



*Reluctant Press* presents:

# Maid OJT

Annie Warren



ILLUSTRATIONS BY C PAGANI

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**A 'HER TV' NOVEL**

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# Maid OJT

By Annie Warren

Fantasy and Science Fiction have their place,  
And I have written stories in those genres.  
But for me, I prefer to write stories that really “could be”.

—Annie Warren

I had just finished AIT in the army. If you do not know what that means, it’s “**A**dvanced **I**ndividual **T**raining”, or it’s giving a Military Occupation to the recruit who is fresh from being reshaped in basic training from a civilian into the army’s idea of a soldier. By the time I had graduated from this training into full soldierdom, I could drive a whole raft of vehicles, could drive along a razor and not blow a tire, could turn on a dime and give change, and could barrel like nobody’s business. I knew driving like *that* since I was an apt learner, always have been. And now, like all of the others in my class, I was on pins and needles to see my assignment. I was not to be disappointed. I was assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division in Frankfurt. Armour! That meant vehicles: tanks, trucks, humvees, tank retrievers, and a whole collection of military wheels. I think I was packed two days before we left.

Frankfurt turned out to be a big city. We came in at night and went off to the Barracks. It took two days for them to get to me. I still thought, 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Division meant trucks, humvees, retrieval machines, and all kinds of other vehicles, even tanks though they had not been in my specific training. By the time I got to my final assignment interview, I had seen the base with all of its vehicles and was

ready and raring to go. Then, however, during my interview, I got *my* job assignment.

“Let’s see, Private Martins, you come to us at an awkward time. We just so happen to have an excess of drivers just now. I don’t know why they sent us still more. It appears that my requests apparently fell on deaf ears. What I really need now are cooks...” He looked up at me from my training records. “Can you cook?”

“Well, sir, as a bachelor I cooked for myself in college, had to as I could not afford to eat out.”

He looked at me and then at his duty roster. “All right, I’m going to assign you to Headquarters Company. You will have to go to quartermaster and draw out your whites. Also, you will have to learn on the job. Good.” He looked at my file and made some sort of notes or annotations in it. “Hmmm, I see that you are new to the army. This is called OJT; it stands for **o**n the **j**ob **t**raining. You learn it as you do it. Check in first with Sergeant Walker. He’ll give you your assignments, show you where you bunk and will tell you where the quartermaster is. He will also have a list of what to draw.

“Any questions?”

“No, Sir!”

He got up and extended his hand and we shook. “Sorry about this, private Martins. I see you were at the top of your class, but here you are sort of the ‘new kid on the block’, and cooks are what we need. Welcome to the 4<sup>th</sup> Armour...” And with that it was over and my tour of duty for the rest of my 3 year enlistment was set... since I had not enlisted for a specific job position, I was sort of stuck. I wondered if I’d like cooking...

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I reported to my new duty station. The only truck I drove those 3 years was a mess truck that took food to bivouacked troops or picked up or dropped off garbage (I won’t say which end of the road was which)... But in the interim with the OJT, I did learn how to cook for LOTS of men. As I said, I was adept at learning and thus also learned from some of the more chef inclined cooks how to do a lot of other things that were small scale and in many cases quite elegant. So, in the end, when my tour of duty was up, I was (patting myself on my back) a good cook and an up and coming chef, if I do say so myself.

Being an apt and relatively quick learner, often learning a lot more than the current exercise was supposed to teach me, I found that cooking was something (with no shame for saying it) that I could really sink my teeth into. As much as I had enjoyed the driving, I think I enjoyed cooking more and better, being a bit redundant in saying that. Above all, I loved specialty cooking or “cheffing” where I could apply those chef talents I was learning at every opportunity. I knew I was well above the boil potatoes and chop greens for salad type cooking. And too, by showing my interest and enthusiasm, I got the attention of some of the more

knowledgeable chef/cooks who showed me lots of tricks and techniques that the run of the mill army cooks would never even dream of. Headquarters was the largest company but it also fed the officers up to the top of the command, and they were catered to and I learned how...

But, time moves on and so did I. I cycled back to the states and found a very useful piece of paper there, my discharge. I was again a free agent who could drive truck or cook it, though the call for cooked truck wasn't too high. I was totally free, as I had no close relatives since I was an only child and my parents had died from an accident when I was at university. I also did not know of uncles or aunts either. On the other hand, being all alone with no strings did give me a certain sense of isolation.

As I enjoyed cooking so much I figured that I would pursue it as a career, leaving truck driving to the larger, the stronger, and the heftier and more macho. In my short army career as a cook I had avoided putting on (much) weight. I was still around 63 kilos (140lb), a good weight for my 162cm (5' 4") frame. I was not macho in any sense of the word, but I could handle myself and, if needs be, wrestle 50-pound bags of flour as well.

Having made my career decision, I looked around. That is when I found the Shoulder Arms, a reasonably large hotel that was advertising for a cook. It was in a resort area that I found was also quite pleasant when I went there to check it out. It was spring and the flowers were blooming and the tourists were beginning to run and so I checked out the hotel itself. It looked reasonable, and so I applied and was hired on.

With summer coming on, the pace picked up and my experience of cooking large quantities came in real handy. Here again, I was also learning a lot from the other cooks. I was not really a chef, but I learned a lot of tricks that made things not only taste better but also look better. These were the chef's skills that I sought out at all turns. I also got to apply a lot of my chef talents I'd learned in the army, doing some really nice things. I was earning my keep and enjoying myself as autumn approached.

Then late autumn hit and with it the annual waning of the tourist season. When the clientele dropped again with the coming winter, I was approached by the hotel's chef, my boss. He told that, since I was the true low man on the totem pole (again?) and since the cooking load had dropped below minimum needs, I would not be needed until it picked up again next spring. He added, however, offering me an alternative option; I could work on the maintenance crew, if I wanted to stay with the hotel.

Having become rather fond of eating and keeping a roof over my head, to say nothing of my love of the country side I was living in, I decided that for the time being that that offer was my best bet. So I was going to try the transfer to maintenance. I did think of truck driving, but that was too itinerant and would mean being constantly on the road. I had grown quite content in having a home near my work and not having my work be my home or visa versa. Besides, I decided that I was too small and non-muscular for most of such activities like driving an 18-

wheeler, not that I couldn't; I was just diminutive in size. So, my first army career was tabled indefinitely. Nonetheless, I did regret hanging up my whites and pulling on coveralls in their stead.

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When I reported to Evan McLaughlin, the chief of maintenance, he was somewhat surprised to see me. Compared to my shortness he was tall and lanky with bushy eyebrows and an equally bushy moustache. When I showed up, coveralls and all, his eyebrows went up. When I explained why I was there, on the recommendation of the chief chef, he nodded his head but said that there would not be much work after the summer-autumn clean up was completed. I did not know what to say and so just started working. I noted that there was a steady, if reduced, number of guests that continued to come to the hotel. It was not like the hotel was closing down for winter. It was more like parts of it were going into a sort of winter hibernation as far as needs, especially cooking needs, were concerned. Unfortunately that also seemed to spread to maintenance after a while.

I had more or less seen the writing on the wall when I had talked to Evan that first time. I had thus continued perusing the papers for other jobs. Like I said earlier, it seems that the town was what you could call a resort town. It was not in, nor was anywhere near enough to any sizable hills, so it did not run a winter ski season, but was close enough to the ocean that there was a trade there, albeit a reduced one. Worse off, I had become very comfortable with the town. It was folksy and just plain comfortable to live there. I hadn't made any real friendships; however, on the other hand, I had no real friends elsewhere either. Those I had known in college had long since split to the four winds and I had not really gotten close to anyone when in the Army. I had pondered putting down roots and had decided that this looked like fertile ground.

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Well, friendly or no, when winter came, the town seemed to me to almost shut down. There were no other jobs in the offing and I did not have enough money saved up to quit and to then make it to the next tourist season, not without some sort of job. As I was pondering the end of my employment, Evan came by and confirmed my suspicions by almost setting a date to end on. But, in passing, he looked me up and down and then added that he got wind that there was a sudden shortage in the domestic staff caused by several members who had, without warning, suddenly just up and quit. They had even asked him for help and so he gave me the name of what he called their chief and said that it might be something to look into, though he doubted I'd really want the position. Well, I thanked him and said that since eating had become a long term, ingrained habit of mine, and that loss of employment could cut into it, that I'd check it out right away anyway.

The name he gave me was a Mrs. Higgins who was the chief housekeeper. I'm afraid I did not cut a very good figure when I went to see her. I was still wearing my coveralls; however, I figured I had best see her as soon as possible to test the waters and so went during a break at work. Oh, I was still relatively clean but just sort of highly non-polished, shall we say?

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When I entered her office, Mrs. Higgins turned out to be a sort of middle aged woman who stood apparently a meter sixty-five or so, around three cm taller than I was. She was even more wiry than even Evan had been and had a quick mind and penetrating grey eyes. Her saving grace, if that is the proper term, is that she had a warm manner with an equally warm smile. She looked like she could throw around a hundredweight with ease and, of course, with a smile.

After I introduced myself, she eyed me up and down, not unlike Evan had done, before she spoke to me, "So, Mr. McLaughlin has sent you to me, eh? Well, you might look the part, but did he say what it was that I was looking for?"

"No, Ma'am, he just said that you were shorted on your crew when some of them up and left without warning. So, just what exactly is it that you are looking for?"

"As it is, Mr. Martins, I am the Head Housekeeper. While Mr. McLaughlin does maintenance on the physical facilities and such, I run the housekeeping staff. In short, I am in charge of the maid services. Three of my maids left suddenly, leaving me with a gaping hole in my staff roster. Do you have any experience in that line?"

I'm afraid that I must have looked at her blankly; so, she continued, "I didn't suppose so, but I *am* required to ask."

"My experiences run from truck driver training in the army to becoming a cook. I was on the cooking staff when the winter cutback hit, and I went into maintenance rather than be laid off. So, I hardly have any experience there either."

"Sounds like you are somewhat itinerant, but at the same time, with a wide range of experiences. I guess you could learn on the job, if you are interested."

"I don't seem to have much choice, Mrs. Higgins. The cooking has closed down for the winter as far my position was concerned. Evan, Mr. McLaughlin, indicated that my maintenance career is also likely to come to an end in a week or less. I have played the job market and found it wanting. If I want to stay in this town, I'll have to find a job and soon."

"All right, but I don't want you to feel that you are working for me under duress. I am not looking for short-term employment. I would like some sort of commitment."

"That does put a different light on it. I don't know if I could do your job nor even if I would like it... Like in the army, it would be what we would call OJT."

“OJT, what is that?”

“It’s a term that you had just alluded to; it means ‘On the Job Training’. It was how I originally became a cook. I thoroughly enjoyed cooking once I got into it, but I had to learn it from the ground up, so to say, while doing it.”

“Sounds like an apt description.”

“To be honest, Mrs. Higgins, how long I worked for you would depend on two major factors. First is if I like the work, and second is if *you* like *my* work. What exactly does it entail?”

“Mister Martins, this is not a military establishment and I find ‘Mrs. Higgins’ a bit stuffy... Just call me ‘Megan’ and you’ll be ‘Joe’ if you join us.

With that she launched into what my basic duties would be, none of which was too trying. She also explained that I would work with another maid as a team of two, which was the hotel’s standard set-up. As I listened, I evaluated the job and felt that I could do it, although I also felt that the detail of setting up rooms “just so” could be a bit daunting. It was, however, what was expected not only by Mrs. Higgins but also by the guests. As I was evaluating in my mind the tasks to be accomplished, the connotation of “maid” did not enter into my thoughts, which were centred more on eating and having a roof over my head. This was an opportunity to continue in this town and, from my searches, most likely my only opportunity, and so my thoughts were on the positive side. By the time she had concluded her overview of the position, I had more or less made up my mind to take it.

“The job does not appear to be above my talents and has enough challenges to probably be interesting,” I said with a smile. “What sort of a commitment would you be looking for?”

“At this time I am not looking for a ten year contract, but at least into the middle of summer. By then I would be able to fill the other positions; however, I would need you to fill this one so that I can concentrate on the other replacements. Who knows, you might like the work and want to stay on longer than that.” At this point it was her turn to smile at me. Then, with that same smile, she added, looking me over, “I suppose we can overcome the problem of a uniform without any great difficulties.”

“I still have some of my army uniforms, if that would help,” I said with more of a grin.

“Somehow, I don’t really think so,” she replied with as much of a grin in return. “We have a dress code that includes a uniform for the maids that identifies them immediately to staff and guests alike as maids. It includes a black dress with white trim, dark hose and three-inch or higher high-heeled black pumps. I guess we can get by with black slacks and a white shirt for you. We haven’t had a man in one of these positions since I took over.”

I sort of heard behind that the “and wouldn’t now if we weren’t strapped for staff.” But we both had a need that the other could fulfill and we both knew it. Neither of us had a choice either, and so I told her that I was applying for the job,

if and when Evan would okay my release from the maintenance crew. Thus agreed, we shook on it and I left.

Evan took my statement of going to work for Megan in stride as if I had said that I was going to be a gardener or painter or other “usual” man’s job. He said he would call Ms Higgins to see what could be worked out. With that I went back to my work for him. It did not occur to me at that time how ludicrous it probably sounded for a maintenance *man* to work as a *maid*. On the other hand, Megan had seen no insurmountable problem in my working for her. Neither she nor I knew then what would eventually happen. On Thursday, when I went to get my next assignment, Evan told me to report to Ms Higgins. With that, my short career as a maintenance man came to an abrupt end.

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When I came into her office, Megan was sitting there as usual and mere moments later we were joined by another person, a rather cute redhead who was introduced to me as Patti Waltham. As I arose to greet her, I found she was also just a bit taller than I was. She was also wearing the “standard” maid’s uniform that Megan had described earlier. On her it really looked good!

I then learned the process I was going to get involved in. Once again, as promised, it was going to be another case of OJT, as Megan had said, of on the job training, this time, it was spelled out in no uncertain terms that I would be working as a maid. Momentarily it occurred to me that the one job that I had been trained for, truck driving, had never been followed through to become my career, even for a short time. Of course, I did not know if this was to be a career or just a holding pattern until I could get back to cooking.

As it turned out the maids worked in teams of two. When Patti learned that I was to be her partner, her eyes widened a bit and she looked me up and down with a bit of a frown. I was still wearing my maintenance coveralls and there was an obvious disbelief in her face that could be clearly seen. For my part I tried to smile a warm smile. I wondered what working with this woman would be like.

I was going to learn.

Patti’s look was not lost on Megan who then went on to explain exactly where I was coming from in the company and what the immediate future was going to hold for me, especially in terms of my “uniform”. Patti immediately suggested that since I wasn’t going to be wearing the standard uniform, maybe she should wear the same as I was going to wear since we were going to be a team. Megan, however, said no to that. I could see a fleeting look of disappointment pass over Patti’s face. I didn’t know why at the time as I thought she had a smashing figure which her uniform showed most adequately, and, as Megan had pointed out earlier, it was obvious that she was a maid. I would not be so tagged it seemed as there was no equivalent male attire for maid-dom.

When Megan laid out the OJT nature of my position, Patti tried briefly to argue, but Megan said that it was going to be. She was short of maids and had got

no responses to her ads until I applied. It was a case of taking what was available. She apologised to me, saying that the facts were just that, facts, and there was nothing she could do about it. Patti merely sighed and gave an equivalent response of “right boss!” She did perk up noticeably when Megan went on to explain that Patti was one of the best and that I’d be sure to learn the job well under her tutelage. Today I was to have Patti show me around and give me an overview of the job and tomorrow I was to start.

I must say that I did feel awkward in my coveralls as I tagged along with her. It must have been sort of tedious for Patti too, for she had to repeat the explanation of my new position to each of the maids that we encountered. It was interesting to see the various reactions of those we spoke with. It ranged from the warmest of smiles of acceptance to what I’d term as a sort of cold shouldered rejection. More than one asked if I’d be happy doing a woman’s job. My stock answer grew to be that there was nothing inherently sexually oriented with the job, as far as I could see. That satisfied many but not all of the sceptical questioners.

By mid afternoon I was beginning to get the spinning feeling of being confronted by so much input. It was not difficult but was full of lots and lots and *lots* of details that were beginning to heap up on me. Finally, we called it a day. She told me where to meet in the morning and I went back to my room with my head spinning, mulling over the raft of details that had been thrust upon me. I had already checked and knew that I had the proper clothing, but I might need more, depending on how long I was to work for Megan... It was not a clear-cut decision.

. . . . .

The next morning I showed up in black slacks, white shirt and black shoes and socks – white above and black below, so to say. It was a comfortable outfit and was what had been asked for. When I checked in with Megan that first day, I was given a maid’s name tag with ‘Joe’ on it. It clearly identified me as a maid. With that I was ready to start my new job,

That first day was sort of a repeat of the previous introductory one with me tagging along and beginning to help as Patti went through her paces. We ran into other maid teams and made, for the most part, polite conversation. It often revolving around a repetition of the most asked question of the day before on how I was liking my new women’s work, most often asked, whether the asker was overtly friendly or hostile, with a smirk... Again, like the day before, I got tired of explaining to these women simply that work was work and so just nodded for the most part with a noncommittal sort of, “It’s OK”. As Megan had stated, more or less, I was almost like a token male in the all woman maid brigade.

It wasn’t for more than a week that we began to get into the full pattern of her (well, also my) job. I was quite impressed with her efficiency and how this came through in such a good job so well done. She had been working alone since her partner had been one of the trio that had so suddenly left, and the hotel had actually experienced somewhat of a slowdown in maid service. I was supposed to be a

part of solving that problem, when I got up to speed, which was happening, but at this time very slowly. The work wasn't hard; it just had a newness added to the fact that there were plainly just lots of details.

The problems seemed to begin about the time that we were getting up some speed, but not up to the full speed that I just mentioned. In some cases, we came into some rooms prior to the occupant's departure from them but with their permission. The established process was always to knock and then announce, "Maid Service!" If no response came after trying this twice (and if no "do not disturb" sign hung from the doorknob), Patti would take her pass key and open the door and we would enter. More than once the occupants were actually still there but had not responded, knowing or thinking they knew whom the maid service involved. To see me, a man, had caused consternation in some of these cases, and the occupants had complained, not to us but to the management. They in turn passed it down the pipe to Megan who explained it back up the pipe. As the complaints slowly piled up over my first several weeks, Megan found she was encountering an unexpected problem and so called us in to see her. Oddly, Patti was not in her maid's uniform for this meeting.

"Joe," she began after greeting us and having us sit down, "I have been receiving complaints about you."

"What have I done wrong? I have been following Patti's excellent model as best I can and am not aware of any shortcomings." I looked over at Patti who was looking at me with probably the same quizzical look as I was giving her.

She then turned to Megan, "He is doing quite well, Megan. What is wrong?"

"It is not a shortcoming at all, Patti." She then turned to me and smiled. "It is the fact that you are a man, Joe, and the clientele have come to expect a woman in your position. Finding a man has been a minor shock, but enough that they have complained, and these complaints, inconsequential as *we* may consider them, have then been passed on to me by my bosses, to the point that something has to be done to ameliorate the condition."

"Why have they complained? I don't quite get it."

"The Maid Service, as you know, consists or consisted of all women. The clientele knew that and so, depending on who they were or what they were doing, expected it. So, when this turned out not to be the case, some got upset and thus the complaints. It seems petty to me, but a complaint is a complaint and has to be addressed".

"Hmmm, what do you suggest?" I had to ask, as I was somewhat perplexed.

"I have gotten reports of your work being A-1, now backed up by Patti here; so, I would be reluctant to fire you or ask you to leave, especially since it could be construed as sexual harassment or some such if you so chose. I did think of an alternate, but don't know if you'd be agreeable."

"What would that be?"

“Well now,” she looked at me, doing another sort of head to foot scan, similar to the one she gave me when I first appeared in her office asking about the job. “Could you change your appearance to be, say, feminine?”

“What, put on a dress?”

“Basically, as Patti well knows, that is what the dress code calls for, but it was designed and written by and for women. We have not had a man in your position before, and, simply stated, our clientele have come to expect a woman. So, what I mean is for you to, say, wear a reasonably obvious woman’s blouse instead of a man’s shirt, perhaps use some makeup. And, you could also wear a lightly stuffed or padded bra, one that would show enough to give you enough of a woman’s figure that would be visible and perhaps a bit obvious at a casual glance. What I mean is for you to appear somewhat as a woman. Your voice is high enough to perhaps pass now.”

“You want me to appear feminine?” I looked over at Patti who wore a broad grin.

“Yes, the only alternative is for me to transfer you out of the Maid Service back to your old job. That would put me in a bind as I still have two vacancies to be filled. No one has applied.”

“But that one does not have enough to do. I’d end up being laid off.”

“And I’d have to start from scratch with someone else?” chimed in Patti, now looking at Megan with a scowl.

Ignoring Patti, she continued to me, “I’m sorry, Joe, but that is the only alternative I see for you. It would be a hardship on all three of us.”

“But I don’t know anything on how to do that!”

“That is why I am talking to the both of you, Joe. Patti has as much to do with solving this problem as anyone.” Still talking to me, she looked over at Patti. “I’m asking her to be your mentor and assistant. I’ve rearranged the work schedule for today so that you can go out together and get the necessary... garments. That is also why I asked her to come in without wearing her standard uniform. Is that OK with you, Patti?”

She once again had a grin. “Yes, of course, Megan. I think it could be fun. He is neither large nor overly masculine,” she paused and looked at me, “Sorry, Joe, but it is true. I think we can get it done alright.”

“Fine, then go on and do it.”

“Don’t I have anything to say in this?” I just had to comment, even if inane.

“Only if you want to go back briefly to coveralls, as the only alternative I see for you. I can’t and don’t want to fire you, and with my continuing shorthandedness, as it now stands, I can’t lay you off. So, to transfer you out is my only choice if you want to refuse. Is that what you want?” Megan’s question quickly summarised my options and I’m afraid I gave several seconds of blank stare before shaking my head “no”.

“Good luck then. Since I figured that this would be the answer, I’ve already set up an itinerary for today for you to follow.” She handed a sheet of paper to *Patti*, which she quickly scanned, her smiles bordering on grins all the time as I watched. “And so, Jo we’ll see what we can do. It will take some what of a wardrobe change plus a couple of other changes. Let me just say, that you should do them all or see how well your coveralls fit. If this plan doesn’t work, then we’ll have to see if there is some other, alternate option, but I don’t have any others right now. This constitutes a minimum as far as I am concerned. Let me know if you have any problems.” With that the interview, such as it was, had come to an end and Patti and I left, Patti was still reading the paper.

“It looks like Megan has the whole day mapped out. We have appointments to make and shopping to do.” She looked over at me as we headed for the exit. “This should be fun *if* you can relax and go with the flow.”

“What flow? Is it a clastic flow or an avalanche flow? What has she got on tap for me?”

“Well, let’s see. There’s a doctor’s visit, a stop at a medical specialty store, an appointment at a beauty parlour to soften your masculinity, and several dress and lingerie shop stops.”

“She must have been pretty sure of herself to set those things up.”

“That is the reason she is our boss. She has a head on her shoulders and she uses it.” By now we were at the hotel exit, heading for our vehicles. “Okay, Joe, I think I had better drive...”

“Hey, I can drive.”

“Joe, we don’t know what you will be going through today or what it all will do for or should I say to you; so, for safety’s sake, I’ll drive.”

I looked at her a bit oddly, wondering what she meant. We were only going shopping, no stress in that. But, instead of standing there arguing, an argument I felt I’d probably lose in the end in any case; I got in her car.

As we drove off, I felt a bit strange riding in her car as a passenger, but it wasn’t bad, just strange.

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Megan’s timing had been impeccable. She had set up our meeting with her and ended it at the right time to go to the first appointment, right on time, so to say. Not only was her timing impeccable but also her reading of what I would do as she had made the appointments ahead of time, before speaking with me. As the day drew on, I felt that she had talked with Patti on this before, apparently not giving details but just enough, although Patti’s reactions bespoke surprise. I mean, after all, she had come to a meeting during the week on a workday without being dressed in her maid’s uniform... Yes, Sherlock, I think you’ve got it.