recall that we rebuilt one of the barns. Well, underneath that barn is a complex of rooms and equipment. It was built for you to use in case you ever became an operative."

"How did yew keep this secret from the neighbor farmer," Dewey asked.

"No need to keep it secret from him," Huey said. "He knows all about us. He turned Musial over to us. We gave Musial some special training for this mission. He's a special dog."

"Ah know he's a special dog. He's the smartest dog I've ever had. He's loyal and will do anything for me," Dewey said.

"It was no accident that Musial was turned loose near the farm," Huey said. "We knew you needed a dog, so we sent you Musial. Do you really think someone would've dumped a valuable Rottweiler puppy out in the country?"

"Ah guess that one got past me," Dewey said.

"Well, not much gets past you, Dewey," Huey said. "Anyway, if you hadn't hired the mob lawyer to bail you out, we were going to present the judge with some compromising photos that Agents Stan and Dan obtained. That would've fixed everything."

"So, how much of my life are yew trying to control? Do I have any freedom to do what I want? Are yew always going to save my butt if ah get in trouble? Dewey asked.

"No, Dewey, we give you freedom of choice. We have nothing to do with your acting or writing careers. You did that all on your own. You've carved out an interesting life," Huey said.

"Does this mean that I'm an operative all the time now?" Dewey asked.

“No, Dewey,” we’ll call on you only when we need your special ... talents,” Huey said.

“Just what are mah special talents?” Dewey asked.

“Well, you have an unusual kind of intelligence that allows you to break down things and see them in a practical, simple sense. It’s like when you said the computer was an adding machine. That’s pretty much what it is.

“Your ability to get out of the ropes and run that car off of the road also showed a good trait. You weren’t afraid of anything. When you get mad, Dewey, you’re unstoppable. You weren’t even intimidated by all of those soldiers,” Huey said.

“Well, ah don’t take no crap,” Dewey said.

“That’s what I like about you, brother,” Huey said with a smile.

They pulled into the driveway of Huey’s house. They went inside and Dewey had what would be his most restful night of sleep for some time.

The next morning, Huey took Dewey to another location, which was not underground. There, they met Phelps, Irisha and Musial. Dewey’s truck was sitting there, freshly washed. Dewey walked up to it and tried to open the hood. It wouldn’t open. “What’s wrong with this?” Dewey asked. “Ah want to see what yew did to mah engine.”

Phelps walked over and waved Dewey over to the cabin of the pickup. “Dewey, what’s under that hood is secret – even to you. We don’t want you putting any baling wire in there,” he said.

“Hell, baling wire will fix anything,” Dewey said.

Phelps replied, “Dewey, I won’t underestimate you. But the hood is staying locked. Now, take a look in the cabin. Do you see that red knob over there?”

“That wasn’t there before. What does it do?” Dewey asked.

“If you get in trouble and need to outrun someone, pull that lever and floor the gas. There’s not a car in this country, including police

cruisers, that can catch you when you pull that lever. But be careful – it uses a lot of gasoline,” Phelps said.

“What else have yew done to it?” Dewey asked.

“We’ve installed a spotlight in the rear of the cabin. If you turn it on with this switch, it will temporarily blind anyone behind you. It also will enable you to see very well at night,” Phelps said.

“Well, ah hope you ain’t messed it up. It was a purty good pickup,” Dewey said.

Irisha walked up to Dewey, smiling. “Well, handsome, this is going to be fun. I’m looking forward to it,” she said.

“Don’t yew get yer hopes up,” Dewey said. “We’re staying in separate rooms at the hotels. Ah still don’t trust you.”

Dewey paused a moment, then looked into the cab of the pickup. “Hey, where the hell is mah shotgun?” Dewey yelled.

Phelps and Huey looked at each other. Finally, Phelps said, “Dewey, we don’t think a shotgun would be a good thing for you to take. You might actually use it.”

“Damn right I might use it!” Dewey yelled. “That shotgun has gotten me out of a bunch of messes over the years. Anyone tries to take those cards away from me is going to get a load of shotgun shells!”

“Dewey, anyone trying to get those cards isn’t going to stand in front of you and let you shoot them,” Huey said. “If anyone comes after you, they’re going to be very sophisticated and sneaky. A shotgun won’t do you much good.”

“And,” Phelps added, “A shotgun leaves a mess.”

Dewey stood, arms folded, a scowl on his face. “Anytime anyone messes with Dewey Webster, there’s gonna be a mess. Ah ain’t goin’ if the shotgun don’t go with me,” he said.

Again, Phelps and Huey looked at each other. “OK, Dewey. I’ll go get your shotgun,” Huey said.

He returned in a few moments and reluctantly handed the shotgun to Dewey. Dewey opened up the passenger side of the pickup and looked in

the glove compartment. "Where the hell are mah shotgun shells?" Dewey said.

Huey rolled his eyes. "OK. Not much gets past you, Dewey. I'll get the shells.

He came back with the shells. Dewey looked over them carefully. "Yep, these are my shells and it doesn't look like you messed with them. Ah might need them."

"One more thing," Dewey said. "Ah need a handgun. A shotgun aint' enough."

Huey said, "Dewey, we're really, really concerned about you going off and shooting a bunch of people. Another gun just makes it more dangerous!"

"Ah collect firearms. Ah know how to shoot and when to shoot. Ah don't wanna leave a bunch of bodies lying around. I jest wanna protect myself," Dewey said.

Huey sighed. "OK, Dewey. But no more guns, OK?"

"That's fine," Dewey said. "Now, where are we gonna get one?"

Phelps and Huey looked at each other. "Uh, Dewey, we don't have an extra gun here," Huey said.

"Ah don't need an extra gun, Ah jest need a gun," Dewey said. He then looked at Agent Dan. "Gimme your gun."

Having regained some spirit after the previous days' defeats, agent Dan said, "My gun is my property. I will not turn it over to you, no matter what you say."

"Listen to this," Dewey said. "Do yew want your ass whipped a third time?"

"Listen, Dewey, you can't solve everything with violence," Huey pleaded. "Someday, someone will whip your butt. Threats won't work!"

Agent Dan slowly took out his gun and handed it to Dewey. Phelps looked astonished. "Agent Dan, you were not obligated to give him your gun!" Phelps said.

"If I keep getting him mad at me," agent Dan said, "there won't be much left of me to use a gun."

"Now yer talkin' sense!" Dewey said. He ex-

amined the gun, removed the magazine, ensured no bullets were in the gun, and looked at it some more.

"Don't yew ever clean this gun?" Dewey said. "It's a mess. Hell, I'd be surprised if this thing could even get off one shot. I'll give it a good cleanin' and it should be ready to go."

"Well, Dewey, let's go inside and brief you on where you're going," Phelps said. Dewey put his shotgun on the gun rack of the pickup and followed them into the building.

They went into a room set up as a classroom. Phelps showed Dewey his destination and gave him maps to help him find it. He emphasized the importance of the mission. Dewey piped up at one point: "Why didn't yew bring the coded message here?" he asked.

Phelps said, "There are linguistic experts at the other facility who can use the computer program and their knowledge to crack the code."

"Why not bring them here?" Dewey asked. "It seems simpler."

"A group of government employees coming here would look suspicious, especially if they were linguistic experts," Phelps said. "Like I said, nobody will suspect you."

"So, who do I give the cards to?" Dewey inquired.

Phelps held up a photo. "This is agent Ned. You will meet him at the Boog-a-loo Diner at 9 a.m. two days from now. Don't be late."

"Ah don't want to have them cards with me any longer than I have to. Now where are they?" Dewey asked.

Phelps pulled a thin package out of his briefcase. "Here they are, Dewey. Be sure they don't get folded, spindled or mutilated," Phelps said.

"What the hell does 'spindled' mean?" Dewey asked.

"Don't worry what it means," Huey said. "Just don't mess them up."

"May ah be excused for a moment?" Dewey asked.

"Where are you going," Huey asked.

"Jes' the bathroom," Dewey answered.

Dewey left, then returned holding the package. "Let's get this show on the road!"

Dewey had packed a suitcase. He threw it and Irisha's three bags into the bed of the pickup. "Why dew women have to have so much stuff?" Dewey asked.

"Oh, because I must always look beautiful for you," Irisha said.

"Cut the crap!" Dewey said. "Ah don't care what yew look like. Just don't cross me."

'Oh, Dewey, that's the last thing I would do," she said, fluttering her eyelashes at him.

Phelps and Huey looked at each other with quizzical looks on their faces.

Huey handed Dewey the pickup keys and an envelope. "There's cash in there for expenses, Dewey. Don't spend it all on food. Keep gas in the pickup. You never know when you might have

to outrun somebody," Huey said.

"Where's Musial?" Dewey asked.

As if on cue, the large black dog trotted out of the building and jumped into the bed of the pickup. Dewey took the items and got into the pickup. Irisha jumped into the passenger seat, smiling. Dewey turned the key and the engine fired up. The vibrations from the engine shook the pickup. "What the heck is in there?" Dewey asked.

"A hell of a ride!" Huey said.

Dewey put the pickup in gear. He promptly floored the accelerator and popped the clutch. The pickup's tires squealed as Dewey burned rubber over the parking lot. Irisha held on for dear life as the pickup flew out the gate and onto the road.

"That's my brother!" Huey said.

Next: Dewey faces danger on the road!