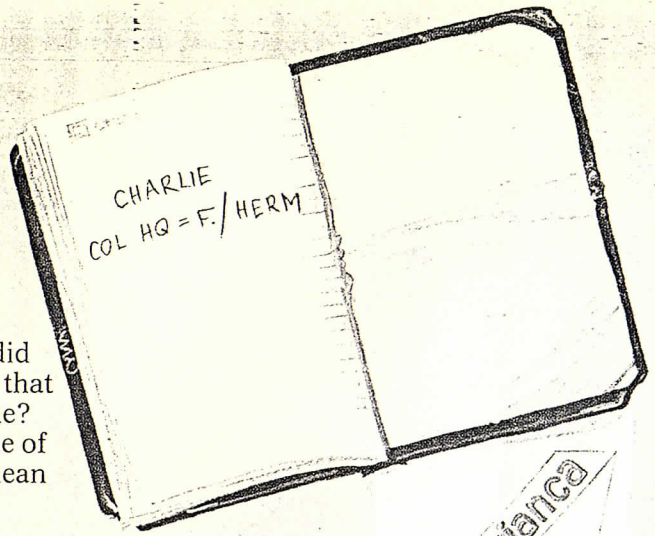


What did the words mean?

The first words were easy. CHARLIE COL HQ meant Mr Charlie's headquarters in Colombia. But what did F.HERM mean? Was that Mr Charlie's real name? Was it the name of one of his farms? Or did it mean something else?

I looked inside the package again. There was something else inside – an airline timetable. It had AVIANCA printed on it. Avianca? That was the Colombian airline, wasn't it? I opened it up. Avianca had flights from New York to Bogotá every night at midnight. Tonight's flight had a ring around it.

I can go to Colombia, I thought. I can find out about Mr Charlie. I can tell the world the real story of the drugs business. My story will stop these evil men.

I picked up the phone and called Avianca. I booked a seat on the midnight flight to Bogotá. I ordered a taxi and packed my bags. Then the phone rang.

'James Capaldi here, Kay. National Drugs Council. It's about Andy López.'

'Andy López is dead, Mr Capaldi.'

'Yes, I know that. He sent you some information, didn't he? We must have it. It's very important.'

Capaldi was angry. Why?

'Information? What information, Mr Capaldi?'

'Don't play games with me!' Capaldi shouted. 'López worked with us. His notebook belongs to us. You must give it to us now. Now! We need it immediately!'

'Sorry, Mr Capaldi. I'm leaving New York tonight.'



'Tonight? Where are you going?'

'I can't tell you that. I'm working on a story, a very important story.'

There was a pause. When Capaldi spoke again, he didn't shout. He was quieter and much more frightening.

'Now where are you going, eh? I wonder. Perhaps Colombia? Am I right?'

I didn't say anything. Capaldi laughed.

'Yes, I think so. You're going to Colombia, aren't you? You're following up Andy López's information. Well, be careful, Kay. Colombia is a dangerous place. There are lots of accidents there.'

There was a click and the phone went dead.

I was scared. What did Capaldi mean? Andy gave information to the NDC. Maybe they killed him – not Mr Charlie's men. It was possible, wasn't it? Anything was possible.

The phone rang again. Was it Capaldi? With more threats?

'Your taxi to the airport's ready downstairs, Miss Duncan.'

I thought for a minute. This was my last chance to say "no". I can still get out of this dangerous business, I thought. I can go back to England and forget about New York, Colombia, cocaine, and Mr Charlie. I can forget the story for *Newsbeat*. Or I can go to Colombia and get the biggest story of my life.

'Your taxi's waiting, Miss Duncan.'

I made up my mind.

'Okay,' I said. 'I'm coming now. I'm on my way.'

