

/YANKEE GO HOME/

by

ROGER ALAN FRIEDMANN

B. A., Kansas State University, 1978

A Master's Report

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1985

Approved by:


Major Professor

LD
2668
.R4
1985
F75
c. 2



A11209 480842

TABLE OF CONTENTS

YANKEE GO HOME.....	1
CRITICAL COMMENTARY.....	39
ABSTRACT TITLE PAGE.....	49
ABSTRACT.....	50

Yankee Go Home

At its northernmost tip in the bay of Eilat the Red Sea is a deep inky blue. The usually placid body of water is guarded on both sides by wild and rugged desert mountains studded with outcroppings of black basalt that make the earth appear charred as though a great fire had raged there long ago. But nature's grandest treasure lies beneath the sea among the scarlet corals that are home to riotously and brilliantly colored tropical fish. For that reason the Red Sea is a mecca for divers around the world.

Robert Stein was only twenty two years old, recently graduated from an up-state New York liberal arts college with a degree in history, undecided about a professional career, and fearful of a livelihood that portended the comfortable but bland existence of his father, a prosperous lawyer in Boston. Robert sensed that all his life elegant upholstery had cushioned him from the harshness of a world beyond Beacon Hill. So he went to Israel because he was Jewish and lived on a kibbutz for almost a year, not far from the Red Sea, while he continued to search for that significant drama which might reveal his destiny. Still unsure of himself he left the kibbutz and moved closer to the sea.

He had been working for two weeks at the Red Sea Diving Shop, owned by Dirk Warfield, an ex-Marine who had served in Vietnam, when Mr. Benevisti came to see him. The shop, a wooden building, painted light blue, and partially shaded by an acacia tree that appears haphazardly stuck in the sand like a large beach umbrella, is located on Coral Beach, south of the wharves where Israeli Zim freighters harbor, far south of the new white plaster casts that are Eilat's resort hotels. Before Dirk bought the shop it had been a felafel and concession stand adjacent to Shaoul's Cafe Morokko, a white, sun-blistered wooden building, shaped like a pavillion, roofed with red tiles, and attached to a large pier where several small fishing trollers dock. Shaoul's is frequented by the divers who come to Coral Beach, as well as the stevedores, fishermen, khaki-clad unshaven Israeli soldiers, and a few Bedouins, who all make up Eilat's local color. The beach is cluttered with assorted body shapes barely clothed and dabbed in grease to affect the natural dark brown shade of the Bedouins who comb the beach with their camels and make a living by posing for camera-toting tourists.

Benevisti carried a camera and looked like a tourist. He wore a navy blue blazer, lime trousers, and cream shoes, and he walked with the aid of a cane. He was elderly and stately, distinguished with robust, pink jowls and a white, wavy shock of hair that shone brilliantly in the mid-morning sun. His eyes were hidden behind an almost opaque pair of brown sunglasses which he never removed. Benevisti perspired profusely and had to pause several times during his conversation with Robert to wipe his

brow with a handkerchief. When he introduced himself, he knew Robert's name, even though they had never met. Benevisti spoke in carefully measured tones, in English that was heavily accented but educated and precise, of the Law of Return, the right of all Jews to immigrate to Israel. Benevisti was from the Jewish Agency. They talked at length about Robert's commitment to Israel and Robert explained that he supported rights of those Jews who believed that Israel was their homeland. They talked about the problems facing Jews in Russia and Benevisti asked Robert if he could help Jews leave Russia, would he? He said that the Agency needed couriers, young people they could trust, Americans preferably, who could travel easily in Europe without being conspicuous, to carry money and documents that would help Jews escape Russia. Robert said yes. Benevisti asked him to keep their conversation confidential.

Two weeks later Robert met Mr. Shamir and Mr. Zohar in an office cluttered with steel filing cabinets stacked almost to the ceiling, on a second floor just above a haberdashery on Ben Yehuda Street in Tel Aviv. Shamir sat behind a desk facing Robert. Shamir was very tall and looked as if he could play basketball as a forward. His hair was thin and graying, prematurely. His complexion seemed anemic, silty in color and texture. He spoke English fluently with a slight British accent like an Israeli of Anglo-Saxon descent. Zohar, who was smaller, and dark skinned with black curly hair, appeared to be younger. He sat in a chair in a corner off to the side from Robert, and hardly spoke at all. Both men dressed were casually, the collars