

Targets

by

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## Chapter One

John Phillips was no more outstanding, to the casual observer, than his name suggested, by nature and upbringing he was an unassuming man, withdrawn, unexcitable, he had few friends, and little was known of him outside of a very close circle of anonymous acquaintances, in a crowd. It would be difficult to single him out, nature had assisted him in that regard. He looked like a very ordinary man, and he did nothing which would dispel that image, he capitalised on every last one of his God-given attributes. He was a survivor among victims, a stayer among also-rans, a prospect among failures. He did nothing to advertise his presence as a result of which, he was frequently, much to his delight, overlooked, He was a man of strict principles, unbending, obstinate, unyielding and self-opinionated, he suffered fools not gladly, and he played the violin really quite well, although with more enthusiasm than virtuosity. It was his fortune to be more genuinely gifted in the art of survival, than in the more subtle arts of musicality, the fingers that struggled with the violin strings were more at home with a Mauser, Luger, Colt 45 or a Bowie knife and were equally at home with a length of piano wire or the infamous Garotte.

He would never be renowned on the concert platforms in artistic circles, and neither would he want it to be that way. It was in the world of subterfuge that he was familiar, the shadowy corridors of power, the dirty tricks department of Government, a man regarded as the saviour of the extremes of behaviour by the inept politicians who could no longer talk their way out of a crisis.

Donald Factor, on the other hand, was the total antithesis, a man of the world, extroverted, comedic, widely travelled, a person of substance, he held radical views on current events, and was

not averse to proclaiming those views. The underlying strength of Factor was deliberately underplayed, he courted ridicule and criticism, encouraged the denigrators, his flamboyant life style was overt and well publicised. When there was nothing of interest to report to the press, then he would make something happen to fuel the fires of his denigrators. His was the explicit, flagrant, method of operations to which he was committed, hogging the limelight, holding himself to public ridicule, abuse and controversy, his manner high handed and offensive. He was portrayed as the public school fop, interfering, querulous and opinionated.

Factor was independently wealthy, the son of a newspaper proprietor, his views were often aired in columns of the tabloid, which brought him into direct conflict with journalists and the public alike. An explorer and mountaineer of some repute, he had served in the army, completing a five year course with paratrooper and commando units. It was heavily rumoured that he had somehow avoided court-martials on at least two occasions not unconnected with the vast wealth of his family connections, and the influence that such wealth could deploy in the corridors of power.

He was a source of constant irritation to the government, the opposition, the media, and just about anybody with whom he came into contact. His radical and often whimsical observations made him a target for the establishment, even his private life came under fire, his frequent appearances at jazz clubs and his participation in the performances of any musical gatherings which he attended, for, despite his tarnished reputation in public life, he was always made welcome at any such assembly, it was recognised that he had mastered his chosen instrument to such a degree that he was considered to be an asset in any of the many groups that abounded in, and around, the suburbs. He was equally at home with a pop group or the London Philharmonic. It was a different ball game when music was the catalyst, at such occasions he was at one with his peers, accepted without rancour or controversy. His music transcended bitterness, resentment and annoyance, and it was at such times that he became a conformist, just for that brief period of time that encompassed his passion for musicality.

There was one other facet of Donald Factor which never reached the public domain, which was as forcefully and unremittingly denied to public detractors as his garrulous vulgarity was exposed. He was an experienced administrator of special services, an active perpetrator of controlled violence and permitted mayhem. At thirtyish, he was effeminate looking, six foot plus, single, snappy dresser, blond, with short cut hair. Boyishly good looking, he had all the features which hid a determination of character, which many of his detractors would be astonished to find in one so defiled.

Willie Banks was restless, he had not been on an operation for over four months, the Libyan exercise had got the adrenalin flowing again, it had been a huge success, all seven captives had been sprung, no losses had been recorded, the Libyan who had the temerity to resist his command, had been despatched to his ancestors. Colonel Phillips had stepped out of his anonymity with flair and daring, the organisation, as usual, had been first class. Every hummock of sand had been faithfully recorded on their field maps, guard duty times had been accurate to the second, hill defences were detailed to the last bullet, the last alarm, the last booby trap. Operating under the command of the Colonel was so much easier than in other commands to which he devoted his life, everything was so much more disciplined and accurate. This had been Willie's fourth operation under Phillips' command, each one successful, each one full of suspense, each one carried out with supreme confidence and aplomb. Willie, a fighting ex-Argyle-and-Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Sergeant Major, and more recently, Special Air Services, was now, 'mine host' of the *New Moon Social Club*, a splendid cover for his extra-curricular activities. He had a football pitch in back of the club, a river ran down the edge of the side line and provided all the exercise he required to keep in top physical condition.

Willie was a burly man, weighing in at some fifteen stone, all of it toughened muscle, sinew and fibre, he was the owner of a rough, lived-in face, reminiscent of the ex-boxer, topped off with

a mass tousled blood red hair, over six feet three. He had recently celebrated his thirty-seventh birthday, and was champing at the bit for more action. He had effected his fourth monthly report, a requirement of field agents everywhere in the United Kingdom, when not required for operations. His latest report had produced nothing of substance.

After his daily two mile swim down river and the jog back, he entered the kitchen at the back of the club. Peggy Fieldhouse, his manageress, was bustling about, straightening perfectly straight beer mats, and polishing an already shiny surfaced bar top. A single woman, she organised the club activities with a rule of iron, never questioning his absences, and happy to be employed by such an unassuming and generous employer, one who rarely interfered with stewardship, and often left her entirely on her own. At her age, she was well into her fiftieth year, she was contented enough to ask no questions.

“Will you be playing tonight, Bill”, she enquired with a familiarity born of deep respect.

“If they need me, I will,” he smiled at her non-committally.

Willie had scorned his native instrument, in favour of the accordion, the bagpipe days firmly behind him. He played mostly for his own pleasure, but was fluent and talented enough to play with good musicians on two or three nights a week. He was considered to be a distinct advantage and could often be persuaded to play solo to the clientele when the occasion was to his liking, tonight may well be one of those occasions. He was never called into the field suddenly, he could always plan twenty-four hours in advance.

He went to the bathroom for a shower.

Jay, even close friends called him Jay. It was rumoured in section that, for some remote reason even his superiors referred to him simply as Jay, and that the closest scrutiny had not revealed his Christian name, if indeed Jay was not just that; a Christian name. Jay he was called and that, generally, was that, he was an orphan, or so it was supposed. Prior to his induction into the Royal

Navy, little was known of him, he was inconspicuous in terms of achievement. However, from the very first week in section Jay found a family with whom he could relate, a naturally well-built athlete, he accepted the encouragement and discipline, he was proud of the letter accepting him into the Officers' training school, it was the document of which he was most sensitive, it was, in fact, the only document left from his array of examination passes, the only relic of his past. He had been stripped of all other identification, he was outside of the human race, he was on his own not in disgrace or punishment. He had accepted his present status voluntarily because of his unusually high degree of motivation.

For Jay, his Navy career was in tatters, he left Chatham barracks on a bitterly cold wintry night turning his back on twelve hard years of dedication and study, of friendship, and camaraderie and of success. He had turned the corner of his destiny, fortunately for him it was a corner which, after two operations with his new partners, he took to like a duck to water. He wasn't too keen on his present cover, but busking was ideal, he was free to come and go, and was quite at home with a harmonica. In the old days he used to play for hours in the mess, always improving steadily, he didn't suppose that he would ever be a Larry Adler, but he had become, over the years pretty damn proficient.

He was a slightly built man, but glowing with good health and fitness, the ruddy complexion indicative of a lifetime in the open air. His snub nose, steely blue eyes, and cheeky grin did nothing to hide the gleam of anticipation, the obvious intelligence and the friendliness of his demeanour. There was not a bone in his body that was not trained to perfection, in the early hours of every morning he could be seen running, in a baggy track suit, around the outer perimeters of any park or track in the area that he was working. He was chosen for his present post, by a very senior Navy Intelligence officer, to plug a gap in a strange but formidable band of men with no faces. He was chosen for his specialisation in communications which incorporated a wide knowledge of cryptography, languages and electronics. He had come a long

way since leaving the orphanage, a long way to end up anonymous, unrecognised and often alone, but he had adapted to his new environment, and was beginning to enjoy the challenge, the special companionship and the danger. These cloak-and-dagger lads were different to that which he had envisaged, of course, none were family men, and that was probably one of the considerations of his own selection, no parents, no family, no next-of-kin, but he did have a future, the Navy would take care of that.

He sat on the side of his tiny single bed and played a few bars of Gershwin on his battered old harmonica.

The final bars of Prokofiev faded, filling the auditorium with the warm response of fervid admiration, four curtain calls followed, but he did not take it as a tribute to his talent, cynically he regarded them as grist for the mill. It wasn't as if they really appreciated his performance, it was the 'in' thing to do, it was the required response of the nouveau riche, to applaud a performance by Roger Boone. He smiled inwardly as he accepted the rapturous welcome, the entrepreneur who organised this gig could have put a pub piano player on stage and announced him as Roger Boone, they would have been just as enthusiastic, just as positive in their re-action, 'perhaps not a monkey', he mused abstractedly but any lookalike musician, they were applauding the name not the performance. He left the stage with the applause ringing in his ears 'fucking cretins' he spat contemptuously, subconsciously studying his long tapering fingers, well aware of his limitations. Boone knew that he would never be a Rubenstien, he would never compose a classic. He had come as far as he would do as a musician and a considerable portion of his ambition had evaporated, he felt that he would not now interpret the works of the masters as he had once aspired to do. They were applauding just another piano player, the display of hysteria was unearned praise and he despised them for it.

Washed, and tidied up, he made his way to the stage door exit, and strolled, un-recognised into the night his thoughts fully occupied with other matters. Roger Boone was well known among the

hardened entrepreneurs, for his taciturnity and cynicism, a concert over, he rarely stayed for the back slapping. He was polite and courteous, he stayed perhaps a few minutes, but without exception excused himself before the party got into full swing, never became involved, indeed there were occasions when he did not even stay to receive the obligatory congratulations. It was fairly apparent by his deeply suntanned skin, that he took many holidays abroad, there were not many people that knew about those holidays. His one ally in this world of entertainment was his agent, a robust character who fumed into ulcers at Boone's absences and cancellations, unexplained, often without warning, and bloody inconvenient. A few days notice that he was available, and the agent was required to arrange extended tours, one night stands, gigs, concerts. It was all coming to an end, the public interest was waning they both knew it, one was thankful, and the other didn't give a damn.

It had all started when Boone had given a lift to a young soldier in West Berlin, a youngish man who had appeared to be exhausted, what more natural than to help a fellow Briton in need, what more natural than to let him in to the hotel, feed him and allow him to rest. Roger Boone was not to know that the young soldier was Willie Banks, and that Willie was a plant, he had not known that this was what he would come to know as an 'operation' and that he, Roger, was an unwitting conspirator. The subsequent events were stupefying in their efficiency, they had taken his orchestra leader and conductor with cool professionalism, and left Roger to explain. That he had carried it off under extreme pressure and subsequent interrogation, had bought him to the attention of Colonel Phillips. It had been a time of secret police, security agents, communist ideologists, of mysterious disappearances, the Cold War the Berlin wall, espionage and counter-espionage, spies and assassins. It could have turned out to be quite nasty, that it didn't was a tribute to the composure of Boone. Colonel Phillips had become very interested in the piano player.

And then there was Ben Hatfield, a man of past glories, but no

loss of enthusiasm. The elder of the group and the one with the most to prove, he felt that his days in the field were drawing to a close, he envisioned a bleak future at a desk looming large. A former high profile Tornado pilot he had volunteered for an assignment when it had become increasingly obvious that his active role in the R.A.F was to be downgraded to that of desk clerk or flying instructor, or perhaps something in administration. A fitness freak, he knew that many more years of active participation could be gained if he pressed the right button. He had gained entry to his present post after a determined investigation into possible alternatives, it had been a frustrating and seemingly endless investigation even with his connections, but it had paid off most unexpectedly one evening at an open night at the R.A.F station to which he had been posted some two months earlier.

He had been playing drums with the band and had come off for a break, at the bar he had been jostled by a large bruiser type with an ill-fitting uniform displaying the epaulettes of a flight lieutenant. They apologised to each other briefly and some twenty minutes later, when he had opened his wallet to pay for a drink, he had found a calling card nestling in the inside of the banknote section, he had pulled it out absently and glanced at it, it was blank except for a ten digit number, nonchalantly he had replaced it, instinct had told him that he had hit paydirt. His constant delving and probing into the possibility of re-training for confidential services, may well be bearing fruit, he paid for the round of drinks, not knowing fully if he was over-reacting, his response could at this very moment be subject to a monitoring system. It was the that flight lieutenant who had jostled him. 'Smart', he murmured to himself, it had been only a momentary brush, if it was what he thought it was, it had been a brilliant exchange, no matter how it had got there. It certainly wasn't there when he had entered the drill hall some thirty minutes earlier. He had allowed another hour to pass before going to a public telephone kiosk, he dialled the number and heard the familiar tone of the connection, the receiver was lifted but there was no voice, no recognition signal, Ben took the bull by the horns.

“Hatfield?” he suggested casually.

A female response was his reward.

“Oh Hatfield yes, you are required to report to the desk of the Savoy Hotel with regard to your recent enquiries 1500 hours prompt tomorrow.”

“Yes I’ll be there,” but the other end had hung up.

That had been his induction call. Subsequently he was introduced to the other men in the group and had started out on the re-training schedule that damn nearly broke his spirit. He had, he later discovered, been successful largely for his experience and know-how of aerial photography and reconnaissance tactics, his fitness was never in doubt. He was in.

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John Walker-Smith was in a foul mood.

“NO!” He exclaimed testily “No!” he repeated, “Absolutely, categorically, and emphatically NO!”

His widely acknowledged imperturbability lay shattered, he had, as many of his colleagues would express it, “Blown his stack.”

“That, gentlemen, is final. To go on record as refusing to comply with your suggestions.”

The gathering of Hawks visibly wilted under the tirade of stubborn resistance. Nobody in that assembly had thought for one minute that it was ever going to be easy, they had come into the meeting with an aura of defeatism. Ignore Walker-Smith at your peril they had been told, in very high places, they had been told that Walker-Smith would never undertake commercially motivated or politically orientated activities. He was a patriot no more, no less, he held the reins of power at combined forces H/Q and he indulged that power but it was a dynamic of expediency. He did not take decisions lightly, and he had built around himself an authority which would take an act of parliament to diminish. They had come under a withering fire of scorn, which was immediately prejudicial to their peace of mind. There followed a lecture on the activities of the department which they had approached for

political assurance, which they had deemed to be in the interest of her Majesty's Government. Scorn and impassioned bitterness had been poured on their theories, and on their request for assistance in their internal problems, things looked bleak.

"Your damn political infighting has no place in my operations. I do not intend to put at your disposal, highly trained personnel to advance controversial and failed policies. My people will not, repeat NOT, assist the police to subvert what I consider to be perfectly legal objections to the present system. A police state is the very concept that my office is trained to infiltrate and neutralise."

The beetle brows were furrowed the large nose snorted. The scar that ran the full length of the right hand side of the stern features showed white against the darkness of his natural colour. The fierce blue eyes bored unflinchingly in the direction of the grey men of commerce to whom he owed no allegiance. A large man with a large reputation, he mesmerised the three well dressed figures sitting across the room, they were listening to him carefully but showed concern as he outlined his reaction to the position which they had put to him earlier.

"Leaving aside the commercial implications," he went on, "What you are contemplating is the granting of political asylum to three dissidents, and you know now, before they even leave their country of origin, that they are prepared to 'come over' so to speak. That is not my area of operations, but no doubt your information is first class, so I will pass on that. However, we now come to my contribution. You expect a reprisals situation to develop, and you have good intelligence with regard to those you expect to be selected, but you cannot be one hundred per cent certain, and you do not want to preclude your success by withdrawing those that are not at risk. You wish me to ensure that, subsequent to the granting of asylum, these characters." He flourished a sheet of white foolscap paper which carried a list of names. "Are to be covertly evacuated, that is the bottom line isn't it?" He glowered belligerently at them.

"Yes" They answered in unison.

## Chapter 2

David Faulkner was never really happy with his appointment. The dust the heat the flies the oppressiveness of a regime of fanatics, the uncertainty of day to day events, the ever present threat of political intrigue, the harsh inhumanity, the tyranny of oppression. His own position was tenuous to say the least, sly innuendos, pointed remarks, heavily loaded questions, random searches for what was cynically referred to as routine. The suspicion and uncertainty of a rigid Moslem society.

His was not the lot of the high ranking confidant officials. He could never relax, never drop his guard. As second assistant at the consulate he took all the shit, organising the tennis tournaments, the dinner parties, the daily routine of the high achievers. And in this land of the military solution, the personality cult, political detainees, secret police, despotism and corruption, they never stopped snooping and prying.

He was tall and thin, with a perpetual frown of disapproval creasing his long mournful features. The product of an upper middle class family, he had taken this way out from sheer desperation and a sense of loneliness. Having failed the foreign office and diplomatic corp examinations, his friends and associates had become slowly less and less available. Now painfully serving out his contract, with even less enthusiasm than he had applied to his education. Now he was being harassed by the sinister 'state security' it seemed that every face he looked at was regarding him suspicion and expectancy. His father would have known how to treat these wags, funny that, he always retreated into the warmth of father's accomplishments when at a low ebb, he would have handled these shites, with a flick of an eyebrow.

They came for him in the early hours of the morning, and they were cruel, sadistic, unfeeling bastards. They slapped him around, pistol whipped him and beat him up, he was no threat to anybody, but he was picked, he was chosen to be the example to a corrupt capitalist system. To fire a warning shot in the direction of British Intelligence, just a few days before a trade delegation left for London. It was designed to make them aware that any subterfuge practised by the security services of that country would be swiftly counteracted. The second secretary was not a big fish but was close enough to the big fish to make it glaringly obvious that people had been targeted and would be an endangered species, in the event of any political manoeuvres affecting the delegation.

Several incidents took place in other parts of the capital to force home the implications, David Faulkner had been the catalyst of a series of events over which he had no control. He dragged himself up to his apartment blissfully unaware of his involuntary participation in the affairs of state, he lay his pain-wreaked body on the bed gasping to catch his breath, ribs and legs throbbing from the unmerciful battering that he had taken. He knew quite well that any complaint would go unheeded and that his would be the subject of a trumped up charge of immorality or drinking excesses, all his bruises would be accounted for as a drunken binge in the market place. The police would shrug their shoulders and dismiss the incident with a warning about his future behaviour, and in far off London the indication would be noted.

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Steve Barrington was worried. The BBC overseas programme had completed its transmission for the night and it had been a catalogue of impending disaster. It was infinitely more threatening since he had his wife and children here, his position as General Manager of the multi-national oil terminal placed him in a very delicate situation. The foreign office had announced its decision to grant political asylum to four very prominent high profile businessmen, and he guessed what was involved. They were very

senior economic experts, in possession of business and political intelligence. They would have names, numbers and evidence, which would be highly sought after in the Western world. They would have information about arms and narcotics smuggling channels, illegal imports into every Arab country in the Eastern bloc, routes of supply and users, specific international intrigue. They had knowledge of detainees, political prisoners and emergency measures, Arab internal security, deals made between Arab states, unpublicised intent, possibly even the very fabric of the closed society. It was a dangerous and explosive coup by the British government, and the re-action would be fiercely indiscriminate. As a result, reprisals could be expected, Europeans would be selected, no doubt about that, probably levelled initially at prominent businessmen and ex-pats. That it would be spiteful and vindictive, he did not doubt. That it would be sudden, he was pretty damn sure. That it would include himself and his family he feared. The telephone call to the airport had been cut off, that did nothing for his confidence, he could only sit it out, disconnected and afraid.

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Sam McCluskie was one of life's utter bastards, late of the US marines, ex-bouncer, ex-bruiser, ex prize fighter, ex CIA, ex bum, ex mercenary, he was mostly ex everything. One of Uncle Sam's misfits, hugely muscled, almost bald above a face of indeterminate features, the eyes small and pig like, a squashed bulbous nose and, his most redeeming feature, full generous lips almost effeminate, the large bull neck nestled on the folds of his shoulder blades, like a tree trunk. To complete the picture he had a well proportioned body, six foot four of lithe cat-like grace, his age could have been anywhere between thirty-five and fifty. A bad man to oppose in any circumstances, a Bronx born street fighter. He had, for six straight years been the Marine light heavyweight champion, and it was during his years in the US marine corp, that a surprising discovery had been made by his doctors, psychiatrists and his Senior Officers. They had detected, that in spite of the

physiognomy and temperament, he was the owner of a fine receptive brain. During many of his frequent visits to the sick bay he had astonished his medical team by showing, in his less violent activities, a high degree of natural latent intelligence. An examination normally applied to applicants to high office, had presented no difficulty whatever to him.

Subsequent high level investigation and interrogation had produced interest in other circles. Other departments of state were interested and it was early one dark winter morning when he was directed to California and disappeared overnight to re-surface in Israel, as a tough no-nonsense drill sergeant on roving assignment for the clandestine operations division. He was on leave in Tripoli when news of the defection broke.

Hafez Jumaih, was evil. Nothing detracted him in his continual pursuit of sadistic excitement. He was feared both by enemies and friends alike, for he did not distinguish between them. His very manner indicated seething resentment, spiteful passions, irritable asperity, impatience and malevolence. His dark, thin, pear-like face was highlighted by the glittering catlike eyes, a thin moustache covered the thin cruel sneering mouth, a long aquiline nose completed the unhappy picture. But to his eternal credit, he was genuine, he did not try to hide his neurosis from anybody, he made no effort to conceal his decayed thinking which, coupled with his advanced education, was a good enough reason to appoint him as chief of police in the Capital. A devout moslem, he was a leading advocate of the harsh, inhuman, penalties that accompanied any breaking or apparent breaking of the harsh laws of Islam, he had found his niche. The ideal man for the post he had made his mark in a very short time, accountable only to his Minister of State, one Ajbdul Monsin AJbushakrter. His cup was filled, he practised his unhealthy appetite unremittingly in the name of the State. Now largely responsible for the whipped-up massanti-Western hysteria which followed the defection of the traitors to British imperialism and to him fell the task of reprisals against that ungifted vacuous nation of manic depressives.

He now faced Steve Barrington across a glass topped table which stood in the middle of the oilman's living room indulging his favourite role of interrogator, the cat and canary, stacked odds, the winning hand, all the aces. Jumaih was the twenty-twenty vision man in the land of the blind.

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In another part of the city, Ali Badran was in the process of interrogating the immigration assistant who had vetted the departure of the detestable reactionaries. Ill equipped to withstand the pitiless severity of the regime of which he was an integral part, Ayeesh Hamdan was framing his answers to extricate himself from any association with subversive elements. The questioning was taking an ugly turn, the replies were becoming disjointed, he was a victim of his own system, acutely aware of the direction that it was going, the whipping boy had been selected and he was it.

Ayeesh Hamdan had but one advantage over his European contemporaries, he was native and possessed the native cunning of his erstwhile colleagues, all despots of every creed or colour always built back doors. Power was not absolute in unreliable concepts, it was fear that motivated these people, fear of the consequences of failure that motivated them to seek alternatives. Hamdan was no exception, the regime, of which he was a faithful servant was rotten to the core, it was inflexible, unforgiving, oppressive, strident. He was aware that failure, or even a suggestion of failure would be dealt with savagely and thus, like all sycophants, he thought he was prepared, but he was ill informed, and the result for which he had not budgeted was dropped right in his lap. The arrival of the state police had taken him by surprise and he was suitably concerned, the gloves were off, Badran was showing his teeth, but Hamdan knew that the difficulty was not, as yet, irretrievable.

Richard Hadyn spat the teeth and blood from his mouth. Another sharp slap across his bruised face, knocked him across the settee,

stumbling painfully, he tried to reach his wife, now blissfully unaware of the brutality being enacted upon her husband, unaware also of her own badly beaten body, slashes of angry bloodstained cuts crisscrossing her back. She lay where she had fallen, pathetic, tiny, delicate, broken. Once again the British vice consul was dragged to his feet and pulled before the grinning face of Abdul Shaini.

“We, Mr Hadyn, are what you frequently refer to as ‘Wogs’.” With each word, he slapped the concussed and badly shaken official across the face, re-opening wounds that had congealed and making fresh bruises on any exposed parts of the body not already badly damaged.

“Do you understand me, you filthy excrescence. Capitalist scum like you need to be eliminated from our society, banished from this beautiful country of ours and I intend to demonstrate the superiority of our culture by ensuring that you would wish to be back among your oversexed, reactionary pig friends.”

Abdul Shaini was in the first throws of apoplexy. He sat down in a richly embroidered armchair as Hadyn collapsed, signalling his four junior officers.

“Put them down on the divan, get me one of those bottles” he indicated the cocktail cabinet.

The shabbily dressed officers hurried to his command, one of whom handed him a bottle of *Haigs*.

“Glass” he sneered to the subordinate.

A tumbler was handed to him, he poured a liberal measure of the amber fluid into the glass and sipped appreciatively, glaring vindictively at the inert figures on the divan.

“To the super race,” he muttered. “Burn the woman” he added casually.

The tallest of the conscripts lit a cigarette, puffed it heavily, into a warm glow and approached the tiny figure of Glenys Hadyn and viciously crunched the glowing tip into her face. There was an involuntary reflex action from the bedraggled consul’s wife, but she was beyond any physical pain.

“Cut her” Shaini hissed malevolently.

The soldiers went about their task with a degree of skill and enthusiasm which indicated the terror in which they held their officer. They slashed the woman's face time and time again with razor sharp knives until Shaini ordered them to desist.

"Break the man's legs." he ordered imperiously and they did so with relish using the butts of their Kalashnikov rifles.

Shaini grinned maliciously. "Come," he instructed the conscripts. "We have others to see."

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Desmond Carter pulled into the garage, killed the engine of his company car and sat for a few moments, pondering. The news was bad, he was in telephone conversation with head office when the line went dead, it was no coincidence, he was wise enough to know that. He was also wise enough to know that, as operations executive of the largest truck and bus business in the Middle East, he would be a prime target if reprisals were to be effected and that reprisals would be enacted in this situation was pretty damn likely. Oh yes they would circle the wagons alright, that was their mentality, revenge, spite, irascibility, traits that were well known to the Western observer. These people were unstable, living with fear, exporting fear, promoting fear and apprehension, they would react violently against British interests, not only British, but many western commercial and individual personnel could be expected to undergo vitriolic attention. What could he do? 'Nothing', he mused. Not one solitary good goddamn thing, a private plane, a landing strip, fuel, charts, that's for the diplomats those in the know, they would have been well informed and ready for this. The businessman, the worker, the entrepreneur, too bad, you landed yourself in that position, you take your chances, and perhaps, in many ways he was aware that this could always happen in an unrestrained, impermanent society. These people were not really civilised, they were indoctrinated savages, they knew no middle of the road policies, no diplomacy, no tact, like children they would strike back at what they interpreted as their tormentors. They

would kidnap, torture, persecute, frighten and harm any of those that they decreed to be part of a plot against the holy one. No, they could not be presumed. All in all there was nothing that he could do, except silently curse the Government department that knowingly put British personnel in danger of abuse.

Sighing resignedly he opened the door of the company owned 'Packard Continental' and made his way to the front door of the Hacienda type bungalow, it was unlocked.

"Thought so," he muttered subconsciously, and pushed firmly at the door, as expected, they were there.

"Come in Mr Carter"

"Shastri," Carter gritted viciously, this was not going to be a cake walk.

"We would like a word Sir."

The oily westernised accent of Mohammed Shastri greeted him. 'One of the worst', Carter thought, as he looked around the at the company of three, all in flowing robes, unctuous, patronising, and grinning maliciously.

"What can I do for you gentlemen?" he grated knowingly.

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