

## Sandbaggers – First Principles

**Neil Burnside** – Director of Operations for “less than six months” who is an ex-Sandbagger.

As little as six years ago he was Sandbagger 1.

**Willie Caine** – Sandbagger 1

**Alan Denson** – Sandbagger 3

**Jake Landy** – Sandbagger 2

**Geoffrey** – Sir Geoffrey Wellingham. Burnside’s ex-father-in-law, the Perminate Undersecretary of State

**Melinda Wellingham/Burnside** – Burnside’s ex-wife



While Neal Burnside is walking to work, he notices someone is tailing him. At work he makes a call to the Micky, the Head of Security, and is told that he’s under a “random surveillance check” Burnside chastises Micky for his men’s sloppy work in easily being noticed. Willie tells Neal that he’s also been tailed and Neal realizes that whomever is tailing Willie isn’t one “of their own” since Burnside would have to be informed if Willie were under surveillance. So, Burnside has Jake back-trail Willie’s “shadow” to “find out where it belongs.”

Out on the street, Willie seemingly goes on a walk around the city and is indeed followed by someone. Jake easily picks up on who is following Neal when a switch occurs, and the original man following Willie hops into a cab to leave the tailing to someone else. Jake follows in another cab and when the cab he’s following stops at the Norwegian embassy, Jake knows who’s doing the following.

Jake suspects that the Norwegians are using the Sandbaggers for training purposes. Neal is incensed that Torwig, the new Service Chief of

the Norwegian embassy, is using the Sandbaggers like this and goes to pay Torwig a visit.

Torwig is a bit upset that his men were so easily discovered, but his explanation is that his men aren’t as good as Burnside’s and he needs help in “practical training.”

Torwig surprises Neal a bit when he reveals that he knows the men in Neal’s “Special Operations Section” as Willie Caine, (Jake) Landy and (Alan) Denson. Neal warns off Torwig on using his men anymore but Torwig wants to make a deal. If Torwig shares the details of the large operation being run by the Norwegians, that Burnside will help train Torwig’s men.

Neal visits Matthew Peele, the Deputy Chief, and informs him of Torwig’s proposal. Burnside wants to work with the Norwegians if simply to keep them away from the CIA. But Peele is a bit miffed. What could the Norwegians have that the British could possibly want? Peele wants to wait and see what they have to offer before making any deals.

As Neal arrives at work, his secretary Diane informs him that Torwig is there to see him. Neal believes that Torwig wants to talk about their deal, but he learns that the operation Torwig was willing to share with Burnside has “gone wrong.”

A secret aircraft flying along the border with Russia along the Kola Peninsula has crashed.

The plane was “radar fingerprinting” the area but suffered a heavy bird strike and could not turn. The pilot radioed that they had to make a forced landing somewhere inside the Russian border. From a signal received after the crash, Torwig knows there are survivors and though he doesn’t know the exact location of the crash, he does have a line of bearing



as to where the downed plane is. He suspects that the Russians do not know where the crash site is.

Torwig wants to get his people out and destroy the craft and he wants Burnside to help. He wants a British aircraft to fly down the line of bearing to the crash site and drop off a Sandbagger. And Torwig wants Caine, specifically, an ex-paratrooper, to be the one.

Burnside wants something in return for this mission. But Torwig has nothing to offer; this mission was his attempt to collect information in order to trade. Torwig goes off to see the Foreign Secretary.

Sir Geoffrey Wellingham, the Permanent Undersecretary of State, calls Burnside to his office. He tells Burnside that the Norwegians have a problem, and that they want the SIS to carry out the rescue operation – no matter the danger or location. Burnside resists telling that his section is there to (sic) “give the UK government a covert capability, not the Norwegians.”

Burnside cannot understand why the UK government would undertake such a risk? Why would they be so quick to upset the Russians at a time where relations between their two countries were so sour?

Wellignham tells Burnside that there are “other considerations,” such as the British Nemesis missile and that the American’s have a similar missile, the War Bonnet, at a similar stage of development. If the UK heads up the rescue, they’ll buy Nemesis and not War Bonnet. Thousands of people will be kept in work in the UK helping the present government and hurting the opposition. And since the current government issues orders to the SIS...

But Burnside isn’t done yet. In charge for “less

than six months,” Burnside doesn’t have the clout to change opinions and asks Peele for help. But Peele disagrees and tells Burnside to talk to “C.”

“C” tells Burnside that they’re “instruments of government” and that he’d better get on in planning the operation.

Torwig tries to plan the mission himself and hurry things along, but Burnside disagrees. He’ll do the planning and launch the mission only when ready.

Willie thinks that idea is crazy. He thinks that all three Sandbaggers must go in case of injuries to the plane’s crew on the ground. But Burnside only will let Jake go with Willie since Sandbagger 3 is in Hong Kong.



Jeff Ross, CIA chief in London, sees Burnside and Willie unrelated to the Norwegian mission and offers them a mission in Malta in exchange for a “load of goodies.” But Burnside refuses and asks Ross to keep the Americans clear of the Kola Peninsula while the mission is going on.

Burnside decides to send a jet in first in order to find the crash in advance of the drop

so that they can get the Sangbaggers right on the crash site. And if they know where the crash site is, they can better plan an escape route for the men.

Burnside meets with the RAF Chief of the Airstaff in order to secure the planes. It is decided to use a non-military aircraft piloted by British Aerospace personnel to do the drop and a military Jaguar to first find the plane. Their cover story is that they’re in northern Norway doing cold weather trials and developed a compass error.

The Jaguar finds the aircraft and Torwig wants Burnside to move faster. But Burnside can only

go as fast as he feels safe. Burnside visits the Ops Room deep in mission planning. There are two Russian installations between the crash the border, and avoiding these obstacles will add an additional 30 or 40 miles to the trip. The Sangbaggers are to go in unarmed with little cover.

Willie doesn't want to take the mission. "Why should I spend the rest of my life in a Russian jail for a missile?" He asks. But Burnside tells Willie that this is his job.

In Norway, Willie and Jake wait on a cold airfield for the mission. The two men are scared as to the upcoming mission. Neither believes that it will end in success.

Wellingham tells Burnside that Torwig has complained that Neal is stalling. But Burnside balks, the mission is scheduled to go in just a few minutes time and Torwig will learn this as soon as the plane takes off.

Back in his office, Burnside receives a call that Torwig wants the operation canceled. But it's too late. Willie and Jake have already dropped. Jeff Ross also calls and tells Burnside to cancel the mission.

Jeff Ross tells Burnside that he reported to CIA headquarters that the UK was undertaking the mission, and that when Torwig thought Burnside was stalling he would accept the CIA's help and order their missile instead of the Brit's. Ross' men are already on site knowing where the crash is via satellite photos.

Inside Russia, Jake and Willie land safely and make their way to the crash, which they find abandoned. The CIA have already rescued the men and mined the aircraft for demolition. And those charges are set to go off just when Willie and Jake arrive on scene.

Willie goes to inspect the plane, but the charges detonate before he can get close enough to be hurt. Willie realizes what's happened and goes to help the CIA agents get the men out. But the CIA doesn't have the intelligence that the SIS has, and instead of avoiding the Soviet military installations they instead unknowingly head straight towards them. Willie and Jake do their best to try and avert disaster, but they're never able to catch the CIA column, which unwittingly stumble straight into a Russian patrol and are captured.

Jeff Ross and Burnside talk. It's all politics, and neither likes it. Ross says, "You have no idea how the US government can screw the CIA." But Burnside has already knows from experience.

Willie and Jake make for the Norwegian border, exhausted from being on the run, when Willie realizes that the two have already crossed into Norway and are finally safe.

Burnside tells Wellingham what happened and Wellingham is a bit pleased. Now, the Norwegians will see the US as being captured, and the SIS as getting out. Perhaps the Nemesis contract is not lost, the "first principle."

Burnside goes to confront Torwig in Norway. He demands an explanation. "The Americans were willing to go in at once," he is told. Burnside tells Torwig, "If you want James Bond go to a library, but if you want a successful operation go to your desk and think. And then think again."

Torwig wants to have a drink with Burnside, but Burnside is infuriated. He tells Torwig, "... if I had a glass in my hand at this moment, I'd shove it down your throat," and walks away.



**Episode recap by Bert Ehrmann, March 2007**