

THE AVENGERS

'OVERKILL'

A Fascist trouble-making unit plan to assassinate the Prime Minister and make capital of the ensuing chaos.

TEASER: Main Line Railway Station. A British AGENT hurries to a phone and calls STEED. "Meet me off the 3.10 at Norborough". Queueing to get into the phone box is a man (SALT), who is sipping a carton of milk through a straw. He wears a hearing-aid, which - camera establishes - has its connection crimped to the window of the box. The Agent completes the call and hurries to his train. Salt follows.

ACT ONE:

1. Mrs. Peel we're wanted.
2. Night. The train hurries through the dark. The Agent returns from the dining car to his carriage. En route he passes a compartment with 'Just Married' written on the door. Establish Bride and Groom.
3. Steed and EMMA arrive at Norborough Station. In the waiting room Steed supplies brief rundown on background of case. A Fascist trouble-making unit has moved its H.Q. and, as it continues to move before a 'fix' can be put on it, Security is finding it almost impossible to pinpoint its new location. Agent believes he has succeeded in making initial break.
4. Agent sits in compartment. TICKET COLLECTOR comes down corridor announcing next stop: "Norborough".

Got to ritualise
this so we spot
it when it happens
next time.

Train slows, then stops. Agent checks "Norborough" sign then gets out, followed by GROOM from 'Just Married' compartment. Train leaves ill-lit station before Agent realises platform and station are deserted. Puzzled, he arrives at exit. Groom materialises out of dark and places pistol against his head. He waits. An express screams by on the up line. As it does so, he shoots. Agent drops dead at his feet. Taxi comes across deserted station yard. Two men get out and collect Agent's body. Groom removes phony Norborough notices from station name-plates.

5. Steed and Emma meet train, which is a few minutes late. Obviously, there is no Agent amongst passengers. At Steed's suggestion, they get on the train.

6. Steed and Emma work their independent ways down the train. (Steed makes enquiries, then leaves, allowing Emma to notice any reactions after he's gone). Apart from red herrings - man with newspaper over his face, coffin in guards van, etc. - they have no success. Steed, pretending that he lent the missing Agent a fiver, is irate; threatening to write to area management etc. The Ticket Collector, a most helpful man and lifelong sufferer from travel sickness, is unable to assist - doesn't remember seeing man at all. Steed passes 'Just Married' compartment, where the Bride is now seated with a different groom: Salt!

7. Steed and Emma, completely baffled, get off the train at terminus. They have just installed themselves in a taxi when an ATTENDANT from restaurant car comes up with

→ Steed notices his face.

an envelope. "A gentleman gave me this. Said to give it to you with his apologies". Steed opens the envelope. It contains a fiver!

ACT TWO:

8. Steed and Emma go to Agent's flat - in hope that maybe he missed the train after all. Inside they find his dead body (powder burns at the side of the head, etc.) and a typed suicide note. Steed, totally unconvinced, finds a piece of paper inside a secret pocket concealed behind the tailor's name tag in the jacket. It says ~~PIERSON~~ and "4 i 67". Emma, remembering his newspaper advert "Give me five minutes and I'll give you a memory", says she'll take Pierson.

per!
If any he'd told me more on the phone!

Emma's watch blown off.

Emma's watch ring of death.

File, writes oriental language.

Jami's saw kit

SALT on train, photo in flat. photo of his loved ones.

SA: Steed pinpoints Salt. (v.p. 4 E 7)

Some sort of cut-away. To Salt at Admiralty? Emma writes him.

9. Emma - as prospective client - meets PROFESSOR PIERSON at his Memory-Expanding Laboratory. (Pierson is comedy character, virtually no memory at all) People work in cubicles with earphones on, etc. Amongst a host of people learning all sorts of extraordinary things, we establish one man developing a memory for 'music concrete'. It's Salt.

10. Steed, having reclaimed the Bentley, meets Emma. He wants to take her for a drive in the country. She is suspicious.

11. The Bentley pulls into the yard of the deserted station. As they inspect, Steed reports. He

Confessio... never trust... written suicide note.

...bodied...

Admiralty: Did you bring the end of the desk?

(Memory because?)

checked with various station masters: the train made no unscheduled stops. However, when it arrived at Norborough it was three minutes late. Yet it was on time when it passed Wrighton signal box only 12 miles away. So something happened between these two points. As they wander round the deserted station, Emma spots wet putty in one of the windows (smashed by the bullet which killed the Agent). Inside the deserted station master's office, they come across something equally puzzling - an empty packet of a gross phials of Quells and a dozen cases of empty Vichy water bottles. As they ponder, they hear muffled sounds from up the platform. Suspense! They pounce. The sounds are made by a TRAIN ENTHUSIAST. He is dismantling an LNER toilet basin - to complete a matching set. The man is a walking-talking expert on trains. He invites them to visit his own station, Chase Halt, another four miles up the line. He confirms that the 3.10 was on time when it passed him. They agree to drop in sometime. As the man sets off up the line with his trophy, Emma and Steed spot remnants of paste on the station name-plate. They now know how the agent was duped.

man bought a
Signal Box,
one day - who
knows - a
station.
Finally - a
terminal. King's
Cross. Most
light - parson
in pen.

He was
lured away.

plate - Norborough.
Mr. Enthusiast work
here.

12. Emma joins Steed who, armed with a railway map, is trying to establish a pattern from the movements of the Fascist H.Q. as pinpointed by radio signals. [He also has photographs of Fascist agents known to be operating in Britain. One of them, Salt, he spotted on the train. He shows the photo to Emma, who also identifies him as a student of the Pierson Memory School. Steed checks the man's cover.

bottles found
jarben

He is a clerk in the Admiralty (safe there as anywhere else).]
 Steed decides to feed him some marketable information and
 let him lead them to the H.Q.

13. Salt, at the Admiralty, acquires the information from a one-eyed ADMIRAL (delusions of Nelson) that the British Nuclear submarine HMS Pyrocantha is in Russian territorial waters photographing defense installations.

14. Salt, followed by Steed, heads straight for the train. Steed takes up his vigil in the opposite corner of the same compartment, "1". The train leaves. Soon afterwards, the Ticket Collector clips their tickets. During the journey, Salt and Steed take tea together in the restaurant car, (served by the Attendant who gave Steed his fiver). They return to the compartment without Salt making contact with anybody. They pass the 'Just Married' compartment. Steed does a double-take as he sees the familiar Bride sitting with another Groom. Steed sits in the seat "4", previously occupied by Salt. Salt asks if he'd mind swapping: travelling with his back to the engine makes him sick. Steed is only too happy to oblige.

The train races through the countryside.

Reprise.
 Steed, anxious to give Salt any encouragement, pretends to dose off. Salt sits patiently reading a Pierson textbook on memory. Suddenly, the Ticket Collector comes down the corridor announcing - exactly as he did before - the next stop: Norborough! Steed, extra-wary,

is surprised when the train actually does pull into Norborough Station. Salt gets off. Steed notes the reserved tag on Salt's seat: 4 i 67. Now fully expecting him to meet his contact, he follows him eagerly into the waiting room. To his obvious amazement, Salt walks straight through and out on to the opposite platform, where he waits for the next train back.

ACT THREE:

15. When a tired and dispirited Steed returns to his flat, he finds Emma waiting for him. He reports negative. Salt must have realized he was being followed. Emma says she hates to break the bad news, but the news about HMS Pyrocantha went out in code over the Fascist radio at 16.49 precisely. Steed is shattered. At that time they were still on the train!

16. As Salt leaves his ^{Admiralty office.} ~~Dolphin Square flat~~, Emma and Steed let themselves in. They search the place. Amongst the usual spy hardware, they come across a stack of London to Norborough railway tickets. Each of them has the middle 'O' of 'Norborough' missing. Emma fits the words to the picture. The dots are the size of a self-respecting micro dot. Steed flicks on a tape recorder. They listen to the mechanical 'diddly-pom diddly-pom' sounds of a train speeding along. Steed suggests a vital portion of the staff of British Railways have been undermined. As they switch off, the door suddenly opens and Salt comes in. Before Steed or Emma can do anything, Salt pitches forward

outside in
his car?

on his face. A knife in the back. Steed suggests the size and importance of the operation can be deduced from his liquidation.

17. Steed visits the Train Enthusiast at his station. He is proudly shown round. As they talk, the 3.10 races through the station. The man complains that it's the one train which affects his radio reception. He doesn't understand it: must be an electrical fault. Steed invites the man to listen to the train recording and try to pinpoint it. The man says there'll be no trouble - he knows the sound of every foot of rail in the U.K. However, it may take time.

18. The Ticket Collector comes along the corridor to the 'Just Married' compartment. This time the blinds are pulled. He gives a coded knock. The door is quickly opened and, after his entrance, quickly closed. The Bride and Groom are working inside installing an H.E. bomb under the seat. The Groom enquires if there will be any trouble getting this particular carriage on 'that train'. The Ticket Collector confidently tells him not to worry.

Afterwards, the Ticket Collector returns to the restaurant car and goes through into the galley kitchen, which we now reveal as the Fascist H.Q.: computers, masses of radio equipment, telex, etc. Queasily, he downs a couple of Quells with a glass of Vichy water.

19. Our Train Enthusiast is still puzzling over the tape-recording when he is ^{with} arrested by ^{one} two suspicious men,

purporting to come from the Special Branch. He is taken away, protesting.

His protestations.

20. In a siding. Railway police, aided by the same Railways Attendant, vet the compartment (with the bomb under the seat) as being suitable, i.e. special double size ash trays, etc. It's obviously for some dignitary - who we don't yet reveal.

Equally ... P.P.S. eccentric.

look for his mark.

21. Steed returns to the Railway Enthusiast for the analysis of the recording. There he meets a suspicious S.B. MAN (codeword for day etc.). Steed eventually satisfies him that he is genuine. S.B. man says ENTHUSIAST left message for Steed: the recording wasn't of a train at all! Almost as an afterthought, Steed enquires what interest Special Branch has. Man tells him the line has been security cleared for the Prime Minister's journey. Steed suddenly realizes what is afoot.

old friend of Steed. (changes his name).

Keep enthusiast in.

didn't say not say.

22. Emma - acting on Steed's instructions - catches the train. When the woman opposite lowers her magazine, we realise it's the Bride. As the train pulls out, an electronic device is set in motion by the Ticket Collector. On a map the first of two miniaturised trains starts to advance towards the other.

Review kitchen ops room for first time.

23. The train makes its scheduled stop at Norborough. Among the passengers joining it is Steed. He is accompanied by a great dane wearing a blanket coat round its middle. His arrival is spotted by the Ticket Collector.

Steed, casing the train, sees his dog safely installed in the guard's van.

He then joins but - because of other passengers - doesn't 'recognise' Emma. Playing Garrulous George, Steed shows his fellow travellers the evening paper with its news of the Prime Minister's journey. He's worked out that the two trains pass at Durbridge Junction at about 8 p.m.

24. casing, casing
The Prime Minister - all white mac and pipe - is escorted to his seat. The train leaves.

25. The Ticket Collector, in the kitchen/H.Q., now starts the second miniaturised train on its journey. From now on, the two 'trains' progress along the line like mercury in a thermometer.

26. The Prime Minister sits, knocking out his pipe on the actual bomb casing.

27. Restaurant car. Steed, completing his tea, is joined by the Groom who sinisterly blocks off his exit at gun point; (gun is the teapot gun with spout levelled at Steed's heart). We see its effectiveness, when, as the train goes screaming through a tunnel, the Groom shoots the heads off the flowers on the table. Steed ruminatively fingers the bullet hole in the seat beside him. The Groom is a man with a death-wish: for other people. Sees his role in life as that of perennial groom escorting brides to altar of Death.

China or
Indian?

ACT FOUR:

28. On the map we see the distance between the two trains has appreciably lessened.

Emma sits worrying about Steed's non-reappearance.

29. Steed, the prisoner, is given a tourist guide of the kitchen by the Ticket Collector. His attention is caught by the button, under glass, which when pressed will detonate the bomb. He is also given a lecture on how Fascists will capitalise on the P.M.'s death.

30. The train speeds through the night. A car, parked close by the railway, radios the train's progress to H.Q.

31. The Attendant, casually passing down the corridor, spots Emma and breaks the news to the Ticket Collector. Orders for her elimination are 'scrambled' by the computer into train sounds and relayed

32. ... Via the lamp fitting over the seat, to the Bride who sits opposite Emma. To Emma's obvious amazement, she suddenly finds herself staring down the barrel of a gun. There is a fight. Emma, of course, wins. Desperate, she pulls the communication cord - nothing happens. She goes down the corridor towards the restaurant car but finds that the end of the train is now locked off. With no other alternative, she opens the door and climbs out on to the side of the train.

33. As the train approaches the site chosen for the explosion, (furthest point from any town) Steed is taken by the Groom into the guard's van. The heavy doors are slid open. Steed makes a dying man's request. Would they give his dog some water? The dog grabs the Attendant's wrist and pins him to the floor. Steed deals with the Groom as Emma comes swinging in through the open door. Steed next removes the dog's blanket. Packed inside, like a car's tool bag, is a selection of assorted weapons.

34. The final confrontation is in the kitchen/H.Q. Steed and the Ticket Collector fight over the all-important button. The two trains are within a very few miles of one another and Durbridge Junction. Eventually, the Ticket Collector throws Steed off and triumphantly succeeds in pressing the button ... but Emma has already ripped out the connecting leads. As Steed and Emma split a bottle of Vichy and recover their breath, the Prime Minister's train screams past on the adjacent line.

9th January, 1967.

ROGER MARSHALL.