

BEYOND VENGEANCE

S h o c k i n g I r r e s i s t i b l e E x c i t i n g T h r i l l e r

LARRY IGBON

*When you destroy my entire family,
you commit a vile act of evil.
What follows such an act is beyond vengeance;
it is justice. Divine, deserved and delivered.*

Larry Igbon.

BEYOND VENGEANCE is a work of fiction, any resemblance to any persons living or dead, is purely coincidental. Whilst every effort has been made to establish accuracy, certain aspects are included only to aid the story and make it an enjoyable, thrilling experience for the reader.

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Copyright details: ISBN-13: 9781503383166
ISBN-10: 1503383164
First published: 2016 by Larry Igbon
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CHAPTER 1

Matthew Brewster downed his scotch, and then flung his glass against the wall of his office. Brewster was the boss of one of the most vicious, criminal gangs in north Manchester; at this moment, his very future was in doubt, and he needed solutions.

“Everybody’s been on the phone, the Old Bill’s on the way and the lawyer’s passing bricks. How did we get this deep in the shit?”

“Take it easy Dad,” said his son Michael, “it’s all getting sorted, we just have to move bloody fast.”

“That bleedin’ bent copper,” said Matthew, slamming his fist on the desk.

“Who’s taking care of him?”

“The Spanner and Leo, they’ve taken him for a wheelie.”

“Good. Better get someone to take care of that brass he moved in with, he’s probably told her everything he knows. Slimy little weasel.”

“It’s all taken care of Dad; the Spanner went to where she works and fixed her car. It’ll look like an accident.”

“Good, get a few of the lads to stay here and upset the police, we’ll get down to the Fairfield Arches and clear out the discs and books. If the CID catch up with us, it’s every man for himself.”

Matthew, Michael, and his younger brother Carl hurried down the back stairs of Kennedy’s, the nightclub they owned, and leapt into the waiting car. The car sped off in the direction of Piccadilly Train Station.



Debbie Flood was a hairdresser and beautician at a popular salon in the city. She had finished her last client of the day, and it was 7pm. She held her umbrella close to her head and cursed the pouring rain, as she sprinted to her car.

Debbie was looking forward to tonight; she would pick Frank up, and they would go out to a top restaurant for dinner.

She was keen on Frank; she found him attentive, loving, and generous. Today was the anniversary of their first night as a cohabiting couple, June 18th 1999.

She set off towards Chester Road, with her windscreen wipers on full power.

Although it was the middle of June, the rain made the night gloomy, and she switched her headlamps on. Fifteen minutes later, she approached the roundabout, which led to the busy ring road.

There was no one ahead in her lane, and she had a green light.

She eased her foot off the accelerator as the lights changed. Nothing happened. Panic!

She pumped the brake frantically, as she coasted towards the intersection; a van set off across the roundabout from her right. She screamed; the van hit her door, and it folded inwards. A jeep tried to avoid rear-ending the van, but failed; as it slammed into the van, both vehicles pushed Debbie's little Citroen into a rolling spin.

Stunned drivers stopped their vehicles, some turned on hazard lights; others ran to the Citroen, some phoned emergency services. One thing was certain; Debbie was beyond help.



Leo Brewster was every bit as cruel and evil as his big brother, Matthew.

The car stopped at Jutland Street, and he kicked Detective Sergeant Frank Biddell out onto the pavement. Biddell groaned and cursed, as Terry 'The Spanner' Woolley picked him up by his collar. He kicked his backside, causing him to stumble down the sloping path to the Ashton Canal. Woolley spoke to the driver,

"Hey Donkey, get the gear out and hurry up, we're getting bloody soaked here."

"Keep your hair on, I'm goin' as fast as I can; this is heavy you know?"

Neil, 'Donkey' Oates dragged a heavy luggage trolley out of the car, and pulled it down the path.

"We should've kept that slag sober, then we could've made him drag it," Leo said, "but Matty wanted it this way to keep his cop colleagues guessing".

Biddell had been useful to the Brewsters for some years; inevitably, his station commander had got wise to his double life, and confronted him.

The Brewsters had found out and, realising Biddell was of no further use to them, decided to make sure he was not around to talk about their business.

They walked along the path and stopped under a small bridge. It was dark, and the pouring rain made a loud, eerie noise. Leo Brewster halted the group.

"This is far enough. Another drink Frank?" he said, holding a bottle of whiskey under his nose.

"This'll have to be the last one Leo, I need to get off I'm meeting Debbie for a feed," said Biddell, reaching for the bottle.

"No worries mate this will be your last." Brewster winked at Woolley and Oates as he said it. They sat him down on a low wall, and watched as he swigged from the bottle.

"Okay Donkey get the gear on him," said Brewster, "we need to get on."

"Right, give us a hand Spanner." Oates said, as he opened up his luggage trolley.

He pulled out a motorcar wheel which had a three metre length of rope attached to it. It also had a smaller length of rope attached, with a karabiner on the free end.

He then pulled out a lifter's belt, which he proceeded to wrap around Biddle's waist. Biddle was suddenly alert.

"What're you bloody doing Donkey?" he said, "Piss off will you?"

"It's alright mate, just seein' how the belt looks on you, have another drink." He clicked the karabiner onto the metal ring, on the back of the belt; Woolley offered him the bottle for his last, ever, drink.

“Okay let’s go,” said Brewster, “we can’t keep Debbie waiting can we Frank?”

“We cannot.” Biddell said, as Woolley helped him to his feet and walked him slowly to the water’s edge.

Oates followed, carrying the wheel behind Biddell’s back. Brewster held on to the longer length of rope. Biddell opened his mouth and tried to turn around.

“Well ta-ra Frank.” Woolley said, as Oates threw the wheel into the canal. Biddell followed the wheel and disappeared from sight under the shiny, black water.

“Good, bloody riddance,” said Brewster, lighting a cigar, “all the crap coming our way right now, is down to that bastard.”

He sucked on his cigar and glared down at the filthy water for a minute. He tossed the rope to Woolley.

“Bring him up Spanner; we need to get out of here.”

“Come on Donkey,” said Woolley, “I think I’ve got a big ‘un here; help me reel him in.”

He chuckled as they began pulling the long rope; within seconds, the car wheel broke the surface.

They pulled it over and lifted it onto the path. They pulled the short rope attached to the wheel, and Biddle’s corpse bobbed to the surface.

The rictus of death on his face was a chilling sight. They unbuckled the lifter’s belt from around his waist and pushed him away.

He drifted out from under the bridge; Brewster threw his cigar at the body. Then, as the rained pelted down on him, Biddle sank into the water again. Another poor, drunken soul who had strayed too close to the water’s edge.

Brewster and his companions spat into the water, and then hurried back to their vehicle.



CHAPTER 2

The Station Commander had briefed all of his officers in connection with the raid. Detective Inspector Stuart Corcoran had the relevant arrest warrants. He had invested more time than any officer had, on the Brewster Gang.

He was in charge of the mission to end the Brewster family’s long reign of terror, and he had all the resources necessary at his disposal.

His colleagues, Detective Sergeant Peter Enright, and Detective Constable Kevin Jennings, had worked on this case with him for the past two years.

Previous efforts to put the Brewsters away had failed for a variety of reasons: lack of evidence, missing witnesses, legal technicalities. Tonight was the night: the Ts were crossed, the Is were dotted, and the guns were loaded.

Uniformed officers and a special armed unit would back the CID; every officer among them was confident and focused.

Four police vehicles were along Baird Street and Travis Street, close enough to converge on Fairfield Street immediately.

Many of the gang members would be at the Fairfield Arches already; any fugitives would make for the same place.

The Brewsters owned the Arches, and four acres of land and sundry buildings around them.

The CID had identified all known exits and would have all of them covered during the raid.

The mission was set to commence at 22.30; the police wanted as little civilian traffic around as possible.



DI Corcoran was in his office drinking coffee; the clock on his wall said 22.13.

DS Enright appeared in the doorway.

“Time to go Boss, the team’s ready and Jennings is waiting in the car.”

“Right then Pete, let’s go clean up the streets,” Corcoran said, grabbing his raincoat.

They left the police station and jogged to their car. Enright waved to the uniformed officers in the lead car, which took off in the direction of Kennedy’s.

The CID were aware that the Brewsters were not in the club, and they headed for the Arches. The beating of raindrops on the roof of their car sounded like a dozen drummers rehearsing.

“Bloody Nora!” said Jennings, “it would have to be a pisser wouldn’t it?”

“I love the summer Kev, don’t you? I mean you were born in Manchester, you have seen rain before,” said Enright.

“Alright Sarge you know what I mean, tonight of all nights, and it’s coming down in lumps.”

“You’re right Kev it is very inclement, but we still have a job to do OK?”

“Don’t worry about me Sarge I’ve been waiting two years for this, I’m cool.”

“I know that; you’ll be fine, I’ve got your back.”

“Crap, now I’ll be worrying that you’re going to shoot me in the arse.”

The three detectives laughed as their driver turned into Fairfield Street.

DI Corcoran ordered the uniformed officers to converge on the entrance and make sure no one came out.

He got out of the car and slogged along the path to the huge doors of the Arches. He banged on the door with the flat of his hand, and shouted, “Open up armed police!” Enright and Jennings were on either side of the doors with their pistols drawn. Corcoran banged on the door again. “Greater Manchester Police, open these doors now.”

There was movement behind the double doors and they clanked open.

A burly man stood there with rain dripping off the peak of his baseball cap, onto his long nose. “What do you want here?” he said.

“I have warrants to search these premises and make some arrests. We shall also need to detain certain persons for questioning. I think we’d better start with you.” Corcoran said, pulling the man out by his lapels. “I’ll take those keys if you don’t mind.”

“I’m only the caretaker,” the man said, handing over the keys, “I’ve done nothing—”

“Take him,” said Jennings, nodding at one of his uniformed colleagues.

The officer grabbed him and walked him towards a police van. The man struggled and protested, until a second officer helped bundle him into the van.

“Spread out men, search every room and vehicle where these guys could hide,” said Corcoran, “and watch out for weapons, because they will not come quietly.”

Corcoran looked down and noticed he was ankle deep in mud, oil, and water. He waded over to the right where stood a row of workshops and offices, lined up like a military barracks.

Lights burned and they could hear voices. Corcoran tried the first door; it was open. He walked in followed by Enright and Jennings; they waved the uniformed officers towards all of the units, and they charged in and ordered all of the occupants to stand by the wall and remain perfectly still.

Enright approached them, backed by uniforms,

“We, gentlemen, are the Greater Manchester Police and you are all under arrest. My uniformed colleagues will escort you to their vehicles where they will formally caution you. Do not make any trouble as these officers are already in a bad mood and things could turn nasty, for all of you.”

The uniformed officers escorted nine men out, mostly insignificant members.

Corcoran was not satisfied, “Come on lads there’s richer pickings in here. Let’s dig ‘em out.”

“We’re with you Boss,” said Enright, “where to next?”

“Those units on the left, do you see what I see?”

“Yeah movement on the ground floor, I’ll call up some of the uniforms.” Enright said, as he raised his radio.

“Jennings take four of those coppers to the door at the far end,” said Corcoran, “we’ll steam in from this end. You know who to watch out for; don’t give any one a chance to do battle.”

“No worries Boss, I’m on my way.”

Corcoran waited until Jennings was outside the far door, then rushed into the unit with Enright. He hit a light switch on the wall; there was no one in the room.

Enright flung open the door to the adjoining unit and rushed in; he flicked on the light switch.

Two men sat at a table in the middle of the room, their heads were on the table as if they had been sleeping. “Hey what’s going on, who are you?” one of the men said.

“Well that’s DS Enright and I’m DI Corcoran, and you know us both very well Oates, you too Woolley.”

“Yeah that’s right; it’s Mr Corcoran and Mr Enright. What’re you doing here has there been an accident or something?” Oates said.

Enright pulled the back of Oates’s chair, and yanked it out from under him.

“Oops, yes Donkey looks like there’s been a little accident, are you OK? I’d say you’ve been doing a little night work.”

“No Mr Enright we’ve been sleepin’ here for a couple of hours, haven’t we Spanner?”

“Don’t lie to me Donkey, your boots and your pants are soaking wet. You’ve been indoors no more than five minutes. Now why are you lying to me, you tosser?”

Oates grabbed the table and tried to pull himself upright. Enright kicked his heel, his foot skidded across a small slick of oil and water, and he was on his backside again.

“You bleedin’ nark,” said Oates, rubbing his behind, “let him have it Spanner.”

Woolley raised his hands slowly, as he felt the barrel of Corcoran’s gun in his right ear.

“Oh Spanner, what *were* you thinking?” Corcoran said, as he kicked the tabletop away from Woolley.

Resting on his lap was a sawn off shotgun. He lifted the shotgun off Woolley, and called to the uniformed officers in the doorway to take the pair away and charge them.

“Search them thoroughly before you cuff ‘em,” said Enright, “either one of those scumbags would kill his own granny for a quid.”

There was a sudden commotion from the next unit; Corcoran kicked open the adjoining door, and eased inside crouched low against the wall, gun at the ready.

Enright slid in along the wall at the other side of the door, and flicked on the light switch. A man lay groaning on the floor, with blood running freely from his nose, and a gash above his eye.

Corcoran crouched by him and patted him down, Enright approached cautiously.

“Is he neutralised?”

“I think he must’ve walked into the wall,” said Corcoran, looking at Enright, “good old Jennings.”

At that moment, DC Jennings came through the door.

“Oh Hello Boss, Sarge, alright?”

“Not too bad Kev,” said Enright, “what happened to this guy?”

“Well he head-butted two of my uniformed colleagues Sarge.”

“So what happened to him?”

“I butted him.”

“And?”

“What do you mean, ‘and?’”

“He looks like he ran into a wall Kev.”

“Oh yeah, he ran into a wall Sarge the clumsy bastard. Is he a face?”

“No he’s not known to us,” said Corcoran, “just muscle probably. Any decent collars?”

“Yeah Boss we got Chinese Alex and Crowbar Collins.”

“Good work. So, that’s four warrants served; what about the Brewsters?” said Corcoran.

Enright held out his radio, “Same Intel Boss they’ve all been clocked coming in here but none of them has left, uniforms are doing a full sweep for documents, computers and discs.”

“Right chaps it’s up to us, if they’re here they’re going to get taken in or taken down. Pete, tell the uniformed DI to get the armed unit deployed all over this yard, and all the rest of the acreage up to the railway and the canal.

No one gets out. Tell them to search everywhere: cars, cranes, crusher, furnace, bogs, *everywhere*. Tell him to send our car up here.”

Enright gave the instruction via his radio and within minutes, spotlights glared through the pouring rain, and their car skidded to a halt in front of them.

Armed officers were searching around four containers, which stood in the yard. One of the officers ran to Corcoran,

“Sir we have live bodies in that red container, about ten we think.”

“Get a van up here with spotlights, and park it facing the door.”

Seconds later, there was a van with high-powered spotlights pointing at the door of the container.

The light beams fixed on the doors as the officers stood poised; two police constables pulled the doors open.

An officer with a loud hailer, announced that armed police officers surrounded them. They gave instructions to the occupants to come out slowly, with their hands in plain view.

Instead, a gang of men ran out wielding pickaxe handles, and shouting derogatory remarks about police officers.

The police drew batons and engaged the gang enthusiastically, clubbing them to the ground and then handcuffing them.

Suddenly, the doors of a green container flew open, and an S Type Jaguar hurtled out, slipping and sliding in the rain.

“The Brewsters?” said Jennings.

“Must be,” said Enright.

“Let’s go,” said Corcoran, and the three of them leapt into their car and took off after the Jaguar, which was racing toward the rear of the Arches.

“Where the hell are they going?” said Enright, “there’s no exit down there.”

The car turned left sharply and hit a wooden panel in the metal boundary fence; it carried on through the gap and the detectives followed it. They

came out onto Travis Street, and sped off down the narrow road of the industrial estate.

“I guess there is now Sarge,” said Jennings.

They followed the car, which though badly dented, was travelling dangerously fast.

“Don’t lose them,” Corcoran said, “how’s our back-up?”

Jennings lowered his window and looked behind them, “Two cars from the arms unit Boss.”

“Why the bloody hell are they going this way, what’s up here?”

Enright said.

“Doesn’t matter,” said Corcoran, “the Brewsters control everything around here. My guess is they’re going to Clements Auto, top of the street. Danny Clements will do anything for the Brewsters, not just because they own him; they’re long-time friends too.”

“Look!” Jennings shouted, pointing ahead and to the left.

The gates in the arched entrance of Clements Auto were wide open; light shone within.

The driver of the Jag approached too fast, but went for the left turn into the archway just the same. The car skidded, slid sideways, and thumped into a tow truck parked outside; then rebounded into the brick wall of the auto shop.

The airbags deployed instantly; the horn sounded, the windscreen shattered and steam hissed from the radiator.

The detectives came to a halt on the other side of the street and leapt from their vehicle, guns drawn.

Four officers behind them, with carbines leaned on their own vehicles, with their weapons pointed at the Brewsters’ car.

Corcoran shouted, “GMP, get out of the car with your hands where we can see them.”

A foot kicked open the front passenger door, of the battered car; Carl Brewster emerged holding a shotgun.

“Drop the weapon Brewster,” Enright said, “drop it now or you will be shot.”

Carl stood motionless, in the pouring rain.

“Last chance Brewster, drop the gun.” Enright shouted.

A shot rang out from inside the arched entrance, and a volley of buckshot hit the detectives’ car.

Danny Clements ran out of the auto shop, with a pump action shotgun, and pointed it to where the three detectives crouched behind their vehicle.

Three other armed men followed Clements through the doorway; they pointed their weapons towards the officers with the carbines.

Matthew, Leo and Michael Brewster staggered from their smashed car; they stood by the vehicle, guns pointed towards the detectives.

Corcoran edged his way to the front of his vehicle.

“DI Corcoran, you are surrounded by armed officers; we have warrants, put down your weapons and give yourselves up.”

“I don’t think so Corky, we’ve got things to attend to, which we can’t do if we’re banged up. Better if you look the other way this time, you know, live to fight another day?” Matthew shouted.

“Stop dreaming Brewster,” said Enright, “we’ve got you bang to rights this time. You’re going nowhere, drop the weapons now”

“Piss off copper,” said Brewster, firing at Enright’s position and sending him diving for cover, “Danny get ‘em.”

Clements pumped two blasts in the direction of the detectives; he was about to go again, when he was hit by two carbine rounds.

He fell backwards into the archway of his own premises, and lay there with rainwater and blood pooling around his body.

Clements’s three thugs took cover, and began firing at the special armed officers, who returned fire.

The Brewsters moved behind the tow truck for cover. Carl fired two shotgun blasts at the detectives, peppering their vehicle, and then the Brewsters ran into the auto shop entrance and out of sight.

Corcoran spoke via radio, to the sergeant of the special shooters behind him.

“We need to go in after the Brewsters; can you take these three mugs out quickly?”

“No problem Boss we’re on our way,” said the sergeant, “we’ll keep them pinned down so you guys can get across the street.”

One of the officers took the wheel of their vehicle, and moved towards the auto shop doorway. The other three officers kept shooting at the Clements gang, from behind cover of their vehicle.

Jennings ran to the tow truck, and flattened himself against the wall behind it. Corcoran and Enright followed.

“Get ready lads we’re going in; remember they know the places to hide in there, and they have a bloody big yard, be careful.” Corcoran said.

“Don’t worry Boss,” said Enright, pulling back the slide on his pistol, “bad guys come last tonight.”

Jennings grinned and nodded, then shouted towards the archway.

“You guys, last chance to surrender before you get shot.”

The special unit had now drawn up opposite the archway; the three thugs decided they had a chance and raised their guns.

Three red spots on their chests suddenly spurted blood; the bang of three simultaneous shots rose and fell, as the men hit the ground.

Corcoran ran through the archway followed by Jennings then Enright. Three of the specials followed them in; they were in the repairs bay, a huge area with inspection pits and hydraulic lifts.

Ahead they could see offices, workshops and a waiting room. Corcoran motioned to the sergeant from the special arms unit, to check the bay and the workshops.

The detectives headed for the offices. Jennings went in first; he found the light switch and flipped it on. He pointed the barrel of his gun at the floor; his companions looked down, to see a mass of oily, wet splodges leading to an exit door at the other end of the office.

No one uttered a word as they all moved cautiously towards the door. Enright turned the doorknob and pushed the door wide open; they all stepped to the side, in case they were in the sights of someone’s gun.

Satisfied that they were not, Corcoran walked through the door and reached along the wall for the light switch.

The light revealed that they were in the customer waiting room; Enright and Jennings made a quick search.

A counter ran across the width of the waiting room, with a low swing door at one end. Jennings walked through to the customer side; carpet tile covered the floor and, though damp, it was not possible to determine how recently someone had walked on it.

The staff side had a vinyl floor covering, which was filthy and wet.

Corcoran found a large torch hanging on a piece of string; he made sure it was working, and motioned his companions to a door marked 'Staff'. They opened it and walked in; it was small and empty, but the oil and water stains on the floor were fresh.

"Two ways out of this room chaps," said Corcoran, "one is the way we came in, and the other one is that door." He pointed to a door leading to a workshop, which had an open door, leading to a yard and parking lot.

"Bingo," said Jennings, "we've got 'em; I'll call the back-up guys Boss."

"Do that Jennings, but we're going out there now," said Corcoran, "let's go."

He left the staff room and walked through the workshop door, and out into the yard. He turned on the torch and swept its beam across the yard; there were vehicles parked or stacked everywhere.

They did not have the resources for a thorough search at this time, so Corcoran decided to improvise.

"Jennings tell the dog handlers to hurry up with those dogs. We need them to flush out these rats."

"Right Boss," said Jennings pretending to call in the request.

"Come on out Brewster you're only making things worse," said Corcoran, "you can't escape."

He peered from side to side, looking for movement.

"Is this how you want to make your last stand, shot to death in a junkyard?"

"What did you expect Boss?" said Enright, "they're just a bunch of thugs, cold blooded killers. They're gutless; they deserve to die amongst the rats in rain and filth."

Matthew Brewster could tolerate no more, he broke away from the cover of a van eight metres away, and fired four shots while shouting,

"I'll kill you, and feed you to your own bleedin' dogs you bastard."

Jennings fired one shot, which slammed into Brewster's left arm. All of Brewster's bullets hit a wall one metre to the left of the detectives.

"You don't spend much time on the practice range, do you Matt?" said Corcoran, "You couldn't hit a bloody warehouse mate. You'd better give up now, and let us take care of that arm for you."

Matthew had ducked down out of sight, gasping and groaning from the pain of his wound.

Leo peered round the van and fired four rounds, which were fractionally more off target, than those fired by his brother.

"Bloody Hell Leo," Corcoran said chuckling, "you're a worse shot than your big brother."

"Try this copper," Carl appeared from the back of the van, and fired two blasts from his shotgun.

Corcoran winced, as some stray buckshot pierced his thigh.

Enright and Jennings fired simultaneously; Carl's head burst open and he fell to the ground.

"Son!" shouted Matthew. "No!" He screamed, "I'll kill every one of you, I swear to God." He stood and pointed his gun at the detectives, Leo and Michael did the same.

They all came forward shooting. The detectives held their ground. Jennings fired three bullets into Michael's chest, and he fell backwards into a puddle and lay still.

"Michael!" Matthew practically screamed as he ran to the side of his first-born. A rage burned in him, as he looked at his son's lifeless eyes filling with rainwater.

Leo leapt for cover, firing wildly as he did so; one of his bullets hit Enright in the side.

"Argh! I'm hit," he said, feeling inside his coat.

"Shit Sarge," said Jennings, "bad?"

“Seems to have gone right through the side, I’m OK.”

Leo got up and fired a volley; Jennings dived for cover, Enright stood his ground and took aim. He hit Leo above his left ear, and down he went; he would not be getting up.

“Give it up Brewster they’re all dead,” said Corcoran.

Brewster held up his gun, and pushed up awkwardly from the ground. He turned around to face Corcoran, and began to lower his hand.

“Don’t,” said Corcoran, “don’t.”

Brewster lowered the gun and fired, Corcoran returned fire hitting him in the chest. Brewster gasped, and sank down on one knee; he pointed the gun towards Corcoran and fired repeatedly.

Corcoran, Enright and Jennings returned fire hitting him in the stomach, head and shoulder. He lay on the ground thrashing about in the water, the gun slipped from his hand and he lost consciousness.



In the final analysis, it had been a triumph for the Law, over the Brewster gang.

Greater Manchester Police had made several key arrests; they had collected much useful evidence, and the evil bosses had been despatched.

Matthew had fallen into a coma, and remained in hospital where he clung to life until 19.35 on July 9th 1999. On the previous day, an estranged family member had visited him from Ireland.

Hospital staff confirmed, that he never regained consciousness.



After the gunfight, Corcoran and Jennings were back on the job two days later, Enright remained on sick leave, after his discharge from hospital.

Corcoran had shotgun pellets removed from his thigh on the night of the event.

Enright had to remain in hospital for twenty-four hours. They were the heroes of the Division. The station commander declared, that the City of Manchester would be a better, safer place.



CHAPTER 3

It was 09.00 on a sunny Monday morning, in April 2010; Sally Jennings was taking clothes out of the wardrobe in the master bedroom. Her husband murmured and opened his eyes; he lay prone for a minute yawning and blinking. He turned over and watched his wife for a few seconds.

“What’s going on woman, what’s all the bloody noise about I’m trying to sleep?”

“I’m leaving you Kevin; you’re absolutely useless, I’ve had enough.”

“You’re leaving me? Just a second, got to pee.”

He got out of bed, and ambled down the landing to the bathroom. His wife continued taking items from the wardrobe. Five minutes later, her husband returned to the bedroom and grabbed her by both wrists. She looked up into his eyes; she could smell his minty toothpaste.

“Let me go,” she said.

“Never,” he said, scooping her up in his arms, “I’m never letting you go.” He threw her on the bed, moved his face close to hers, and looked deep into her eyes. “Give me another chance, you won’t regret it,” he said.

“Oh alright then, one last chance.” She pulled him into a close embrace and kissed him tenderly. “Had you worried that time didn’t I Jennings?”

“Not at all, I knew you were lying; you see I’m a detective, I’m trained to spot lies.”

“Wow, OK it’s a fair cop Inspector, I’m not leaving you this time.” They laughed and romped about for a few minutes, Sally pointed to his nightstand. “Have your coffee darling before it goes cold, look at the time.”

“Thanks Sal, suppose I should get out and start cracking crime. So what’s going on with the wardrobe commotion?”

“Just sorting out some stuff for a charity collection, thought I’d do it noisily to wake you up.”

“Oh did you now? Come here.”

“Not likely,” she said, standing up. He was too quick for her, pulled her to him again, and kissed her. “Mm,” she said, “how can I leave for work when you kiss me like that?”

“I know right? Still at least you’re smart enough to realise how lucky you are and—”

“Get up now,” she said, whacking him with a pillow.

“OK, OK but be careful babe, you are pregnant after all.”

She picked up an armful of clothes, and blew him a kiss as she headed for the door.

They had been married for four years and Kevin Jennings had never been happier. Aged forty-one and a Detective Inspector, his had been an interesting and successful career, ever since the battle against the Brewster gang eleven years ago. His superiors had assured him that his work was outstanding; he was a valued asset to the Force.

Sally was the marketing executive who had worked on the campaigns, run by his police station. They had bumped into each other a week after Sally began her first assignment at his office. She had felt attracted to him on first sight. He had helped provide her with background information and procedures, to assist in her project.

They delivered a campaign together three months later; when he invited her to dinner she accepted, and the relationship blossomed. They married in July 2007 and were now expecting their first child. He smiled contentedly and picked up his coffee mug. He got off the bed, and took a few sips of coffee whilst looking at the screen of his phone, then he headed for the shower.

Fifteen minutes later, fully dressed, he made his way downstairs. He opened the kitchen door and entered; as he walked over to the breakfast bar, he noticed Sally’s armful of clothes on the floor, near the side door, and tut-tutted. Then he froze and stared in horror; a few inches from the clothes lay Sally, with a large carving knife embedded in her chest. He trembled, and then screamed. “Sally! Oh please God no, please, Sally.” He fell to his knees by her side, and felt her wrists and neck for a sign of life. There was none. He burst into tears; her lifeless eyes filled his heart with despair. He closed them with his hand, and then knelt there, in her blood, wailing uncontrollably and kissing her.

He was in this same position when he felt something penetrate his neck, at the base of his skull. He lost all feeling of control, and fell forward onto his wife’s body. He was aware of a hand sheathed in a rubber glove, grabbing his hair and pulling his head back. He saw the knife blade in front of his face; he realised too late, he had acted like a civilian, instead of a police officer.



The immediate aftermath was manic; the station commander called an emergency meeting for every available officer. He cancelled all non-essential leave, and instructed teams to brainstorm and come up with suspects, motives, strategies to assist in the hunt for the murderer.

The forensic team had isolated no specific evidence; the weapons used for the murders belonged to the victims. The crime scene showed no sign of a struggle; this presented the obvious question, did the victims know their killer? There was no sign of ransacking and, so far, no evidence of any kind of theft. There was no evidence to suggest that the killer had entered any room other than the kitchen. There was a feeling that the perpetrator acted coolly, there were no signs of panic, and the scene was neat and clean.

Jennings’s work partner, DS Langdon Cook, had discovered the scene of carnage, when he called to drive Jennings into work that morning. He had forgotten that he had picked his Inspector’s phone off the floor; he took it out of his pocket and activated the screen. He gasped at what he saw. He hurried to the office of their superior, Detective Chief Inspector, Beverley Holland.

“Chief, I’ve got something here. I picked up DI Jennings’s phone at the scene and stuck it in my pocket.”

“Without bagging it for forensics, are you bloody insane Sergeant?”

“Look Chief, we can question my sanity another time; right now we need to focus on the bastard who killed Kevin and Sally. It’s a dead cert the phone’s clean, but there is something on it you should see.”

“Something relevant?” DCI Holland said, pushing away from her desk, “a message, phone number, some kind of clue?”

“It’s weird Chief, but I’m bloody sure it’s relevant,” he held the phone out, “take a look.”

Holland took the phone and read the text on the screen, she stood up, and her eyes widened.

When you destroy my entire family, you commit a vile act of evil. What follows such an act is beyond vengeance; it is justice divine, deserved and delivered.

Holland looked at Cook. “What the hell? This has to be from the killer; has anybody else seen this?”

“Just the two of us Chief, and I’m not sure what to make of it.”

“I’ll show it to the Superintendent before his briefing, in fact you’d better come with me. We have to try to think this through before the meeting; we don’t want a room full of coppers making assumptions.”

“Roger that, everyone is in a right state as it is.”

“The meeting’s at 14.30; get one of the CAs to make copies of this for everyone.”

“Will do Chief, I’ll just be a minute,” said Cook, as he made for the door.

Superintendent Stuart Corcoran was in his office, elbows on his desk, head in his hands, when DCI Holland knocked on his door.

“Come,” he said. “Ah, DCI Holland sit down.”

“Thank you Sir, DS Cook will be joining us he’s found something.”

“Something concerning the murders?”

“Yes Sir, not seen by forensics or anyone else for that matter. In truth Sir only DS Cook and I know about this so far.”

“I do hope no vital evidence has been withheld Bev.”

“Only by accident Sir, and copies of the evidence are being made for distribution as we speak.”

There was a knock on the door, and DS Cook entered without waiting for an invitation. Corcoran nodded towards a chair. “Sit down Sergeant. DCI Holland tells me you have some evidence relating to the murders.”

“Yes Sir, here,” Cook said, handing him the phone. Corcoran looked at the screen and studied the message in silence. Finally he spoke.

“This is very disturbing; it leads one to conclude that the murders were some kind of revenge killings.”

“Yes Sir,” said Holland, “but for what?”

“I could accept a revenge motive for DI Jennings,” said Cook, “there are lots of nutters with grudges against the police; what I don’t understand is why poor Sally was killed.”

“Possibly in the wrong place at the wrong time,” said Holland, “the post mortem reports may help Sir.”

“Yes,” said Corcoran looking at the phone screen again, “I’ll talk to the pathologist personally, get a preliminary report before the meeting. Usual rules apply double, regarding any publicity; I’ll be joining the press liaison people later, to prepare a press release at 17.00.

Sergeant, anything you and DI Jennings were working on that might have provoked violent revenge?”

“Nothing I can think of Sir, however, we have a lot of completed cases where the usual threats were issued by various villains. I’ll go through all our recent cases and make a list of possible suspects, with motives and opportunity.”

“Good start Sergeant,” said DCI Holland, pointing at the phone in Corcoran’s hand, “I should take that for forensics Sir, enter it into evidence.”

“Sure, if you get any flak because it wasn’t submitted earlier, let me know, I’ll take care of it.”

“Thank you Sir, we’ll see you at the meeting. Let’s go Sergeant.” They left the Superintendent’s office and made for Holland’s office.

“Look Chief,” said Cook, “Kevin and I confronted a lot of baddies, all obnoxious and most of them dangerous. I can’t think of one of them that would do something like this.”

“You’re probably right; he, or they, would surely be someone that would spring to mind easily. Nevertheless, you and DC Joannides go through the case files. See if we can eliminate all of the obvious suspects; I’ll make sure we turn over all of the old rocks, and see what crawls out.”

“Thanks Chief,” said Cook, pulling a chair out, and sitting at the desk “they were a great couple, he was an incredible copper.”

“Look Langdon, you should see one our counsellors, maybe take some leave. You’ve been on the move since you found them, you need to process this properly, and come to terms with what’s happened.”

“No Chief, no counselling and no leave. I’m not slowing down ‘til we get the bastards responsible. I need to keep on the go while the picture of that scene is still in my mind. You have to trust me here; nothing will make me feel better than doing my job.”

“OK Langdon, I understand, and you have my support; if you go on to show any signs of emotional instability or bad judgement, your feet won’t touch the ground. Are we clear?”

“As crystal Chief, thanks.”

“OK get started on that list,” said Holland, taking a sip from a bottle of water, “I’m here if you need me.”

She sat in front of her computer, as Cook stepped through the door, and walked to his own desk in the general office. He looked back at her through the glass-panelled wall that separated them. She was as tough a boss as he had ever had, but all of her team knew that they could count on her.

DC Frank Joannides, also known as The Bubble because of his Greek roots, had worked on the team with Cook and Jennings for four years. His nickname was a contraction of ‘bubble and squeak’, the rhyming slang for Greek. Ironically, bubble and squeak was a traditional English dish of fried, leftover vegetables. Joannides was a hard working detective; he was especially adept at IT matters and an asset to his force colleagues. Although many

found his approach to work almost casual, his colleagues knew he was always working hard beneath the surface.

Joannides was on the opposite side of the desk to Cook at this moment; they were each trawling through their computer arrest and conviction records.

“OK Langdon that’s got to be it for me; are you done yet?” said Joannides, holding up three pages of A4 size paper.

“Just finishing Bubble,” said Cook, “how’s the time?”

“14.05, time for pre-brief yeah?”

“Yeah, stick the kettle on mate while I’m printing off my list.”

Four minutes later, they knocked on DCI Holland’s door, and walked in with three cups of coffee.

“Time for a quick team meeting Chief, go over the lists?”

“Sure,” said Holland, reaching for her cup. “Thanks. Right what have got guys?”

“Well, from the past four years, there are multiple convictions, where the villains are still inside. None of them could be called influential or connected, so there’s no way they would organise a killing from inside.”

“Fair enough,” said Holland, taking a sip of coffee, “what about parolees?”

“Small fry Chief,” said Joannides, riffling his papers, then continuing “we’ve got four obnoxious villains out on licence; not one of them has the brains to pull off a double murder, without leaving a trail of bloody footprints back to his front door.”

“What about pending?” Holland said, tapping her fingernails against her coffee cup, “any potential there?”

“Possibilities here Chief,” said Cook, nodding his head towards the list, “eight thugs awaiting trial. Six in custody for the past few weeks; two free on bail for attempted murder, you might fancy these two.”

“Heavy hitters?” said Holland.

“Cyril ‘Toxic’ Heath and Ernie ‘Icepick’ Pybus.” Said Cook.

“You’re right, they’re certainly possibilities. I’m not sure they’d go after coppers, when they’re going to be facing eyewitnesses in court for the existing charges.”

“That makes sense Chief,” said Joannides, “but given their connections, we think we should turn them over and see if we can stir something up.”

“Good work chaps, I’ll put this to the Super.”

“Do we have a DI to cover yet Chief?” Cook asked.

“Not yet, you’ll probably get an acting DI soon. Meanwhile, I’ll head things up myself; rank comes in handy against thugs like these.”

The station meeting, overseen by Corcoran, lasted for two hours. The atmosphere at the start of the meeting was sombre; the death of a brother officer and his family was devastating. The initial disbelief and sorrow morphed into a feeling of anger, and determination to bring the perpetrator to justice. There was no question in anyone’s mind; the killer’s motive was revenge. Everyone present now knew the current facts of the case; Corcoran presented the pathologist’s initial report.

Sally Jennings died from a single strike to the chest; the murder weapon was a carving knife, taken from a knife block on her kitchen counter. The blade had penetrated her heart and she had died instantly. The pathologist had confirmed that there would have been some blood spatter at the time of the attacks; her report made it clear that the killer may have some of that blood on his clothing.

Kevin Jennings had been in a kneeling position, bent over his wife’s body; a sharp pointed instrument had entered into his neck, rupturing the neural foramen between cervical vertebrae C3 and C4, and continued into the spinal cord. He had lost control of his upper body, and fallen onto his wife. The killer had grabbed his hair and raised his head, before slitting Jennings’s throat. A metal meat skewer, and a carving knife were found near his body.

There was no sign of a struggle at the scene; there was no forced entry, and no mess. The killer apparently walked in through the open side door, and into the kitchen. There were DNA samples at the scene: the victims of course, DS Cook’s and one other, unidentified. Cook clarified the question of the open side door, leading to the kitchen. He confirmed that Sally usually left the door open for him to enter each morning; he usually called for Jennings between 08.15 and 09.00, and helped himself to coffee while waiting for him.

Jennings lived in a leafy, suburban street and there were rarely any neighbours hanging about at that time of day. All indications pointed to one inescapable fact; the killer was aware of the Jennings’s morning habits and had coolly entered the house, killed his victims and left.

Everyone present had a copy of the message left by the killer on Jennings’s phone screen; they were asked to comment. The consensus was that it might be a quote from *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu. However, Corcoran was able to assure everyone that it was not; DC Joannides had checked that fact earlier, he had also checked quotes relating to vengeance, via Google, with no success.

Officers had made house-to-house enquiries in Jennings’s street, but none of the neighbours had noticed anything out of the ordinary. Corcoran made it clear that this case was to take priority; he promised that every lead, no matter how tenuous, was vital. The meeting ended and every officer went to work.



CHAPTER 4

DCI Holland had spoken with Superintendent Corcoran about Cyril Heath and Ernie Pybus. Corcoran had made no secret of his hatred of these men. “Oh yes, Toxic and Icepick a real nasty pair, and quite capable of a killing like this. You can question them, bring them in if they’ll co-operate, just remember questions only. These boys are with the Burns Gang, and they don’t mess with the police these days.”

“I understand Sir, we just need to check them out, and after all Jennings was their arresting officer. I am aware you brought down their old gang with Jennings’s help; I’d appreciate anything you can tell me.”

Corcoran told Holland about that June night eleven years ago, when the Brewster family and the GMP had their showdown at the Fairfield Arches. He told how armed police had pursued, cornered and vanquished the four Brewsters in a bloody shoot-out that night. Many arrests had followed which had decimated the Brewster Gang; what remained was reorganised, and managed by Randal Burns, a lifelong friend and partner of Matthew Brewster. Burns was a more reasonable kind of villain; he organised all of the gang’s businesses and operated them legally. All nefarious activities were clandestine, and operated in a business-like manner with minimal violence.

Burns assured the loyalty and co-operation of his employees with the aid of his compliance team, which included Toxic and Icepick. Burns would also use these two to deter rivals from encroaching on his territory.

Now, both Heath and Pybus were on bail for attempted murder, it was unlikely they would use bail time to murder a police officer and his family. Especially as they had to report in to his police station, every day whilst on bail. They had done so every day, accompanied by the gang lawyer, Eddie Riley, at 17.30.

Corcoran and Holland agreed on this point; they agreed also, that the old Brewster gang members were the most likely suspects. They decided that they could put pressure on Randal Burns, by insisting his gangsters made statements under caution, and provided alibis.

DCI Holland did not want to waste time getting to Heath and Pybus, so she had arranged for two interview rooms to be available at 17.30 that evening. Holland was sipping coffee; Cook was looking the last charge sheet on Cyril Heath. “Do you really fancy Toxic for this one Chief?” he said.

“I’ve got the same reservations as you Langdon; I know he’s capable of this, but it just doesn’t fit his normal profile.” Holland said.

“Yeah, it just seems too much, to expect a thug like him to be so meticulous. With him it has to be business, which usually means steaming in and getting the job done, without leaving the place spotless.”

“Absolutely right, he does executions; it’s never personal. What we’re dealing with is an emotion driven killing, a vendetta possibly. I’ve been talking with the Super, about this being someone who was involved in the battle at the Arches, all those years ago.”

“I can believe that; I was still at university at the time, but I followed that story to the bitter end. The Brewsters all died at the time, there was no one left to carry on a family vendetta. Do you think it could be a gang member who got sent down?”

“Well then we’d be back to Toxic and Icepick, and I think we agree that’s unlikely.” She paused and frowned, “Mind you, they’ve been out of the nick for less than four years, and they’re already on bail for attempted murder. Of course that’s related to gang business.”

“What about the ones who got long terms and are still inside?”

“Such as?”

“Such as Woolley and Oates.”

“Ah yes The Spanner and Donkey. That, Langdon, is where I might be able to help. This is where an officer of my rank can start turning over lots of slimy, old rocks.” They looked at each other and grinned.

At precisely 17.30 Cook’s phone rang, to let him know that Heath, Pybus and their lawyer were at the reception desk. Cook sprinted to Holland’s office. “They’re here Chief, just signing in.”

“OK Langdon, let’s go and see if we can spoil their day.”

They approached the three men waiting at the reception desk.

“Well, well Inspector Holland, what do you want with us?” said Heath.

“That’s Chief inspector Holland,” said Holland, “and this is my colleague DS Cook.”

“Sorry *Chief* Inspector, afternoon Sergeant Cook. This is Mr Pybus and this is our lawyer Mr Riley, QC.”

“Right, what’s this about?” said Riley.

“We’re investigating a recent crime, and we’d like to ask your clients a few questions under caution Sir, I’m sure it won’t take long,” Cook said, taking out a notebook. “We will however, be interviewing your clients separately and recording those interviews.”

“A few questions about what Sergeant?” Riley asked.

“About a serious crime which took place yesterday morning, we’re rather anxious to eliminate your clients, so that we can proceed to explore other avenues. Your co-operation is appreciated. We believe the crime may be related to events which took place eleven years ago, involving the Brewster Gang. Your clients were associated with the gang at that time.”

Pybus stepped forward, his face red with rage, “Are you trying to fit us up for the murder of that copper yesterday?” he said, moving towards Cook.

“That’s a little too close Mr Pybus, please step back immediately.” Cook said, looking directly into his eyes.

“Too close, I’ll show you too—”

“That’s enough Ernie, calm yourself,” Riley said, holding up his hand. “Can we get on with this please Sergeant.”

“Certainly, this way please.” Cook and Holland led the way down the corridor.

Holland pushed one door open, and turned to Pybus.

“Please wait in here we’ll be back shortly.”

“Right,” Pybus said, as he walked into the room and sat down at a small table. Holland waved at a uniformed officer to wait by the door. The rest of the party walked on past two more doors, and then Cook opened the third and invited Heath and Riley to enter, with a wave of his hand.

They sat at the table: Holland and Cook on the one side facing Heath and Riley on the other.

Cook switched on the recorder on the table and spoke, giving the date and the names of all attending the interview, and stating the precise reason for the police enquiries.

“Mr Heath would you please state where you were yesterday morning between 08.30 and 09.30?” Cook said.

“Yes I was in a meeting at Fairfield Enterprises,” said Heath.

“I see. Is there anyone who can corroborate your statement?”

“Yes, apart from my colleague Mr Pybus, there was: Randal Burns, his secretary Melanie, and Eddie Riley.”

“What time did the meeting start and end please?”

“It started at 8am and finished just after 10am.”

“Thank you Mr Heath,” Cook turned to Riley, “Mr Riley can you confirm the facts just given by Mr Heath?”

“I can confirm those facts in their entirety Sergeant,” said Riley.

“Thank you for your time gentlemen,” said Cook, “if you would care to wait in reception Mr Heath, we will bring a copy of your statement for signature.” Cook proceeded to end the interview on the recorder.

Holland, Cook and Riley entered the other room, for the interview with Pybus. The result was the same and Pybus went to reception to sign his statement.

Holland eased back her chair and stood up, facing Riley, “Mr Riley a quick word if you wouldn’t mind please. Sergeant you may leave also.”

“This won’t take long will it Chief Inspector?” Riley said, glancing at his watch.

“I’ll keep it as brief as possible; sit down please.”

They both sat, Holland looked Riley in the eyes.

“I accept your clients’ alibis and I confirm they are no longer under suspicion for this crime.”

Her eyes never left Riley’s and he fidgeted uncomfortably, imagining she was looking into his soul.

“I’m relieved to hear it; is there some other matter you wish to discuss regarding these clients?”

Holland unscrewed the top from a bottle of water, and took a sip. “Well that remains to be seen.” She took another sip, and then leant forward. “A brother officer, his wife and his unborn child died yesterday at the hands of an unknown killer. The GMP is committed to bringing the person responsible to justice.” She took another sip of water, and then sat back in her chair; her eyes never left his.

“I understand what you’re saying Chief Inspector; that was a deplorable crime and I wish you success. Is there some particular reason for telling me this?”

“Yes Eddie, there is,” she placed the bottle on the table, keeping her eyes fixed on his, “I’m going to talk to you off the record.”

“That’s very unusual Chief Inspector, and it could prove very prejudicial to some unfortunate soul.”

“No Eddie, it’s not unusual at all; you’ve had many a conversation with the GMP off the record. Let’s not get sanctimonious; we can be of help to each other here.”

“How?”

“As my colleague told you, it appears that the motive for these killings may well go back eleven years, to the old Brewster Gang.”

“But you don’t suspect my two clients, so who?”

“All indications point to someone other than Toxic and Icepick, someone of a higher intellect.”

“OK, I’ll have to accept that; but you’re certainly not describing anyone from the original mob.”

“Never in a hundred years, you’re right, but someone from the old days holds the information we need; something that can give us a track to go down. If anyone in the firm can put me on that track it’s Randal Burns.”

“You don’t think Randy wants to help the police, do you?”

“With your co-operation, yes I believe he’ll help.”

“Forget it Chief Inspector, I am not about to betray my client’s confidence; you’ll have to find someone else.”

“No Eddie, you’re the ideal go between; what’s more you’ll do it, and you’ll do it exactly how I tell you to.”

“That sounds like a threat to me.”

“Doesn’t it though? Good job we’re chatting off the record.”

“I think I’m going to have to consider an official complaint to—”

“Stop talking Eddie, right now. Listen to me very carefully, and you’ll see why you’re going to do as I tell you. Of course, the choice will be yours, but if you don’t co-operate, I think Randy will cancel your retainer.” She smiled and took another sip of water, without taking her gaze away from his eyes.

“The hell does that mean?” Riley mopped perspiration from his brow, and tried to avoid looking into her eyes.

“What that means Eddie, is that we’ll cause such a shower of shit to fall on Fairfield Enterprises, there won’t be enough shovels in Manchester to dig you out.” Holland sat back in her chair, and stared into Riley’s eyes, through his eyes, and into his soul.

“What do you want me to do; may I have some water please?”

Ten minutes later Holland had explained exactly what she wanted Riley to do, and why.

She wanted Burns to come into the station tomorrow morning, for a meeting with herself and Corcoran. Riley was to tell Burns that if he refused to give any useful information, she and Sergeant Cook, together with a dozen uniforms would arrive at the premises of Fairfield Enterprises every morning. They would proceed to question everyone with a criminal record, and then take the person to the station for a written statement. This disruption to daily business would continue indefinitely. All the while, she looked into poor Riley’s eyes, and when he looked back into hers, he saw himself sweating and broken on the rack.



CHAPTER 5

The next morning DCI Holland got a phone call at 08.30 from Riley. In the spirit of co-operation, Randal Burns had agreed to offer his assistance, in helping the police solve this dreadful crime. However, he was not prepared to come into the station, but he would talk to Holland and Corcoran on the phone. “OK Eddie, tell me when and we’ll call you at Fairfield Enterprises.” Holland said.

“No Chief Inspector, we’re at Randy’s home; please call us here.”

“Good enough Eddie, give me the number and we’ll talk in the next fifteen minutes.”

After a five minute briefing with Corcoran, in his office, Holland made the call. Randal Burns answered,

“Good morning Chief Inspector Holland, I have you on speaker, because I want my solicitor to be present.”

“Understood Mr Burns,” said Holland, “although you are not being questioned under caution, this is informal. For your information Superintendent Corcoran is also present.”

“Good morning Corky, long time. You’re fit and well I trust?”

“Good morning Randy, yes I’m good thanks still cracking crime, protecting the city. You?”

“I’m just working hard Corky, trying to stay one step ahead of you.”

“Well Randy now is a good opportunity for you to build some credit. DCI Holland is going to ask you some questions; it’s mainly to do with the old mob, so I expect some useful answers.”

“OK Corky, I think we understand each other and Eddie certainly understands DCI Holland. Ask away Chief Inspector.”

Fifteen minutes later the conversation was over, and the police officers were both satisfied with the outcome. Burns had no idea who would want to seek bloody revenge on the men who killed the Brewsters. However, he could offer one slim thread that might lead them to someone who did.

According to Burns, the link was the last person to visit Matthew Brewster as he lay in a coma. The records showed that the person in question was Mary Keogh, elder sister of Matthew and Leo Brewster. She had lived in Dublin, and her brothers used to visit her about four times every year. Mary had died in 2006, but Burns knew nothing more about her than this. The one thing that Burns knew, was that on every trip the Brewsters made to Dublin, Terry ‘The Spanner’ Woolley accompanied them.



Holland punched up Woolley’s records on Corcoran’s computer and they read the details. Woolley was serving a twenty-five year sentence in Wakefield Prison. He had not been a model prisoner during his first eleven years of captivity. Recently however, he had become more subdued. He had Type 2 diabetes, diagnosed in 2008; one year later he was diagnosed HIV Positive.

As a dangerous criminal, he had never expected parole or an early release. Now he was hoping to get a parole hearing on the grounds of his deteriorating health; he knew he would need to attend such a hearing, without any opposition from the police. This is why Corcoran saw the possibility of learning something useful from Woolley.

“If this is a vendetta Sir, I suggest either you, or the other arresting officer, visit Woolley at Wakefield ASAP.” Holland said.

“You’re right, but I want to stay here on top of things. I’ll discuss it with DCI Enright today.”

“Good, I’ll get in touch with Wakefield and put them in the picture.”

“Thanks Bev, get your team briefed as well. Oh and I have a replacement DI for you, recently transferred from Metropolitan division. She’s been going through her induction here, and she knows about the case. She’s quite a catch for us, has an Honours degree in criminal psychology, name’s Anne Cody.”

“I know her by reputation Sir, be glad to have her on the team. I’ll be off now, speak to you later.”

Peter Enright’s career had flourished over the past eleven years; he had risen to the rank of Detective Chief Inspector, and moved across the city to the Bethel Street station. His crime detection rates were among the best in Manchester; he was a man devoted to his job. He was recently divorced from his wife of seven years, due to irreconcilable differences. There were no children from the union, and Enright now lived alone, in the four bedroomed house he had once shared with his wife.

He was in a small bistro in Albert Square, drinking lager from a tall glass, as he waited for his friend. He had not seen Stuart Corcoran for a couple of months when the two of them, plus Kevin Jennings had gone for drinks together after work. He was well aware that this meeting would be a grim affair; this was borne out by the sad expression on Corcoran’s face.

“Hello Pete,” he said shaking his hand “this is a bloody bad business right?”

“Right Stu, it doesn’t get any worse than this. Poor old Kevin.”

“Any thoughts at all?” Corcoran said picking up the beer, that Enright slid across the table to him.

“If you don’t have anything tasty that Kevin was working on, I think we’ve got to be looking at vengeance from a long time ago. What’s more I think we both know which case that would have to be.” He looked at Corcoran while raising both eyebrows interrogatively.

“Got to agree with you there mate; it must be a vendetta of some kind, and it won’t end with Kevin so we need to come up with a solution bloody quick.”

“Right,” said Enright, taking a swig of lager, “I’ve racked my brains, but I can’t see any of those clowns from the Brewster mob being behind this.”

“We agree on that then,” said Corcoran, raising his glass and taking a sip, “my team, well Bev Holland to be precise, hit on a plan to fish out some information.”

“Really? OK let’s hear it then, I want to be a part of this Stu.”

“Randal Burns has given us a lead; it concerns the Brewster’s sister, Mary Keogh.”

Enright listened as Corcoran related the information that Burns had given him, about the Brewsters’ visits to Dublin.

“So The Spanner wants to get out does he? What a bloody nerve.” Enright said.

“All we have to do is promise not to oppose his parole appeal, and he’ll tell us what we need to know. That won’t necessarily secure his release, or even get him a hearing, but it will get him talking to us.”

“So who’s going to Wakefield and when?”

“I want you to go Pete; hopefully tomorrow, if that’s OK with you?”

“No problem, just let me know when to come round for the paperwork. The Spanner is going to help us fix things.”

“I’ll drink to that.” Corcoran said, tapping his glass against Enright’s.

Corcoran was back in his office, following a meeting with the station commander, when DCI Holland knocked on his door. She told him that she had arranged a meeting with Woolley, the following day at 13.00.

“Excellent,” said Corcoran, “I’ll let Peter Enright know right away.”

“Very good Sir. In the meantime, can we have a meeting with our new DI?”

“Certainly, come back with your team in fifteen minutes.”

“Thank you Sir,” said Holland, as she headed towards the door.”

Holland met DS Cook and DC Joannides in the CID office area. “OK chaps,” she said, waving them towards her office, “we’re about to meet the new DI, let’s have a quick chat.”

“Right Boss,” said Joannides, as they followed her into her office.

“She’s called Anne Cody; she had an excellent run with the Met. She has an honours degree in criminal psychology, and her criminal profiling skill has been invaluable to the Met. From what I’ve heard she’s a real team player, and she has no time for prima donnas.”

“OK Boss, we’ll back her all the way; just like we backed poor old Kevin.” Cook said, looking at Joannides, who nodded his assent.

“I know you will guys, thanks.”

“Any idea why she wanted to leave the Met for the GMP?” Joannides asked.

“Apparently she and her husband divorced a year ago, and she wanted to relocate away from the London area. OK Super’s office, let’s go and meet her.”



CHAPTER 6

Holland led her team into Corcoran’s office; the superintendent stood and introduced Cody. “This is DI Anne Cody, formerly of the Met, and now here as a permanent member of the GMP strength.”

She shook hands with the three officers in turn.

“I’m really pleased to be here working with you,” she said, in a deep, somewhat smoky voice reminiscent of a famous actress of a bygone era.

“My condolences to you all, for the loss of your colleague. I realise there is very little to go on at the moment, but I assure you finding DI Jennings’s killer is our priority.”

“Thanks Boss, we appreciate that.” Cook said.

“Yes thanks Boss, anything you need, let me know,” said Joannides.

“That’s right Inspector,” said Holland, grinning. “DC Joannides is our IT wizard; if it can be found, he’ll find it. As soon as you get settled in, give me a shout and you and I will have a one to one OK?”

“Thank you Ma’am,” said Cody, “I’ll get together with you later today.”

“Right Chief Inspector that about does it for now,” said Corcoran, “but I would like to see you about the case tomorrow afternoon, may have something for you.”

“Excellent Sir, I’ll be available,” said Holland. She turned to the others, “Right people, let’s bring things up to date.”

Back in the CID office, Cook and Joannides set about briefing Cody on their recent activities. They also informed her of the results of all enquiries so far.

“So far, you’ve been able to eliminate the more obvious possibilities in terms of motive. There is however, this one old case I see relating to the Brewster gang.”

“Yes Boss, it’s a long shot, but it seems worth following up.” Cook said.

“Absolutely right, it should be checked thoroughly. These suspects you’ve listed here; did they yield anything at all?”

“No Boss, they’re mostly small fry, and we’re satisfied with their alibis,” said Joannides.

“That’s right,” said Cook, “but we did think these two were worth a pull. It turns out they have a watertight alibi.”

“Hm, Heath and Pybus,” said Cody, “what’s their status?”

“They used to work as enforcers for the Brewsters and they are a pair of vicious animals; they’re awaiting trial for attempted murder. When the Brewsters died, Randal Burns took over the gang; now they work for him. DCI Holland questioned these two in the presence of their brief, Eddie Riley. Somehow she frightened poor Eddie, into getting Burns to give her a lead in this case.”

“Why would he agree to that?”

“Well, DCI Holland promised she would keep coming round, and taking all of his employees in for questioning. Told him she’d bring a dozen uniforms with her every time. Riley convinced Burns that she was serious.”

“Lovely,” said Cody, smiling.

“She would and all; Bev don’t bandy words Boss, she says it - she does it.” Joannides said.

“I like her already,” said Cody, “right what about the pathologist report?”

The three spent the next hour or so discussing the case and, in particular, the motive.

The pathologist had thought it reasonable to assume that the killer was a man. The power used to force the knife into Sally’s heart had been substantial. However, she insisted that it was by no means a certainty. She pointed out that a strong woman, of average proportions, could have delivered each of the deathblows with sufficient motivation. Cody agreed with this

proposition, and that until evidence to the contrary appeared, they should assume they were dealing with a male suspect.

Both Cook and Joannides agreed that the likely motive was revenge. Their brother officers at the station were in the process of identifying the Jennings’s relatives, co-workers, neighbours and friends. They would investigate any hint of a known enemy with a grudge. Intuitively, both men believed there was a connection between the murders and the old Brewster gang.

Cody told them that she thought that was the most likely probability. She told them she would talk to Holland about this later in the day.

Cook and Joannides had each taken a list of names, consisting of people well known to Kevin and Sally Jennings. They would start the task of questioning these people immediately.

Cody was in Holland’s office; seated at her desk, drinking coffee. On the desk was a spreadsheet Cody had prepared; she informed Holland that it was based on details known so far.

“Thanks for getting into this so quickly Inspector,” said Holland.

“Not a problem Ma’am, a brother officer killed in cold blood is something we deal with urgently. I promise we’ll check any and every lead in this case.”

“Thanks, I know you will,” said Holland, as she continued to look at Cody’s spreadsheet.

“Now this looks impressive, have you compiled a profile of the murderer?”

“In a manner of speaking Ma’am, based on what we know: this is a crime of vengeance, the killer is probably male, the killing is related to the Brewster deaths eleven years ago, therefore the killer has not finished. The killer wants revenge on all of those involved in killing the Brewster family.” Cody paused for a sip of coffee, and then continued.

“The killer knew DI Jennings, his movements, his wife and probably a little about DS Cook.” Cody paused and watched Holland’s face as she took in the part about Cook. “I know Ma’am it doesn’t bear thinking about, but whoever killed the Jennings’s would certainly have had no compunction about killing anyone who stumbled upon the scene.”

“I agree, are you thinking psychopath?”

“No Ma’am, this person is cool, organised, educated, patient and driven. This person, so focused on his mission, would willingly wait another eleven years if necessary. He will not give up, he will not negotiate, and he will not waver. He’s focussed Ma’am, the only way to stop him is to catch him, and the only way to catch him is to out-think him.”

“The only way to do that Inspector, is to be one step ahead of him, and you know the problem with that don’t you?”

“Yes Ma’am, lack of knowledge.”

“At least we know who his next targets are, don’t we?”

“Yes Ma’am and he knows we know that; that isn’t enough for us, if we give the targets twenty-four hour protection, the killer will simply out-wait us. As long as he knows what we’re going to do he’ll always have the upper hand. What can we do Ma’am?”

“Good question Inspector. Look, thanks for putting this together you certainly live up to your reputation. I take it you’ve given this profile to Cook and the Bubble?”

“Yes Ma’am they’re following up the leads brought in, for all we know the killer may have been among the victims for years.”

“Keep up the good work Inspector,” said Holland, “for now share only with the team OK?”

“Of course Ma’am. The chaps said there was a good chance that Randal Burns might give some sort of lead, any hope of success there?”

“I can’t say just yet but I hope to be in a position to do so tomorrow, the Super’s looking into a possibility. What would you do Inspector, if you couldn’t find evidence today of someone with a grudge about the battle at the Arches.”

“I’d go back eleven years to the killing of the Brewsters; try to identify the person with sufficient motive to be a potential revenge killer.”

“Good work Inspector,” said Holland, “you think like me. I’m going to like working with you.”

“Thanks Ma’am, I’m sure I am too.”



The leads given to Cook and Joannides produced nothing. Both officers heard the same responses all the time. It was clear that the Jennings’s were a well-liked couple, Sally had no enemies and everybody loved Kevin, apart from the criminals he arrested.

Back at the station it was 17.45, the two detectives chatted as they input the results of their enquiries into their computers. DCI Holland and DI Cody were still in Holland’s office completing Cody’s one to one interview. Holland noticed them and opened up their daily reports in turn, she showed Cody the screen. “As expected, the Jennings’s were a perfect couple.”

“Yes Ma’am but it has to be done,” said Cody.

“I know; we’ll keep shaking the trees until something falls out. Eventually we’ll get a break. Looks like the guys are done, you might as well call it a day too, we’re done here. I’ll email a summary of the meeting to you for your records.”

“Thanks Ma’am. I’ll see you in the morning then.”

It was 18.30 when DCI Enright walked past Holland’s office; he tapped on the window, “Hi Bev, burning the midnight oil I see.”

“Hello Peter, here to see the Super right?”

“That’s right,” he said moving to her door, “I think you should be in on this, so does Stuart.”

“Sure, I’ll shut this file down and join you.”

Superintendent Corcoran had a coffee maker in his office, he had brewed a fresh pot and poured out three cups.

Holland knocked and entered, “Hm real coffee, lovely.”

“Sit down and enjoy,” said Corcoran putting a cup before her, “a drizzle of skimmed milk just how you like it.”

“Cheers Sir,” said Holland, taking a cautious sip then blowing on it. “What’s the next move?”

“Well,” said Corcoran, taking a quick sip, “Pete has his authority so he’s driving to Wakefield tomorrow to talk to Woolley.”

“That’s right,” said Enright, “and since he believes we’re doing him a favour, he’ll tell us what he knows.”

“He has nothing to lose by talking to us,” said Corcoran, he’ll talk all right. Anything he knows that could be remotely relevant we need, and Randal Burns is convinced he knows something.”

Holland turned to Enright, “Does this mean a light touch approach with Woolley?”

“Not a bloody chance,” said Enright, “he has nothing, but what I throw his way. I’ll explain that he’ll die in Wakefield nick for sure, if he doesn’t co-operate with me. He knows me well enough to believe that; he’ll sing, like a pub drunk at closing time.”

Corcoran had to pull his cup away mid sip to laugh, without spilling his coffee. Holland was already laughing.

“I’ll drink to that Pete,” said Corcoran, raising his cup.

“Me too.” Holland raised hers.

The three discussed the matter for a half hour more, trying to pre-empt the quality of Woolley’s knowledge. The one thing they all agreed on, was that they needed something to advance this case; a solution to the Jennings’s murders, and a way to prevent two more murders.



The next morning, after the customary briefing, there was renewed activity in the CID office. Every officer was giving prior attention to the Jennings murder case. Several CCTV cameras were operational near the crime scene; officers were scrutinising the recorded contents of each camera. The public were playing their part too; they had been encouraged to come forward with details of anything out of the ordinary, which they may have noticed. The response had been swift and substantial, and it continued. Officers searched through the CCTV footage, for possible matches to descriptions they had been given.

All of this effort was necessary; there were high hopes of it yielding a clue. A clue of any kind would be welcome, if only to give the investigation a solid direction to take. In her briefing DCI Holland praised all of her officers for their efforts, and encouraged them to keep fanning the flames. “It’s times like this when a team like ours really steps up, and I thank you for that. Right

now, we need to raise our game people; sometimes when you’ve tried everything once, it’s not enough. Sometimes you need to try everything again; you have to be sure before you move on. If you have a lead, a hunch or just a gut feeling please act on it. It could be the break we’ve been waiting for.”



CHAPTER 7

DCI Peter Enright had driven in silence to Yorkshire; he had a lot on his mind. He knew, as did Superintendent Corcoran, that this killer was avenging the deaths of the Brewsters. He also knew that with Jennings dead, he would be the killer's next target. He put his hand inside his coat, and ran his finger over the scar left by Leo Brewster's bullet. His thoughts went back to that night, eleven years ago, when he returned fire and shot Leo in the head.

He had presented himself at HM Prison, Wakefield at 13.15 and given details of the reason for his presence. The governor had given orders for DCI Enright to have private access to inmate Woolley, away from the main convict population.

At 13.30 Enright entered Room 14, where Woolley was waiting with a guard in attendance. The room may as well have been a large cave; it had no windows and it was gloomy and cool. Enright heard a faint crunching sound as he walked across aged carpet tiles. In the centre of the room was a small, metal table with a chair on either side. Woolley sat on one of the chairs with both his hands on the table. The past eleven years had not been kind to The Spanner; he was gaunt, wrinkled, and bald.

Enright looked at the guard.

"Thanks, you can leave us now."

"Right Sir, I'll be just outside when you're ready," said the guard, leaving the room.

Enright sat down opposite Woolley and took out his phone. He looked into Woolley's eyes, as he placed the phone on the table.

"Afternoon Mr. Enright," said Woolley, "it's been a long time. You're looking well; I hear you made DCI?"

"Don't Spanner, I haven't got the time. You know why I'm here and if you don't co-operate, you *will* die in this hole."

"Bloody Nora! Who rattled your cage? I was just being pleasant, catching up like."

"You scumbag, I've seen people that you've been pleasant to in the past. They found out why you're The Spanner the hard way didn't they? You tighten nuts, or loosen nuts, depending on how sadistic you're feeling. Am I right?"

Woolley laughed. A strange, cackling guffaw, like a magpie choking on a golf ball.

"I had a job to do Mr Enright and I did it efficiently, does that make me a bad person?" He laughed even louder.

"Listen to me you moron, I'm not forgetting that you were about to blast me with a bleeding shotgun eleven years ago at the Arches. I'm not here to do you any favours, but if you don't give me something I can use all deals are off."

Enright stood up, snatching his phone from the table, and turned towards the door.

"Alright, alright Mr Enright don't go, please; I'll tell you what I know."

Enright stood for a couple of seconds looking at him. The bravado had left Woolley as the colour had left his cheeks.

His eyes were pleading, and he nodded towards the chair. Enright sat, and put his phone back on the table.

"Randal Burns says that you have information that could be useful to the GMP, in relation to trips that you made to Ireland with Matthew Brewster. I'm recording our conversation, so make sure your statements are clear and accurate. Then we'll have a record of you helping the police with their investigation."

"That won't do me any harm at a parole hearing, thanks Mr Enright."

Enright set the phone to record.