

“Shaken-not-Stirred,” Stirs Up Clients Cont. from page 1

The invitations for the “secret agents” coming to the party to discover their new assignment, included simulated passports with “alias” IDs, (photos of HCA staff members). The passport included the Name (principals or staff), Code name, Cover (their title in the firm), and Previous Missions (projects the person had worked on).

The copy in the invitation read, “There has been a breach at Hickok Cole Headquarters. Design secrets have been stolen and we believe it is an inside job. Your Mission: Operation Guest List. Report to headquarters on Thursday May 10th. In your enclosed dossier you will find: a passport with your alias....” and so it went.

A translucent vellum red envelope encased a card with a decoder band of red vellum, which revealed secret notes that could be seen when the band was moved.

The invitation continued. “We are hosting this event as a way to secure the intelligence needed to complete your next profitable mission,” (obviously alluding to the client’s next project), “Please look around, mingle, exchange market intelligence, but remember, nothing to draw suspicion. Keep your eyes open and your wits about you, but have a good time. There will be a martini bar as well, it is a party after all.”

Sarah had sent a save-the-date electronic invitation via email, with a note that they would “self-destruct” if they

were passed on to others. Some clients really got into the party theme.

“I just received your invitation to the “top secret” gathering on May 10th. The package was probably the most creative invitation I’ve seen very well done my friends. Too bad that I teach RPA courses on Thursday evenings and that Agent B will be “under cover” elsewhere. Damn, your event sounds like a blast!! It will be a true crime to miss it. Perhaps I can bag the class altogether and have my small army of students infiltrate Q’s fortress and pilfer a martini or two. Mission impossible, you say? Perhaps not. You’ve been warned ... be on the lookout for imposters next Thursday evening.”
Brian A. “Agent B” Cass, CPA, CFA, Akridge | SVP & CFO.

Other consultants couldn’t resist an overt marketing message in their RSVP.

Attn: Headquarters: Special experts D. Wilmot and J. Devlin of the Washington area’s most elite code consulting firm (Schirmer Engineering) will be in attendance for the special meeting on Thursday May 10. Our agents have been given orders to assist your team members with any “specialized covert design operations” you have undertaken. They have successfully broken the encrypting messages of the DC and model building codes before, no challenge is too big. We are happy to be of service on this mission, see you then.
David P. Wilmot, P.E.
SCHIRMER ENGINEERING CORPORATION

At the party all of the guests were provided with invisible ink-decoding pens. James Bond movies were shown on a loop, and sound tracks from the movies were played.

As a themed event, the party was both elegant and low-key while obviously a 007 scenario. Comments from participants attest to that.

“I loved this year’s party! We actually look forward to the night. You guys always have a first class event, with the finest crowds. It’s one of the premier events in the District. While we’ve been going to it for years—it’s still a great time with great people. Thanks for inviting us — we wouldn’t miss it. By the way, did we win the car?”
Douglas Development Corporation, Premier Washington DC developer.

No, they didn’t get the Aston Martin, but the winner of the raffle did get passes to the Spy Museum and Restaurant. For more information, contact Marilynn Deane Mendell at 202-667-9776, or mmendell@hickokcole.com.

Previous HCA events included the “Big Brand Ranch” party, based on a western theme, that celebrated the firm’s new branding. It was described in the June 2006 issue of A/E Rainmaker. Another event, “Art Night,” turned the HCA office into a modern art museum in conjunction with the Washington Project for the Arts\Corcoran. It was described in the December 2006 issue of A/E Rainmaker. The creative, specially designed invitations for both events were illustrated in full color in *PSMJ’s Databank of the Best AEC Promotional Material on the Planet*. For more information contact Bruce Lynch at 800-537-7765.