

Josef, Boy from Brazil

by Noah Friedman

I noticed his pistol before his pissbag and I knew then that failure not only had a face but a balding head, too and after two decades of Pan-American boarding passes, target practice and Krav Maga maneuvers in hotel mirrors, the nightmarish pressures of the past that had converged with the greater ones of the future seemed to shrivel into dust. I was sent to put a bullet in his brain so we could put a bandage over our hearts. But they wanted his scalp, too. Amos, who had met him once, claims that even dried ink sears the flesh at the sight of those gap teeth. I found him, guarded by Paraguayans on an open field. He was the sweeper. And so was I, squatting the bush with the breath of a thousand year Reich beating against my neck as he sniped a futbol gone astray from his feet with his Walther, and I witnessed a dynasty deflate like the Hindenburg.

So I left.

