

SIDE 6: BARBARA & NORMA

NORMA. Ah, yes, family is so important.

BARBARA. Well, then. Let's put our heads together. What can we do get me back overseas and allow Dale Ramsey to be a proper father to that elephantine infant?

NORMA. Did you consult your supervisor?

BARBARA. Yes. He told me I was needed on local matters. So I thought I'd best speak with Bob.

NORMA. Bob's certainly in no position to override a Department head. I'm sure they have their reasons.

BARBARA. Really, Mrs. Baxter? Pick that up from the J. Edgar Hoover Handbook? *They have their reasons.* Well, that explains everything. I suppose I shouldn't question it at all, then. I'll just go out and try on more hats without a care in the world.

NORMA. Barbara, I don't appreciate your hostility.

BARBARA. When I received the memorandum on your new criteria, I knew it was only a matter of time before I made an appearance on one of your little lists. But I was not expecting it to happen with such haste. Enlighten me, Norma. Why is the Personnel Security Board the only government agency that's capable of doing things quickly? There's nary a scrap of red tape in the whole goddamn department.

NORMA. Barbara, really, even if you were –

BARBARA. They think *I'm* a security risk? Me? As if I care to be so deeply entrenched in the games these little Napoleons play with each other.

NORMA. Barbara, you know I'm not at liberty to – Look. Even if – if you've done nothing wrong you have nothing to fear.

BARBARA. Is my name on a list or not, Norma?

NORMA. I cannot say, and you know it, so stop asking, Barbara.

BARBARA. Very well. You tell Bob Martindale something for me. Will you do that, at least?

NORMA. Certainly.

BARBARA. This little morality task force they're creating, the return of the Puritans, it's not Constitutionally sound. I have neither harmed anyone nor broken any laws. I am forty-six years old, I have lived my life as I see fit. I have enjoyed the company of a number of bedmates, some less than others. That is my business. I am not vulnerable to blackmail because I have nothing to hide. I am not a security risk, and I won't be stoned like a whore in the public square to satisfy whatever it is Jack Peurifoy or Ted Sunderson hope to gain from this. And if you support them, you're just as bad as they are.

NORMA. I'll show you to the door, Barbara.

BARBARA. You're an intelligent woman, Norma. They hate that. Eventually they'll find a way to come for you as well.

NORMA. I appreciate your candor. Good afternoon.

(BARBARA regards her for a long moment.)

BARBARA. Thank you for the coffee, Norma. Have a lovely weekend.

NORMA. *(Opening the door.)* And you as well.

(BARBARA exits. NORMA closes the door and sighs.)

MILLIE enters, dressed.)

MILLIE. So that was -

NORMA. Barbara Grant. The most popular gal in translation?

MILLIE. Is she under investigation?

NORMA. Of course she is. For the company she keeps.

MILLIE. That poor woman.

NORMA. She's prepared for the attack. Said she's not vulnerable to blackmail because she has nothing to hide.

MILLIE. One can say that until the character attacks actually begin.