

Many Dead Bankers

SAS Para-Ops, #1

by Casey Christie, ...

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1 ... thru ... Chapter 15

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This novella is a work of fiction. In some cases true life figures appear but their actions and conversations are entirely fictitious. All other characters and descriptions of events are the products of the author's imagination and any resemblance to actual persons or locations are entirely coincidental.



Canary Wharf, London. Midweek lunch time. The sound of gunfire reverberates under the hulking structures of the Canary Wharf skyscrapers. The Wharf and its bankers are under terrorist attack by extremists in black kevlar combat gear and with fully automatic assault rifles. Bankers and their families are cut down in broad daylight and the authorities and their unarmed police force are powerless to stop the slaughter.

Mark Andrews, an out of shape, retail bank manager, sits at a bar in the middle of the mayhem and waits for his one true love, Amelia Brown.

Then he receives a surreal phone call from his mysterious friend, John Taylor—is he British Army SAS? And can he help Mark save himself, Amelia and the city's bankers? The drama proceeds at a cracking pace and Mark Andrews is tested to his limit—and beyond.

Chapter 1

Canary Wharf. One o'clock lunch. Thousands of workers stream down and out of the massive buildings housing the headquarters of the world's biggest and most powerful banks. Suited and booted. Tired and wired. Money made and money lost. It's time for a pint and a bite to eat.

Canary Wharf tube station is buzzing. Throbbing with people. Dozens of individuals a minute ride the escalators from the depths of the Jubilee Underground Line through to the top of the moving stairs and out of the station entrance into daylight and under the hulking structures of the cluster of the Canary Wharf skyscrapers and the famous LED stock market ticker on the Thomson Reuters building.

There investment banker James John waits for his family—his wife and their three beautiful daughters. Today is a good day for James and his household. A large deal he has been working on for over a year has just come to fruition. His bonus will be a big one. It will allow them to climb out of the pit of debt they now find themselves in. A nice holiday and presents for the kids. So today they will

celebrate. The kids, the twins both aged twelve and their little sister aged nine, have all taken the day off of school. Special like. To be with daddy on his big day!

He waits patiently scanning the crowd for his loved ones as they emerge from the station entrance. Finally there they are—easy to spot against the automatons that work the square mile in their grey and black suits, unkind and uncaring; Bankers, money is their business. Easy to know why he loves them so, his family that is, *not the bankers*. His wife is a stunning brunette of Italian blood, smooth olive skin. His daughters a powerful counterpoint to their striking mother, all flowering blondes, fair English skin, glowing bright, happy energy. Today will be a good day he thinks to himself and he smiles.

They see him and in moments are closing in on their daddy. He leans down and rests on one knee. Opens his arms, his youngest squeals in delight.

“Daddy!”

CRACK!

CRACK!

CRACK!

The sound of a whip, unleashed, again and again, another and another.

What’s going on James thinks to himself?

He turns around to face the direction of where the whip is being lashed, to see the lashing whip and its master and the reason for a public flogging.

He sees clearly now that it’s no whip. But what then? He squints his eyes against the sideways London light and through the throng of the human herd and makes out four small figures, female figures, children perhaps, no they are bigger than that, small men? Dressed in black, all black, dark combat gear? All wearing balaclavas, in Canary Wharf?

A woman screams, and then another, and another.

“Keep quiet you silly women, I’m trying to see what’s going on?” James says to himself half-heartedly.

Guns? Are those guns in their hands? Machine guns.. Is one of them pointing that thing at me?

He feels something thud against his chest, his chest? Then he feels hair, human, soft beautiful aromatic hair, strawberries.. his little one. He had bought her the special shampoo the night before. She smells heavenly. *She is his heaven.* He turns, holds her tight and stands on his feet. He finally realises what is going on. And he knows what he must do. He must save his family, he must get them to safety! Fast!

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!

But what is he holding, it’s not his Vicky, his lovely, wonderful little love Victoria. What is it? He holds out straight armed in front of him to examine it from a distance. He sees his little Vicky’s body. Her face, her legs, her arms her eyes but..

It’s, she’s not, her, there. He looks to his right and now sees and hears the screaming woman. It’s Adona, his bello bella, his wife. She is screaming but it’s more of a moan, filled with pain, sadness, madness and shock! Angry, she cries.

In an instant his eyes swell with tears. He chokes as his throat fills with emotion. He knows what’s happening but denial is safe. For the time being denial is safe.

“What’s wrong my love, my beauty, why do you cry?” he barely mutters.

She falls to her knees. Her children in her arms. Either side, limp. Dead, or dying. Dead.

He drops to his knees, both of them this time, the body of Vicky still in his arms, but held at a distance. He quickly realises and pulls her close into his chest. He looks at his wife, speechless, for what can he say? Her eyes widen, large and instantaneously empty. The light in them, that indefinable light vanishes. Blood trickles out of the side of her mouth. Adona slumps backwards. Her children’s carcasses lie either side of her own. They are all gone. The important parts have left their bodies. Bodies which were shut down so cruelly by 7.62mm rounds of an AK47 Assault Rifle.

CRACK! CRACK!

James is still there though. On the floor outside Canary Wharf tube station. People scatter around him, people scream. Men and women scream and run and hide and die.

For a moment he is caught in limbo. No longer here nor there. Dead or alive. He breathes but he is empty. Moments pass and he waits. He waits for the bullet to pierce his body. He smiles, he knows he will see his loves again. He happily waits for the reaper’s round. He waits but it does not come. More moments pass and his mood changes from happiness to great anger. He places the body of Vicky with her sisters and mother and he stands. He knows what he must do. And he knows that he will do it.

He turns. His mind tells him that by now his family’s killers will be far, or at least further from here. In the Shopping Centre perhaps? But no. Standing directly behind him he sees one of the small figures dressed all in combat black. Weapon at his side.

His right hand holds the machine gun but then what is in his left hand.

What is he pointing at me? James thinks to himself.

It’s a handheld high definition video camera streaming live to the internet.

“A camera? You are filming this?” spits James.

He can see the small figure smile. Beneath the ski mask he can see the killer of his family contort its wicked face into a smirk.

James’s blood boils. He will kill this coward. He will kill this sadistic malevolent being. Every muscle in his body tenses, adrenalin known only to those who witness death and whose own life is under mortal threat, surges through his body. Tunnel vision, no more noise, no more sound, he goes deaf as a result of the epinephrine. He charges at the terrorist with all his might, with all his power. He will kill and meet death head on. Fighting on his feet. Roaring to avenge his family.

He charges hard and fast and true, powerful and good. He has no fear. He feels no pain..

He feels no wound as his futile attempt to reach the killing, cowardly, terrorist comes to its obvious end as the merchant of death lifts his weapon of destruction and fires the tumbling rounds of doom into James’s body. Once, twice, again, one more, five, six... nine bullets later and James is dead at the feet of one of the twelve terrorists who now attack London. Attack London at its financial core.

London and it’s Canary Wharf are under terrorist attack.

Chapter 2

Fifteen minutes earlier..

Mark Andrews sits at the All Bar One restaurant situated opposite the entrance to the Canary Wharf tube station. He's a divorced 31 year old retail bank manager. He was once a big, strong, good looking man. Not now though. Well he's still big and good looking, under the flab, but more overweight than just clean, good big. Not fat as in obese but he has a belly, a fairly large belly, and the beginnings of a double chin. He is naturally big boned and stands at 6 foot 2 inches. He used to play 1st team rugby. He used to like being alive. His hair is thinning and greying. He still has his piercing baby blue eyes though. And they still attract as much attention as when he was the old Mark.

He doesn't know it but those baby blues of his are the reason he sits where he now sits. Mark is waiting for his first girlfriend since his nasty divorce from the woman he now simply refers to as *The Demon Whore*.

He waits, quite excitedly, which is very unusual for Mark, for Amelia Brown. He loves her. He really loves her. Adult love. Mature love. Something he had not known when he had married *The Demon Whore*. How could he have known real love at the tender age of nineteen? Married at just twenty two.

"*You young lust struck fool!*" he mutters to himself before bringing the cold pint of Grolsch beer to his lips.

Now he remembers just why he was so *lust struck!* *The Demon Whore* was and still is incredibly, strikingly beautiful. Sexy and she knows it! That's part of the problem. Marriage wasn't enough for *The Demon Whore*. She demanded more, you see she liked the male attention, loved it in fact. And loved it as much in the bedroom. In Mark's bedroom. With other men. With bankers, with anyone. Even Mark sometimes. Even afterwards until Mark walked in on *The Demon Whore* and his best friend. Doggy style with another couple. In his bed.

Did he kill them? Did he at least beat the living daylight out of them? Did he scream and shout, throw a few things in anger. Rant and rave?

No.

He simply left and never came back. The Demon Whore engaged the services of a big shot, big city lawyer, who raped Mark for nearly everything he had. Not actually, only figuratively. Left him near homeless though.

Anyway life went on for Mark. Our Mark.

He worked and he worked hard. And he didn't really know why he worked so hard but his job kept him going. It kept him eating, sleeping and breathing. Even though it was a daily 2 hour commute in and out of the Square Mile from where he lay his head at night.

He drank too. He drank a lot. Of alcohol that is, not milk. So much so that he got himself into an AA programme. But yes, he still drinks, but doesn't consider himself a drunk. Who does? In truth he joined the AA programme as more of a social thing than anything else. Like a club to meet new people. And that's exactly what happened. He met the two most important people he now knows at that AA club. Wonderful Amelia and mysterious John Taylor.

Chapter 3

Mark checks his wrist watch and drains the last of his pint. Amelia should be with him momentarily.

He receives a text message on his Blackberry. It's Amelia.

"Running late. Missed my station on the DLR. Getting off at West India Quay instead. Should we skip lunch & watch a cheeky movie instead? It's dark in there xxx"

"Always running late Amelia" Mark thinks to himself and shakes his head. *"And you never stick to the plan."* He smiles as he knows this is just one of the reasons he loves her so.

He replies: *"Okay babe. But only because it's dark in there x ;) I'll just finish my drink and head over. What should we watch?"*

Mark swiftly gets the attention of the waitress and orders another pint and the bill.

Amelia responds: *"Cheeky bugger. I dunno, I'll surprise you. Just get here and bring your game face Sexy Eyes! x"*

It's lunch hour now and Mark notices the hordes of people starting to emerge from the massive buildings around him. It's Mark's one day off yet he still chooses to come into the Wharf. He likes it here. It's always buzzing and people always seem to have a purpose here. It's very clean too. Usually he would get to the cinemas via the DLR but now he's trying to lose weight he decides he'll walk it. Around the buildings, over the road, past the fountain and over the water on the pedestrian footbridge into the Quay through the shopping complex, over the road and then into the Cineworld next to the Fitness First. An enjoyable and scenic ten minute walk. Amelia had shown him the route a week before.

Mark's Blackberry makes a noise once more. This time it's a message from John. Mark has saved his number in his phonebook as *The Tailor*.

"Mark, Are we still a go for this evening. 2000hrs at the Boisdale?"

"Roger that drill sergeant!! 2000hrs on the dot" reads Mark's reply.

Mark laughs out loud at the speech patterns of *The Tailor*. He still thinks he's in the army! But what exactly do you do now my friend?

"And bring an extra liver. For tonight we drink!" is the quick reply text.

"I may just be a civi John but I can hold my own! And the jazz don't forget the jazz mate!"

"I live for the jazz mate. Out."

Chapter 4

The waitress delivers Mark his pint and the bill. He pays her immediately and gives her a very generous tip—Why not? He's happy. He's actually really happy.

The waitress who can't be a day over 20 takes the money and accepts the substantial tip without a word and walks away. Mark thinks nothing of it until she turns on her heel and walks back to the table.

"Hey mister, I'm off after the Bankers have their lunch, wanna wait for me to finish and then grab a couple of drinks with me and my friends—there's gonna be some great jazz tonight playing around the corner?" said the waitress.

Mark's lost for words. He is gobsmacked by what he hears, not least because earlier on he had admired the young lass's beauty but had admonished himself thinking "*She'd feel sick if she even knew I thought she was beautiful.*" Not so it now seems. He feels his face turn red.

The young waitress, a fiery red head, perceives his shock and shyness and attempts to add some levity to, what she realises, is a very straight forward proposition.

"You can be our... chaperone?" She says with a cheeky smile.

Her device works and the chubby man smiles.

Mark feels his embarrassment pass and his cheeks cool as though an air conditioning unit has just been switched on above his head.

"I would love to, I really would. But I am meeting my... girlfriend... at the cinema now. We're going to watch a movie" he finally says.

"You're going to watch a movie at the cinema? Imagine that. Of all the places to do such a thing" quips the redhead.

Mark feels his face begin to flush once more but fights the urge to retreat within himself once again. After all this young lady is his junior by at least ten years.

"Ah but you see we're really not going to watch a movie at all in the cinema. It's the privacy a show house provides that we really require" he says with a wink and a smile.

This time it's the young red head that blushes. Making her look innocent and even more attractive.

"Well mister perhaps I'll see you around some time." And she turns and walks to a customer who had been demanding her attention.

Well, well, Mark thinks to himself. Life isn't that bad after all.

He looks at his beer in front of him and decides that he won't have it. He doesn't need it. He stands and puts his hand on his suit jacket ready to remove it from his chair. Just then he notices James, a friend of a friend he had met at a work do a couple of weeks earlier. He was a friendly fellow with a quick smile and a childish grin. He walks past Mark a few paces in front of him heading towards the Tube Station entrance. Mark calls out to him but to no avail.

Mark's mobile phone rings. It's from an unknown number. He answers the call.

"Hello?"

"Mark. It's John, mate."

"John, ha-ha, how are you my friend? Everything all right? We're still on for tonight aren't we?"

"We'll see. Sit down won't you?"

"Sit down, why?"

"Just sit down my friend. Trust me. And do it now!"

"What? But I was just going to say hello to a friend and then I've got to meet Amelia at the cinema.."

“Sit down!! Now. Please Mark. Now sit *down*.”

Almost without consciously thinking about it he sits. His jacket now on. He instinctively realises something is very unusual about this call—*aside from the fact that his best friend is commanding him to sit down*. John’s voice seems concerned, sad, troubled yet full of authority and sincerity. Mark hears his subconscious tell him:

Listen to John.

Chapter 5

“Okay, I’m sitting.”

“Good. Do you have your blue tooth head set with you?”

“Yes, of course, I always do, I use it at work.. John what’s this all..”

“Put it in. Now. Quickly. We don’t have much time” commands John, cutting across Mark mid-sentence.

Mark does what he is told and within moments he has reached into his jacket pocket and removed his trusty ear piece and inserted and activated it. He places his Blackberry into his hip side phone holder.

“It’s in. Now please tell me what the hell is going...”

CRACK!

CRACK!

“Can you still hear me Mark?”

“Yeah... yes but what is that noise, what’s...”

“Please Mark be quiet now and just listen and do exactly what I say. Trust me my friend. I cannot explain right now what is happening but in time things will become clearer. Now finish that beer, drink all of it!”

“What? No? You’ve gone mad John...”

CRACK!

Then Mark sees something. But it can’t be can it, really be? He sees figures, small figures dressed all in black and they are shooting guns. They are shooting people with machine guns. He sees his friend, James, again, but why is he on his knees and what’s he holding?

CRACK!

CRACK!

Then he sees that James has a little girl in his arms, she’s limp, she’s dead. Then he notices James put the little girl next to the body of a woman and another two little kids.

CRACK!

Time starts to slow down. Mark thinks he is going deaf. He sees James get up now. He sees him turn and charge the small figure all in black who had been firing a machine gun. He must have been the one that killed them. Mark looks at the small figure now and sees he’s holding a video camera. Pointing it at James. Then with his other hand he raises his machine gun once more and fires. But Mark doesn’t see what happens next as it’s chaos now. People are running everywhere. Running and falling and dying.

CRACK!

“Mark. Mark. **Marcus**, *Hear* me.”

“Yes, yes I can hear you but who is this? What’s going on?”

“You know who it is. It’s John. Your friend. You are in shock... Because London is under attack by terrorists.”

“The little boys dressed in black with the machine guns, are... terrorists? but it can’t be I have to go watch a movie with my Amelia and then I’m meeting John at the Boisdale...” said Mark.

“They are not little boys. They are highly trained men. And they are not carrying machine guns—they are carrying AK47 assault rifles. And your job today is not to watch a movie with Amelia but to save Amelia’s, and many other people’s, lives. And the only way you are going to do that is if you listen to exactly what I say! Now be silent, be very still for the moment and listen to me. Or let Amelia and many others die.”

Chapter 6

Charlie Whisky Three. That’s Charlie Whisky Three of the Charlie Whisky attack element—Four men in total per element. Three elements in total. Charlie Whisky is code for Canary Wharf. And Charlie Whisky’s job is to drive back, kettle and cut down and kill as many bankers within the Canary Wharf district as possible.

Charlie Whisky Three keeps replaying his orders over and over again in his mind in the vehicle on the way to Charlie Whisky’s drop off point where they will commence their attack.

The DOP is Bank Street as it becomes Heron Quays. It’s perfect for their designs as it’s right alongside the entrance to the Canary Wharf Jubilee Line Tube Station. Their attack will force the bankers back into the underground and back into the shopping centre. Where they can be killed like rabbits in a hat.

“Open fire, shoot in small bursts and kill everything and everyone in sight. Drive them Underground and into the shopping centre and our comrades will do the rest” were the words of Charlie Whisky Three’s Team Leader Charlie Whisky One. None of the Charlie Whisky Element Members had ever met before or even knew each other’s names. They are simply Charlie Whisky One, Two, Three and Four. They came together for the first time only one hour earlier in an abandoned warehouse in the Docklands of the East End. And already had their full face mask balaclavas on, covered by thick winter jackets and hoodies – not out of place in the freezing December temperatures and in the current yob climate. They had no idea what each other physically looked like. The only characteristic that could betray their collective identity was their diminutive size. They were all under 5.5 foot tall and were slightly built. And as per their training only Charlie Whisky One said anything at all.

Charlie Whisky Three did not like his Team Leader. In the short time he was in his presence he came to realise that his commander was a madman, a psychopath. But then what was Charlie Whisky Three? He was about to gun down innocent, unarmed civilians. And why? This was not what he had joined the army

for. But he was here. Now. And if he did not play his part he would be killed. And as promised by Charlie Whisky One his family would also be killed. Raped, tortured and murdered.

“Open fire, shoot in small bursts and kill everything and everyone in sight. Drive them Underground and into the shopping centre and our comrades will do the rest.”

He looked to the front seat and noticed Charlie Whisky One pull out a video camera from his satchel. *“With this my brothers we will show the world how the brotherhood deals with infidels and capitalists! Today the world will change and we will be the cause of that change- at the end of this day there will be Many Dead Bankers.”*

The driver of the vehicle, Charlie Whisky Two laughed. He laughed long, loud and hard.

Moments later Charlie Whisky One spoke once more.

“We arrive in less than a minute and our mission has already been successful my brothers. We have fooled their intelligence agencies and bypassed their border controls. We have smuggled weapons into their weapon-free country and we have driven through their streets with complete freedom while being armed and war ready. Now is the easy part. We will meet no resistance—their police don’t even carry guns. And we will be victorious. Now load your weapons and prepare to kill and remember your initial orders, after that just shoot.”

Charlie Whisky Three did what he was told and loaded his 30 round magazine into his AK47 assault rifle and cocked it. He glanced across the back seat and saw Charlie Whisky Four do the same thing. Then he checked his webbing—it contained nine more magazines—giving him and each of his comrades 300 rounds of ammunition to slaughter with. They each had a small bag on their hip and in each container were five grenades. Each man wore heavy kevlar armour—on their legs, arms, torso and neck. The only parts of their bodies exposed and easily vulnerable to gun fire were their faces and skulls.

Seconds later and their people carrier stopped on Heron Quays. In the middle of the road and across it diagonally. Blocking traffic from both directions as per instruction. Charlie Whisky Three’s first order of business was to kill the driver of the vehicle on his side of the street to further ensure a road block with the dead person’s car.

He exited the people carrier and looked on in shock as a London Black Cab failed to stop in time and crashed into the driver’s side of their vehicle. He saw that the hood of the people carrier had come clean off and had been pushed forward through the windshield and had decapitated Charlie Whisky Two.

But before he could even properly register what had just happened his two comrades opened fire. Unleashing death and mayhem in the busy street. Charlie Whisky One killed the London Cabbie, spraying his AK through the airbag that had cushioned the taxi driver’s impact, sending blood and brains into the vehicle, staining the life saving device. Charlie Whisky Four on the opposite side of the vehicle had done his job and had killed an elderly driver of a station wagon vehicle.

Charlie Whisky One had done Charlie Whisky Three’s job for him. And Charlie Whisky Three was relieved. No way for a terrorist to think or feel, he thought to himself. But he was scared. In fact, he was shitting himself. Not because he was

afraid of dying but because he was afraid of killing. Now Charlie Whisky One glared at him. Angry. And Charlie Whisky Three swore to himself that his terrifying commander had just read his thoughts.

“Now move forward brother comrades. And kill. Kill, Kill!” said Charlie Whisky One.

With that Charlie Whisky One and Charlie Whisky Four moved, firing their weapons. He was rooted to the spot and couldn't move. His rifle lay at his side harmless. He noticed the bankers and the civilians. He was astonished that the majority of them hadn't seemed to have noticed the car accident or the firing of the guns. The people who evidently had noticed stood still and looked at them with their mouths open. Most continued to walk on as usual, either talking on their phones or listening to music on their headphones. *Are these people so cut off from the rest of the world that cars can collide and people can die mere metres away from them and they don't even notice?* Charlie Whisky Three thought to himself.

Slowly though, people started to realise what was happening. Charlie Whisky Three looked at One and noticed his actions—after the initial burst of fire and a dozen people lay dead on the floor before them and in front of the busy tube station. He saw that One lowered his weapon and raised his camera. But what was he focusing on? He looked where One was pointing the camera and saw a man. A suited man, a banker, kneeling on the floor. A child, a dead little girl, in his arms. The banker then placed the child on top of a woman who lay lifeless in front of him with a child on either side.

But had they just done this? In mere moments? And how long had they been here for, how long had they been killing for? Charlie Whisky Three thought to himself. He had lost track of time and thought he was starting to lose his mind. But had he fired his weapon? He looked at his rifle and he saw that it was raised. He looked at the barrel and saw that it was smoking. Then his heart stopped and he noticed that his rifle was aiming at the dead family. He looked down and saw bullet casings scattered around his feet. Had he killed them? He looked down at his weapon once more and turned it to remove the magazine, he looked at it—and saw that it was empty. He had fired every one of the 30 rounds it housed. He had murdered that man's wife and daughters.

He was brought out of his trance by the man whose family he had just killed. At first he slumped as though he was dead but seconds later he rose to his feet and turned. But he didn't see Charlie Whisky Three. He did see One though. And he saw that he was filming him. He heard the man hiss something at One but could not understand what he had said as he didn't understand English. The man charged at One.

What a fool Charlie Whisky Three thought as he watched One casually raise his rifle and cut the running family banking man to shreds. Then One looked at Three and walked closer while calmly still firing his weapon into the crowd of people running towards the shopping centre and Underground, some of them fell as he fired.

He came close enough to communicate and then smiled at Three and said in their native tongue:

“Well done brother. I am proud of you. You have killed well. But this is only the beginning. See, they run like cowards and rats, exactly how we knew they would.”

Now you go towards that bar and kill everyone there and then move into the shopping centre.” One patted Three on the back and instructed Four, who had been firing his weapon nonstop, to follow him. And they moved off towards the station and the escalators moving deep Underground.

Charlie Whisky Three looked up at his next target, the bar, and noticed only one man still sitting at an outside table of the venue. He had a headset on and it looked as though he was talking to someone. Charlie Whisky Three snorted and said out loud to himself.

“The fool hasn’t even realised what’s going on. Idiot. I will kill him! I will kill that fat banker next!”

Chapter 7

“John. One of them is walking towards me” said Mark.

“Good. Has he seen you?” asked John.

“Yes. And why is that good?”

“Because you need his weapon.”

“What the hell are you talking about? I don’t know how to use a machine bloody gun! ...”

“Calm down Mark and get up and walk to the first door of the bar, enter and wait behind and to the left of it, quickly. And make sure our guy sees you do it.”

Without a word Mark did what he was told. The terrorist was about 20 metres away and closing. By Mark’s reckoning and own experience it would take him just under 10 seconds to reach the entrance where he now waited, maybe longer within all the chaos and death.

“Okay, I’m here, now what?”

“Did he see you move into that entrance?”

“Yes, and what the bloody hell am I going to do when he comes after me?”

“You are going to kill him. Now don’t respond or answer back Mark, just listen. When he comes through that door the odds are his weapon is going to be lowered and in the firing position. Perfect for you in your location to grab it and take it from him...”

“Are you bloody well insane and then what am...”

“And then you are going to raise him off his feet and head butt...”

As John’s words trailed off from *head butt* Mark saw the muzzle of an AK47 Assault Rifle appear in the entrance to the All Bar One. But he froze. He froze in fear. He was a deer in headlights and he was failing. Fail.

“Act! Act Mark. Act now!” He could hear John saying the words over the phone. But he could not, he was paralysed with fear and self-doubt.

A moment later and the weapon which was now fully within the doorway started to spit hot lead from its venomous mouth. The muzzle flash searing into Mark’s face. For a split second he thought he was dead. Until he realised the weapon was still facing across him and not at him. He looked in the direction the weapon was aimed and saw the target of the terrorist. It was the red head who had so sweetly flirted with him only moments earlier. She was standing behind the counter with

her hands in the air. He saw a bullet rip into her face and through the back of her head, mushrooming as it did so, sending brain and blood all over the wall behind her. She dropped to the floor dead.

Mark looked forward once more and saw that the terrorist was now looking at him. There was a deranged twinkle in the man's eyes and Mark could see under his mask that he was grinning broadly in delight.

Without conscious thought or plan he finally grabbed the killer's weapon from the top of its barrel with his left hand and raised it high into the air. With his right hand he grabbed the back of the terrorist's neck and brought him up and sent his own skull crashing into the smaller man's face. He was twice the size of the little terrorist and he could hear the man's face and neck break and splinter upon impact with his own head. But he didn't stop after the first strike. He head butted the terrorist four more times before letting the unconscious body slump to the floor like a discarded old cloak.

Then he stood there, still. Tears swelling in his eyes.

"Mark, Mark, are you there buddy? I need you to come back. There is more work to be done. Listen to me buddy, you can still save more lives. Come back to me."

"I let her die, the girl, the waitress, I could have saved her but I froze. And now she's dead and I... Ah shit." Suddenly Mark felt a blistering pain surge through him emanating from his left hand and he released his grip on the weapon. It fell to the ground and a round discharged hitting the ceiling harmlessly above him.

"It's the barrel of the rifle. It's extremely hot right now. That's your third lesson of the day. Don't touch the barrel of an in-action weapon!" said John over the phone.

"Shit it's bloody painful. And how the hell would you know? And, well what the hell was lesson one and two?"

"Okay, we have a few seconds to go over a few points and then you must move quickly. The other two Tango's, Terrorists, will come back out of the station entrance in front of you and that is where you must kill them. So listen. I know you are bursting to speak but listen! Lesson One was The Will to Act. You must always be ready to act in an instant. If you had acted immediately that girl would still be alive. So now every time you hesitate or question me I want you to think of the girl. Now lesson Two was the mistake the terrorist made: Always, and I mean always point your weapon in the direction that you are looking? Understand?"

"Which part, what, that a girl is..."

"No! About the weapon. Always point the rifle in the direction you are looking. Tell me and quickly what would have happened if the terrorist had followed this rule?"

"I... I would..."

"Yes you would be dead. Now don't make that mistake or you *will* be dead. Now pick up the weapon, it's called an AK47 and it's an assault rifle not a machine gun."

"But John, wait a minute, just wait, I can't go against these guys. It's the police's job not mine. I should end this call and phone the police—they can deal with this sort of thing... I mean I'm just an out of shape bank manager... I can't..."

“You can Mark and you will. You have to. If you don’t Amelia will die. And the police have already been called and are now aware of what’s happening. And do you know what they are doing? They’re setting up a square mile perimeter and are calling in the army. They won’t deal with this, they can’t deal with this. And if you don’t deal with this Amelia will die. There are two more death squads. The Canary Wharf security team are fighting off one of the terrorist cells deep within the shopping centre and are doing the best they can without weapons, they are good lads, I know some of them, ex-armed forces, good men and as they overpower the radicals with sheer numbers and brute force they will take their guns and use them against the remaining bastards. As you will use yours. That leaves one remaining element of four and they are headed in to West India Quay as we speak. Their final destination is the Cineworld. Now are you ready to act without hesitation and to listen without protest?”

“But how the hell do you know all this? What the hell is going on?! Damn it John how can you possibly know these things???”

“I know these things—And that is all. It is inconsequential how I know. But what is important is life. Your life. Amelia’s life and the lives of the innocent people who I know you are capable of saving. You see Mark, now you have passed the point of no return. You have to follow this through or you will have blood on your hands. Now are you with me. And does it make a difference that I fully believe in you and that I have complete faith in you, I always have. *And* you should have had that beer, it would have quietened your mind and it would have made you accept these bizarre, and terrifying, circumstances just that little bit easier. But that doesn’t matter now, what does matter though is that you are fully committed from this point on. Are you ready?”

Mark stood in the doorway unmoving and silent. He didn’t reply, he didn’t say a word. And John didn’t push him for he knew that this would be the moment of full commitment or complete withdrawal and denial. Mark waited for longer than John had anticipated and John was about to say something when Mark finally spoke:

“I thought alcohol was always bad, in all circumstances, that’s what they told us at the AA, that’s what everyone says... but here *you* are in the middle of the most terrifying and crazy experience of *my* life telling me that I should have had that beer!?”

“In advanced weapons and tactics training all over the world they use sleep deprivation. Obviously this was not possible so alcohol was the next best thing. It turns the brain off you see, being very tired and drunk are similar but the one and perhaps only advantage is that you take instruction more easily and you learn quicker. Because the brain doesn’t interfere. Now forget about that. We wasted enough time as it is. You won’t be able to set up an ambush for the two Tangos that come back up those escalators now. But I need to help you get that weapon fully loaded and operational. Are you finally with me?”

“Yes.”

“Good now let’s do this.”

Chapter 8

Charlie Whisky One and Charlie Whisky Three had just entered the Canary Wharf Tube station and they were both pleased to see the absolute carnage and chaos their actions had created.

Women were screaming and grown men were crying and if they weren't dying they were running. Running and shoving, pushing and clawing at the person in front of them. Their instinct to survive apparently overrode any humanity in them. As One sprayed his weapon and cut down a young man in a sharp suit in front of him he noticed another man shove the woman in front of him out of his way and down the escalators—she broke her neck during the fall and on the way down the same man who had pushed her walked over her lifeless body.

As the two terrorists reached the top of the escalators they each pressed the emergency stop switch on the escalator in front of them. The desired effect was accomplished and both elevators stopped abruptly sending the dozens of people on them hurtling down. While they were there One gave Four the instruction to reload. They both did so and One spoke:

“Now my brother, kill these cowards and these capitalists slowly and joyfully while I video tape it all. I have it streaming live to the internet!”

The two men stood at the top of the tall escalators in Canary Wharf station and looked down at the pandemonium beneath them. Sunlight from behind them seeped into the station and gave their silhouettes an almost angelic glow from below. An eerie cacophony of automatic gunfire, human screams, running feet, the Canary Wharf emergency alarm and the sound of One laughing, reverberated throughout the halls of the station. Four unloaded his weapon and carefully replaced his magazine with a fresh one containing another 30 rounds and then began to systematically execute the defenceless human beings below.

Four was a very good marksman and the majority of his victims died instantly from a bullet to the head. One noticed this.

“In the body, Four. Rather shoot them in the body. It takes them longer to die then and it's more painful. In the stomach is the best!”

At that moment a new sound was heard by both terrorists and they turned around to face the entrance and saw that three security guards and a policewoman were charging at them while screaming in anger. Their actions were brave, of that there was no doubt. And perhaps if they had kept quiet while launching their assault they may have succeeded. Alas they did not succeed and they died.

One even had enough time to once again put away his video camera and raise his AK which was slung across his chest ready with a fresh magazine. One and Four cut the officers down with ease. The female cop went down with the most difficulty. She seemed really angry about what we are doing, One thought to himself. But she went down in the end as did the three security men.

“At last” said One. “I can take my police officer's head.”

He pulled out the video camera and gave it to Four. And reached into his kit bag and produced a hacksaw and walked over to where the dead policewoman lay. Blood oozing from her ears and mouth.

“Now film this. Is it on?”

“Yes.”

“Good,” said One while he knelt next to her body, grinned broadly and lifted her head off the ground by pulling it clear by her blonde hair. He placed the hacksaw under her neck and began to cut.

“You fool!” said One and let go of the officer’s hair. Her face hit the floor as she muttered something incomprehensible, blood spilling from her mouth as she tried to plead for her life.

One walked over to Four and slapped him around the back of his head.

“It’s off you idiot, see the red light is not on” as he took the camera and switched it on.

“Now let’s try this again and we’ll have to be quick as we are wasting time and their army will have been alerted by now.”

Quickly and without spectacle this time One walked back to where the brave officer lay and proceeded to hack off her head. Finally after gruesomely fighting with stubborn bone he ripped the head clear and held it above his head. Blood dripped from the neck to the ground as One spoke in his native language into the camera.

“To all those watching this be warned that this will happen to you if you continue in your wicked ways. Your sex and lies and capitalism and war. Turn it off, quickly turn it off.” And the broadcast was ended once more.

By now the upper levels of the station were deserted and everything was going to plan. The civilians had been driven to the platform levels and into the heart of the affluent shopping mall underground where a battle was also now being fought between the Canary Wharf security staff and the terrorists. The security personnel had taken heavy casualties already with over a dozen of their men and women gunned down but they had killed one terrorist and taken his weapon.

Meanwhile One and Four had double-timed it down the escalators and were headed towards platform level, the final location of their Tube Station attack orders. The massive killing ground would be Platform Level. The hundreds if not thousands of bankers and civilians who would now be trapped, helpless with nowhere to go and nowhere to run. The other attack element who began their assault from within the shopping mall had also kettled their victims towards and into Platform Level. The entire Jubilee Line had been shut down and there truly was no way out.

It would be a murder pit of the most terrifying and massive scale. Here is where the high explosive grenades packed with rusty nails would be used.

Chapter 9

Meanwhile John had explained to Mark how to load and unload a magazine from the assault rifle and how to aim and fire. And had stressed to always squeeze the trigger and fire in small bursts and to never pull the trigger and let the weapon fire madly in long bursts.

The training was far from adequate and neither of the men felt comfortable about Mark’s weapon handling skills. But they had no choice and he had to get moving.

“It’s time to go” said John.

“I know. But before I do I’m going to call Amelia...”

Beep. Mark’s phone sounded in his ear and alerted him to a received message. He pulled out his Blackberry and read the message aloud.

“Mark, where r u? Am in cinema—something’s happening. Gun shots, explosions... Security have led us all into the upstairs cinema and have locked the doors. Don’t come here, not safe. PLs call police. I cannot get call reception in here... I hope u get this text.. love u.”

“I’m going to her” said Mark and headed towards the cinema—a five minute run from where he now stood.

“Wait Mark. You must first help the people trapped underground.”

“They are not my concern. I don’t know them. The police or army will help, I must get to my Amelia.” And Mark broke into a run.

“Think of the girl Mark. Think of the cheeky redhead.”

And Mark stopped running and slowed down to a jog and then a walk and then stood still. He lowered his head and brought his free hand up to his face and gripped his own hair and pulled it, teeth clenched.

“FUCK!!! What the bloody hell is going on. Why bloody me?? I’m no hero. FUCK!!! What if I go down there to help people I don’t even know and Amelia dies, I won’t be able to live with myself or what if I die which is much more bloody likely. I’ll be dead and Amelia will be alone if she survives and I’ll be remembered as the idiotic have-a-go-hero! Ah shit! What the fuck is going on!! Please God be with me, help me... Ahhhh!!”

“I’m sorry Mark. I really am. But this is life. You must try, we must all try. If you don’t your life will be ruined from this day forward. Try, please. Just try.”

“This is life?!! Try, just try, to fight armed bloody terrorists!! When I’ve never fired a gun in my life. TRY you say! Then if this is bloody life what advantage or reason do I have to fight these bloody cunts who kill people—they will bloody well kill me. That’s why as an intelligent man I have to walk away John. I’m sorry but... I...”

“Me Mark. You have me. I am, I was, SAS, remember I said I was in the army, well I never left, it’s a long story but... anyway I am SAS or I was. And I am in your ear, I am with you. I am your man. And if you haven’t noticed you are holding a... *Machine Gun* and you have already defeated one of those cunts—you killed him remember?”

“You’re SAS. I always knew something was up with you.”

“Again I’m sorry Mark, but there is no time. We have wasted too much already. Please just try and save as many lives as you can. It is the best option for your soul. Please my friend.”

Without another word Mark turned on the spot and began to run towards the station entrance.

“It’s an assault rifle John—Not a machine gun. And I’m surprised at you, an SAS man should know these things” said Mark with a weak smile.

Chapter 10

Amelia had just arrived at the Cineworld in West India Quay. Stupidly she had missed her stop at the Canary Wharf DLR station because she could have sworn she had seen Mark's good friend John. She was sure it was him. And he had even waved at her. She was about to get off when she heard her name called aloud. She turned to see what looked like John sitting down. He was in an adjoining carriage and was wearing a baseball cap that obscured his face. But he sounded like John, and he or someone else had called her name and he had the same athletic build as John. But the bizarre thing was that when she went to the carriage to greet him he quickly got up and ran out of the doors just as they closed. Amelia couldn't get off and missed her stop. That incident had changed her plans drastically and was what had led her here. She was eagerly awaiting Mark's take about his friend's strange behaviour, if indeed it even was John.

Now though, she walked up to the counter and purchased two tickets to *The Hobbit*.

She showed her ticket to the friendly security guard and explained that her boyfriend Mark would be joining her in a short while, she described him to the guard and left his ticket with him and proceeded up the escalators to the 3rd floor bar. They had some time to kill before their movie started and she thought they could have a cheeky drink and a bite to eat while they waited.

She pulled out her mobile and dialled Mark's number, she wanted to tell him what movie they were going to watch and that she would be waiting for him in the bar. No signal. So she waited until she had seated herself at a table and had ordered herself a glass of white wine and tried again. No luck.

The waitress who had just taken her order explained to Amelia that there was no voice service in the building as a repeater tower had gone down yesterday morning or something like that but that text messages still worked fine.

Amelia thought she would enjoy the wine and then send Mark a text message in a little while. She was looking forward to seeing her Mark and was surprised at just how much she really was looking forward to it. Their relationship had been a whirlwind romance if ever there was one but for some reason she felt as though she had known him forever and before the beginning of time. And since before then too.

Amelia never did things the traditional way either. She hated conformity—never believed in it. She did what she wanted when she wanted and more importantly the way she wanted. And today was no different—for during the screening of *The Hobbit* she was going to ask Mark to marry her. No bells, no whistles and no ring either. Because if Mark said yes then that is all she would ever ask for. As she didn't actually believe in the concept of marriage. But the romantic in her at least wanted to ask the question. The more inquisitive and probing side of Amelia also wanted to carefully judge Mark's reaction to the question as she knew full well how his last marriage had ended - though she would not tell Mark this. But his initial reaction to her question would speak volumes. And the underlying reason for the question? She was scared. She was falling for Mark hard and she wanted to be sure he felt the same way.

Amelia sighed and drained the contents of her glass. She had butterflies in her stomach and she thought she may just be able drown them with the wine.

Chapter 11

Mark ran into the Canary Wharf tube station entrance, AK 47 slung across his chest and the dead terrorist's bag, containing extra ammunition and grenades, on his back, as instructed by Tailor. Definitely *The Tailor* Mark now thought to himself. He noticed the bodies of the three dead security officers and the decapitated police officer. A couple of survivors were milling around staring blankly. They baulked when they saw Mark and the weapon and ran out of the station.

Canary Wharf Station on the Jubilee Line is one of the Underground system's most modern. It's deep as well and it has huge internal dimensions which fact often leads to it being compared to a cathedral. Weddings have even been held at the station because of its grand cathedral ambience.

From ground level Mark would have to descend two sets of long escalators separated by two floors—offshoots of which led into the busy shopping mall. It's the busiest station outside of Central London with just under 70 000 people per weekday using the station. It is the near perfect target for terrorists.

Mark could hear a chopper in the sky directly above him. There were four in total circling above—two police choppers and two media helicopters.

"You must be careful now Mark, not only of the Tangos but of the authorities and civilians as well. They won't necessarily see you as a good guy."

"Yeah well, let's deal with the guys who definitely are the bad guys first."

As Mark descended the escalators, taking them three steps at a time, the smell of death and cordite met his nostrils. He almost puked. The sight of blood and guts strewn across the usually sparkling floor didn't help either. Here and there on his way down he caught glimpses of injured and dying civilians. He noticed with subdued joy though that already he could see uniformed paramedics and unarmed police officers attending to the wounded or ushering them out of designated exits. Funnily enough though, none of them were heading in the same direction he was—down. Down to where the noises from below gave Mark goosebumps.

The sound was a mixture of terrified screams, crying children, pleas for help, gunshots—the unmistakable and gut wrenching sound of AK47 fire; it makes a sound unlike any other assault rifle, that of a whip—the sounds speak of intent and evil—the odd thud of an explosion could also be heard.

"Is it just me or am I the only one stupid enough to be going down there?"

"Yes, it's just you—going down there. But that's why it's so important that you do."

Chapter 12

Charlie Whisky One and Charlie Whisky Four had made their way down to the lowest level of the station, platform level and the sight they witnessed surprised even them. There were thousands of people crammed onto the immense platform that is Canary Wharf serving both the East and West Lines of the Jubilee Line. And unlike the vast majority of underground lines the platforms at Canary Wharf did not allow direct access to the railway tracks—a safety device installed to stop people from throwing themselves in front of an incoming train, among other things.

And before even a single shot had been fired by the two criminal killers dozens of people lay dead on the floor, having been trampled to death by the fleeing fear-fuelled stampeding horde of human flesh running from the hot lead.

Charlie Whisky One stopped to admire the site and film the scene. His HD video camera was not getting any WIFI signal at this level of underground so mercifully the images his camera recorded were not being streamed live to the hundreds of thousands of viewers who were now tuned in to Charlie Whisky One's own internet video "channel".

While he looked at the devastation he marvelled at how well his plan had worked. The second attack element, codenamed Sierra Charlie, had entered the Canary Wharf Tube Station from the opposite entrance situated on Upper Bank Street. And as they had descended they had kettled the civilians to this point from the opposite direction leaving one terrorist to block the escape route. Unbeknown to Sierra Charlie One that sentry had already been killed by one of the few armed police units in London—The Met Police's CO19. One of their BMW Armed Response Vehicles or ARVs had responded rather quickly and had eliminated the terrorist from above ground. Unfortunately Gold Command had ordered the highly trained armed officers not to descend underground and challenge the remaining terrorists. This infuriated the officers but they had no choice but to follow orders. Instead they were commanded to maintain a safe perimeter.

One's bloodlust returned and he switched off his camera and replaced it with his AK. One and Four moved forward, stepping over and on top of, unconscious, half dead, dying or dead-dead human beings. They were nearing the half-way point of the platform level—in the middle were two sets of elevators—forcing foot traffic to either walk left or right of either one to proceed forward.

What One saw on either side of these filtration points scared him. The Metropolitan Underground and Canary Wharf Station staff along with a handful of unarmed London Transport police officers had created a human barrier and as the last of the fleeing civilians passed the temporary entrance point in their human line they closed it and, as one, each brave man and women in that line took two steps forward.

Four thought he felt the earth shake in that moment and he couldn't help but take a step back. Once more the line of unarmed defenders took another step forward. And Four took another step backwards.

One felt fear. A fear he had never experienced in any other moment in his life. And One was a hard and ruthless bastard who had been in combat and who had killed in more conflicts than most people have had holidays. Now it was the turn of One to have time stop for him.

And as time slowed he surveyed the scene: Non-Combatants were protecting the lives of people whose names they probably didn't even know—and with their own lives. They offered no real threat, no weaponry or chance of success yet once more each man and woman in the line took another step forward. And against all the hate and prejudices that was in One's heart and preconception about the Great British Public, another aspect of what he was witnessing rattled him to the bone. The defenders were not all black, or all white or of any one particular colour, creed, denomination, sex or inclination. In fact they were as diverse as could possibly be possible.

And again they all, as one beating heart, took another two steps forward. They were now a mere thirty paces from the armed terrorists and the look on their faces was not one of fear or doom—rather it was resolute, determined and formidable.

It was all too much for Charlie Whisky Four and he turned on his heel to run. But One shouted an order.

“Stop! Turn and face them you fool! And open fire! They are just making it easier for us.”

Though even as he said this he too was moving backwards. And he soon realised this was because the line of defenders were no longer a line—The entire platform of kettled unarmed civilians had joined in on the march. Two steps forward. This time the ground really did shake.

One felt a bead of sweat roll under his balaclava and down his neck, down his spine and into the small of his back. He wasn't just frightened now, he was utterly terrified.

He raised his weapon and replaced the old magazine with a fresh one. Thirty new rounds. He brought it up to his eyes and took careful aim. He opened fire on the biggest and strongest of the defenders. The round pierced the man's face and exited his skull. He dropped to the ground without sound. Immediately the gap in the line was filled. One fired again. Once more the gap was filled and the throng moved forward. Two steps. Earth shakes. Again and once more a person was executed with a shot to the head and the line was filled. The last time the line was filled it was filled by a girl of no more than nine years old with dark hair in pig tails, yet her eyes were no different to that of the large policeman who held her hand next to her. Resolute and strong.

One turned on his heel and broke into a brisk backwards walk, he didn't dare run or take his eye off his prey who had suddenly become the beast. He moved to where Four had planted himself in shock and awe of the sight before him and spoke.

“It's time brother. Shoot and shoot well, we only need a few more moments.” And without another word Four began to fire once more and One moved behind Four and opened the large bag Four carried on his shoulders. He removed from it a large 10KG IED filled with a mixture of high explosive, Sarin gas and rusty nails and carefully placed it on the floor.

The marching line finally stopped.

One was relieved. And he began to laugh.

Then he saw the little pig-tailed girl smile at him. And slowly the entire line of people began to smile and grin and one by one they looked over One's shoulder.

Slowly One and Four realised that someone or something was behind them. They both turned around in unison and saw standing there Mark Andrews, the out of shape, double chinned, alcoholic, divorced bank manager.

On instruction from John, Mark fell to one knee and raised his weapon, took a deep breath and held it, squeezed the trigger and fired four rounds. Two shots to the head of each Charlie Whisky Terrorist.

Both men fell face first to the floor and died.

For a moment the large crowd could only stare at Mark and he could only gaze back. Then John spoke in Mark's ear.

"You must get to Amelia Mark. Now, turn and run, sprint! Go!"

The large police officer holding the hand of the young girl caught the eye of Mark and almost imperceptibly nodded his thanks.

Mark turned and ran to save his Amelia.

Chapter 13

Amelia had just drained her second glass of wine and had ordered a glass of water and was about to send Mark a text message when she heard the first crack of a gunshot. Then another and another. At first nobody seemed to hear the shots but Amelia—she gazed around the cinema complex and could see no sign of warning or danger. The cinema staff continued about their business as usual and Amelia relaxed once more.

CRACK!

And then the most horrifying high pitched scream reverberated around the 3rd floor of the West India Quay Cineworld

CRACK!

Another gunshot and Amelia and the other patrons at the bar ran towards the escalators but were stopped at the top of them by the security guard Amelia had spoken to earlier.

"We're under attack! You can't go down there, I'm shutting this floor down" he said.

"What are you talking about man? What's going on?" asked Amelia.

The guard shut the escalator down, put a barrier in front of it and then took Amelia by the wrist and pulled her along while telling the others to follow.

"I'll show you."

He took them to a low overhanging window space that looked out onto the entrance to the cinema below on street level. What Amelia saw stole all the breath from her. A man behind her gasped aloud.

Three small men in black balaclavas and combat gear holding AK47s were gunning down people in the street. Amelia noticed a smartly dressed business lady in a grey dress and black suit jacket run away from one of the gunman. She had high heels on and as she ran one of the heels caught in a drain, she slipped and fell into the road. A minicab hadn't the time or inclination to stop and ran the lady over. Her hair caught in the undercarriage of the vehicle and she was dragged

along the road, smearing blood on the asphalt. Her screams made Amelia's hair stand on end.

"They are going into the gym. They are going to slaughter them like pigs. Like the pigs that they are" said the security guard.

"Like the what? What did you just say?" asked Amelia.

Nobody else seemed to hear the guard's remark.

"There's no time to explain. Everyone must follow me now. We have shut the front entrance and are shutting down all the escalators and lifts. We'll get everyone into the top floor cinema and set up a barricade there while we wait for the police" said the guard.

Minutes later and the majority of the people within the cinema had been ushered into the largest of the screening houses within the cinema complex. By Amelia's estimate there were about 750 people crammed into the space. It was hot and stuffy, kids were scared and crying, parents were frustrated and felt powerless.

Amelia peeled off from the group and could think of no one else but her Mark, she sent him a message:

"Mark, where r u? Am in cinema—something's happening. Gun shots, explosions... Security have led us all into the upstairs cinema and have locked the doors. Don't come here, not safe. PLs call police. I cannot get call reception in here... I hope u get this text... love u."

She was sure to hit the send button multiple time but the phone never registered any kind of send confirmation.

Amelia looked up to see the guard walking towards her.

"What are you doing?" he snapped.

"That's none of your business but if you must know I am send my boyfriend a message letting him know what's happening."

The guard smiled and kind looking smile.

"Of course you are, I am sorry I should have known."

He walked over holding out his hand and then he slapped Amelia with a powerful backhand and grabbed her phone from her and threw it against the wall shattering it. He struck her once more.

"Now listen to me you stupid bitch! I want you to know something. I want you to know that I am going to kill you today. But not yet."

And with that he hit her as hard as he possibly could with a right hook. It shattered her jaw and knocked her unconscious.

Chapter 14

Amelia felt a cold wetness on her head. The water ran down her blouse and soaked her trousers. Then she felt a slap, and another. She came to and for a moment only was completely baffled as to where she was or what had happened. Then she saw and recognised the guard and it all came flooding back to her. But who was he? Was he one of them? He was—Amelia now saw the machine gun in his hand. She tried to speak but she couldn't—her jaw was broken.

The guard picked Amelia up by the hair and dragged her down the escalators and out of the front entrance. There waiting outside were two Metropolitan Police Armed Response Vehicles – one blocking either side of the street. Two officers stood by each vehicle their MP5 Sub Machine Guns now trained on the guard, the terrorist. Three dead extremists lay dead nearby. A police helicopter and a media chopper hovered above.

Amelia couldn't breathe properly and she didn't know why. Had she been struck in the ribs or chest? She looked down and then she realised why.

She had a bomb strapped to her chest. Rusty nails protruded from the IED homemade vest and she could smell a strange gas emanating from it. She was going to die now and she knew it.

"AMELIA."

"AMELIA."

"MY AMELIA."

Amelia looked up and could see her Mark running towards her. She felt faint and was beginning to experience some sort of outer body experience..

"AMELIA."

"I love you Mark, I only wish I had met you earlier..." Amelia said incomprehensibly and she slumped to the ground.

Rage consumed Mark as he cocked his weapon once more, he didn't need to, as there was already a round in the chamber. But he didn't know that. How could he.

The Armed Officers didn't like this action and two of them turned and trained their weapons on the unknown AK47 wielding madman. They ordered him to stop. He didn't. He couldn't—nothing mattered now. Only being with Amelia mattered now. Dead so be it.

The officers opened fire and cut Mark to pieces. It didn't matter though as the Security Guard terrorist detonated the IED strapped to Amelia's chest. And another bomb similar to the one Charlie Whisky One attempted to detonate on the platform. This bomb was successfully detonated though and all the people corralled and then locked into the cinema were blown away. Amelia was blown away. As was the security guard terrorist. The rusty nail shrapnel did their job too and cut down three of the police officers. One of the media helicopters took some shrapnel to its engine and it veered into the tall building that housed the gymnasium and then fell to the ground and burst into flames.

Many Dead Bankers.

Chapter 15

Mark Andrews sits at the All Bar One restaurant situated opposite the entrance to the Canary Wharf tube station.

"Hey mister, are you okay? Hello? Anybody there. Hey mister?"

Mark's body jerks violently, his eyes focus in on the present once more and his surroundings become clear. He takes a long deep gulp of fresh, crisp London air and almost throws up as the oxygen fills his lungs once more.

"You okay mister?" Inquires the red-headed waitress while placing Mark's pint

of Grolsch beer on the table.

“What’s just happened?” Replied a confused Mark.

“What do you mean?”

“Well how long have I been here, what happened to the attack, the attack on the Wharf? The killers. The...”

“I don’t know about any attack mister but you’ve just got here—you sat down and ordered this here beer. And now when I came back here with it you were in some kind of trance—strange like, you were just staring straight ahead at the station entrance like and not breathing. You were here, well your body was here but you were somewhere else mister.”

An impatient customer demands the attention of the waitress and she moves off to serve her.

“Amelia.” Mark mutters to himself and picks up his Blackberry and dials her number.

She picks up on the second ring.

“Hey baby.”

“Amelia, where are you?”

“I’m on my way to Canary Wharf, to you, I’m on the DLR. Why what’s wrong, we are still on for lunch today aren’t we?”

“So you didn’t miss your stop?”

“No, I’m just passing Heron Quays now, I will be there in a couple of minutes—why would I have missed my stop?”

“Okay, good. Lunch is cancelled though. Well at Canary Wharf it is. Don’t get off and continue till the end of the line babe and I’ll meet you at Stratford International, at the new Westfield Shopping centre there.” Said Mark.

“Why babe, what’s up? You sound nervous?”

“I explain later. Just keep on going and I’ll call you in a little while—don’t get off for anybody or anything. But I have to go now, I have to speak to someone else...”

“Alright Mark I’ll go to Westfield instead—I need to do some Christmas shopping anyway but I hope the explanation is a good one.”

“It will be. You’ll see. Oh and babe...”

“Yeah?”

“I love you.”

“Ah thanks babe—I love you too.”

Mark ended the call and pressed the phone button for *The Tailor*.

“John here.”

“John, it’s Mark. I have no time to explain mate but just tell me one thing and honestly—are you in the SAS?”

“Whoa, hold on a minute—that’s a bit random isn’t it Mark?”

“No it’s not mate—I have just had one of my *episodes*, you know those vision type things I had as a kid, remember I told you about them. Well I have just had one and you were in it.”

“You mean like those predictions you used to have, those prophecies?”

“Something like that. Now we’ll know if I am crazy or not if you just tell me if you are still in the army and part of the SAS?”

The phone went silent. And Mark could *hear* John thinking that his friend had lost his mind—but *then why hadn’t he answered his crazy question straight away.*

“I don’t know how you know Mark and you’re definitely not supposed to know—
But yes I’m SAS.”

Mark felt a cold shiver run through his body. He looked at his arms—gooseflesh.

“I think London, I think Canary Wharf, is about to be attacked by terrorists. Terrorists with machine guns, I mean assault rifles and grenades and bombs.”

“When? When Mark? When?”

“Today. Now, well in about 15 minutes if the timing stays the same but these visions I have are as symbolic as they are accurate—like I think the Londoners will eventually fight back on the platform underground, they’ll make a stand or something and I think I’m supposed to help you, I am supposed to be your man on the ground—does, does any of this make any sense to you John?”

Once again John, the SAS man, Captain John Taylor, *The Tailor*, went quiet. He was caught in quandary of top secrecy and the possibility of his friend either being crazy or a terrorist, an undercover journalist? Or a terrorist accomplice or a real bone fide psychic of sorts. But Mark was the closest thing John ever had to a brother, a real friend – he owed it Mark to believe in him, To trust him. *And to trust another human being is hard enough for an ordinary man and ordinary citizen but for a Special Forces Soldier involved in international clandestine operations it’s almost impossible.*

“Okay Mark. I’ll trust you my friend. But please do not betray this trust for it could mean my life, my career, my family. I don’t know how you know or what you know but for the time being I am going to treat everything you say as genuine solid intelligence on an imminent terrorist attack.”

John could not believe the words he just spoke to his friend, the fat banker, Mark. But he continued to speak as calmly as he could.

“But before I sound the alarm and risk my career and the lives of other undercover operatives I need more information—to be sure. Okay?”

“Okay, ask me and I’ll tell you what I can but please be quick, time is running out.”

Mark put his head in his hands and began to laugh ironically.

“What’s so funny, are you taking the piss Mark?” Asked an angry John.

“No mate, I’m not. It’s just in my vision you were the one trying to convince me to believe you! And we’re always running out of fucking time. Again I’m sorry, everything will become clearer—either making me right or bloody barking mad. But ask your questions. Please Just ask.”

A still angry John replied through gritted teeth.

“Do you know how many there will be and what do they look like?”

“12, there will be twelve at least—maybe more. They dress in all black and use AK47 assault rifles—and I only know that because you told me—how else would a banker know—I thought they were machine guns...”

“Anything else?”

“Yes, they are small and slender. Like children or women...”

These were the words that convinced John that Mark was telling the truth or at least his version of it. Captain Taylor’s unit had been monitoring a suspected terrorist cell based in East London and all of the observation and surveillance reports noted the diminutive size of the suspects.

“Okay Mark. Stay where you are and get your head down. I will alert the people

who need to know, Organise an evacuation and will deploy a Quick Reaction Force. Just keep out of trouble and we'll..."

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!

It was too late. London and her citizens were under terrorist attack and the only man who could save them was banker Mark Andrews.

"This time I'm ready for you bastards. And this time I'm having that pint!"

