

КОМЛЯМАТ

ALSO BY STANLEY JOHNSON

FICTION

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The Urbane Guerilla

The Marburg Virus [republished as *The Virus*]

Tunnel

The Commissioner

The Doomsday Deposit

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The Politics of Environment

Pollution Control Policy of the EEC

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*The Earth Summit: The United Nations Conference on Environment and
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World Population - Turning the Tide

The Environmental Policy of the European Communities

The Politics of Population: Cairo, 1994

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UNEP: The First 40 Years

MEMOIR

Stanley I Presume

Stanley I Resume

КОМПРОМАТ

STANLEY JOHNSON

**POINT
BLANK**

A Point Blank Book

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To my grandchildren

CAST OF CHARACTERS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Ronald C. Craig: *Republican Presidential candidate and later US President*

Brandon Matlock: *US President (outgoing)*

Caroline Mann: *Democratic Presidential candidate*

Rosie Craig: *Ronald Craig's daughter*

Malvina Craig: *Ronald Craig's wife*

Dirk Goddard: *Attorney General*

Bert Rumbold: *Ronald Craig's Campaign Director*

Bud Hollingsworth: *Director of the CIA*

Wilbur Brown: *Director of the FBI*

John Hulley: *CIA boffin*

Jo Silcock: *Attorney General*

General Ian Wright: *National Security Adviser*

Julius Lomax: *Former US Congressman*

Sandra Lomax: *Wife of Julius, aide to Caroline Mann*

Gina Paulson: *Vixen TV*

Eric Longhurst: *CBS*

Bill Whitelaw: *Congressman*

Larry Kinder: *Senator*

Pedro Gonzales: *Federal Marshal in Florida*

Jimmy Redmond: *Ditto*

Georgiy Reznikov: *Russian Ambassador in Washington*

Jack Varese: *Movie star*

Terry Caruthers: *Co-pilot of Varese's plane*

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RUSSIA

Igor Popov: *Russian President*
Fyodor Stephanov: *FSB St Petersburg*
Yuri Yasonov: *Chief aide to Russian President*
Galina Aslanova: *Head of Special Projects, FSB, Moscow*
Pavel Golov: *Galina's boss, Director at FSB, Moscow*
Lyudmila Markova: *FSB, Moscow*
Christine Amadore: *CNN, Moscow*
SWAT team
Ling and Kong: *Two Chinese agents in St Petersburg*
Sir Andrew Boles: *UK Ambassador in Moscow*
Martha Goodchild, *Boles's successor as UK Ambassador in Moscow*
Jim Connally: *Embassy driver in Moscow*
Sergei: *Driver of car in Siberia*
Ivan: *Head Ranger in Siberia*
Two Russian ladies of the night

GERMANY

Helga Brun: *Chancellor*
Ursula Hauptman: *Chancellor's main aide*
Thomas Hartkopf: *State Secretary at German Ministry of the Interior*
Dr Otto Friedrich: *German Minister of the Interior*

CHINA

Liu Wang-Ji: *President*
Jang Ling-Go: *Director of Forestry and Wildlife, Heliongiang Province*
Shao Wei-Lu (female): *His Assistant*
Zhang Fu-Sheng: *Minister of State Security (MSS)*
Li Xiao-Tong: *MSS Counter-Intelligence*
Professor Wong: *Archaeologist (in Xian)*
Professor Gung Ho-Min: *in Khabarovsk Hospital*
Wang Tao-Yu: *Chinese Premier*
Deng Biao-Su: *MSS analyst*

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UNITED KINGDOM

Edward Barnard: *MP, Secretary of State for the Environment (DEFRA)
and later Chairman of the Leave Campaign, still later Chancellor of the
Exchequer*

Joyce Griffith: *Barnard's P/A at DEFRA*

Jeremy Hartley: *MP, Prime Minister at start of book*

Mabel Killick: *MP, Home Secretary, Prime Minister at end of book*

Melissa Barnard: *Edward Barnard's wife*

Dame Jane Porter: *Head of MI5*

Mark Cooper: *Head of MI6*

James Armitage: *Deputy Head of MI6*

Shirley Wilson: *Head of MI6 China desk*

Roger Wales: *Head of MI6 Russia Desk*

Giles Mortimer: *Mrs Killick's joint-chief aide*

Holly Percy: *Mrs Killick's other joint-chief aide*

Tom Milbourne: *MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer at beginning of book*

Sir Oliver Holmes: *Metropolitan Police Commissioner*

Cornelia Gosford: *Deputy Police Commissioner*

Harriet Marshall: *Director of the Leave Campaign*

Christine Meadows: *Harriet Marshall's partner*

Harry Stokes: *MP, former Mayor of London, later Foreign Secretary*

Owen Griffiths: *Stokes' aide*

Joshan Gupta: *Employee of MI5*

Jill Hepworth: *Employee of MI6*

Lillian Peters: *Employee of FCO*

Jack Kellaway: *MP, former Minister for Social Affairs*

David Cole: *MP, Justice Minister*

Andromeda Ledbury: *MP, Leave leader*

Eric Forster: *MP, Speaker in House of Commons*

Miles Pomfrey: *MP, leader of the Opposition*

Fred Malkin: *Conservative Party Chairman*

Monica Fall: *MP for Blyth*

George Wiley: *Editor of the Sun newspaper*

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Louise Hitchcock: *BBC journalist/broadcaster*
Arthur Pemberton: *President of the Oxford Union*
Lord Middelbank of Upper Twaddle, *Conservative Grandee*
Jerry Goodman: *Security aide for Edward Barnard*
Mnogo Abewa: *MI5 interrogator*
Noel Garnett: *Veteran BBC journalist*
Thomas Pulborough: *Conservationist*
HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh
Simon Henley: *Leader of UKIP (United Kingdom Independence Party)*
Nancy Ginsberg: *BBC political correspondent*
Warren Fletcher: *US Ambassador in London*
Gennadiy Tikhonov: *Russian Ambassador in London*
Nicolai Nabokov: *First Sec at Russian Trade Mission, London*

AUSTRALIA

Mickey Selkirk: *Head of Selkirk Global media empire*
Melanie Selkirk: *Selkirk's wife*
Ching Ze-Gong; Mrs Fung: *couple who work for Selkirk at Lazy-T ranch*
Hu Wong-Fu: *Owner of Chinese restaurant in Kununurra*
Jim Jackson: *Cattleman and helicopter pilot at Lazy-T ranch*
Dr Phillips: *Doctor at Kununurra Hospital*
Professor Cohen: *Consultant at the Kununurra Hospital*
Professor Irwin Jones: *Australian Toxicologist*

IRELAND

Fiona Barnard: *Daughter of Edward and Melissa Barnard*
Michael Kennedy: *Fiona's partner*

BRUSSELS/BELGIUM

Michael O'Rourke: *President of European Commission*
Mary Burns: *O'Rourke's Chef de Cabinet*
Arne Jacobsen: *Danish Prime Minister*
Eloise Pomade: *Senior Official in EU Council Secretariat*

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Lazlo Ferenczy: *Prime Minister of Hungary*

Jacques Petit: *President of France*

Martine Le Grand: *French Presidential candidate*

Otto von Wiensdorf: *German Ambassador to EU in Brussels*

Sir Luke Threadgold: *UK Permanent Representative to EU*

TURKEY

Ahmet Ergun: *President*

Nuray Ergun: *His wife*

General Aslan Bolat: *Turkish Army*

KEY INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES

CIA: *US Central Intelligence Agency*

FBI: *US Federal Bureau of Investigation*

FCC: *Federal Communications Commission*

FCO: *UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office*

FSB: *Successor agency to KGB*

KGB: *Main security agency for Soviet Union from 1954–1991*

MI5: *UK Counter-intelligence agency*

MI6: *UK's Secret Intelligence Service*

MSS: *China's Ministry of State Security*

KEY ANIMALS

Amur tiger: *crosses border into China*

Helga: *tiger cub presented by President Popov to Berlin Zoo*

Jemima: *Edward Barnard's bay mare*

Sydney Funnel Web Spider: *Atrax Robustus*

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Kompromat is, to use an old-fashioned term, An Entertainment.

Although the book borrows from recent events, it is a very loose borrowing, being self-evidently a work of fiction and satire, and not a work of history – an antidote to the maxim that truth is stranger than fiction. Readers of this novel should not conclude in any way that any living person misbehaved in the manner that some of the characters in the book regrettably seem to have done.

CHAPTER ONE

Jack Varese, winner of the most recent Best Actor Oscar, was late. Very late. Sitting in the front row of the celebrity audience in St Petersburg's famous Mariinsky Theatre, Russia's long-serving president, Igor Popov, muttered to an aide, 'Where the devil is he? We're going to have to start without him.'

Popov glanced across the aisle to where the German chancellor, Helga Brun, stared stony-faced at the empty stage in front of her. Next to her was China's prime minister, Liu Wang-Ji, and next to him in the VIP line-up came India's prime minister, Nawab Singh.

President Popov was about to go up onto the stage himself to explain the delay when there was a sudden commotion in the wings.

The loud speakers burst into life. 'Ladies and Gentlemen, the guest of honour, Jack Varese, has arrived and will address the gathering.'

'So sorry,' the American began. 'We were delayed by headwinds on the way over from New York so we had to refuel in Helsinki. Guess I should have flown Aeroflot after all! Or else Ron Craig here could have brought me in his Boeing. But, hell, I like to fly my own plane!'

Varese beckoned Ron Craig up onto the stage. 'This is a man who wants to help save the world's tigers. So I said to him. "Welcome aboard, Ron. Your help is sorely needed. President Popov needs your help." So that's why we're all here. To support the World Tiger Conservation Action Plan, which President Popov has launched tonight.'

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Within a few moments Varese had them eating out of his hand. Popov sat back in his chair and relaxed.

This World Tiger Summit had been very much Popov's own initiative. A passionate outdoors man, he liked nothing better than to be photographed bare-chested in field and forest, preferably with a hunting rifle in his hand. Of course, there were some animals he didn't shoot and the fabled Amur tiger was one of them. There were still a good number of these magnificent beasts left in the wild, way out there in the Russian Far East. Some of them indeed were so far to the east that they sometimes crossed the Ussuri River and strayed into Chinese territory. The previous day, in a tête a tête with China's president, Liu Wang-Ji, Popov had said, 'You may have killed and skinned all your own tigers, Mr President, but kindly keep your hands off ours!'

When it was Popov's turn to speak he kept his remarks short.

'Today, ladies and gentlemen, we are adopting a World Tiger Action Plan. Yes, there are 450 Amur tigers left in Russian Siberia; yes, there are maybe 3,000 tigers in India; yes, there are tigers in Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh and so on. But, believe me, those tiger populations will be extinct unless we take action now.'

Later that evening the presidents and prime ministers of the tiger 'range states', whom Popov had personally invited to St Petersburg, gathered for dinner in the glittering splendour of the Winter Palace.

Edward Barnard, MP and Secretary of State for the Environment, found himself, by some quirk of protocol, sitting next to Helga Brun, the German chancellor.

Barnard, an outdoor man himself, was full of praise for the way Popov had handled the event. 'I thought he would just look in and out of the meeting, but he put in three full days. He must really care. And he had some kind words for Europe; he acknowledged the help we have given with his tigers' cause.'

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Helga Brun laughed. 'Don't believe everything he says. Our people in Moscow tell me that he's absolutely furious. He thinks we've backed Russia into a corner. From Popov's point of view, we've been running after the Ukraine the way a dog runs after a bitch on heat. We've been expanding NATO right up to Russia's border. We've imposed sanctions over Crimea. I admit we have seen one side of President Popov tonight, the rather pleasant side, but I can't help feeling we are going to see another side very soon. Popov is planning something big. Very big. You mark my words.'

The guests all rose to their feet as President Popov left the splendid dining-hall to the sound of trumpets.

Jack Varese, very much recovered from the long journey and its various mishaps, worked the room glass in hand, moving from table to table like a politician running for office.

It wasn't long before he took Barnard's hand and shook it warmly. When Barnard introduced himself, Varese commented: 'So you're the leader of the UK delegation. Secretary of State for the Environment. That's a great handle to have.'

'We may not have any tigers. But the British government wants to make it clear we fully approve of President Popov's initiative.'

Varese laughed. 'Maybe that'll distract him and he'll forget about invading the Baltic States.'

Seconds later, President Popov himself stopped at Barnard's table. He was, Barnard guessed, around five eight in height, a trifle less perhaps. Thinning hair, carefully brushed back to cover a bald spot.

Barnard bowed his head instinctively. This was the Russian head of state. Whatever you might feel about the man, you had to respect the office he held.

A lavishly decorated aide hovered at Popov's side. The president had obviously been well-briefed.

'Please thank your government for the support they are giving to the World Tiger Action Plan,' Popov told Barnard. 'We very much

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appreciate it. I hope one day soon to come to London to show my appreciation in person.'

As the presidential party moved on, Barnard muttered to himself, 'Dream on!' Reaching for another drink, he found it hard to imagine that Popov would be making a state visit to Britain any time soon. Not in the current climate.

The party began to break up. The limousine was waiting to take him back to his hotel. Sinking back into the plush leather seat of the sleek, black 3-litre BMW that the authorities had made available for the VIP guests, Barnard took his phone from his pocket.

Although some of his fellow Cabinet ministers had joshed that his trip to Russia was a mere jolly, there was after all some important news to convey to the authorities back home. He had absolutely no doubt that, in their separate ways, both the Russian president and the German chancellor had hoped that he, Secretary of State for the Environment, would convey a message to London, and he was delighted to be able to do so.

How things had changed in Russia over the last few years, he thought. In the big cities at least, it was all bling and gizmos. Wi-Fi was everywhere. Even in a moving car twenty miles outside St Petersburg you could pick up a signal, which was more than could be said for some of the outlying areas of London. Edward Barnard began to tap out his message.

Not far away, on the FSB control centre on St Petersburg's Cherniavski Street, Fyodor Stephanov, a tall, broad-shouldered man with a scar on his right cheek, picked up Barnard's message almost as soon as it had been sent.

He printed off a flimsy and walked quickly into the next room where his superior took one look at the text.

'Not even encrypted! Not even the lowest level! What do they take us for?'

He handed the flimsy back to the duty officer. 'You'd had better

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get going,' he said. 'Pass the word. And make sure the women know what to do.'

Stephanov rubbed his hands and smiled. 'They know all right.' In due course, he would be well paid for the video he would offer for sale on the now well-developed market for such material. He always welcomed a little freelance action. He was saving up for that Baltic cruise with his new girlfriend.