



Wegwarte

Registry 750 / File 411

Registry 750 documents phenomena for which no other agency claims jurisdiction. You are Analyst 750-31.

File 411 has been on your desk since this morning, on the desk you have taken over. It was assigned to you because your predecessor 750-22 is no longer in service. The word "transferred" appears in no memorandum.

You have 76 hours to submit a recommendation. The classification scale comprises three levels. OCHRE means the file rests and is observed. INDIGO means it is actively pursued, with intervention on site. VIOLET means it is out of control. There is no fourth option.

Read. Decide.

HOW TO READ THIS FILE

- This file is non-linear. Follow the links.
- At each section, you choose what to do next.
- Tap a choice to jump to that page.
- There is no correct path. Some paths end badly.
- Use the margins for notes. You are the analyst.

OPEN FILE >>>

I. BRIEFING

Handover

File 411 carries your predecessor's signature. 750-22 closed it nine days ago, without classification, without final memorandum. The personnel file records a transfer to Bonn. In Bonn no one has arrived under that number.

You took over his desk this morning. One of the drawers has not been locked.

The case: Wegwarte Hospice in Schleswig. 18 months of observation, 14 documented deaths. In their final hours, every patient describes the same room. Blue tile. Cold light. A man at a table, writing. The descriptions agree on 22 points of detail.

Since spring the nursing staff has had a new habit. Before the end of shift they wash their hands for 47 seconds. No one has ordered it. No one remembers starting it.

Where do you begin?

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Study the case dossier.

>> Drive to Schleswig at once.

>> Trace 750-22's movements.

II. FILE STUDY

Three hundred and eleven pages

The case dossier runs to 311 pages. You read it on the 8th floor, in an office without windows.

The 14 dying have died between March and November. 11 of them spent their final hours in Room 7. The remaining three died in other rooms, but not without referring to Room 7 in their final hours.

The description of the room is consistent. Estimated 8 square metres. Wall tile in a blue that Dr Roth, the resident physician, annotates as NCS S 4030-R90B. The light source has never been seen, only described as cold. The table: oak, three drawers on the left. The man wears a white shirt without a collar, has thin hands, his face is described nowhere. He writes with his right hand.

750-22 has noted in the margin: "He is in no hurry."

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Read the death records one by one.

>> Drive to Schleswig.

>> Look for 750-22's notes.

II. FILE STUDY

Last words

You read Record 9. Helga Behnke, 79. Admitted in May. Carcinoma.

Last words at 02:14, recorded by Nurse Krüger:

"He is writing something to me. He is not reading it aloud. But I hear it."

Record 11. Detlef Marwedel, 84. Admitted in September. Pneumonia.

Last words at 19:46, recorded by Orderly Vogt:

"It is not mine. The entry he is making. It is not mine."

Record 14, the last before 750-22's handover, contains no transcription of last words. Instead there is a note in your predecessor's hand: "Patient moved his mouth for 41 seconds. Without sound. We read it from the picture."

We.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Who is "we"? Pursue 750-22.

>> Drive to Schleswig at once.

II. FILE STUDY

Norderstrasse 71

750-22's personnel file is thin. Three pages. Joined the Registry 2007. Four cases handled. Transfer order dated the 4th of this month, recipient Bonn. From Bonn: no confirmation.

In the desk you now use, you find the unlocked drawer. Inside lies a folded A4 sheet with a hand-drawn sketch. A room, seen from above. Eight squares, hatched in blue. A table, three lines for the drawers. A figure at the table, in stick-figure form.

An arrow runs round the figure. Beside it, in the same hand as the margin notes: "He has turned the chair."

No date. No signature. On the back, in pencil, an address in Schleswig: Norderstrasse 71.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Visit Norderstrasse 71 later.

>> Continue studying the file.

III. ARRIVAL

Schleswig

You take a car from the pool. Four hours on the A7. Traffic in Hamburg, the rain begins in Neumünster. You reach Schleswig in the evening.

Wegwarte Hospice lies at the western edge of town, Bismarckstrasse 12, opposite a disused sports field. A two-storey brick building from the 1970s. A sign at the entrance: "Dying With Dignity". You report in.

The director, Ms Sönksen, is expecting you. She is 48, gaunt, polite. She has already received 750-22. The fact that a different analyst has now arrived she does not seem to register. She says she is not surprised. She has not been surprised for three years.

Whom do you wish to speak to first?



WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> **Ms Sönksen, director.**

>> **Nurse Krüger.**

>> **Dr Roth, house physician.**

III. PERSONNEL

Ms Sönksen

The director's office is on the ground floor, looking onto the courtyard. On the wall a row of framed photographs: staff, ordered by date of entry. You count 17 faces.

Ms Sönksen says she is aware of the phenomenon. She has never seen it herself. She has never been there.

"You mean, in there, in Room 7?"

"No," she says. "In the room."

"Which room?"

She raises her hands in front of her, as if to wash them, then sets them back in her lap. She does not see it. She says: "Die young, Analyst, then no one will ask. My first name is Hannelore. I was 21 in the spring."

She is 48.



WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Speak with Nurse Krüger.

>> Speak with Orderly Vogt.

>> View Room 7.

III. PERSONNEL

Nurse Krüger

Nurse Imke Krüger, 43, 14 years at the hospice. She receives you in the staff room. The tea is black. The cups are stoneware.

She accompanied Mrs Behnke, she says. She accompanied Mr Marwedel. In total she has accompanied 9 of 14 patients. She has counted.

"Ms Krüger, the handwashing."

The nurse's hands lie on the table. They are very clean. The cuticle has been pushed back, to a degree you look at too long before you stop.

"We wash our hands," Krüger says.

"Before the end of shift?"

"We wash our hands," Krüger says.

She says it pleasantly, as if that were the answer in full.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Wait for end of shift, observe.

>> View Room 7.

>> Speak with Orderly Vogt.

III. PERSONNEL

Orderly Vogt

Orderly Heiko Vogt, 39, 6 years at the hospice. He receives you in the residents' lounge. In the background the public broadcaster runs with the sound off.

Vogt talks faster than you can listen. He has a brother, a police officer in Heide. He has not called his brother in 11 months. He intends to, every Sunday. He forgets. He has been forgetting a lot lately.

You interrupt. You ask about the man.

Vogt falls silent. He looks at the floor. "I have never seen him. I have heard him."

"How does one hear someone writing?"

Vogt says: "When he means you."

Then he stands, politely, and says he must return to duty. It is his day off.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Visit 750-22's flat.

>> Wait for end of shift.

>> Speak with Dr Roth.

III. PERSONNEL

Dr Roth

Dr Tobias Roth, house physician, 61. His consulting room is in the basement, beside the laundry. On the wall a photograph of his family, five persons, the doctor at centre.

Dr Roth is forthcoming. He co-authored the death records, he confirms the matches, he confirms the blue. "NCS S 4030-R90B," he says. "That is my notation. I was once a wall painter, before I read medicine."

"I will show you Room 7. If you wish."

You wish. On the way, in the stairwell, he remarks in passing: "There are five of us in the family photograph. When I look at it I am never sure which is the second boy. I have only one son."

He says it without stopping.



WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Enter Room 7 with Dr Roth.

>> Review death records together.

>> Speak with Nurse Krüger.

IV. ROOM 7

Eight square metres

Room 7 lies on the 1st floor at the end of the corridor. 8 square metres. No window, which is unusual for a hospice room.

The walls are painted white. The plaster is new. You scrape your thumbnail across the surface. The line comes away red. You look more closely. It is clay from the underplaster, not blood. You wipe your hand on your trouser leg.

Dr Roth says: "Mrs Behnke died here. Mr Marwedel as well. We have replaced the bed. It is always the same bed. I cannot explain that."

In the corner opposite the bed there is no table. On the floor there is a square in which the floor is less waxed than elsewhere. Three drawers on the left would be there, if a table stood there. None does.



WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Return at night.

>> Query the building archive on the tile.

>> Observe end of shift.

IV. RITUAL

End of shift

Shift change is at 22:00. You wait in the staff corridor, half hidden, a notepad on your knee.

At 21:13 Nurse Krüger enters the washroom. You hear the water running.

At 21:17 Orderly Vogt comes out of resident's room 4. He passes Krüger without a word. He stands beside her. There are two basins. He washes.

Neither speaks. You count along. At 43 seconds the rear door opens, and Director Sönksen enters the washroom. She is not on duty. She has been in her office only.

She steps between the two, to the basin that is already taken. She fits there. She washes with them.

You hear three taps. You see two basins.



WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Confront them.

>> Install cameras.

>> Visit 750-22's flat.

IV. TRACES

Norderstrasse 71

Norderstrasse 71 is a tenement of three storeys. On the 2nd floor, at the rear, 750-22 had rented a small flat for the duration of his observation.

The key lies under the doormat. An indication that someone wanted you to come in.

The flat is spatially empty and chronologically not. On the kitchen table stands a cup of cold tea. In the bedroom the bed is made. On the wall of the living room 750-22 has set up a board: 14 Polaroids in a row, the patients. Beside them, separately, a 15th photograph. It shows 750-22 himself.

Beneath it, in his hand: "The table is turned to me. No longer to him."

In the sink: a water glass. Beside it, dried, the print of a hand. The fingers are too long.



WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Compare the handwriting with the file.

>> Photograph the board and leave.

>> Sleep in the flat.

IV. RESEARCH

NCS S 4030-R90B

NCS S 4030-R90B. You call the building protection authority in Kiel, which you consulted on an earlier case.

The clerk, Mr Brammer, knows the notation. It is a blue, he says, used in the 1950s in a single context only. In pathologies. In autopsy rooms. In rooms whose floor sloped to the centre.

"More precisely?"

"More precisely," Brammer says, "it was a special blue for rooms in which on-site documentation was performed. Rooms in which one not only dissected, but also wrote. In the room. At a table."

He adds: "Such rooms did not exist in the Federal Republic. They existed before 1949, in the north. They were plastered over after the war."

"Plastered over?"

"With clay base."



WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Query the Schleswig building archive.

>> View Room 7 again first.

>> Consult the Registry library.

IV. RESEARCH

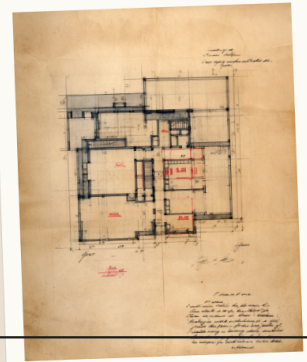
Schleswig building archive

The Schleswig building archive is in the basement of the district office. Ms Hansen, the archivist, is in her late fifties, helpful. She leads you to the rear room with the folders for Bismarckstrasse.

The folder for number 12 lies at the front. It has already been requested this morning. By whom? Ms Hansen checks. The entry book gives your predecessor's number, without a date.

In the folder: building plan 1971. Wegwarte Hospice, new construction on a parcel previously listed as undeveloped. An older plan, 1948, shows a different building. Hall, elongated. Function: not entered. Authority: not entered.

Ms Hansen says quietly: "The building did not belong to the town. It belonged to the Navy." She corrects herself. "Not quite. An office whose remit is recorded as transitional. Nothing further is here."



WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Consult the Registry library.

>> Return to the hospice for night shift.

>> Close the file, request transfer.

IV. RESEARCH

File 117

The Registry library is on the 9th floor. You call from Schleswig. The librarian, whose name you have never asked, searches for the keywords "Wegwarte" and NCS S 4030-R90B.

He calls back an hour later. He sounds thinner than usual.

"There is a precursor. File 117. Closed 1953. Location: not here."

"What do you mean, not here?"

The file went to Registry 750, he says, but is not held in their stock. It is recorded but not present. The 1971 request, in the course of the hospice construction, was answered with the remark: "File is being kept."

"By whom?"

"The remark reads 'is being kept'. It is in the passive voice. There is no indication by whom."

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Request file 117.

>> Return to the hospice.

>> Request transfer.

V. NIGHT SHIFT

The fourth

You return to the hospice at 22:00. Ms Sönksen has gone. Nurse Krüger has the night shift. She leads you to the staff room and places a chair.

"I have told the residents you are here. No one asks any more who you are. You are the fourth today."

"The fourth?"

"The fourth in the chair. This week."

The corridor is quiet. From Room 9 comes Mrs Petersen, 81, dementia, palliative. She has not spoken to Krüger for two days. She looks in your direction. She does not look at you. She says clearly and calmly: "He was on time today."

Then she lets Krüger lead her back to bed.



WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Question Mrs Petersen.

>> Wait through the night in the chair >> Enter Room 7.

V. NIGHT

Three seventeen

You fall asleep without meaning to. It is 03:17.

In the dream you are not in the hospice. You stand in a room, 8 square metres, blue tile, no window. The light comes from above, but you see no fixture. In the centre of the room stands a table of oak, three drawers on the left. On the table lies a file, opened.

No one sits at the table. The chair is turned. It is turned to you.

The file is a case file. You can read the writing. It is your hand. It is yours already now.

At the top of the page it reads: 750-31. Below it a date. The date is three weeks in the future.

You wake. In the staff room the light is off. No one turned it off. Your hands are wet.



WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Check your hands at once.

>> Request file 117 - now.

>> Continue at the hospice.

V. CONTROL

Seven minutes

The next day you install two cameras. One in the staff corridor, facing the washroom. One in Room 7, on the ceiling, concealed in a smoke detector.

At 21:13 Nurse Krüger enters the washroom. Orderly Vogt at 21:17. Director Sönksen at 21:29.

On the recording: Krüger and Vogt wash at two basins. Sönksen comes in and stands between them. She performs the motions. In the picture she is at a basin. In the picture the third basin is not visible.

In Room 7 you watch the recording at speed. Between 03:12 and 03:19 the image is tinted. It shows blue surfaces, a table, a man. He sits with his back to the camera. He writes.

At Wegwarte Hospice there is no such table.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Send the recording to the Registry.

>> Confront the staff.

>> Follow the man into the picture.

V. PATIENT

Mrs Petersen

Mrs Erika Petersen, 81. Dementia for five years. Palliative for two weeks. According to the nursing log she has not spoken since Thursday.

You sit by the bed. It is three in the morning. Nurse Krüger is in the anteroom. Mrs Petersen sleeps, then she does not. She opens her eyes and looks at the ceiling.

"He is asking after you. He has a list. You are not on it. But he has an empty place. He always does that."

"Mrs Petersen."

"You are polite. That does not help. 750-22 was polite as well."

She closes her eyes. She breathes for four more hours. At 07:17 she is dead. Krüger writes the record. Afterwards she washes her hands. Three basins now, you see. There were always three.

You are polite, you think.



WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Confront Sönksen directly.

>> Request file 117.

>> Co-write the death record.

V. DEATH RECORD

Pencil

You take the record yourself. Mrs Petersen, 81, in Room 9. You write in pencil, as is prescribed.

At 04:22 Mrs Petersen opens her eyes. She has been silent for six hours. She says: "He looks across at me from the side. He has not turned the chair. He nods. He makes the entry."

Then, after a pause in which her hand moves on the back of yours without finding it:

"He nods to you, Mr 750-31."

You have not given your number.

Mrs Petersen closes her eyes. She breathes for three more hours.

Beneath your hand, on the form, the pencil has moved without your writing. It is a notation. NCS S 4030-R90B.

You did not write it. You also did not not write it.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Want to see the man.

>> Leave at once.

>> Run a handwriting comparison.

V. CONFRONTATION

We know you

You assemble Director Sönksen, Nurse Krüger and Orderly Vogt in Sönksen's office. You show the recording. You show the death records. You name names, dates, numbers.

No one objects. No one confirms.

Sönksen says: "We know about it. We know that we know about it. It changes nothing. I was 21 in the spring. I was 21 in that same spring of 1969. Once a year I go briefly into the room. I come out again as a 48-year-old. It is always the same spring."

Krüger says: "We wash our hands because otherwise they do not fit in the room. And you are the fourth today. You were also the first. With you, it makes no difference. I do not count in your sequence."

Vogt says: "My brother is a police officer in Heide. I had a brother once. I have not called him in a long time. I have never called him."

Sönksen says: "You are 750-22. We do not know your predecessor. We know you. You were with us nine days."

You have been here eight hours.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Request file 117 now.

>> Search for the truth about yourself >> Abort.

V. SELF

Mirror

In the bathroom of the staff room you stand at the mirror. Your hands are damp. You did not wash them.

Beneath your fingernails the cuticle has been pushed back. Very neatly. You have never done it yourself.

You count. To 47. Then you stop.

The door behind you is closed. In the mirror you see yourself. You see one basin. Behind you, quietly, water is running.

You turn around. There is only the one basin where you are standing.

In the mirror you still see one basin. Behind you, water is running.

You raise your hand to wipe across the mirror. The hand in the mirror does not rise quite at the same moment. It is half a second late. It is polite.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Leave at once.

>> Get in the car, descend further.

>> Call the Registry.

V. COMPARISON

Half-open o

You lay your predecessor's notes beside the death records you took yourself today.

750-22's hand is straighter. The o's are closed. Your own hand, which you know, has half-open o's. It is a tic.

In the Petersen death record the o's are closed.

In the margin note you made for yourself after the call to the library, the o's are half-open.

In the word "forty-seven" that you entered in your notebook in the bathroom, the o's are closed.

You leaf back. In the entry from this midday the o's are half-open. In the entry from this evening they are closed.

You no longer know when you last wrote yourself. You write now. You watch yourself write. The o's are closed.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Request transfer at once.

>> Deeper, into Room 7.

>> Call headquarters.

V. HEADQUARTERS

Ms Albers

From the staff room you dial the direct line to the Registry. It is seven in the morning. Ms Albers is on switchboard, whom you remember because she always uses your first name.

She answers. "Registry 750."

"This is 750-31."

She is silent. "We do not have a 750-31 active in the field. Active numbers in the series are 750-29, 750-30, 750-32. Would you like to leave a message?"

You give your given name. You give your home address. You give your sister's name.

Ms Albers exhales audibly. She says quietly, in a tone she has never used with you: "Are you certain it is your sister?"

She hangs up before you answer.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Drive to Bonn in person at once.

>> Descend further, into Room 7.

>> Abort, file OCHRE.

V. HEADQUARTERS

A7 south

You drive back. Eight hours on the A7 south. Rain begins again in Hamburg. Near Hannover your supervisor calls, who never calls in person. You answer.

"You stop. I am transferring you. Do not tell me where you are driving. Tell me you are stopping. Say it now."

"I am stopping."

"Good. 750-22 said the same. 750-22 called yesterday. From Schleswig."

"Yesterday?"

"From Wegwarte Hospice. From Room 7. He said the table is now turned to him. He asked whether the file is being kept properly. I told him: it is being kept. In the passive voice."

He hangs up. You drive on.

The car knows a route you do not. It takes it.



WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Stop the car, get out.

>> Drive the route the car knows.

>> Turn around, back to Schleswig.

V. WITHDRAWAL

Petrol station Rendsburg

You pack the car. You leave Schleswig at four in the morning. On the A7, just past Rendsburg, you stop at a petrol station. You write the closing memorandum in the car, with the pencil from the death record.

The classification is now due. You know what you are supposed to write. You also know what you could write.

OCHRE means the file rests. It means Wegwarte continues. It means you may go back to your desk.

INDIGO means the file is actively pursued. It means an investigative commission. It means the staff at Wegwarte are interrogated, Room 7 is sealed, the dying are redistributed.

In the mirror of the petrol station lavatory you see yourself. You look polite.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> File OCHRE.

>> File INDIGO.

V. DESCENT

The drawer

You turn back. You drive to Schleswig without sleep. You enter the hospice at 21:00. Nurse Krüger nods to you as if you had never stopped being there.

In Room 7 the bed has been removed. On the floor, where the table would stand, the wax layer has now come away entirely. The wood beneath is oak. It is not the floor of the hospice. It is a tabletop.

You kneel. You see three drawer edges in the floor surface. You open the upper left drawer. It opens.

In the drawer lies a file. On the cover sheet: 750-31, with half-open o's.

Beneath: today. In the same column, with no rule beneath it: three weeks later. Both dates simultaneously on the page, with neither struck through.

Beneath: a chair, turned. Toward you.



WHAT DO YOU DO?

>> Open the file.**>> Close the drawer, flee.****>> Sit down on the chair.**

FILE CLOSED

OCHRE

You file OCHRE. You sign. The file rests.

At the Registry you receive another file. A woman in Munich speaks in her sleep a language no one knows. You return to work. You are in form.

After the end of shift you wash your hands. You no longer count. You stopped counting because counting was knowing, and knowing was tiring.

In the mirror of the lavatory next to your office your reflection is polite. It is half a second late. It has closed o's.

In Schleswig, in the spring, the next patient dies. In the death record a man is described. A table is described. Beside it, newly, a second chair is described. It is turned.

FILE STATUS: 750-OCHRE. ANALYST 750-31: TRANSFERRED, BACK ON DUTY. SECOND CHAIR: REGISTERED.

[RETURN TO COVER]

FILE CLOSED

INDIGO

You file INDIGO. You sign. You transmit the memorandum to headquarters by radio.

24 hours later Wegwarte Hospice is sealed. An investigative commission of Registry 750 takes over. The dying are transferred to other facilities. Eight of them die within 48 hours, three with reports that match.

The staff are removed from duty: Director Sönksen, Nurse Krüger, Orderly Vogt, Dr Roth. They give statements. They do so politely. Afterwards they wash their hands.

You yourself are pulled from the case. Your file is handed to a colleague, 750-32, whom you know from the lift. He is thorough.

You will not return to Schleswig. You have it in writing. Sometimes you believe it.

**FILE STATUS: 750-INDIGO. ANALYST 750-31: REMOVED. SUCCESSOR 750-32: ACTIVE.
CONTAMINATION: NOT EXCLUDED.**

[RETURN TO COVER]

FILE CLOSED

The file

You open the file. It is your file. It is your hand. It reads like a death record, but the date is today. And three weeks later.

You read yourself, dying. You read it word for word. You read that you died politely. You read that the hands were washed.

In the background you hear water running. There are three taps.

At the end of the file there is a note. It is not in your hand. It is in a hand you do not know, but you understand it.

The note reads: "Kept by 750-22. Handover to 750-31 effected. Observation of the handover point: satisfactory."

Then behind you you hear a chair shift. You no longer know whether you can turn around.

FILE STATUS: 750-VIOLET. ANALYST 750-31: OBSERVED. FILE IS BEING KEPT - IN THE PASSIVE.

[RETURN TO COVER]

FILE CLOSED

Portable

You close the drawer. You leave Room 7. You leave the hospice. You drive back. You file a memorandum in which the word OCHRE appears. You sign with half-open o's.

Three weeks later, in a hotel in Frankfurt, at a Registry conference, you step to the basin after the end of shift. Beside you two colleagues wash their hands. You count along. You are polite.

On the flight back to Berlin you feel it for the first time: you have it with you. It came on board.

In Berlin there is no Wegwarte Hospice. In Berlin there is you. You wash your hands before the end of shift. No one asks why. In the mirror of the office lavatory you are polite.

In the spring, someone takes the place beside you.

FILE STATUS: 750-VIOLET. ANALYST 750-31: CARRIER. RITUAL: PORTABLE. TRANSMISSION: CONFIRMED.

[RETURN TO COVER]

FILE CLOSED

The chair

You sit down on the chair. It is no longer turned. It is turned to the table.
Before you lies the file. Open. A blank page. A pencil.

You write. You write the name of a patient who has not yet died. You write
the date. You write the last words that have not yet been spoken.

You hear behind you an orderly opening the door. You hear him making the bed.
You hear a patient breathing.

You write on. It is cold. The light comes from above. The tile is blue.

Sometime, much later, an analyst of Registry 750 enters Wegwarte Hospice. He
carries the number 750-44. He is handed 14 death records. In the 15th a
patient describes you. You nod to her.

**FILE STATUS: 750-VIOLET. ANALYST 750-31: TAKEN OVER. POSITION: PERMANENTLY OCCUPIED.
FILE: BEING KEPT.**

[RETURN TO COVER]

FILE CLOSED

The clearing

The car drives. You no longer intervene.

After three hours it stops at a forest car park north of Schleswig. You get out. It is cold. In the wood behind the car park lies a clearing with the remains of a brick building. Hall, elongated. Function: not entered. Pre-1949.

In the centre of the hall, where the roof is gone, stands a table of oak. Three drawers on the left. On the table a file. At the table sits 750-22.

He looks at you. He nods politely. "Good of you to make it. Only one of us is here at a time. You can take my place if you wish."

You do not wish.

"That changes nothing."

You sit down. The chair is warm. It was warm before you sat down.



FILE STATUS: 750-VIOLET. ANALYST 750-22: RELIEVED. ANALYST 750-31: AT THE TABLE. NEXT PREDECESSOR: SEEKING.

[RETURN TO COVER]

FILE CLOSED

03:13

You enter Room 7 at 03:12. It is quiet. There is no bed. There is a table.
You see it now.

You hold the recorder. You mean to record what you see. It is 03:13.

Then it is 03:20.

The recording from the camera in Room 7, between 03:12 and 03:19, shows the same blue surfaces as before. The table. The man. This time, however, two men. One sits. One stands behind him and watches him write.

At 03:20 the recording is normal again. Room 7 is empty.

The pool car still stands in the hospice yard. In the staff room your notebook lies open. The last entry is in half-open o's. The next is in closed o's. There is none between them.

FILE STATUS: 750-VIOLET. ANALYST 750-31: MISSING. LAST OBSERVATION: 03:13. FILE IS BEING KEPT - BY TWO.

[RETURN TO COVER]