

LITTLE GREEN MEN

by Stanley Lieber

Fred Drumpf had shit his pants.

"Cobalt, God damn it!" he bleated, referring to the popular toilet bowl cleaner. The old goat had succumbed to senility.

"If we need to bring in the big gun, we'll bring in the big gun," Piotr said, dangling the plunger above Fred Drumpf's waiting mouth. "You are helping the other side." Piotr tapped the side of the spotless commode with the plunger. Aimed it, again, at Fred.

Fred considered his predicament. Life in the Salt Pit had been something of a disappointment. Certainly, the facilities were in need of an overhaul. Pink sand filtering in from who knows where, coarse and irritating. He felt to some degree taken advantage of. Expenses had been, demonstrably, disproportionate to services rendered. What exactly he been paying for, all this time? To be fair, Fred was not sure what he had been expecting. Something... different? Anything but this dreary open plan prison he now called home.

Conditions were unsatisfactory. A rip-off.

At length, while obviously frustrated, Fred relented.

"Okay, sign me up."

Piotr jotted down Fred's name and address, then asked for further identifying details, including information about Fred's holdings and financial institutions. Baseline qualifications fulfilled, Piotr next presented a written request for disclosure of Fred's citizenship status and any contractual obligations that might interfere with his ability to discharge the terms of the new agreement.

Fred placed his fingertip on the leaf. Removed it.

Piotr withdrew the leaf.

Finally, Piotr asked Fred if he was now, or had ever been, an employee or stock holder of UNIVERSAL MOLD, INC., to which Fred shook his head. And that was that: Mission funded.

Gradually, Fred realized that Piotr's visit was drawing to a close and that there was no way of knowing when he might drop by again. As if triggered by some remote command, Piotr immediately egressed Fred's cube.

That was abrupt.

Fred reclined on his bunk, resolved to try and get some sleep before the call to prayer.

You know what? Fuck that guy.