

BIRDS OF PREY:
THE RISING FORCE



SHANE HARMAN

**Birds of Prey:
The Rising Force**

Shane Harman

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by Shane Harman**

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by Shane Harman**

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For my beautiful family,
Bianca, Olivia and Jack
And in Memory of Matthew Taylor (Matt T)

The only time that evil will triumph is when
good men do nothing
Edmund Barke

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Runnin

1510 20-01-2006

It was Friday afternoon and groggily, Jack Sharman got himself ready to pick up his kids; Sarah, 7, from school, and Mat, 2, from their Grandma, who was meeting Jack at the school.

Apart from only having four hour's sleep from coming off a twelve hour night shift, Jack was rather alert and excited, for he was going on a camping trip with a couple of mates.

This was not just any camping trip; they had Jack's brand new Hilux 4 x 4 dual cab loaded to the hilt with Paint ball and camping gear, and were heading into the hills for the weekend.

Jack was a very family orientated guy who did not stray very far from his young family, he had worked in security for the past eight or so years, starting out in crowd control at a local pub, and having no idea about the security game at this stage, he went in pretty much blind folded.

Well, he learned how to how to handle himself fairly quickly when he found out that the drunk patrons did not like doing what they were told in a situation especially when the guard telling them what to do was smaller than them. Jack soon learned that some people just don't like going quietly. Jack stayed in the 'thug' game for about six years mainly because he had to more than anything; in the meantime he got a job as a Loss Prevention

Officer at a local department store;

The money was shit but when he combined it with his pub work it was not all that bad, The only problem with store Loss Prevention is because you were only there to deter the thieves and not really to catch them, Jack soon found out that they might as well be a cardboard cut out at the front of the store that said "WE WELCOME CRIMINALS WITH A FRIENDLY SMILE AND A COMPLIMENTRY SHOPPING BAG".

For anything they did was not recognized and the fact that they sometimes put themselves in danger was neither here nor there to management.

Then finally Jack Sharman got a break, at least financially when he went for a job as a security contractor, the money doubled and he finally gave away his pub work.

But even making decent money had its fall backs, like bad management and colleagues that had no idea what they were doing, other than that the job was pretty laid back even though it was a high risk job.

But at just under fifty thousand dollars a year who would complain, hell his wife was making roughly the same so together they were on a good wicket, they had just bought a brand new house and car, so you could say they were ready for their turn in the sun.

"Come on kids, don't forget Chloe, Alex and baby Sam are staying for the weekend". Jack said.

Sarah bounced excitedly in the back seat, "Cool, I can't wait!!!"

At home, Jack's wife, Liz was preparing a meal for the kids, and their Mum, Jess, who was staying as well. By the time 16:30 (4:30pm) came around, Jack's mates had arrived and were pumped about the adventure packed weekend that lay ahead.

“Oh great the weekend warriors have arrived. Yippy.” Jack’s wife Liz piped up in a sarcastic tone. “G’day Mrs S, did you get the permission note and the money for Jack’s little camping trip? Do you know I have known Jack for nearly five years and this is the first time he has asked me to go camping.” Nick retorted as he walked in the door.

“That’s because I thought you were gay and just married Jess as a front and secretly wanted to bed every man you seen”. Liz threw her head back in laughter.

“Ouch that was a good one, you nearly had me there, right up until you said . . . I wanted to BED your husband . . . now that is just sick”. Nick laughed shaking his head.

Nick and Liz had a very “at each others throat relationship”, not in a bad way, they just enjoyed taking the piss out of each other.

Sometimes their little verbal battles ended up in harmless violence but even then it was all in good fun.

“Lucky it’s not you staying here all weekend cause I would end up killing you. You drive me crazy”. Liz said throwing her hands in the air.

“That is why I married Jess thankfully, plus, I did not know you that long ago”. Nick replied taking the point.

‘WHACK’ Liz threw a real woman’s punch into Nick’s stomach, which took him by surprise and knocked the wind out of him.

“That was a cheap shot”. Nick gasped, going to his knees trying to suck in some air.

Meanwhile, the rest of Jack’s mates had turned up and were oohing and aahing with every verbal and physical blow. “Are you kicking the shit out of my friends again, dear?” Jack said while his mate picked himself up of the floor.

“He started it”, Liz retorted giving Nick a cheeky side glance as she laughed hard.

“What am I going to do with you pair, honestly?” Jack said shaking his head at both of them.

“I know, we can leave Nick here and let them fight it out for themselves”. Quinny laughed.

‘THUMP’, the pillow caught Quinny in the side of the head and he stumbled sideways. “Hey, what did I say?” Quinny said with a smarmy look on his face.

“That’s enough from the peanut gallery, thank you”. Liz said readying another pillow in case of retaliation. But there was none, the guys had called, Liz one, guys nil and left it at that, instead they all just smiled in agreement to shut up.

“I love it when the guys come to visit, it leaves me out of the firing line”. Jack said carefully.

Liz just shot him a glance, that was enough, he gave her a peck on the cheek as he pinched a snag Liz was cooking for the kids.

Jack’s mates were not hard to describe: there was Nick aged 26, who was married with three young children and an owner operator of his and his wife’s own small business, a cleaning business which started out as a lawn mowing business but when the drought hit and everyone stopped mowing their lawns once a week, the lawn mowing stopped and the cleaning side of things really took off.

Nick was not a tall man but was rather solid with heavily defined arms and broad shoulders and one of few lucky people his age to be able to maintain a six pack, although he worked hard for it, weight training and martial arts were both part of his daily life, that and an active working life kept him in great shape.

It wasn’t long before Nick and his wife bought their own home and

started to expand their contracts with the business, Nick had met Jack while working at the same department store and they built a strong friendship as Jack went over to Nick’s house on occasion to work out with him.

And then there was Mitchell aged 19, who had not a care in the world but who had just recently joined the Australian Army Reserves, he and Nick were brothers.

Mitchell had flown through reserve training with high scores in weapons, Tactics and marksmanship training.

Then there's Quinny, a tank of a man who at twenty five, was a bit nervous about commitment and children but had a loving partner all the same. Quinny was in everything for the rush and the thrill of the hunt, Jack had met Quinny while working security at the pub.

He and Quinny had been placed on the street patrol between the pub and a cab rank about eighty metres down the road; together they patrolled the area intervening in any street violence and moving on intoxicated persons. Jack and Quinny had worked together for over four and a half years and they pretty much knew what the other was going to do before it happened.

Sometimes that just was not possible often the pair would have to use what they liked to call 'reasonable force'.

One of these instances was when they were asked to move a patron from the front of the premises for causing trouble.

After Jack had tried the gentle approach by talking to the man, he was faced with an ever familiar task of taking on an intoxicated person nearly twice his size, Quinny was at the door of the pub, about twenty metres away, talking to a group of girls.

Jack saw the right hook coming and caught it with his right grabbing the attacker's wrist and twisting it down across the front of the body in a rather unconventional arm lock, but it caused enough pain to force the attacker to his knees where Jack forced him face down, but before Jack could get himself in a position to restrain the struggling giant a less intoxicated friend of the man seen his friend in trouble and came in for the for the kill; lining himself up to crash tackle Jack.

Jack caught sight of the charging buddy out of the corner of his eye and dropped his shoulder just as the man was about to strike. Catching the man in the rib cage Jack lifted himself up into the stomach of the man while still pinning the other guy.

"Little bit of help would be nice, Casanova", Jack screamed as the second guy went crashing into the pavement landing on the back of his right shoulder.

"Oh shit, can't I leave you alone with anyone for a second, Grandad?" Quinny replied rushing to Jack's aid.

Quinny noticed another four onlookers rushing towards Jack as he reached his side.

"Shit this could get hectic, SECURITY TO THE FRONT DOOR, SECURITY TO THE FRONT DOOR". Quinny yelled into the portable radio mike he had attached to his black security jacket.

Quinny jumped in between Jack and the incoming brawlers bracing for the imminent attack.

What happened next was nothing short of incredible, Jack's first attacker who he thought he had restrained started to struggle so Jack pushed the guy's arm up towards the shoulder until he heard a sickening popping sound followed by a blood curdling scream.

"You fucking asshole, you busted my shoulder. You prick!" The guy was really hurting but was no longer a threat, unlike the car load of friends that had just pulled up after receiving a phone call from the guy's girlfriend who was watching from just inside the front door.

Jack was back on his feet and back to back with Quinny, with nine attackers now moving in quickly.

"Ok big fella, you take the ugly ones". Jack said trying to make light of the situation.

"They are all ugly. This is NOT fair". Quinny said as his attackers charged him.

“Here we go again”. Quinny said as he dodged a haymaker from a tall, thin man in a singlet top and black track pants.

Quinny retaliated with a quick right jab to the centre of the man’s face smashing the man’s nose across his face, meanwhile Jack was in serious trouble with two guys holding him by the arms while another two laid into him with fists and boots alike.

“You had enough old man?” one of the attackers said taking a step back.

“Not quite”. Jack said bringing his left boot up into the man’s groin dropping him like a sack of potatoes, once his left was down he used the men restraining him to launch himself into the air and kick the fourth attacker fair on the bridge of the nose knocking him out cold, he then gathered his last remaining bit of strength to force the other two men off balance, one of which was forced to the ground, releasing Jack’s arm as he went.

In one fluid motion, Jack brought his free fist around hitting the last man fair in the left eye, sending him flailing backwards before he slumped against the wall of the pub in pain.

At that point another ten security guards arrived on the scene removing three of the four men from various parts of Quinny’s anatomy. Within minutes the remaining attackers were restrained and two police cars and a police cage truck also attended. And that was one of the tamer nights.

Jack was the oldest of his four mates at 33, but still very young at heart, or so he liked to think anyway.

The guys said their goodbyes and headed off, stopping of course at Hungry Jacks on the way for a quick bite before heading off on what was to be the largest adventure of their lives, six hours down the road to their destination, The Blue Mountains.

The Blue Mountains National Park is one of Australia’s most prized national parks covering an area of 2,470 km squared and is actually an uplifted plateau of land other than a mountain range with large cliff faces, creeks, rivers and ravine crossings it was the ideal spot for a weekend adventure.

The six hour drive involved some Red Bulls, a couple of snacks and a lot of filthy jokes, the kind you don’t even tell your wife.

“Hey Quinny is it true that for a while before you met Ellie that Jack used to call you a skirt chaser?” Nick retorted with a chuckle.

“Fuck off, is there anything that you have not told these guys about me Jack or do they know me life story?” Quinny replied almost annoyed.

“Well I am sure I did not tell them everything, well maybe a little bit”. Jack answered sarcastically.

“Ok it seems you told them the nickname you gave me but did you tell them the nick name I gave you?” Quinny said in retaliation.

“Well Granddad.” Quinny threw at Jack giving half a chuckle. “Granddad hey, maybe I should stop calling you Sharm’s and start calling you Granddad”. Nick said smiling.

“Don’t you start Nick its bad enough Mr Obnoxious over there had to bring it up let alone everyone else jumping on the band wagon.

They all shared the driving, hence the reason there was no alcohol.

“Can’t this bucket of shit go any faster?” Quinny remarked.

“Yeah I thought this was brand new? Put the boot in we are doing like 75 kmh in a 110 zone”. Mitchell said.

“I am running it in you half wits”. Jack replied angrily.

“How bout I run you in, Granddad?” Quinny laughed.

“You just wait till we get on the field, then we will see which one’s the Granddad, smart ass”. Jack replied slowly pushing the peddle down the more pissed off he got.

“Whatever, you will always be in my shadow Jack, always”. Quinny replied.

The ute became quiet Quinny wasn’t serious about what he had said, it was just the way it came out. Jack decided to leave it be and just smiled it off and kept driving.

As they were very serious paint ballers, they had gotten special permission from National Parks & Wildlife and signed statutory declarations to say that they were in the park with environmentally friendly paint balls and there at their own risk.

This was all done so that they did not have to play on a public field, where there were no other patrons to deal with and they were in a very natural environment.

Apart from all the jokes and dirty stories, there were a lot of mind games between the already picked teams. The brothers had been parted, so it was Quinny and Mitchell and Nick and Jack.

In ‘battle’, Quinny and Mitchell became Falcon 1 & 2, and Jack and Nick became Eagle 1 & 2.

Both teams had a set of 2-way radios which they could alternate between two separate ‘team’ frequencies and one group frequency that one member from each team was on all the time and that the other could change to at the flick of a switch.

Both teams were in full camouflage clothing which they informed the authorities about, so as not to cause any alarm, with that the guys had reported to their local Police station the day before with all there gear so as the police could rule out any terrorist group affiliation.

The games were played in four to six hour sets, depending on intensity, with an hour or so break for lunch in between.

Considering the group would not get to the mountains until about 2300 hours, they would stay in a motel at the entrance to the park for the first night and set of at about 0300 hours in the morning.

“It is not exactly the Novatel resort is it?” Mitchell piped up.

“Be grateful ya little shit, you didn’t have to pay for it, Jack has supplied everything for this trip so show some respect”. Nick yelled at his brother.

“Alright I was only making an observation”. Mitchell pouted.

“Well I think it fits in with the surroundings quiet nicely”. Jack said looking at the ranges beyond the motel.

“Me too all we need is two guys sitting on the porch playing banjo’s and the scene is set for the movie Deliverance”. Mitchell replied half seriously.

“Look get ya gear out of the back and get into the room so we can get some shut eye for fuck’s sake and stop whining”. Nick scorned.

Jack went to reception and checked in for the night while the rest of the guys fought over the four single beds in the room.

By the time he got back to the room they were all fast asleep.

“Fucking typical.” Jack said under his breath.

Jack collapsed onto his bed and like the others fell asleep straight away. The next morning the guys were up bright and early, at around 0300 they loaded up the ute and started their drive deep into the heart of the park stopping the ute on a fire trail at the foot of Mount Werong; from there they secured the vehicle and started loading up their backpacks before walking an hour deeper into the scrub to set up base camp and have breakfast. They took two fire fighting knapsacks with them and left another two twenty litre water jerry’s just in case.

The backpacks were loaded with food, water, spare clothes and tents and sleeping bags and of course, their paint ball gear and plenty of paint balls, of which they had five thousand each.

There was no hiking trail, so they had to clear their own, so as to get back to the vehicle safely, but after a solid hour and a half walk, they set up their portable cook tops and hooked into a big breakfast of eggs, bacon, beans, juice and coffee.

Then they filled their water canteens, day packs with food and about a thousand paint balls each and Team Falcon headed into the scrub to set up their base camp which was to be marked with a green flag. With that done they radioed blue team to give them a two minute time frame to start the hunt.

Team Eagle was marked with a blue flag, and Green Team was on the defensive within half an hour.

Blue team was on the stalk, taking them twenty minutes to find Falcon's base camp, but it was deserted, although twenty metres behind base camp Falcon, it was on for young and old.

Radios crackled to life as Eagle One ducked for cover behind a fallen log and called in his mouthpiece; "Eagle 2, take cover, return fire".

"Falcon 1, draw them in them in and the first games ours!"

Eagle 2 dived out from behind a tree and hammered a volley of shots at the now fast moving Team Falcon as Eagle-2 landed in the dirt behind a group of rocks, he screamed into his mouthpiece "Eagle-1, Falcon on the move fifteen metres and closing".

Team Falcon (Green team) were firing at a phenomenal rate, moving in five metre bounds at the same time. So by the time Eagle 1 had dived out from behind the log and fired a volley of shots Team Falcon were all over him.

They had the upper hand and nailed Eagle 1 with two shots to the chest, but at the same time Falcon 2 had taken a shot to the chest from Eagle 2 who had strategically moved to the right flank and pounced just at the right time.

At this stage there was a five minute break.

"What was that about, wait until we get on the field Granddad? Well you sure showed us old man; gee how long did that take, not even half an hour?". Quinny said smugly winking at Jack.

"You gotta give these old timers a bit of time to warm up Quinny". Mitchell said with a cheeky grin on his face.

"Hey guys, we let you win the first round so you wouldn't have to play catch up for the rest of the weekend". Nick said trying to save face.

"Ok you guys keep telling yourselves that, maybe by the end of the weekend you might start to believe it". Quinny replied sarcastically.

"Ok ok just shut up and take score so we can start kicking your butts". Jack said starting to get agitated.

Everyone rehydrated before taking fifty paces in opposite directions, and getting straight back into it with Team Eagle on full offensive driving Team Falcon deep into the scrub before they started to regain any ground.

"Draw them into that clearing we just past so we can get one up on them". Jack screamed into his two way as he and Nick split up to try and out flank there opponents.

'Blat blat blat' Jack pumped three blue paint balls into Quinny's body Armour.

"What's the matter Quinny reflex's are not as good as they used to be. Maybe your joining the GRANDDADS league?" Jack laughed as he took out his score book and put another point down.

Meanwhile Nick and his brother were in a skirmish of their own, Nick had Mitchell pinned behind a log and no matter where Mitchell went Nick was there.

“Where are those army instincts now little brother?”. Nick laughed evilly.

While Mitchell was behind the log he used his left hand to dig up a bit of moist earth from under the log and roll it into a mud ball, Mitchell popped his head up to draw the fire before quickly ducking back behind the log.

The next time he came up he brought up his mud filled hand and as soon as he could see enough he aimed up at his brother’s protective goggles and launched his filthy bomb attack.

The clump of mud hit its target with perfect accuracy splattering all over his brother’s goggles. Mitchell took the initiative and pumped a volley of paint into his brother’s chest armour.

“Oooh, so that’s where those army instincts got to?”. Mitchell said taking down his point and moving on.

“Eagle-2 this is Eagle-1 regroup at checkpoint bravo-6 over”. Jack ordered over his radio.

“Copy that Eagle-1 be on that location in thirty seconds over”. Nick replied already moving.

Team Eagle had fall back points all over their area of operations for these sort of circumstances.

Two hours into the first set, after fiercest fighting so far, the strangest thing happened

Team Falcon stumbled onto another campsite, scared the living blazes out of two teenagers sunbaking. The two young girls were lying on their stomachs with their bikini tops unlaced.

“Get away you perverts. Dad we have peeping toms bring your gun”. Yelled one of the young girls covering herself up with her towel.

“We are not peeping toms. I can assure you”. Mitchell said trying not to stare at the attractive young females.

“Who the fuck are you?” Came a loud voice from behind Quinny and Mitchell.

“Hey put the gun down I can explain, we have written permission to be in the park dressed like this, just hang on.” Quinny said as he keyed his lapel mike on his radio.

“Eagle team this is Falcon one we have a situation, we are about two clicks south west of your location”.

“Copy that Falcon-1 we will be there in 10 mikes over”.

Obviously the game was stopped while they waited for team Eagle.

Quinny explained what they were doing there and showed them a copy of the letter, apologies were made, just as the other two came onto the scene introductions were made and hands were shook, turned out to be two families and their eighteen year old daughters on a parent daughter bonding trip.

“Just out of curiosity why the Police issue Glock-17?” Quinny said admiring the weapon.

“Sorry”. Said the man that called himself Jones.

“We are cops yes, you have an eye for weapons, young man”. The second man calling himself Smith said with a sense of tension in his voice.

“Its ok officer I have been looking into joining for a while now”. Quinny said.

“Yes we all have a history in security of some sort officers”. Jack piped up.

“What sort of history do the rest of you have?” Asked the one named Smith.

“Well I am a Security Officer on a defence site, Mitchell here has just joined the Army and his brother Nick is just a hard ass”. Jack said smiling at his end remark.

“Why do you ask”. Quinny asked curiously.

“No reason, I was watching the four of you a while ago down in the gully, are you sure you guys dont have any other training together? You work well as a team; although the outfits made me look twice the paint on them was a dead give away”. Smith answered with a genuine smile.

After a fifteen minute chat, the guys decided to leave the families to their camping site and get on with their game, making a three hundred metre radius no go zone around the newly found campsite.

The last hour and a half of the first set was even more intense than before with Team Falcon taking first honours by one lousy shot.

Lunch was had where the first set finished and between mouthfuls, they spoke about the day thus far, including running into the two families when Falcon 2 piped up and said. “They were definitely first time campers”.

Eagle 1 asked. “what makes you say that?”

To which Falcon 2 replied.

“Brand new tent, not erected properly, the two guys were virtually in suits”. Falcon 1 said.

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Twist of Fate

When the games began they were almost a quarter of the way into the set before the first shot made its mark, from then on it was tit for tat, and the adventure was well under way.

Creeks were run through and caves hidden in, and paint balls were spread all through the scrub, with even a few of the local wildlife copping a few, luckily from non toxic paint!!

“Eagle 1, this is Eagle 2, one coming five metres left”. Falcon 2 dived out of the bushes just metres from Eagle 2, with Eagle 2 diving sideways while firing a burst into the lower torso of his attacker just before receiving a shot to the arm from the surviving Team Falcon player.

“Eagle 2, dive right for cover, I’ll take him out”. Like it was rehearsed Eagle 2 dived to the right while Eagle 1 moved into position directly behind and hit the remaining Falcon team member with three shots to the upper chest.

Scores were taken again and what was to be the last game was started.

The game was extremely fast with at least twenty scored shots in the first 15 minutes, both teams were fatigued but still going hard, and it was down to the last 10 minutes, Eagle 1 & 2 burst out of the scrub together.

They were down on points and desperate for a team win, but Team Falcon were waiting, and the ambush well executed with Team Eagle’s day lost, if only by a couple of points..

After sitting for fifteen minutes, and rehydrating, the weary toy soldiers headed back to base camp for a good feed and a well earned rest.

Back at base camp, the smell of bacon and eggs was fresh in the air, along with a few cold softies, they spoke about the day’s war games with laughter and hero stories.

“Well it looks like the first day belongs to team Falcon”. Quinny said as both he and Mitchell let out a nice loud cheer.

“As I said, we let you win so you would not have to play catch up on day two”. Nick said calmly.

“Well the losers have to stock the woodpile before bed so off ya’s go and we’ll see you in the morning”. Quinny said sarcastically.

Team Eagle decided they better stock the wood pile before it got too dark, they walked a lot, talked and laughed a lot, but collected very little wood, coming to the top of a hill, probably one of the highest around, a strange, almost man made glow was seen roughly five clicks and out of the area of operations, towards the centre of the park.

From where they were on the hill, they could see their campsite, lit up by the well cleared, covered campfire.

The total fire ban that had been in place for the last week had been lifted just two days prior, with strict guidelines to follow for those who wanted campfires.

Although at the two families campsite, there was no fire and very minimal movement, which was rather odd, the guys thought.

It was starting to get darker, so Team Eagle decided to get an armful each of wood and head back to camp.

On getting back, Quinny and Mitch were listening to a battery operated radio and were listening to the next day's weather report.

"You guys ain't gonna believe this," indicating to the radio, said Quinny shaking his head.

"Believe what?" Jack replied.

"Well, 38 degrees with 40-50 km per hour winds with 20 percent humidity", Mitchell said.

"Hmm, we'll just have to see how things pan out in the morning then. For now, last one to bed, puts the fire out completely", said Jack.

After chatting about the day and the weather for an hour or so more, all four men decided to call it quits.

It had been a brilliant day and Team Eagle wanted to get sleep so they could get their payback the next morning.

On confirming that, all four promptly dropped their strides and extinguished the fire in the most water saving way possible and retired to the tents for the night, and by the time all four heads hit the pillows, the weekend warriors were dead to the world. It was just after 0300 in the morning when the big bald agent was awoken by the vibration of his satellite phone he kept with him at all times.

The guys were right, these guys were not seasoned campers but agents working undercover with their families on an alleged drugs surveillance operation.

They'd been there for a week, and so far had counted 20 men and roughly 100 kilos of drugs go through the camp, not just one type, but cannabis, crack, ice and crystal meth, just to name a few.

The agents were meant to have a civilian plane fly over in the next day or two to take aerial pictures of the camp, but this phone call was not good news.

Smith, who was close by, was on surveillance detail when the phone rang, and they were half a click away from the drug camp.

Smith was a lean, muscular man, great marksman, and doing one more case before moving over to special operations, Tactical.

He had also been very distant on this mission, Jones had thought, keeping to himself; even distancing himself from his family which he was usually very close to.

Jones gingerly answered the phone, "Jones speaking".

"Jones, this is HQ, just giving you the heads up, a bush fire has been reported about 30 clicks southwest of your position moving straight towards you, there is a fire trail 3 clicks directly behind your position to the north, and we can have two black unmarked 4 x 4's waiting for you, I'll send the co-ordinates to your sat-nav when the vehicles get close. Move fast, as they'll be there within the hour." Said the commander with urgency in his voice.

"What about the operation? We're about two days from cracking this one wide open!!" Jones sounded rather defeated.

"This is not open for discussion; your families lives are on the line, plus you have pictures of faces, so if they survive, we'll catch up with them, chances are they have the same info as us, so they will be on the move as well. Look, we are losing the satellite, we will see you back at HQ. Be safe." Jones had to restrain himself from throwing the satellite phone into the scrub.

"Lets get back to the camp, get these women packed up, 'cause if that wind picks up, we'll have a fire storm on top of us before the hour's up." Jones ordered shrugging of any thoughts of Smith's strange behaviour.

He couldn't afford to not trust his partner now, they had a large fire moving towards them and a major operation about to go belly up so now was not the time.

Back at the paint ball camp there was plenty of movement too, as Mitchell had been listening to the radio when an urgent broadcast came across saying that rangers were coming through to evacuate the park.

Twenty minutes later, Jack and the guys were ready to go, when they heard a commotion from behind.

“Stop, Police!” Yelled Jones and Smith from twenty metres behind the group.

The four guys turned their heads in unison.

Jack looked at the officers with an inquisitive look on his face.

“No time now guys; we’ll explain later, we have to break some rules, so are you guys as good with real weapons as you are with those paint guns?” Jones asked in a serious tone.

“Well we have all handled them before, mainly in simulated situations”. Jack replied vouching for the rest of the team.

At this time, Jones flashed his badge, while Smith took over talking.

“We were here undercover with our families, and no we are not Police, this is Agent Smith and I am Agent Jones we are with the Australian Anti—Terrorist Tactical Unit, AATTU for short, well now our families have been taken hostage; it seems that the guys we were after now know who we are”. Smith said urgently.

All of a sudden a radio from Smith’s belt came to life, “Night Stalker, this is the Stork, The extraction package has been delivered and the ice pack, is in the fire Shit there here. Grid bearing long: 24 Lat 32, need back . . .” Automatic fire could be heard in the distance.

“That’s the co-ordinates of our truck”. Jack said.

“Well, we still have to get there. Our party packs are in the back”, said Smith.

“Well boys, we have a firestorm behind us, a shit load of hostiles on one side and some more in front of us, they’ve probably shot out our truck and I’d hate to think it was our wives and kids”. Jack said as the four guys looked at each other with serious but agreeing looks.

“Let’s get hectic”, said Mitchell.

Quinny replied. “we have nowhere else to go”.

“Why not? We were gettin our arse’s handed to us anyway”, Nick said half joking.

Jack said. “Ok officers, what sort of party pack are we talking about?”

“Four M-4 assault rifles, silenced with night vision scopes, two M203 assault rifle/grenade launcher, one M40A1 sniper rifle, silenced and an assortment of Claymores, two law rocket launchers and enough C4 to wipe out a whole town.” Smith said.

“Ok, we have about two hours before it gets really hot here, so I say we have an hour and twenty minutes to get in, get the girls and get out, but first we have to get that ‘party pack’”. Jack replied with a serious look of urgency on his face.

Agent Jones and Jack both went with police issued Glocks, and stalked their way towards the vehicles. About 20 metres from the fire trail Jack spotted them.

Two guards on each of the three vehicles, all with ex army Steyrs or

M16’s Jones turned to Jack and said. “we have to do this quietly, any ideas?”

Jack just looked across, gave a dirty great smile, winked, and then keyed his lapel mike and said. “Blue team, green team, we need those guards out of the equation, think you guys can handle it silently?”

“Copy that”. The team replied in unison.

Within five minutes two by two the welcome party was taken out by Mitchell and Nick.

Quinny took the last two out by himself, knocking their heads together. The other four were taken out by Australian Army issue combat knives.

“Eagle 1, this is Falcon 1, whatever we gotta do, we better do it now, cause these vehicles are gonna vapour in about five minutes.”

“Copy that Falcon 1”, replied Jack, into his radio before turning to Jones and saying.

“Agents, these vehicles are set to explode in about four minutes.”

“Ok, lets get to work”. Jones said as he opened the back of a black 4 x 4 and pushed a button in the door jam at that point the floor opened up and the agent quickly pulled out two weapons cases, Smith pulled two out of the other 4 x 4, while Eagle 2 grabbed four fire fighting nap sacks out of the Hilux.

Meanwhile Jack had placed two water jerry’s on the roof of each of the vehicles out of the Hilux, hopefully to soften the impact of the explosives which were going up in about forty seconds.

The six men were now fully armed and laden with ammo and other gear, and sprinted into the bush and were well clear when the three vehicles exploded.

The water didn’t do too bad a job, left the vehicles burning on the fire trail, while only two or three spot fires were quickly extinguished of the trail, they had enough to deal with, with a fully fledged bush fire screaming towards them.

The six men had been running for about 15 minutes, weapons at the ready.

Jack had actually found out that both agents had actually worked in SAS, so after a five minute crash course in each weapon, the guys were pretty right, Quinny had done some weapons training with the police through a friend of his, Mitch was in the Army, Jack had been in the army and Nick was a quick learner.

However, they were all scared shitless; four men with limited skills up against twenty odd of the worst scum in the world with who knows what sort of arsenal.

“Stop here men”, Jones whispered into his radio which was now linked to his four new deputies, who had no doubt that Jones was now in charge.

The men crawled side by side up to the top ridge overlooking what looked to be the entire camp, there was about a dozen hot houses around six main buildings.

One was a communications (comms) building obviously, as there was an aerial protruding beside that, a broken down old shack and three tent barracks and a large building which looked like an old rangers house.

From what Jones could see through his binoculars, most of the workers had been evacuated because of the pending fire, which was now roughly 15 kilometres away and obviously still closing because the smoke was starting to thicken up.

Jones counted only 10 men walking the perimeter.

Smith and Mitchell played God on the ridge, Mitchell armed with the silenced M40A1 sniper rifle and Smith, who was spotting, had his M203 as a just in case, if things got ugly.

Meanwhile, the other four snuck through the perimeter and started a building to building search for the women.

Some of the hot houses were checked but they were full of drugs or drug making equipment, so they decided that Quinny and Jones would go to the Communications hut and get an evacuation chopper in, while Nick and Jack searched the remaining buildings for the girls.

Nick kicked in the door to the old shack, Jack burst in assault rifle raised, simultaneously Jack and Nick opened fire, each with a three round burst “tap tap tap” and downed the two guards.

“Clear.” yelled Jack.

“Three hostages secure,” yelled Nick into his radio.

“Who is missing?” Yelled Smith.

Nick paused, keyed his mic and took a deep breath.

“Your wife seems to think that Mrs Jones was taken to another location just over the next ridge, apparently they have a vehicle waiting”.

Jones barked into his radio. “Move my daughter and the Smiths’ to the over watch position on the hill, call sign God (Mitchell) will clear the way, when you’ve done that Nick, get back here asap. In the meantime we have communications; we will get mop up and extract teams in”.

Four men came running out of the main building guns raised, two of them were met by Quinny and Jack, covering Nick from the doorway of the comms hut, the other two copped a round each between the eyes in quick succession from Mitchell on the ridge, Jack then cleared the main building and found out it was linked to the comms hut via recording and CCTV equipment.

“Hunter, this is Blood Hound, we have hostage situation at these co-ordinates break; send extraction team to this grid asap. We will mark the landing zone with red smoke. Over”. Yelled Jones into the commandeered radio.

The response was. “Blood Hound this is Hunter, First; wind has changed, fire is moving away; three evacuation and mop up choppers are en route ETA 10 minutes, we also have a fire team en route just in case. Over”. Came the reply.*

“Will pop smoke when we have visual Blood Hound out”. Keyed Jones.

At that moment, the team radio burst to life.

“Take defensive positions, we have fifty to sixty hostiles moving over the ridge directly to your front”. Smith ordered over the radio.

“I’ll warn the evacuation team before moving to cover.” Jones replied.

“Hunter, this is blood Hound, we have approximately 60 hostiles moving to our position, you will be landing in a hot landing zone. I say again, the landing zone is hot”. Then speaking into the team radio “Fire team, find a clearing and defend until evacuation gets here Go loud, go loud, and make all shots count. Choppers are about 10 clicks away”.

With that, Smith raised his M203 and placed a High Explosive (HE) grenade in the launcher and fired it into the oncoming horde, wiping out five or six in one hit. Meanwhile just at the foot of the hill in a small wooded area the four man fire team were under heavy fire, Jones had only just made it back from the comms hut when it exploded into a huge fireball after it was hit by a Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG).

The RPG strike had started another fire, now spreading along the ground, through the remains of the camp.

“How far aways the calvary?” screamed Quinny into his mike.

“ETA about five minutes”, answered Jones.

“I don’t think we have five minutes”. Replied Nick as a Russian made small attack chopper came into view over the ridge.

“I don’t like this game anymore”. Jack said as he picked off another two hostiles.

Bullets were whizzing past the teams head and ricocheting all around them, Jones could see the guys were scared shitless but noticed how well they kept their cool under pressure.

The chopper headed straight for the four man fire team, dipping its nose at the last minute to start its attack run; just then as if out of nowhere, the chopper was blown out of the sky.

“We have visual on evacuation team, Pop smoke and let’s move our families out”. Smith’s voice said over the radio.

Now hooked to the team frequency, the chopper pilot came into the conversation.

“Blood Hound, this is Valkerie 1 Alpha, smoke seen, we will be dropping party of twenty, picking up off your mark, chopper to start straffing run, sit tight Valkerie 1 Alpha, out.”

“Valkerie 1 Alpha, Predator 1 Alpha we are on the ground attacking to check point Bravo”.

“Valkerie 1 Alpha, Predator 1 Alpha, this is Blood Hound, welcome to the party”.

As soon as the 20 man strike team was deployed, Nick and Jack moved up the hill to get the ladies and escort them to where the chopper was sitting, rotors still thumping as they spun, ready to take flight when the package was secure.

Through the fire fight that was intensifying all around them, Jones had called the four guys together on the foot of the hill.

“Guys we will fly you to our office in Sydney where I will give you a full debriefing before the days out, I will also copensate you all for your efforts here”. Jones yelled over the fire fight.

“Oh ok, is that it? ok come on guys into the chopper” Jack was interrupted by the radio.

“Blood Hound, this is Predator 1 Alpha, we are half a click from check point bravo and have found what looks like a terrorist training camp. We have secured copious amounts of weapons, explosives, maps and a large list of targets, break, All threats have been neutralised the area is secure, awaiting further instructions, Predator 1 Alpha out”.

“Predator 1 Alpha, this is Blood Hound. Any sign of my wife? Over.”

“That’s a negative, Blood Hound; But we have a fire trail and tyre tracks heading towards the edge of the park Over.”

“Blood Hound this is Valkerie 2 Alpha, I will try and get a visual on that vehicle for you Over” came the voice of the second chopper pilot.

“Blood Hound, this is Predator 2 Alpha, need you at following grid, asap. Grid being 240 132 over.”

“Predator 2 Alpha, this is Blood Hound, heading to your position now. Over.”

With that, the guys handed their weapons back to Smith, and somberly hopped in the chopper with Jones’s daughter and Smith’s family.

The chopper then took off and headed first towards Sydney to a safe house for the families and then back towards Wagga to drop Jack and the other guys off.

The newly found terrorist camp was alive with movement and another two choppers were flown in to move the large amounts of weapons, they had trucks en route to move the explosives.

Jones had arrived at Predator 2 Alpha’s position to find one of his worst nightmares coming true. “Sir, it seems that we may have found where they are taking your wife.” Predator 2 Alpha said gravely.

Just then, a static ridden message came over the radio “Blood Hound, this is Valkerie 2 Alpha, we are taking heavy fire from a black Range Rover 4 x 4, Plate number QZY 204”. At that moment, the helicopter was hit in the tail with an RPG.

“Blood Hound, this is Valkerie 2 Alpha, we’ve taken an RPG hit to the tail rotor; lost all control, we’re going down, found a clearing putting her down hard and fast three clicks from your position, 50 metres off the fire trail. Valkerie 2 Alpha ov . . .”

“I want a medical team with a six man escort to that position in five minutes. We have to secure any survivors”. Said Jones.

“I want the fire fighting team when their finished to move to the crash site, monitor the area with equipment.”

The fire fighting team had been mopping up the spot fires that had started due to the exploding comms hut.

“Sir, I really think you should hear this.”

“What is it McKenzie?” aka Predator 2 Alpha.

He stated, “We have information on sleeper cell in Sydney, apparently this was their camp and they’re pissed that we took it off them. Our informant says he has heard from your wife’s kidnappers in the last 10 minutes, and they are taking her to a house in the city,” said McKenzie.

“Well, have we got guys on the house?” demanded Jones.

“No, the Police have, and intel is, that they move on the cell at 1800 tonight”, replied McKenzie.

“Shit, have we got anyone in that area, any more teams?” Jones said desperately.

“Negative, Sir, everything we’ve got is tied up.” Jones paced, thinking for a moment.

“Give me two of your best men, and recall that chopper with those guys on it asap, as soon as they hit the ground, send ’em to me, then get on the phone and speak to their families”. Jones said with a renewed sense of urgency.

“Valkerie 1 Alpha, this is Blood Hound. Change of plans. Turn the chopper around, drop those four guys back to me and continue on with my daughter and the Smith’s”.

“McKenzie, how much time have we got?” Jones asked.

“Well, it’s 1400 now, 45 minutes to get back to Sydney. I’d say we have two and a half hours”, said McKenzie, looking at his watch.

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Birds of Prey

The chopper was back in the air within fifteen minutes and heading for an undisclosed location on the outskirts of the city with Jones and his new found team on it.

Jack and the guys were told not to ask questions and that they would be kitted out and briefed at headquarters.

“Whatever is happening here is something bigger than they were telling us earlier”, whispered Nick.

“What makes you say that?” Questioned Mitchell.

“Cause if you look out both sides of the chopper, we’ve picked up two attack choppers (Army) as escorts.” said Nick.

“What the hell have we got ourselves into?” Quinny said aloud.

“Think of all these things we crapped on about when we worked in the clubs and times it by a ton!!” Jack said as he reached over and pinched Quinny on the arm.

“Shit, what was that for Granddad?” Quinny yelled, recalling what he used to call Jack when they were working security together.

“Just to let you know it isn’t a dream, big fella!!” Jack joked.

“Excuse me men, before we land, I’d just like to introduce you to your team leader and second in charge (2IC) for this next little exercise. Johnno and Smitty, call signs Condor 1 and Condor 2, your team call sign will be Birds of Prey, and HQ will be Eagles Nest. Thanks for your attention guys, we will be landing in five minutes”. Jones said.

The building they landed on top of was about twenty five stories high.

The escort choppers had disappeared and as soon as they landed, Jones ushered the rescued hostages into a stairwell with a waiting agent and moved the six men into a lift, which upon leaving although fast, seemed to take forever when they stopped at the floor was marked basement three.

“Fuck me running,” Mitchell said without realising he’d said it out loud. Mitchell was looking into a small, well lit room with a big steel door with a security keypad beside it, and above the door in bold letters read “AUSTRALIAN ANTI-TERRORISM TACTICAL UNIT”.

Jones typed in a pin and rushed the men through a series of rooms that looked to be part of the 24 tv series set before coming to another steel door with what looked like retinal scan security system, and no amount of police or army training could prepare these four accidentals for the arsenal they were about to see.

The door swung open and there as large as a fifty metre swimming pool sat fifty to sixty of the world’s most high tech weapons and accessories.

“Oh, shit, I’ve just died and gone to heaven.” Nick said with a lop-sided grin on his face.

“Two words—MINI GUN.” said Quinny, almost drooling at the sight of such a magnificent piece of weaponry.

At roughly 1620, the men moved out of the Armoury, each kitted in full black tactical gear and all armed with silenced H & K MP7’s with laser sights.

All had silenced sidearms, tactical helmets, vests, boots, flash bangs, smoke grenades and night vision goggles.

They were then moved to the mission briefing room.

“First of all, I’d like to welcome our four new guys, I’ve noticed you’ve all met each other. You will go in two teams of three, there are orders sheets going around. Alpha team will consist of Smitty, Jack and Nick, you will go through the front door, while Bravo team Johnno, Quinny and Mitchell will go through the back, some brief instructions and how to’s are on the sheet you’ve just been handed. It’s advisable just to use flashbangs because we are uncertain as to where the chief’s wife is. Well, gentlemen, good luck. The chopper is waiting, the police are set to move in 30 minutes, so we have to be there in 20.” said the Operations Commander, James Cosgrove. The choppers nose dipped as it took off at a rate of knots and virtually stayed dipped for the duration of the trip, the last five minutes of the trip were used for some last minute gear checks and going over a rough plan of the house, which was handed out at the briefing.

It was a large single storey house with six bedrooms, three bathrooms and set on an acre block at the end of a rather exclusive street on the outskirts of a large suburb.

The Police were readying in a small crop of bush land just beside the house and looked like they had a Special Operations Group (SOG) heading towards the back fence and front of the property, ready to breach.

Johnno quickly switched the unmarked chopper radio to the police channel. “NSW Special Operations, this is AATTU. Please stand down. This is now a government operation. I say again, please stand down.”

17:55. The chopper hit the ground in a clearing about two hundred metres from the house, Johnno strode over to the officer in charge of the operation handed him a satellite phone and said “Sorry, this is our operation. Have your men stay in position near the fence and we may call on them. In the meantime, press redial, my boss will explain.” Johnno said taking charge.

As he caught up with Alpha team, Johnno barked into his throat mike, “Bravo team, move to the check point Charlie quietly and await the command.”

Backs against the wall on either side of the front door. The blinds were drawn which made it easy to get straight to the front door.

“Bravo in position”, came Smitty’s voice, through comms.

“Eagles nest, this is Birds of Prey, we’re in position, over”, Johnno said tensely over the comms. “Birds of Prey, this is Eagles nest, move in and secure the package”.

17:59; Both front and back locks were picked and simultaneously the doors were quickly opened and flashbangs were thrown in, the two explosions of light blinded anyone in their line of sight and the two teams breached the front and back rooms of the house.

Alpha moved fast to secure the lounge room, master bedroom and the second and third bedroom with only one three round burst fired from Condor 1’s. H & K MP7 taking out a lone terrorist sleeping on the lounge.

Bravo cleared the kitchen and three other bedrooms only meeting light resistance, the two teams met at a door which lead to the garage.

They quickly breached it only to find three terrorists and the hostage.

One terrorist, who was already in the car, gunned the known black 4 x 4 back straight through the roller door, the second terrorist who had just been kicked in the nether regions by the fighting hostage went straight under the front wheels, and the third got taken out by Jack with a three round burst to the face.

“Eagles nest, this is Birds of Prey. Package is secure, last remaining hostile fleeing in vehicle. Awaiting further instructions. Over.” Condor 1 said as if expecting to be asked to pursue the vehicle.

“Birds of Prey, this is Eagles Nest. Pursue Vehicle at all costs. Do not let this man get away. Over.”

“Copy that, Eagles Nest. Birds of Prey out.” Johnno was running and barking orders at the same time.

“Officer, is this your car?” Johnno said, pointing to a marked holden SS Highway Patrol Car.

“Yes sir. Brand new. Try and bring it back in one piece and oh . . . you’ll need these.” The officer said, throwing the car keys straight into Johnno’s hands.

“Thanks, I need two special ops teams to follow as back up”. Johnno said as he, Jack and Nick took off, lights and sirens blazing.

Bravo team jumped into an unmarked XR8 Ford Falcon, and followed Alpha 1. Two black Suburbans also followed, both with special ops teams aboard.

The SS soon caught up with the 4 x 4 just before the on ramp to a busy freeway.

The hostile merged onto the freeway, doing around 130 kilometres an hour and ran straight into the side of an old 2 x 4 Rodeo ute, spinning half of it across the remaining three lanes of traffic, causing one car to lurch sideways and flip twice, while another dozen were sent hurtling off the sides of the road and into the back of other vehicles.

The Range Rover now with a heavily damaged front end was surprisingly still moving, the impact had pushed the bullbar into the front quarter panel, which was now rubbing on the front tyre, causing a huge amount of tyre smoke to billow from the front of the car.

The two sedans had got through the carnage and Johnno had radioed for emergency services.

The driver of the Range Rover gunned the accelerator in one more desperate attempt to outrun the gaining police cars, for fifteen minutes, the Range Rover got up to speeds of 150 kilometres an hour, dodging through traffic until the inevitable happened, the Range Rover’s damaged tyre exploded, sending the vehicle freakishly sideways before it flipped sideways five times, coming to rest on its side.

The men blocked the road with their cars, Johnno called for more back up and the Birds of Prey swarmed the overturned vehicle, weapons raised, Jack was the first one to see him still conscious, but only just, dangling half out of the window.

Jack dragged the terrorist out and lay him on the side of the road.

The special ops guys were used to block traffic for a kilometre on both sides of the freeway, just in case the hostile was meeting someone.

All of a sudden, Condor 2 started barking orders with a very big sense of urgency.

“Carefully place the prisoner in the back of the car and move ten kilometres down that way, clearing anything in your path”.

Quinny asked. “Why, what’s up?”

“Eagles Nest, Eagles Nest, this is Birds of Prey, we have taken one hostile into custody, but need bomb disposal unit at this location, asap, and I want the gates at the tollway shut down and every car cleared within a 10 kilometre radius in all lanes. We have an extremely large amount of explosives in the Range Rover and we’re going to have to move this guy for medical help.” Johnno ordered with urgency.

“Birds of Prey, this is Eagles Nest, emergency service have cleared first crash site and we have troops coming back from camp, so just hang tight and we’ll get you and your guys out on the first chopper. Bomb squad will be there in five minutes.” came Jones’s voice.

The terrorist, known as Ali Mohamed, was laying in the back of an ambulance, just about to leave the 10 kilometre cordon, when he started rambling about a sleeper cell that was going to strike in the next couple of days.

“Keep this guy alive and talking at all costs”. With that the ambulance drove off with a police escort.

Two minutes later, the bomb squad arrived.

“Can I get one of you guys to” At that moment, the charges detonated with a huge amount of force, the massive explosion was heard up to 85 kilometres and the blast radius was six kilometres, all around and the fireball was also seen up to 25 kilometres away.

Within minutes dozens of sirens could be heard as emergency crew’s raced to the scene, first on scene was a local rural fire service truck with five crew, followed by a large contingency of other agencies including NSW Fire brigades with ten initial units and more en route, about a dozen ambulances, rescue vehicles and Police all that until they pulled up did not realise the full extent of the massive blast and the effect that it would have had in a built up area, there was only one truck stop engulfed by the blast but no bodies were found.

It was calculated that if the same explosion took place within the middle of a city block the body count would be well into the thousands, if not tens of thousands.

“Eagles nest Eagles nest this is birds of prey, large amount of explosives just detonated about ten clicks from our position ‘break’ Emergency services on scene ‘Break’ No further intel on where package was headed, concerned of secondary device already in place over”. Johnno clearly explained into his throat mic.

“Birds of prey this is Eagles nest have recent intel on package destination, secondary device has been confirmed moving to pick up your team and head to location ASAP over”. Jones’s voice now more serious than before.

“Eagles nest this is Birds of Prey copy your last will be set to move when you land over”. Johnno replied rallying the team and prepping them for pickup.

“Ok guy’s it ain’t over yet, seems there is a secondary device prepped to go, the boss has the location, he has bomb squad en route we will be there as an assisting force only, we are there as cordon protection and maybe a clearing patrol but believe me guys, stay close and stay alert”. Johnno said as he heard choppers in the distance.

The birds were shakin enough from there first large explosive encounter the thought of being faced with another even bigger device was extremely daunting.

Three choppers landed, and one of the first men out was Agent Jones with his wife and daughter, his wife walked right up to the guys and thanked them individually for saving her life.

“Ok guys, as you know we have more work to do so load up”. Jones said moving to kiss his wife before watching her hop onto a different chopper.

the agency sent me to debrief you and offer you all full time jobs, but that was ten minutes before the secondary was found so I can understand if you were to say no, they also said they want you to take a couple of weeks off, Luxury apartment, full car hire, fun parks, boat trips, pampering for the wives, and kids will have their own nannies, well that was also before they found the secondary so that is temporarily on hold, so what do you get? A free trip into the world of Australian terrorism and all the weaponry that goes along with it”. Jones said stepping into the chopper next to the team.

“We are about to arrive at the location sir”. Came the pilots voice.

“Thanks, ok guys look sharp we are on a time limit”. Jones said.

“What do we know about this secondary device”. Nick said nervously.

“Only that its in this vicinity other than that we have a bit of ground work to and not much time to do it”. Jones said stepping off the chopper and walking up to the Officer in charge.

“Thanks Sarge we will take it from here you and your men fall back to the fifteen kilometre cordon we will let you know if any further evacuation is needed.” Jones said scanning the area.

“Where the fuck could this thing be there are buildings every where we don’t even have a specific location, where would you plant a bomb if you were a psycho suicide bomber?”. Jack asked facing Nick frustrated.

“Somewhere that I could make a statement, do as much damage as possible and kill as many people as poss oh fuck, shit we are about five blocks short of where the secondary is”. Jack said running towards Jones.

Jones seen him coming. “What is it Jack have you found it”.

“yes the show ground five blocks away, The big day out is on today there will be tens of thousands of kids there”. Jack shouted in desperation.

Jones was on the radio straight away. “Outer cordon this is Agent Jones AATTU move all your resources to the show ground the secondary is at the big day out move now”. Jones said twirling his finger in the air signalling the birds into the chopper.

The chopper was in the air within minutes.

“We are about sixty seconds out lets hope we make it”. Jones said with obvious dread in his voice.

The show ground was in view, there were people everywhere, tents, cars, rides and bands, lots of bands.

“Ok bring us down the police will arrive any minute”. Jones said facing the pilot.

They were landing about a block away so as not to get mugged by the huge crowds.

“Come on guys theres no oh mother of god”. Jones had been cut off mid sentence by a loud explosion.

“Fuck no we’re to late”. Nick said burying his head in his hands, the explosion was only a quarter of the size of the first one but the carnage was far more devastating.

There were young broken bodies everywhere, some revelers thought at first that it was part of the show until they found their friends with limbs missing or screaming in agony with half their face missing, one young man about 18yrs old wandering around obviously still in shock looking for his arm that was ripped off in the blast.

As the team moved toward ground zero there were people running every where, people were getting trampled trying to get out, others were crushed against the make shift fence that surrounded the major concert event, others just screamed for their parents or lay in shock curled up in the fetal position.

Bands that had survived the blast were trying to calm fans over any working microphones they could find, but it was a futile attempt to regain control of such a distressed crowd.

“This is Special agent Jones of the AATTU we need emergency services to the show ground the secondary device has been detonated”. Jones said almost in tears.

The team was running around every where trying to calm people, and move people out of the area.

“Goddamn it there is just too many people to help, who the fuck does this sort of thing? Christ their just kids”. Jack screamed looking up at the heavens as if looking for answers that he would not find.

Sirens could be heard in the distance as most were redeployed from the first blast.

“Birds this is Jones I am at the first aid tent the volunteers here have set up a make shift medical centre send all injured over here, there is another tent about fifty metres away it will be the command tent, move to me we will start tasking some jobs to volunteers and emergency services as they come in, Jack you and Nick man the front gate make sure there is plenty of room for emergency vehicles and personnel, speak to the Police Officer in charge and see if he can task some units for a perimeter we have to lock this place down ASAP Jones out”.

The team acknowledged there boss’s orders one by one and went about there individual tasks.

“Boss we have to notify the PM”. Mitchell said handing Jones a secure line.

“Yeah ok”. Jones said as he dialed a direct number to the PM’s office wondering how to tell the PM that roughly fifteen thousand school kids had been killed in a terror attack.

“Agent Jones, is it true what i have just heard that a secondary device was detonated?” The PM asked with obvious dread in his voice.

“Yes sir we had no way of knowing this was going to happen there was definitely no intel on this I am sorry sir”. Jones said almost taking the blame for the attack.

“I will be down as quick as I can”. The PM ordered.

“Sir at least wait until my men do a sweep and deem the area safe, there has been enough bloodshed today”. Jones replied sadly.

“When this job is over Agent Jones promise me you will stand your men down for some R&R”. The PM said genuinely.

“Yes sir, thank you sir”. Jones replied wearily.

It took crews up to five hours to round up survivors move out priority patients and clear the blast area, then some of Jones’s bomb experts moved in to start piecing together what sort of device was used and how it was detonated.

Jones and his team finally got off the scene at 2230 that night.

On arriving back at the AATTU HQ, Jones sat all the guy’s down in the conference room; the four men had not even been with him a full day, had no formal training, no psych evaluations or medicals yet he had put them through what some highly trained soldiers had never seen in years of service. Jones turned to the men; who were now wearily helping themselves to coffee and biscuits and cake that had been set out for their return and looked at the weary distressed faces.

“I am not sure what to say men?” There was an awkward pause; most of the guys did not even look up Jones.

“You guys held up under pressure real well today; I wish none of you had to go through what I have put through today, I am not sure if any of you believe in fate; what you witnessed today will change your lives for ever, wether you want it too or not, but if you wish to; and I understand if you don’t; you all can make a difference and help put a stop to atrocious acts like what we witnessed today; don’t let me know now, we can go away together and think about it. Just remember ‘all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good man to do nothing’ gentleman; you are all good men”.

With that Jones walked out the door, leaving the men in silence.

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A Well Earned Rest

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