

Green Alert

Coral not Coal



Chris Deggs

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The future will either be green or not at all.

Bob Brown

It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment.

Ansel Adams

The moment the shift in consciousness began is not known. But somewhere along the way, Professor Eduardo Murray, an environmental scientist, came into the picture. He was not the most charismatic of people. Physically; he tended to resemble a gargoyle-like clown. But some people, the kinder ones saw beyond his broad face, bulbous nose and puffy lips.

He lectured at Sydney University and had come to Mt Tomah to regale the good people there with his take on what he saw to be the energy revolution and promote his book of the same name. So why Mount Tomah you may well ask? Well, Eduardo had been raised there, and he was reconnecting with his birthplace. He had attracted around three dozen locals, who were in the public library listening to the middle-aged academic talk about his energy revolution.

The townsfolk didn't know what to expect. Most of them had not seen Eduardo for many years, and some had difficulty even recognising him as the years that had not been too kind to the professor. But Eduardo, an intensely focused confirmed bachelor, did not care about his looks. He had an important message to deliver to the folks of Mount Tomah, a small Blue Mountains township. His message was really for the whole world, but he had to start somewhere.

Just the title of his new book 'The Energy Revolution Rescue Activism', an acronym of TERRA, was so dull it sent people to sleep. Eduardo thought it was perfect and explained the content accurately.

So what was it all about? The professor stated that humanity was on the brink of an energy revolution. He wiped his thick glasses, saying, 'Low oil prices are sending shock waves through the global economy.'

Some of the audience nearly nodded off during the long monologue. It was only the little furry head popping up out of the professor's top pocket, that kept the attendees puzzled and bemused as they listened with lukewarm interest.

Oblivious to the effect his pet hamster was having on his listeners, he ploughed on. 'This and other shifts are harbingers of an imminent energy revolution, which will bring the fossil fuel age to an end. And the brave new technological era will herald global reductions in our demand for oil, gas, and other non-renewable energies. This will prove more effective than current efforts to avert climate change. This will happen, but it needs to be helped along by activism in its various forms.

One member of the audience who was actually listening, as well as watching the small animal, with amusement, even had a question. 'Professor, what you're saying is all very well, but how do we get our waste of space Pollies to get on board?'

Eduardo stared myopically at the questioner. 'Our politicians have two choices where energy policy is concerned. They can either get on board and be apart of the energy revolution and its far-reaching consequences for nations, multi-national companies, and the effects of climate change. Or, with the help of protests and petitions, they will be dragged screaming into this revolution because they will have no say in the matter, and they will have no choice but to respond.'

'Eduardo paused as he gently pushed Hamish back into his pocket. Then, as though having pets at lectures was the most natural thing in the world, he continued, 'Oil companies and energy utilities must begin to adapt their existing business models or face future irrelevancy. Oil-exporting nations, particularly in the Middle East, will be negatively impacted, whereas the United States and European countries that are investing in new technologies may find themselves leaders in the global geopolitical game.'

Eduardo took the top copy of his book from the small pile and brandished it at his dwindling audience. He stated, 'My book is both timely and controversial. It offers sound advice on what governments and businesses can and should do now to prepare for a radically different energy future.'

The remaining six people, mostly his relatives, applauded, unable to hide their relief that he had finished his speech. Three of them bought a copy of his book. It did not seem like much of a result, but it was a start.

Keep close to Nature's heart... and break clear away, once in awhile, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean.

John Muir

Chapter 1

In war, there were generally four levels of death. Skip Bott knew this from experience. The weathered soldier had a contemplative air about him and penetrating brown hooded eyes. The good kill was the removal of a hostile individual from the battle area by any appropriate means. Then came collateral damage, the consequence of unforeseeable or unavoidable circumstances that lead to the death of civilians. It also described foreseeable but acceptable deaths considering the strategic objective. Then there was the death of innocent civilians due to uncaring, reckless behaviour. The last level was outright murder. The malicious intent to seek out and kill another human being in a circumstance that is not self-defence or defence of another. As a sniper with a recon platoon, Skip

knew the fourth kill very well. Some times levels three and four got clouded, especially when the target was a thousand metres away.

The three hundred metre range at the Queensland Military Rifle Club in Carina was a piece of cake for Skip, but it helped him keep his eye in. Besides a Hell's Canyon Long Range, with a twenty-six-inch barrel, although a great gun, was no match for the SR98 7.62mm bolt-action sniper rifle, he had used in the army. He had one stashed at home, but he didn't use it at the range because it would have drawn too much attention.

Sergeant Woody Stone had served with Skip Bott in Afghanistan. They had both enlisted around the same time, and first met as privates in the Royal New South Wales Infantry Regiment. Woody had gone on to signals and Skip graduated as a member of a rifle platoon. After a couple of tours in Afghanistan, both Woody and Skip left the armed forces. Woody disappeared into the bush to live in a bunker off the grid. Something had happened to him in Afghanistan that gave him the night terrors, but he never spoke about it, not even to Skip, his closest friend. 'What happened in Afghanistan stayed in Afghanistan' was his motto. Unlike his friend, he never had a love of guns. For him, it was just a tool of the trade.

Every now and again Woody contacted Skip, never the other way around, and they had a drink together. On one such occasion, they met at the Camp Hill Hotel. They sat at a table, far away from the Karaoke, under the covered veranda. 'Cheers mate,' Woody said, clinking his schooner of XXXX against that of Skip's. He said, 'Mate, whatever got into you to talk to that fuckin' ABC, journo about army shit?'

Skip looked at the tall, lanky veteran with a scar on his forehead and wearing camouflage fatigues. 'I know mate. But I'm sick and tired of the fucking self-glorification that goes on at the expense of our blokes.'

'I know, mate. But you know the drill. Whatever took place in Afghanistan stays there. Jesus, mate, you haven't done yourself any favours blabbing to Auntie. We've all got our fucking psychological battles scars mate, but we keep them to ourselves.'

In some ways, Skip regretted speaking his mind in the interview, but he could not stop himself. He was trying to save lives. When the egotistical few threatened the very values special operations command stood for, it became a major contributing factor in subjecting Australian troops to unnecessarily dangerous battle zones. He responded, 'Although. I must say I never personally witnessed this within Special Operations Command.'

Woody took a swig of beer. 'Sometimes, he wanted to talk about his demons, but he always stopped himself. 'It's just a pity you didn't have a bit more self-discipline, mate.'

Skip knocked back some beer. 'Yeah, well maybe it didn't happen in signals, mate.'

'Can't say that I noticed it, mate. Oh, there were one or two officers who bathed in self-glorification, but it was just a tiny minority.'

'Yeah, well, it became infectious in our mob at the expense of the greater reputation of special operations.'

Woody finished off his beer, He got up. 'Another one mate?'

'Bloody oath, mate, Keep them coming.'

Matthew Barker, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, introduced Sinclair George as the keynote speaker at the Brisbane Conservative Breakfast Club.

Sinclair began, 'Thank you, Mr Mayor, for your kind introduction.'

He paused, took in the audience, then said, 'What a great day to be in Brisbane. Kevin Randell has arrived home from the United States and held a press conference to announce that he is holding a press conference.'

Chuckles from the wealthy audience.

'We still don't know whether Joe Fox will be contesting the Labor leadership on Monday, but if he does Labor members will be presented with a choice between Kevin Randell, the most chaotic and disorganised prim a-donna Queensland has ever seen, and Fox, the most incompetent and dysfunctional backstabber that Australia has ever seen.' He paused for effect. then added, 'And that is what they say about each other!'

Hoots of laughter from the haves.

'Ours is a great state in a great country. Queensland deserves better than the Labor rabble at the state level. In contrast to Labor's pitiful offerings, Mason Land is a strong leader with a united team, committed to the Queensland economy ...'

And so it went on.

Simon Felix tuned out of most of the speech, but his ears pricked up when it came to fixing Queensland's ailing economy.

'And that, ladies and gentlemen, is state Labor. Never have we witnessed such vitriolic animosity between warring factions in a political party. Now, like Napoleon, I believe you never interrupt your enemy while it is making mistakes. So I have said enough about the Labor leadership brawl, except this. Whoever wins the leadership battle on Monday, the instability, the dysfunction, the incompetence will not go away. When Queenslanders wake up on Tuesday morning, whoever the leader of the state Labor Party is, they will still endorse the crippling carbon tax Federal Labor will impose on our economy from the 1st of July.'

Sinclair George thumped the rostrum for emphasis. 'There will be no Carbon Tax under the Federal LNP. Nor under any government led by Mason Land.'

Cheers from the floor.

Simon Felix sought out Sinclair George at the breakfast buffet following the speech. 'I was heartened by your stand on this insidious and impractical Carbon tax.'

Sinclair looked at the smartly dressed man with a squarish face and large ears. 'Thank you, but who are you?'

Simon handed Sinclair his business card. 'I represent a company that wishes to invest in your great state.'

'Oh, and which company is that?'

Simon handed the politician a glossy brochure. 'This will give you a little idea of what Inada Holdings represents.'

Sinclair perused the promotional document and read: Inada is an Indian mining, energy and infrastructure company dedicated to delivering energy solutions for an advancing world. Sinclair looked at Simon and smiled, 'So, what can I do for you?'

Simon smiled also. 'I think we can do something for each other.'

Burnout Scenario Says Oil Loses \$21 Trillion By 2040 As

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/feliciajackson/2018/05/23/under-burnout-scenario-sees-oil-lose-21-trillion-in-revenues-by-2040-as-coal-is-phased-out/>

Australian special forces veteran breaks silence on <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-10/australian-special-forces-veteran-breaks-silence/8453728>

Ten percent of the big fish still remain. There are still some blue whales. There are still some krill in Antarctica. There are a few oysters in Chesapeake Bay. Half the coral reefs are still in pretty good shape, a jewelled belt around the middle of the planet. There's still time, but not a lot, to turn things around.

Sylvia Earle

Chapter 2

Davion Hawe a former Green peace activist, now a Green Party representative in the Queensland Parliament, loved snorkelling in the Great Barrier Reef. Ever since his dad taught him how to snorkel, he had been totally captivated by fish of every imaginable colour, swarming amongst the many-hued corals, as the sun's rays danced through the surface of the blue ocean. Davion loved to watch stingrays slowly drifting by, their smiley faces staring down at the ocean floor. The Great Barrier Reef was Davion's favourite place on Earth.

Was!

Because soon, If the Australian Government continued to ignore its plight, this natural wonder of the world will be gone forever. Davion joined Green Peace as it was one of the only influential bodies that actively campaigned for protection of the Reef. The Queensland Government has stood idly by while the Great Barrier Reef, the most massive living thing on the planet, deteriorates at an alarming rate. Over the past 30 years, Davion had watched helplessly as the beach lost around half of its coral. On a breakfast TV show he declared. 'We must act now if the Great Barrier Reef is to survive

through future decades.'

The interviewer said, 'What is the cause of this accelerating deterioration, Davion?'

'Many things have contributed to coral bleaching. Now the Bishop Point coal port expansion poses the biggest threat.'

'Why is that the case?'

Because the proposed expansion includes three million cubic metres of dredging. This dredging involves digging up the seabed and rocks, destroying the sea grasses and the habitats of bottom-dwelling marine animals.'

'And that harms the reef?'

'Destroying the sea grasses affects the fish, molluscs and other sensitive creatures like turtles and dugongs that depend on them. Dredging also throws up fine sediments into the crystal clear waters, increasing turbidity which affects visibility and can smother benthic life. These sediments drift for kilometres, degrading water quality and covering sea grass beds and coral.'

Rhianna Walcott studied the proposal in detail. As the Co-ordinator General, it was her job to build robust and sustainable resource communities. The corporation, an Indian mining and energy company sought to make the world's biggest new coal mine in central Queensland's Jericho Basin.

The Carnegie Project, a thermal coal mine in the north of the basin in Central Queensland, Australia, involved both open-cut and underground methods.

At the same time as Mrs Walcott made her decision on the proposed DA, her husband was a frontrunner for the position of Carnegie mine manager during the construction phase, if the project got approved. Adrian Walcott had a solid background in the mining industry including his role as the CEO of the massive Konkola copper mines in Zambia. This experience stood him in good stead for the CEO job once the mine was up and running. This conflict of interest was conveniently glossed over.

Having gone through the necessary motions, Rhianna decided there was more than enough room for the Carnegie mine in Central Queensland, where there was plenty more coal in the ground. And The Deputy Premier, Sinclair George announced that the state's coordinator-general had approved the project, subject to an extensive list of environmental and social conditions. And subject to getting the project the tick at Federal level.

Gregory Hunter was impressed with the Coordinator General's glowing report. It looked as though Queensland had landed a big one. Reading the document he whistled through his teeth. The mine was going to produce up to 60 million tonnes of coal each year. The proposal also included the provision for a 189-kilometre rail line. The plan had the potential to create up to 2,500 construction and 3,900 operational jobs.

July 28, 2014

Federal Environment Minister Hunter approved the Inada project subject to 36 strict conditions focused on conserving groundwater, including returning 730 mega-litres of water to the Great Artesian Basin every year for five years.

The Greens had argued that as the water would have been used by the mine, it would be contaminated when returned to the GAB. They wanted all the water used by the mine to be thoroughly purified before it was returned. But they didn't have the numbers to make this happen, and the proposal did not see the light of day.

Mr Hunter maintained that his 36 conditions, which complemented the Queensland Government's environmental requirements, would ensure the proponent met the highest environmental standards and that all impacts, including cumulative effects, were avoided, mitigated or offset.'

As they flew over the cattle station's vast ranges, Ossie McCarthy turned to his chopper pilot. 'Looks like Eddie was right.' He was referring to Edward Ferringdon a fellow cattle grazier, who like Ossie, owned a vast cattle station in Jericho Basin, which had been drought-stricken for seven years.

Abelard Morrelly responded, ' Well boss there's definitely something sneaky going on.' He brought the R44 Raven in lower, get a closer look at the activity going on below.

Ossie had kept up surveillance in the basin, which comprised some 247,000 square kilometres of thermal coal. Ever since the Department of State Development had seen fit to support mining development there, Ossie, like all station owners was concerned that each new project put increasing strain on the ground water's dwindling supply. Which was why Abelard Morrelly, was flying and spying the Raven chopper over the Inada property.

Abel said, 'I'd say they're definitely drilling down there.'

'I didn't think they had the green light yet.'

'The DA was knocked back once, They have an appeal next week,' Abel offered.

'So why are they drilling already?'

'Maybe they think they can get away with it.'

Abe grinned, 'Not with us on the job, boss.'

They weren't the only ones on the job. Campbell Rendall, an Indigenous Land Rights lawyer, was busy building a case for the Kimala and Jinnamoora people, who were deeply concerned that the mine project would undermine them, trash their rights and destroy their ancestral lands, waters and cultures. On the wall of his Townsville office, a sign read:

The native title recognises a set of rights and interests over land or waters where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups have practised, and continue to practice, traditional laws and customs before sovereignty.

It was a constant reminder for Campbell who had joined the legal profession to fight for indigenous rights. Campbell was head of the native title practice in Townsville. He was listed in Doyle's Guide to the Australian Legal Profession as one of Australia's leading native title lawyers. Over his years in practice, Campbell developed strong relationships with indigenous groups, developers and mining organisations, and had a wealth of experience in dealing successfully with government bodies, tribunals and other stakeholders concerning indigenous rights and interests. So he was the perfect choice to lead the defence for the Kimala and Jinnamoora people. Campbell knew it, and so did the Inada company lawyers.

Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.

Aldo Leopold

Chapter 3

Ossie McCarthy, in his tight jeans, big boots and a characteristic wide brimmed leather Akubra, was a cattleman through and through. He and his two siblings had inherited Ulcanbah Station after his father's fatal accident whilst rodeo bull riding. Ulcanbah was the second largest station in Australia, after Anna Creek in South Australia, and the largest in Queensland. It was around six in the morning, when Ossie walked in on Sam, the camp cook, who was preparing breakfast for the station hands. 'Hi, Sam.'

The overweight Aboriginal with grey Afro-style hair paused from beating eggs. 'Hi Boss'

'I need to contact your cousin Michael.'

'Sure, Mr McCarthy. I'll get you his number.'

'Just text it to me.'

Ossie loved the great outdoors, in fact just about everything to do with running a vast cattle station. Except when there was a prolonged drought. And this one had been going on for many years. The existing coal industry in the basin was sucking the aquifers dry, as well as contaminating the groundwater. Ozzie often shook his head in disbelief. How could the Queensland Pollies be so stupid? What really galled him though was that the coal industry did sneaky deals and got their water cheap, or even free, while graziers, like him, had to pay through the nose. Well, enough was enough, and he was damned sure he would not stand by idly while Inada built their Carnegie megamine.

Ossie sighed, It did no good growling at the universe. Not when there was some 5,000 head of shorthorn Brahman-cross cattle to attend to. He was heading off to his ute when he received Sam's message. Ossie rang the number.

Michael Burrugoo lived in Alpha, a tiny rural town in the Barcaldine Region in Central West

Queensland, Ironically, it was named after the first proposed mine, called the Alpha Coal Project. The construction camp moved west, but the township remained at the former terminus. Michael wished all the mines had gone west. He responded to Ossie's call. 'Hi Ossie, what can I do for you man?'

'How about coming for a ride in the chopper?'

'I take it this isn't just about joy riding.'

'Mate, Inada is drilling bores. Thought you might like to get some video.'

'Right mate. But why can't you record it and send it to Campbell?'

'Mike, I'm strictly a behind the scenes man. Besides, it'll be better coming from you, being a stakeholder and all.'

'OK man, but you'll have to pick me up, Gerard has got the ute.'

'I didn't know he'd got his license.'

'I don't remember mentioning that.'

Sinclair George was home with Alva his wife, half watching the ABC 7:30 Report, when an article caught his attention. It was an aerial shot video of the Inada Carnagee mine site, showing bores being drilled. It was the first he had heard of it. Then he saw an ABC commentator speaking with a tall, lean Aboriginal man with shoulder-length dark hair. When Sinclair realised it was Campbell Rendall, the Abo's land rights lawyer, he became interested and turned up the volume just in time to hear Rendall say, 'It's a flagrant abuse of the Inada Indigenous Land Use Agreement as laid down by the Coordinator-General.'

'So, in the light of this illegal drilling what steps do you think the Queensland Government should take?'

'Inada should have its mining licence revoked.'

'Do you think that is likely to happen, Mr Rendall?'

Campbell smiled, 'No. I'm not naive. But Inada should be heavily fined at the very least.'

'What the fuck are they playing at,' Sinclair mumbled, going for his phone. When he heard Adrian's voice, he said, 'Are you watching the 7:30 Report?'

'No. Why?'

'Because someone made a home movie of your guys drilling bores at your mine site.'

Adrian was silent for a moment, digesting Sinclair's words. Then he responded, 'Could you see the Inada name anywhere?'

'No, but it's too late to go down that road. Fucking Campbell'

Rendall has had his say and is demanding severe penalties for Inada.' Then he asked, 'Adrian, were you aware this drilling was going on?'

'Bloody hell, Sinclair, in just a few days we'll win our appeal, and we can drill as many fucking bores as we like. You just have to keep the media hounds off my heels until then.'

'What am I supposed to tell them?'

'You're a smart politician. Say it wasn't us and simply stick to that story. That'll keep the media busy chasing its tail for a few days. Then, we're home and dry.'

'I admire your confidence, but if this drilling becomes an issue you might lose the appeal.'

'Don't worry about that, Sinclair. Australia has the best legal system money can buy.'

October 2015

The announcer on the 7:30 Report said, 'The latest evidence shows that Indian mining company Inada carried out illegal drilling on the Carnagee coal mine site. With me, in the studio, tonight is Campbell Rendall an indigenous rights lawyer from Townsville. Turning to his guest, the ABC reporter said, 'What is this new evidence, Mr Rendall?'

Campbell flicked back his shoulder-length black hair. 'Somebody had the clever idea to check the GPS coordinates in the video that showed drilling going on. Then they checked the coordinates on a plan of the proposed Carnagee coal mine. And they got a perfect match.'

'But Sinclair George was adamant that there was no drilling taking place on Inada land.'

Campbell said, 'This new evidence shows Inada lied. Not only did Inada get caught drilling it lied about it.'

The commentator turned to the camera. 'We invited the Deputy Premier to explain this new finding, but we were told he was not available. We also wanted a comment from Adrian Walcott, the Inada mine manager but we were told he is overseas at present.' Back to his guest, the ABC reporter said, 'Now we can see that Inada has not complied with the Coordinator General's ruling, how should we go on from here?'

'Now that we know Inada cannot be trusted they must be put under government scrutiny. Apart from that, Inada needs to be brought before the Land and Environment court to answer for their crime.'

The reporter turned to the camera again, 'We are now crossing live to the Department of State Development to speak with the Coordinator General. Good evening Mrs Walcott. Now that we have evidence that Inada has deliberately carried out illegal operations at the Carnagee mine site, what steps will you take to make sure such blatant disrespect to your office does not happen again?'

'My department will look into the allegations, and if we discover any substance to them, we will act accordingly.'

'How will you act? What kind of penalty will you impose?'

'That depends on the substance of the allegations. But I will say this.'

Inada won its appeal today, so it can drill bores legally.'

'Well, I'm sure your husband will be very relieved.'

'We're all very relieved.'

Davion Hawe looked for any opportunity to put nails in Inada's mine project coffin. He asked a question in Parliament that made visible the elephant in the chamber. Addressing the House of Reps, he said, 'Am I the only person here to see a conflict of interest concerning Rhianna Walcott as our Coordinator General and her husband as the new Inada mine manager?'

Davion felt the mental arrows hitting his armour from the LNP side of the chamber. Thoroughly enjoying himself, he continued, 'Only recently we have seen an example of this conflict of interest when Inada, despite drilling illegally on its Jericho Basin site, lied about it on the ABC. I find it strange that the Coordinator General never mentioned any of this during Inada's DA appeal. This

shows a clear case of conflict of interest which, for the honour and integrity of this house, needs to be addressed. Mrs Walcott should resign her position right away to avoid a scandal and restore credibility to the Queensland Department of State Development.'

The House erupted in an uproar! But nobody wanted to defend the indefensible, except Sinclair George, who felt he had to comment. Sinclair stood up. Puffing out his chest, he said, 'Honourable members. It comes of no surprise to me that our Green member has got his wires crossed. Mrs Walcott was employed as Coordinator General prior to her husband becoming Inada's mine manager. Even so, it could be argued that this does represent an apparent conflict of interest. Now, if our Green friend had spent his time reading the Code of Conduct, instead of snorkelling in the Reef, he might have noticed that having a conflict of interest is not considered misconduct or a breach of the Code of Conduct.' He paused, waiting for the House to settle. 'The important thing here is being open about the conflict of interest. How it is managed to ensure that it's resolved in the public interest. Therefore I think the Coordinator General should come before the House and put this matter straight so we can get on with more important business.'

Cheers from the LNP.

Davion rose to rebut. 'Thank you to the honourable member for pointing that out. I am very interested to hear what the Coordinator General has to say about not giving evidence against Inada during the mining giants appeal.'

The Endangered Species Act is the strongest and most effective tool we have to repair the environmental harm that is causing a species to decline.

Norm Dicks

Chapter 4

With his pale skin and black hair, political cartoonists drew the Queensland Premier as a vampire. He certainly liked to get his teeth into state development projects, such as the Inada mine, the subject he was discussing in a private meeting with Sinclair George.

The Deputy Premier said, 'The Carnagee mine is our biggest and most courageous project, Mason. So we're bound to have a few hiccups along the way.'

Mason responded, 'Yes of course, but my leadership is on the line if it blows up in our face.'

'Relax, it's all under control. We've sorted out that little business with the drilling, and it's all on track.'

Mason looked at the Coordinator Generals report. 'Inada still needs finance.'

'That's to be expected with a huge 21.7 billion dollar investment.'

'Have we given Inada a deadline in which to raise funds?'

'What good would that do?' They have leased the land for 25 years.'

Mason shook his head.

Sinclair buoyed, said, 'Inada's Carnagee Coal mine will comprise six open-cut pits and up to five underground mines, to supply Indian power plants with enough coal to generate electricity for up to 100 million people. You've seen the figures. The royalties from the project alone will be enough to put us in the black.'

Mason smiled for the first time at the meeting. 'Yes, I guess you're right. We just have to make sure they stick to the agreement.'

Sinclair said, 'Talking of the Inada investment, Simon Felix wants to meet you.'

'Felix. What does he want?'

'I don't know. We just bumped into each other at the club the other day.'

'I'll get Kate to put it in my diary.'

'He'll be at the club today, at 1 o'clock.'

'Why can't you deal with it, Sinclair?'

'He expressly asked for you.'

Green Alert Australia was not just an organisation. Over the years, quietly in the background, it evolved into something of a lifestyle. Its members came from all walks of life and orientations. What made Green Alert different to other environmental organisations, is that it had no membership, as such. Alfonso Fernley, a veteran green activist, came up with the concept that anybody who wished to be part of Green Alert's concerted effort to save the natural environment for future generations, automatically became part of the movement. This intelligent approach stopped any government agencies from keeping tabs on the Green Alert database. For the last ten years, GA was able to lead the most innovative environmental actions. Most GA communication took place on social media. So whenever a green alert flag went up, people could rally around to fight for that particular cause. The Inada mine was such a cause.

Alfonso Fernley lived on Barker Road just outside Aldgate, in the picturesque Adelaide Hills. He and Ida had lived in their timber stilt home since they had built it ten years ago. He was in the middle of a Skype session with Michael Burrugoo. He looked at the bearded Kimala elder. 'So how are you guys holding out, bro?'

'Now that Inada has the green light to build their mine without our permission, we're building our case for the Land Rights Court. So we're busy with fund-raisers and collecting donations for our fighting fund.'

'Yeah. Look the reason I called is that we can mobilise through our networks and get some boots on the ground up there if that'd be a help.'

'Bro, dollars in the bank would be better. Doing fund-raisers down there would be the best help you guys can offer. And it keeps the issue alive. What do you reckon?'

'Mate, we do what we always do. Put it out there and test the response. What would be a huge help though is if you send me a run-down on your fund-raising methods and the message you want to get across.'

Michael sighed, 'This is going to be the mother of all land rights battles. And we'll see it through to the bitter end.'

'You guys are really courageous taking on the Government funded and supported coal mine project.'

'What else can we do when we're fighting for our rights to our country, bro?'

'Yeah, well all the best to you guys.'

'Knowing Green Alert is supporting us means a lot, man.'

'You're welcome, bro. We'll, do what we can at this end. Stay strong brother.'

Alfonso closed the lid of his tablet and looked at Ida. He loved her expressive brown eyes. He knew what she was about to say, but he let her say it anyway.

'Al, we have to be careful how we approach this.'

'I know that, Ida. But I want to let the Kimala and Jinnamoora Council know we are solidly behind them.'

'You know what environmentalists are like. We all have our pet things to fight for. We can't assume our whole non-membership will jump on board the "Stop Inada" train.'

'OK, we could be bold and do something we've never done before.'

Ida stared at Al, 'And what would that be?'

'We hold an online referendum. Anyone who wants to actively support the anti-Inada protests just answers yes or no.'

Ida shook her head. 'That's far too confronting. Why not just say, if you want to support the K&J people in their struggle against the mining giant Inada, organise fund-raisers, in your communities?'

Al jumped up and gave Ida a big hug. 'You're a fucking genius as usual.'

August 2015

The 7:30 Report interviewer said, 'The approval of Inada's Carnagee coal mine in central Queensland has been set aside by the Federal Court because of a bureaucratic bungle over two vulnerable species - the yakka skink and the ornamental snake. An Australian court has revoked the government's environmental approval for one of the world's biggest coal mines under construction in Australia after environmental legal centre EDO Queensland, representing the Mackay Conservation Group, challenged the consent given by Environment Minister Gregory Hunter.'

With me tonight I have Professor Murray an environmental scientist who is going to tell us about these two reptiles. 'Professor, why are these two species so important that they are holding up the Carnagee mine construction?'

Eduardo Murray, a picture of innocence, smiled, 'The Mackay Conservation Group brought it to my notice that they had launched a challenge to the mine project earlier in the year over the presence of a vulnerable species. Namely the yakka skink, a secretive animal that's active during the day. It grows up to 40 centimetres in length and has a thick tail. With a reddish-brown body, It has broad, dark brown to black stripes that extend from the back side of the neck to the tail; its survival is threatened by land clearing activities and mining.'

The interviewer could have sworn a little furry head had popped out

of the professor's breast pocket. He tried ignoring it. 'And what about the other species, professor?' he asked.

'The other endangered species which the Inada project harms is the brown coloured ornamental snake which has a stout body and grows to a length of 50 cm. A dangerous animal, the ornamental snake, can compress its body and can hold itself in curves. It can attack brutally if it feels threatened.'

At this juncture, Hamish made a bid for freedom and jumped onto the interviewer's lap. Eduardo grabbed the little fellow and popped him back into his pocket before he escaped into the studio. The interviewer regained his calm. 'If that happens again we could be looking at another endangered species.'

Gregory Hunter stormed into the Coordinator General's office and tossed a newspaper, depicting a blown up picture of a reddish brown lizard on the front cover, onto her desk.

Rhianna Walcott was expecting the Federal Minister for the Environment's visit, but not such a dramatic entrance. 'Good morning, Minister.'

'There's nothing good about it at all,' he snarled. Pointing at the image of the reptile, he said, 'I've never heard of a bloody yakka skink. And now the Mackay Conservation Group and some smart arse professor claim it's a vulnerable species that just happens to live on the Inada mine site.'

Rhianna's skin tone matched her pearly white teeth. 'Tell me this is just a bad dream!'

'It's no dream I can assure you. And you are going to deal with this nonsense so we can keep this project on track.'

'I don't understand it, Minister. We included any vulnerable animals in the report.'

'Yes, but the data about this was never sent to my department.'

Rhianna Walcott stared at Gregory, wide-eyed and mouth open. 'Oh shit! How did that oversight happen?'

'Incompetence in your State Development Department, perhaps. All I know is that documents were not presented by your Department before we finalised the approval. It's created a technical legal vulnerability that you need to address right now.'

'I'll get right onto it, Minister.'

Davion Hawe said, in an ABC Radio interview, 'If it was not for the Mackay Conservation Group's diligence the State Department's 'oversight' may never have been discovered.'

The journalist speaking with the Green politician, said, 'Well it's good for the two vulnerable animals but not so for the delay in billions of dollars in investments and thousands of jobs.'

'Well, that's down to incompetence in the LNP's State Department.'

The interviewer looked at the Greens MP. 'Now the oversight has been addressed Inada's spokesperson said the company is confident all imposed conditions on the existing approval have been covered.'

Davion huffed, 'That may well be the case, but it does not address returning clean groundwater back to the Great Artesian Basin,'

Sinclair George sat opposite Michael Rockman as they dined at

Tattersall's Club in Brisbane. Sinclair, a long time member of the conservative establishment, popped in for a meal whenever time permitted. Or, as on this occasion, dine on expenses with a colleague, who in this case, was Michael Rockman. As they ate, in the tastefully designed Art Deco Dining Room Rockman, the Queensland Resources Council chief executive spoke between mouthfuls of trout and salad, 'It's preposterous that Walcott's technical, administrative hitch could hold up billions of dollars in investment and thousands of desperately needed jobs.'

Sinclair said, 'Yes' it's an unfortunate hold up, but Gregory assures me that Mrs Walcott is on top of it.'

Rockman looked straight at the Deputy Premier. 'The great irony of this is that Gregory included the two species, a skink and a snake, as a condition of his approval for the mine, but on some technical basis he can't demonstrate that all the right documents were in front of him at the time.'

'Well let's hope the court's irrational decision won't delay the project much longer.'

'Sinclair, I'm extremely disappointed this has happened,' Michael said, shaking his head. He added,

'Are you sure that Mrs Walcott is up to the task?'

'It's the only blot in her copybook as far as I know.'

'Well, we can't afford another technical error.'

'I understand that, but she is good at her job.'

Michael frowned a little. 'OK, Sinclair, if you're prepared to vouch

for her, she gets another chance. But if she stuffs up again, it'll be on your head.'

Sinclair had been waiting his turn. 'Now, Michael, I have a question for you.'

Michael sipped an excellent red and said, 'Ask away.'

'Will Inada's mine really provide 10,000 Australian jobs?'

Michael was not surprised at the question. There had been considerable debate in parliament and the media about Inada's projection of 10,000 jobs. 'The two main figures quoted are 10,000 or 1,464.'

'There's a vast difference between those two numbers. So where does the Queensland Resources Council sit on this issue?'

Rockman began feeling a little uncomfortable. 'I have spoken with the Federal Member for the region, Geoff Christian, and we discussed the various estimates of just how many jobs will be created. His take is that the vast Green Alert network and the biased leftist ABC have perpetuated the lie that the Inada project will only net 1,464 jobs. While it's true that the mine alone will directly employ approximately 1,464 workers during its first phase, this figure doesn't include workers needed for the construction phase, workers needed for construction and operation of the railway line from Alpha to Bowman or workers needed for the expansion of the port of Bishop Point. Nor does it include the indirect jobs that will flow on from this multi-billion dollar investment. From all this Inada came up with the 10,000 jobs figure. It's a number they're sticking with despite the extreme Greenie lies.'

When Davion Hawe was asked, by an ABC reporter about the Greens take on the Inada job numbers debacle. He said, 'In my view, the debate over Inada's jobs claims is not important. It's pointless going on about how many jobs this project will or won't create because the project isn't viable and is unlikely to proceed. So this point is largely irrelevant.'

Approval of Inada's \$16 billion Carmichael coal mine in <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-05/federal-court-overturms-approval-of-Inadas-carmichael-coal-mine/6673734>

Ornamental snake (Department of Environment and Science).
https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals-az/ornamental_snake.html

Fact check: Will Inada's coal mine really boost employment
<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/business-spectator/news-story/fact-check-will-Inadas-coal-mine-really-boost-employment-by-10000-jobs/903c1932738b1d1a1763c74e45f4d7c7>

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

Chapter 5

Davion Hawe was one of a hundred and fifty protesters who gathered on the steps outside Inada's head office in Brisbane, where he spoke out about the coal mining projects planned for the Jericho Basin and Bishop Point. Aboriginal elder, Marge Parry, who had helped organise the protest, hand-delivered over 2000 personal messages from concerned people, opposing the Carnagee mine project.

Police began to gather around the protesters, but the rally remained peaceful. Instead of loud, angry chants, the anti-mine attendees followed the organisers' wishes, expressing their views creatively with written messages on orange cor flutes and other materials. They held up these heartfelt messages when the media turned up to film the event.

Following the protest, in another, on-air interview, Davion Hawe said, 'Rather than screaming and ranting, our protest was peaceful. This is the most effective way to get our message heard.'

The interviewer said, 'What do you hope to achieve by this protest?'

'These proposed coal mines will be the largest of their kind in the world, at a time when many nations are turning away from coal-fired power stations. To answer your question, we are helping everyone who cares about our country to become aware of how these mines will devastate the environment and destroy sacred indigenous sites. This ill-conceived Inada project will also cause irreparable damage to the Great Barrier Reef, one of the natural wonders of the world. This will also have a devastating effect on tourism, a huge money earner for Queensland. '

'Davion, do you think the Inada mine is the biggest threat to the health of the Reef?'

'Climate change and industrialisation are certainly the greatest threats facing our Reef.'

'But surely, on the upside, Inada is going to provide huge employment and economic benefits to Australia.'

Davion responded, 'Inada has time and time again overstated the economic growth of this project and exaggerated job figures by up to 80 per cent.'

Mrs Toni Williamson of 'Reef Protectors', speaking with an ABC journalist at the rally, said, 'We have tried to get a meeting with someone from Inada, but they have not even responded to give us a chance to discuss our concerns.'

'Why do you think the mining company ignores your request?'

'Because Inada has scant regard for our environment and Indigenous native rights.'

'Will you continue to seek an audience with Inada, Ms Williamson?'

'No, I don't think there is any point. But I have this message for

Inada. Reef Protectors will not be deterred. Right across Australia communities are beginning to stand up and take action against this disastrous mining project.'

November 2015

Campbell Rendall was about to leave his office to get some lunch when he received an odd phone call.

The man at the other end introduced himself as Jeyakumar Kanajara. He said, 'I am calling about the Inada mine.'

Campbell's ears pricked up. His grumbling gut would have to wait. 'What do you know about the copper mine, Mr?'

'Call me Jeya. I am a Zambian Migrant, and I live in Sydney.'

'What has that got to do with the mine, Jeya?'

The other day on the news I heard a name I recognise from when I live in Zambia. It was Adrian, the manager of the Inada mine.'

'The manager of the Carnagee mine!'

'He was also CEO of Konkola Copper Mines when I worked there.'

'So he worked in mining in Africa. Why would that interest me?'

'Because there was big trouble when poison from the mine got into the Zambia River.'

Campbell's interest piqued. 'And this was while Adrian Walcott was the CEO of the mines?'

'Yes. That is so.'

Campbell scratched his head. 'I can't get involved, Jeya, but I can ring somebody who may be interested in meeting you. Give me your phone number, and I'll ring you back.'

Campbell stood up and stretched to relieve stiffness in his lower back. He picked up his mobile and rang Michael Burradoo's, contact number. 'Hi, Mike, Campbell here. Something has just cropped up to do with Inada that might get you a heap of media coverage.'

Michael perked up. 'What are you talking about, bro?'

'I was just talking to a man who worked in a copper mine in Zambia. The boss was our good friend Adrian Walcott.'

'So what's that got to do with us and our fight?'

'Walcott was there when a lot of poisonous crap leaked into the Zambia River.'

Now, Michael was getting it. 'So, what happened. Was there an enquiry?'

'I never got that far with Jeya - that's what he likes to be called. I've got his contact details if you want to give him a ring.'

Michael rang Jeya that evening and was interested in what he had to say. As Jeya could not get time off from work, Michael agreed to meet him before work in Mt Druitt at the Zambian's favourite cafe, Espresso Warriors, a friendly place with a surprising range of vegan and vegetarian food. Michael ordered the Vegetarian Warrior kale burger and a cappuccino for breakfast.

Jeya arrived and took a seat opposite Michael.

With introductions dealt with, Michael said, 'Have you brought the info with you?'

Jeya handed over a manila folder that contained many newspaper cuttings and other pieces of information.

Michael perused the collection, making notes on his phone from time to time.

... Zambian villagers are taking a multinational copper mining firm to court in the UK, accusing it of poisoning their water. The BBC's Nomsa Maseko visited the area which has allegedly been polluted.

Women, dressed in colourful sarongs and t-shirts, the women of Hippo Pool village collected their water on the banks of the Kafue River in Zambia's copper belt. At sunset, as the day cooled, the women carried their precious water in buckets on their heads as they walked back home.

They cooked with this water, cleaned with it, drank it and irrigated their farms with it. But a tragedy loomed!

The tragic story turned out to be the same in all Zambian villages that were near the river. When Jeya went home to Hippo Pool village, he could smell and even taste the pollution. Jeya visited the communities: Kakosa, Shimulala and Hellen where he found the Mushishima stream and the Kafue had become rivers of acid.

Michael looked up from his reading. 'And you have proof this was caused by the copper mine.'

Jeya took the folder and rummaged through the cuttings until he came to what he was looking for. He took the cutting out of the pile

and handed it to Michael. The newspaper report stated:

Leaked documents, that the BBC has seen, appear to show that Vedanta Resources - through its Zambian based Konkola Copper Mines (KCM) - have been spilling sulphuric acid and other toxic chemicals into the water courses.

Jeya said, 'I worked for 15 years with KCM, and I can't stay silent any longer.'

Michael closed the folder. 'Can I study these further?'

'Yes, you can have these copies. I hope you can get justice for the victims.'

Sometimes, Rhianna Walcott wished she had not signed off on the Inada Carnegie mine so quickly. But who could have foreseen the enormous public outcry in addition to the massive political campaign against it? The worst part was the multiple court cases, some of which had received substantial media coverage. Sinclair had told Rhianna to keep her head down and not to make any comments to the media. Rhianna felt out of her depth and thought the whole Inada business was too big to be handled at the state level.

She was sitting with Adrian relaxing by their palm shaded pool at their luxury home in Thunderbolt Drive. The Walcotts had lived in Oak Valley, on the outer fringe of Townsville, for 5 years since they got married. But with Adrian mostly absent, dealing with mine management business and Rhianna spending most of her time running the State Development Department in Brisbane, they seldom had time to do things together.

Adrian looked up from The Townsville Times. Turning to his wife,

as she lay beside him on a sun lounge recliner, he said, 'Another bloody court dispute over the Carnegie mine. Christ, trying to keep this project on course is like taking one step forward and two steps backward.'

Rhianna looked at her husband. She had never seen him so stressed. Which was why she had taken time off for a few days to be with him, so they could recharge their batteries. 'Yes dear, I know. Another damned case study.'

He looked at his tall, tanned wife lying there in her bathing suit. He had to stay in the shade. Ten minutes in the hot sun and his pale skin would be burning. He slapped on yet more sun block cream as he replied. 'Yes, and this latest study involves a major dispute in the Queensland Land Court, which means a judicial review challenge to the mine's approval in the bloody Supreme Court.'

'How is Inada coping with all these delays?' Rhianna asked.

'Mahatma Inada is coming here personally to try and clear up this fucking red tape nonsense so we can get on with the job.' Adrian went back to his paper. Then he said, 'That Green trouble maker has been spouting off to the media again.'

'Which Greenie is that dear?'

'The damned Hawe fellow, listen to this rubbish here in the paper. He frowned as he read:

The Greens MP has stated, in the Townsville Times, 'Due to its enormous scale, the Inada Carnagee mine impacts heavily on the local and regional environment.' He goes on to claim, ... 'the consequences of climate change, if the mine proceeds, will be dire for all Australians and is strongly opposed by conservationists.' He goes on to say, ...' that the campaign against Inada is the biggest environmental campaign seen in Australia since the Franklin campaign in the 1980s. Inada has become shorthand for are you serious about climate change?'

'He's always mouthing off about something, dear. He can't do much damage, but the Supreme Court "can". We need to focus on that.'

Just then Rhianna's phone rang. It was from Sinclair. She was needed back in Parliament, where another Inada crisis had hit, creating a shit storm in Canberra.

December, 2015

Gregory Hunter and Sinclair George were engaged in a private, heated conversation in the Environment Minister's office. 'Where the hell has that woman got to?' Gregory growled.

Sinclair, trying to cover for her, said, 'The flight probably got held up.'

The Federal Environment Minister snapped, 'Oh come on George. Private jets carrying senior ministers do not get held up.'

Just then Rhianna Walcott arrived.

Sinclair smiled at her. 'Glad you could make it. There's a bit of a problem we have to deal with.'

She looked from one man to the other. 'What problem is that?'

'First, my dear, this is Gregory Hunter,' Sinclair said, indicating the tall severe looking man.

Turning to Gregory, she said, 'Sorry to keep you waiting. The flight got delayed. So why have you summoned me to Canberra?'

Sinclair turned to the Coordinator general, 'Another Inada problem, I'm afraid.'

'Oh!'

Gregory said, 'My department's job is to see that Inada meets the highest environmental standards.'

'That goes without saying, Minister,' Rhianna huffed, annoyed.

Gregory continued un-fazed, 'Which means all measures must be approved before mining starts. Now that we have approved it we find that it could have been premature.'

Rhianna looked at the Environment Minister wide-eyed. 'What do you mean?'

'Didn't you see the ABC news last night, Mrs Walcott?'

'No. I try not to take notice of that leftist rubbish. What was on?'

'A bloody Zambian mine worker told the 7:30 Report that KCM and its parent Company Vedanta were being taken to the High Court in London.'

'Whatever for?' Rhianna asked, genuinely puzzled.

Villagers claim they were poisoned by toxic water caused by leakage from the company's huge Konkola open-pit copper mine. Local villagers claim that the contaminated water made them ill and devastated nearby farmland, for over 10 years from 2004.'

'So what has that got to do with me?' Rhianna snapped, puzzled.

'It turns out that Inada owned those mines.'

'Even so, that's history. It doesn't affect the contract we have with Inada.'

Gregory said, 'I haven't finished. It turns out that Adrian Walcott, Inada Australia's chief executive officer was in charge of the African copper mine when a flood of dangerous pollutants from the mine poured into the Zambian river.'

Rhianna looked as though she had a close encounter with a ghost. She stood staring at the minister, no words forthcoming.'

Sinclair guided her to a seat. 'I think you ought to sit down, Rhianna.'

She collapsed on the chair. She eventually said, 'Are you saying my husband ran a copper mine in Zambia?'

'That's exactly what I'm saying.'

'But he never told me any ...'

'It seems he left there under a bit of a cloud,' Sinclair said.

Gregory said, 'He'll have to resign of course.'

'Perhaps we should at least listen to what he has to say first,' pleaded Rhianna.

'Gregory rebutted, 'Listen to him! He'll probably be called as a material witness in London any time soon. We can't be associated with the poisoning of dozens of villagers. We have to be decisive and act quickly before this government is dragged into this sordid affair.'

Rhianna said, 'At least let me be the one to tell Adrian. I don't want him to hear it first on the news.'

Gregory tutted, 'This is one god-awful mess. Understand I have the power to suspend or revoke the Carnegie mine approval and strict penalties apply if there is a breach of the licence conditions.'

Sinclair said, 'We should be involved in the new mine manager selection, so we don't have to deal with this crap again.'

But the crap in question was not over. Having received his wife's call, Adrian contacted the ABC and arranged with the national broadcaster to go on the 7:30 Report to give his version of the story.

The ABC Director of Current Affairs could not pass up such a coup. As the only TV news to host the interview, even the latest royal baby story took a back seat.

Facing his interviewer, Adrian expressed his usual haughty arrogance to mask his seething anger.

'Is it true that you were the CEO of the Konkola Copper Mines in Zambia before becoming Chief executive of Inada's Australian operations, Mr Walcott?'

'Yes, that is correct, although I did not know Vedanta Resources was owned by Inada.'

'If you had known would you have taken the job?'

'What, at KCM?'

'Yes.'

'I don't understand the context of the question,' Adrian said lightly

rubbing a scar on his forehead, an affectation when feeling nervous. Then he said, 'I had no reason not to take on the job of CEO.'

'I see. Now, did you disclose your role of CEO at KCM and the fact that under your watch KCM was charged with causing a huge pollution spill that saw a toxic brew of highly acidic, metal-laden discharge released into the Zambian Kafue River?'

'Yes but ...'

'Mr Walcott It is now revealed that KCM and its parent company Vedanta Resources are being taken to the High Court in London by Zambian locals who say pollution from the company's huge Konkola open-pit copper mine made them ill and devastated nearby farmland for over 10 years, from 2004.'

'Yes, but It wasn't my fault.'

'So why did you, the man driving Australia's biggest mining project, fail to disclose that a company you ran for ten years in Africa was guilty of serious environmental breaches, despite being asked to do so, in a letter from the Federal Environment Department.'

Adrian rubbed the scar again. 'I don't recall ever having received such a letter.'

'Well let me refresh your memory. The interviewer handed the mine manager a single sheet of paper.' Here, I have a copy of a letter from Gregory Hunter requesting information about the environmental history of executive officers.'

'Oh, that letter. Yes, I remember receiving a standard form letter, but ...'

'And did you include your employment with KCM in your reply?'

Adrian forced a smile. 'Obviously not otherwise it would be mentioned in my reply, which no doubt you also have a copy.'

'Why did you not include that pertinent information, Mr Walcott?'

'Because of a slight misunderstanding. I thought it only meant my environmental history in Australia.'

'Mr Walcott, let me take you back to the form letter you received. The letter asked you to provide information about any executive office you have held that has been the subject of any civil or criminal penalties or compliance-related findings, for breaches of, or non-compliance with environmental laws and information about your roles both in Australia and in other countries.' So where is the slight misunderstanding?'

Adrian sat there open-mouthed. He rubbed vigorously at the scar. In a weak defence, he uttered, 'KCM was not subject to any prosecution while I ran the mine.' And I would like it put on record that I informed Vedanta on more than one occasion that some of the old pipes were leaking and needed to be replaced.'

'Mr Walcott, the information was needed for the Environment Minister's assessment of the Carnegie mine. Yet there was no mention of it in Inada's Land Court appeal. So let me ask you this. Did Inada tell you not to disclose your role with KCM?'

Adrian reddened. If he said no, he would have to take the fall

himself. If he said yes, Inada would deny it and cover their ass by sacking him. Either way, Adrian knew he was screwed. The clever ABC bastard had forced him into a corner. Visibly uncomfortable he mumbled. 'It appears Inada may have made a mistake in failing to disclose that it previously owned a polluting mine.'

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck! Gregory Hunter snarled as he listened, horrified to the 7:30 report. Fucking Walcott had done more damage to the Carnegie mining project than all the environment groups combined. Gregory kicked himself for not reading the riot act to Walcott himself.

Five minutes later he received a call from the Prime Minister.

'Gregory, I told you to get rid of Walcott quickly and quietly. So what the fuck is he doing spouting off on the fucking ABC?'

'I had no idea he would ...'

'Well, it's your fucking job to have an idea. Now get this shit sorted so that neither Inada and my government cop the flak from this unmitigated fucking disaster.'

'Prime Minister, with the court case against KCM and Vedanta in England and the revelation that Inada owned Vedanta I don't see how Inada can be left out of this.'

'Well you find a fucking way, or I'll be looking for a new Environment Minister.'

Sinclair George was awoken from sleep by the strains of the national anthem coming from his phone. Grabbing it, he snapped, 'Yes.'

'This is Gregory Hunter. Sorry about the late call but all kinds of shit have hit the proverbial. Did you see the 7:30 report tonight?'

'Yes. How the hell was that allowed to happen?'

'Look, we have to extricate ourselves from this mess, which means you have to clean your house as well.'

'I will speak with Mason about it tomorrow, Minister.'

'Never mind about that. You have to get rid of the Walcott woman.'

'Get rid of her! I don't understand.'

'Do I really have to spell it out. Rhianna and her husband are a fucking team. His dirtied copybook affects her, and she affects us.'

'Oh, I see what you mean. But as Mrs Walcott had nothing to do ...'

'I don't give a flying fuck about your feelings about her. Ditch her and do it right away. Have you got it?'

'Yes, Minister.'

Handwritten pledges against Inada handed in to mining <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-07-16/hundreds-turn-out-to-protest-against-Inada-in-brisbane/6625968>

Carmichael Coal ("Inada") Mine cases in the Federal Court. <http://envlaw.com.au/carmichael-coal-mine-federal-court/>

Sooner or later, we will have to recognise that the Earth has rights, too, to live without pollution. What mankind must know is that human beings cannot live without Mother Earth, but the planet can live without humans.

Evo Morales

Chapter 6

Davion Hawe may have been a lone voice in the wilderness of the Queensland Parliament, but it was becoming louder all the time. As a regular Greens spokesperson on the ABC, he had been invited to speak out about Inada in an ABC, exclusive, 7:30 Report, called "Big Coal".

Standing over six feet lightly built and heavily tanned, Davion spoke convincingly about the massive Carnagee Mine project but from an ethical, not environmental standpoint. Although he would argue they were one and the same. He said, 'By not disclosing the water-polluting incident caused by Vedanta, an Inada subsidiary, to the Environment Minister, in the Inada mine application, the Indian mining giant is in breach of contract. And it is Gregory Hunter's job to revoke the mining licence. But this has not happened, and it leaves one wondering what other breaches the Federal Government is going to gloss over?'

The interviewer said, 'Surely we should wait until after the verdict of the case against Vedanta in England before we point the finger at Inada.'

'That really has nothing to do with it. By not disclosing its connection with Vedanta. Inada is, once more, in breach of contract.'

'It could be argued that the Inada Carnagee mine is so important for the Australian economy and jobs that there needs to be a little leeway here.'

'Then what is the point of having all these conditions that Gregory Hunter wrote into the contract with Inada if they are not worth the paper they are written on?'

Like many Queensland graziers, Ossie McCarthy lost over half of his annual income from the station due to the severe drought that had been going on for over seven hard years. He was forced to lay off some of his cow hands. And, apart from the fact most of his stock had died from dehydration leaving only ten thousand head of cattle, he had less than half his potential annual water supply.

So it made his blood boil when he thought of Inada being given 12.5 billion litres of water a year from the Suttor River. Ossie could not believe the Government would be so stupid. 12.5 billion litres was as much as that used by all the local farmers and graziers combined. And they had to pay for their water. Inada was becoming a ravenous monster that could do anything it liked.

Ossie had been funding Green Alert for many years. But now, the once active group had become just a bunch of sympathetic friends on Facebook, it had no teeth. The passive stance had not worked. If he was to stop the insidious mine, he had to become more radical. But how? That was the question.

Michael Burrigoo headed the impressive group of traditional owners attending the Federal Court to hear their case against Inada.

The mining giant was trying to get the Queensland Government to permanently extinguish their native title rights before they took their case to the High Court. But the Federal Court decision upheld Inada's Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with the Kimala and Jinnamoora people.

This outrageous decision paved the way for the State Government to cancel all native title over the mine site. In his 91 page judgement, Justice John Reeves claimed none of the grounds of the challenge by the mine opponents had any merit. Michael told a reporter outside the court, 'If Inada gains freehold over the site the K & J could never reclaim native title rights in the future, regardless of whether or not the controversial mine project goes ahead.'

The reporter asked, 'So what do you think of Justice Reeves decision.'

Michael snapped, 'Even you must see that is a stupid question. Do I look like I'm doing cartwheels?'

The reporter, unperturbed, said, 'What's your next move?'

'All I'm saying is we respect the ruling but maintain our position that the ILUA is bogus.'

'What do you mean by bogus?'

'Inada has split the traditional owners and set out to destroy the will of our people. The court process is weighted against us, and it has turned this bloody circus into a painful process for my people and me.'

Campbell Rendall, who was also present at the court case, was

stopped on the way to his car. A young woman journalist said, 'Mr Rendall, now that Inada has their ILUA what else can you do?'

Campbell turned to the woman. 'The ILUA was a critical step for Inada to gain finance, as leading global financiers do not fund resource projects without traditional owner consent.' So, the court's ruling was not unexpected.'

'So now what will you do?'

'We will look at filing an appeal in the next few weeks. Now I really must be going.'

On the 7:30 report that night Campbell Rendall told the interviewer. 'Three weeks before the court finding the K & J tribal council had written to Mason Land, Sinclair George and Joseph Fox pleading with the Queensland Government not to rush any decision to hand over their property rights to Inada ahead of a possible High Court challenge to the Federal Court ruling.'

'How did that go for you?'

Campbell said, 'It was a tragedy for the government to wipe out the native title in favour of Inada.'

'What did you expect?'

'Well, after the Queensland Government surprisingly stopped Inada dredging the reef before they had the money, we thought there might be a chance they would protect the rights to our land.'

'Well, as we now know that did not happen. So what is your next move?'

'We are calling on the United Nations to observe what is happening here.'

'How do you think the government will react to you involving the UN.'

'Our government has to honour our human rights and leave us to protect our country, And it needs to chart a better future than coal mining.'

The interviewer asked, 'Isn't it true, Campbell, that K & J are split on Inada, with opposing groups holding rival authorisation meetings to claim or reject support for a deal with the Indian mining firm?'

'While that is correct the K & J native title representatives, which initially approved the ILUA with

a 7 to 5 majority, is now split 6-6.'

'When did the vote become even?'

After Joshua Price withdrew his support for the mine. He alleged that Inada paid him and others to recruit mine supporters, including Indigenous people outside the K & J territory, with no link to the mine site.'

'Yet Inada and its K&J supporters insist the process was legitimate?'

'I'm not even going to respond to that. What I will say is the K & J letter to the State Government warned there was a substantial risk of injustice in the face of a project that appears to have little real prospects of going ahead. Therefore it would be unfair and unreasonable to act prematurely to extinguish K & J native title by any means until the litigation is fully completed.'

'Well, the letter is academic now.'

Campbell argued, 'Not necessarily. I have made it known to the indigenous clans involved that despite the court ruling the Government is under no obligation to extinguish native title by granting freehold to Inada. We shall emphasise this point to the UN when they come here to scrutinise the process.'

The ABC, to show fairness, in a separate interview, invited Joan Kennedy, head of Inada's legal team, on the show.

The interviewer said, 'Ms Kennedy, the K & J people claim that any pressure from Inada to act upon the ILUA should be resisted. Extinguishment of native title involves the exercise of the Government's statutory discretions, which can't be imposed in advance of a fair and unbiased assessment by the UN. What's your response to this?'

'These are just delaying tactics on behalf of the K & J trouble makers,'

'I see. Well, Mr Rendall also said the Government should also wait for Inada to lock in finance, pay rehabilitation bonds in full, sign royalty agreements with the state and get approval for groundwater plans before acting on the ILUA.'

'That has already been agreed upon.' Ms Kennedy smiled, 'Let me emphasise, Inada is following an open and transparent legal process.'

'I see. Then, why does Queensland's Environment Minister Leanne Leveridge have to force Inada to identify the source of the Yangingoo Springs?'

Ms Kennedy smiled, 'I don't know. You tell me.'

'The ABC has previously reported that scientists had concerns that the springs, a key cultural heritage site for the K & J people could run dry under Inada's water extraction plans.'

Joan Kennedy smiled sweetly, 'We will work with the K & J people on this.'

'I have another question for you. 'Does Inada expect the Government to extinguish native title?'

'First, the decision upheld by the ILUA was challenged by a minority group of K & J people.'

'Yes, but that does not answer my question.'

'We look forward to continuing working with the State Government and the traditional owners to take the next steps to finalise land tenure for our project.'

'Ms Kennedy, you have still avoided answering my question. Does Inada expect the Government to extinguish native title?'

'We will work with the K & J people under the guidance of the ILUA while respecting the rights, history, future intentions and requests of the traditional owners.'

'Thank you, Ms Kennedy.'

Joan was glad to leave the studio that night. As she stepped into her limo, she sighed with relief at her realisation that somehow she had dodged the interviewer's bullet.

Inada still has a long march ahead before its Carmichael <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/Inada-still-has-a-long-march-ahead-before-its-carmichael-coal-mine-opens-20190410-p51cug.html>

Nick Tsagaris – Inada Indigenous Challenge Dismissed By <https://www.nicktsagaris.com/nick-tsagaris-Inada-indigenous-challenge-dismissed-by-federal-court-government-could-cancel-mine-native-title/>

Climate change is a terrible problem, and it absolutely needs to be solved. It deserves to be a huge priority.

Bill Gates

Chapter 7

Ossie McCarthy had other businesses, all of which were related to the meat industry. There was McCarthy's Processed Meats, McCarthy's Meat works and McCarthy's Meat Pies. But as these industries all relied on the raw product, they were all hit hard by the drought and Inada's water extraction. Worried about his and his neighbours' future, Ossie called a Jericho Basin Farmers Action Group committee meeting to deal with their growing concerns.

Lance Craig, a third generation station owner in his mid-thirties, said, 'No rain for six years, then, when it did come two weeks back it was too much, too fast.'

'Yeah, what fucking irony,' Geoff Bickles said, 'All ready weakened starving cattle forced up to fence lines leaving me to deal with hundreds more fucking carcasses.'

Ossie said, 'Yes, it's been a heart-breaking business. But we're here to focus on what we can do to stop this fucking Carnagee mine going ahead.'

'Sammy Wallington, a fifth generation, 50-year-old grazier in the basin, said, 'The government doesn't give a fuck about us farmers. We should drop a few stinking carcasses on their doorstep. That would get the drongos' attention.'

One or two of the graziers showed amusement at the frivolous suggestion.

Ossie said, 'Now wait a minute. That's actually not a bad idea.'

Sammy reacted, 'Oh yeah, And they're not going to see us unloading smelly rotten carcasses?'

'We use refrigerated trucks, and we drop them off on the lawn in front of Parliament House in the dead of night,' Ossie argued.

'And who's going to do this?' Bickles queried.

Wallington said, 'A convoy of refrigeration trucks will be too obvious. One semi could carry enough carcasses to make the point.'

Ossie agreed, 'One of my Maxi-Cube Advance freezer vans should do the trick.'

Wallington, amazed at the response to his cynical idea, said, 'First off, we need as much media

publicity about our gripes as possible.'

Bickles, a little slow on the uptake at times, said, 'If we let them know what we're going to do they'll be waiting for us.'

'Fuck, no! We don't tell them about that.' Ossie said, 'We just hit the media with our hardship story, and the fucking Inada proposed water license. So when the carcasses hit the grass, the point will become obvious to the pricks running the show in Canberra.'

'Forget the grass. Dump the dead cattle on the steps, so the bastards have to climb over them,' Craig suggested.

Bickles looked worried, 'And what will the security guards be doing while we're dropping our load? There will be security cameras all

over the place.'

Ossie grinned, 'There are no cameras on the lawn, but even there we may be spotted. We have to work in silence.'

'What about the noise of the forklift?' Wallington asked.

'Forklift! What fucking forklift?' Ossie said.

'The one we need to lift the frozen carcasses from the truck. I'm not humping rotting fucking cow carcasses. Not with my back,' Sammy stated, vehemently.

Ossie had not thought of that. 'Isn't there something else we can use?' he asked.

The farmers wore blank faces.

Ossie beamed, 'Fuck it! We'll just use a tip truck.'

Sammy nodded, 'It'll be a hell of a lot quicker.'

'Yes, and a hell of a lot smellier,' Lance quipped.

'We cover the back with heavy-duty canvas,' Ossie said.

Sammy beamed, 'We can drive up and leave them at the entrance like I suggested,'

Ossie nodded, 'It makes more sense now.'

Ossie took on the role of letting the Australian public know about the Jericho Basin farmer's plight. He got the ball rolling on the ABC news. A dramatic video introduction, showing the beef carcasses rotting in mud, was followed by the female journalist's presentation, in which she said, 'With me today I have Ossie McCarthy who owns the biggest cattle station in the Jericho Basin.' Turning to him, she added, 'What we have just seen is truly disturbing, Mr McCarthy.'

'Yes, these horrifying scenes are an everyday reality for the hard-pressed, drought-stricken farmers of Central Queensland.'

'I understand that Mr McCarthy, but what do you expect to achieve? After all, a drought is a natural occurrence.'

'Yes, of course. But even more disturbing is the fact that our irresponsible government is looking at allowing Inada, with its proposed mega coal mine to draw some 12.5 billion litres of groundwater from the Great Artesian Basin, free of charge. While us station owners have to pay through the nose for ours. This stinks of double standards.'

'Are you complaining because about the price of water licences? Or are you concerned that taking

another 12.5 billion from the natural water supply is unsustainable?'

'Both really. We certainly need tighter regulation of mining and exploration in the basin. Yet, we see a dramatic increase in exploration and drilling, particularly with the Inada coal mine.'

'Aren't you being a little bit over concerned, Mr McCarthy. The GAB lies under one-fifth of Australia and is estimated to hold 65 billion mega litres of water. In comparison, Inada's 12.5 billion litres seems a drop in the underground ocean.'

'Oh, the experts tell us it's all under control, but we don't have enough evidence to satisfy ourselves that this over-development, together with all the mining projects in the basin, won't jeopardise the GAB in certain areas, forever. The GAB is a huge natural asset that may be threatened by over-development in gas, oil and coal. But it's not just about how much water is available from the GAB. Some of us farmers are the fifth generation, and yet we are seeing new boys on the block, like Inada, given preferential treatment when it comes to water licences. On the one hand, a Jericho Basin grazier has been denied access to the river system while Inada plans on drawing 12.5 billion litres of water from the Suttor River each year. Where's the justice in that?'

The journalist said, 'Thank you, Mr McCarthy, and we all hope the drought breaks soon.'

January 2016

Sinclair George looked up from the document, a worried frown on his face. 'Where did you get this?'

Mason Land, snarled, 'Bloody FOI.'

'So, who accessed this from Freedom of Information, Mason?'

'Sylvie Lefèvre.'

Sinclair exhaled loudly. 'Why is the Treasury looking into this?'

Mason pointed at the file. 'You read it yourself. The top officials, even Lefèvre, have grave doubts about Inada's capacity to complete its Carnagee coal mine project.'

'If this shit got out it could derail the whole fucking project!'

'It's certainly making potential investors and creditors very nervous.'

So we have to show we have great confidence the mine and support it to the hilt.'

Sinclair frowned, 'How?'

'That's why I summoned you here to pick your brains.'

'Bloody hell, Mason, I'm beginning to get cold feet myself.'

Mason stared at his deputy. 'That's not an option. Too much is riding on this.' He sighed heavily, 'I'm

meeting with Herve Dupont later. But we have to present at least the semblance of a plan.'

'Why the ATO?'

'What do you think about promising Inada taxpayer funds to help establish the mine?'

'And you are seriously contemplating this?'

Mason sat back and spread his hands. 'It will show our financial commitment.'

Sinclair shook his head, despondently. 'It's not a viable proposition. Not while Inada is seeking

hundreds of millions of public money dollars to help construct a rail line from the mine to its coal terminals.'

Mason said, 'What if we could generate a loan?'

'It would show the banks we're serious about the mine's success.'

The Premier said, 'Inada has invited me to India.'

'Excellent, Mason. it will send the right message to potential investors.'

That night on the news, Premier Land said, 'The Carnagee mine is one of the minor miracles of our time. Our coal can improve the lives of 100 million Indians. It just goes to show what good free trade can do for the whole world.'

The interviewer said, 'Is there any truth in the rumour that your government is going to fund the Inada project with a tax-funded loan?'

Mason smiled. 'At the moment everything is on the table. I will be discussing all options to do with this golden opportunity with Mahatma Inada when I visit him in India next month.'

Climate change is the environmental challenge of this generation, and it is imperative that we act before it's too late.

John Delaney

Chapter 8

A series of events brought things to a head. It was like one of those words games where love becomes hate by changing one letter at a time. It all started with Davion Hawe, whose administrative duties had kept him from checking the state of the Reef. So, as soon as he had the time, Davion was off to the beach. But his usual exuberance while snorkelling gave way to depression. The Great Barrier Reef was being transformed at such a rapid rate, it pained Davion to swim there. The beautiful coral colours had faded to ghostly white as back-to-back bleaching events left vast areas of the reef a corpse. The poor water quality, cyclones and climate change had all further stressed the Reef. As he swam around, it seemed like a different Reef to the one he had grown up with and loved. At least two-thirds of the Great Coral Reef was devastated by bleaching. It was all too heartbreaking. He could hardly bear visiting the Reef any more.

Davion's deep sadness gave way to anger. The Queensland Government was supposed to have protected the Reef. But they had done nothing. Worse than nothing! They openly encouraged companies like Inada to engage in industrial practices that lead to further Reef destruction.

Davion went back to Townsville to drown his sorrows in a beer or three. He was walking along the Strand Esplanade when he bumped into someone he'd known in the Green Party many years before. He saw the man from the back. But the tall man with a warrior's build still had his elbow length frizzy black hair. Davion said, 'Alfonso.'

Alfonso looked around and spotted the familiar tall man with light grey eyes. "Is that you, Davo?"

'Yes mate. What brings you here?'

'I was about to ask you the same question.'

Davion said, 'I came up to visit the Reef.'

Alfonso saw tears glistening in his friend's eye. 'It's a fucking disgrace.'

'Tell me about it. So what's your excuse, mate?'

'Oh, I'm here to meet with a major Green Alert sponsor.'

'I could do with one of those for the Reef.' Then Davion said, 'How is he on the Reef issue?'

'We've never discussed it mate. But I can put in a good word for you.'

Davion said, 'Every green person I have met has their favourite thing to fix. Oh, they support several environmental issues, but they always have a pet project. So what's your sponsor got a bug up his arse about?'

'Water licenses. Inada's in particular.'

Davion grinned. 'So your man needs lots of water. I guess that he is a farmer. And if he's sponsoring you, he's a big wheel with a lot of influence.'

Alfonso stared at his friend. 'How the fuck do you know all that?'

'Elementary my dear Davo.'

They both laughed, which lightened the mood.

Alfonso said, 'I just need to make a call.'

'Go for it, mate.'

Al walked a short distance, so he was out of earshot. He pressed Ossie's contact. 'Ossie, it's Alfonso. He listened, then said, There's someone else with me. Davion Hawe. Have you heard of him?' A short pause then, 'Yes he is a good bloke. He's trying to save what's left of the Reef.' Another short pause. 'Yeah, I'll ask him.' Al cut off the call. He walked back to Davo. 'Have you heard of an Ossie McCarthy?'

'No. can't say I have.'

'Well, mate, you're about to.'

'Where is he then?'

'He's here mate, waiting for us at Molly Malone's.'

Who's she then?'

'Not she, mate. An Irish restaurant.'

Ossie McCarthy was born in Kerry, but his parents left Ireland for Australia when he was three. But the residue of his Celtic heritage made Irish ballads to his liking and Guinness to his taste. Molly Malone's offered both, which was why he was there, waiting for Alfonso and his mate. Ossie sipped his stout. The pour was a tad too heady, and there was an unusual after-taste from neglected beer line cleaning. But it was cold and very refreshing. The decor, with shamrock images around the place, made it unmistakably an Irish pub. However, it was a bit run down, possibly partly due to recent flooding, which had left a stale, mouldy smell. So Ossie opted for a shaded area outside to enjoy his beer.

Then his phone rang. 'Hi Lance, have you got that tipper sorted yet?'

'Yes mate, a 2003 Iveco Power Star 6700.'

'That should get you to Canberra OK.'

'Yeah, Ossie that's what I rang about, Craig and I reckon we should drop our cargo outside Queensland Parliament instead.'

'Well, it'll certainly make the journey shorter.'

'Have you any idea what those carcasses are going to smell like by the time we get to Canberra.'

'Yeah, I take your point. Look if you think Brisbane is better, I'll leave it up to you blokes.'

At that moment Ossie's guests arrived and Davion went off to order the drinks, while Alfonso caught up with the grazier.

Ossie greeted Al, and said, 'We've got to do something to make these bastards sit up and take notice.'

'Which particular bastards did you have in mind? There's so many to chose from?'

'Bastards like George Black who are giving away our precious fucking water to Inada.'

Al eye-balled Ossie, 'So what's the plan?'

'Have you spoken to that army friend of yours yet?'

'I haven't seen him for quite a while.'

'Do you still have his contact?'

'You're really serious about this then?'

'Desperate times, mate, call for desperate measures.'

If a man walks in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer. But if he spends his days as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making the earth bald before her time, he is deemed an industrious and enterprising citizen.

Henry David Thoreau

Chapter 9

It was a fifteen hour journey from Townsville to Brisbane. Both Sam and Lance had HGV licences so they took turns driving the Powerful 14 litre tipper, south. To pass the time they came up with messages they could leave the government. They had to make sure the politicians knew why a load of rotting cattle carcasses had landed on their doorstep. Sammy suggested, 'How about, 'A gift from the Jericho Basin.'

Lance said, 'I prefer something like, 'We have a beef with you.'

'No, mate. It has to be about the drought and Inada's free water license.'

Lance thought about it, then he suggested, 'OK, what about, 'No free water for Inada's Carnagee coal mine And so the ideas kept coming.

Sammy was the more cautious of the two drivers. He kept the Iveco 18 speed Road Ranger just under the speed limit. Lance was busy on his mobile, searching for vehicle inspection stations. The last thing the pair needed was government inspectors sniffing around the truck. So the intrepid pair

made detours where necessary to avoid any checkpoints. This of course added extra time to the journey but caution had to come first, so the delay it could not be helped.

They stopped for a break on the outskirts of Mackay, parking their tip truck as far away as they could from any other vehicles.

As the sun went down over another sizzling hot Queensland day, Sammy and Lance parked at a truck stop for the night. It had been a long and arduous day, but at least everything had gone according to plan. They broke out the camp stove and cooked up bacon and beans with bread rolls and Sam brewed some half decent coffee.

After they had knocked back a tinny or six of XXXX, Sammy watched as Lance grabbed a swag from behind the seat of the truck and stepped down from the tipper. 'Where are you going mate,' he queried.

'To hit the sack, mate.'

'There's room for two in the truck, mate.'

'You have to be fucking joking. I'm not sleeping near that stench!'

'I didn't bring a swag,' Sam complained.

Lance shrugged, 'Well I'm not sharing my swag.'

'And I thought you were a good mate.'

'I am. But not that good.'

Skip Bott lined up his target through the telescopic sights of his SR98 7.62mm bolt-action sniper rifle. It was an Eastern grey, eating dry grass some 600 metres away. Just then his phone rang. 'You picked a really bad time to call, Alfonso, my lunch just got away.'

'You can always switch the phone off.'

'Yeah, whatever. So why are you calling?'

'An acquaintance of mine has a proposition for you.'

'Who's this acquaintance then?'

'Somebody who wants to utilise your rifle skills.'

'Tell him to fuck off. I'm not for sale.'

'Not even for fifty grand.'

'OK, you've got my attention. So who the fuck is this guy you know?'

'First you have to go to Townsville to see him.'

'I want to speak to him first and find out what all this is about.'

'I don't think he'll want to talk about it over the phone. But I'll ask him anyway.'

After the call, Skip Bott lined up behind his rifle, which rested on a stand with short adjustable legs. Now he'd just have to lie in wait for the next kangaroo to come into his sights.

Following their 15 hour drive, Sammy and Lance reached the outskirts of Brisbane. Lance pulled up in a truck lay-by near North Lakes for a final strategy meeting. As he stepped down from the tip truck he could smell the rotting animal flesh. He gagged on the stench and walked away from the truck to light a cigarette. Sammy caught up with him. 'Well, this is it mate.'

'Yeah,' Lance replied exhaling smoke.

There was an uncomfortable silence as each man thought about what they were soon going to do.

Sam, 'What if it goes wrong?'

'What's to go wrong, Mate. We back up the truck and tip all this shit as close as we can to the Legislative building.'

'I know mate. But I've got a feeling it's all going to go pear-shaped.'

Lance gave Sam a matey punch on his shoulder, grinning, 'Come on, mate, where's that ANZAC spirit?'

'We could dump this shit here and head on back home?'

Lance stared at Sam. 'We've got to leave these bastards a strong message. Something like. 'We're in the middle of a drought and you stupid bastards decide to give Inada access to free groundwater.'

Craig sighed, 'You're right mate. We have to do it.' He brightened, 'It needs to be a strong simple message. Something like, No free water for Inada.'

'Not bad mate. I reckon we could run with that. But we could tack on, From the drought-stricken farmers in the Jericho basin.'

So, with the message decided on, all the intrepid pair had to do was deliver it.

At around 2 am the next morning, buoyed by a few tinnies, Lance drove the tipper to the corner of George and Alice Streets. There, in the dead of night, the truck ground to a halt. Lance selected the 18 speed manual's reverse gear and slowly backed up to a pair of bollards that prevented vehicles further entry. The growl of the powerful 14 litre diesel engine and the reversing beep sound was deafening in the quiet of the night. The pair of anarchist farmers knew the racket would soon draw unwanted attention.

Lance backed up the Iveco Power Star as close as he could get to the Legislative building. Then he activated the hydraulics to raise the tipper. As the aluminium tray became elevated, Sammy yelled, 'WE HAVEN'T UNLOCKED THE FUCKING BACK!'

Lance stared at his mate, bug-eyed. 'Fuck! He quickly returned the tray to the horizontal position, while Sam shot around the back to release the catches that secured the tail gate. He froze! Two figures with flash lights were heading his way. He quickly undid the catches and caught a full blast of the putrid flesh in the confined space, covered by the electronic tarp that had effectively sealed the cargo. Sam yelled, 'OK,' retched and vomited over his boots.

Lance worked the tipper and when the tray reached a certain point of elevation gravity did the rest. Sammy, bent double, vomited again, as the massive weight of the carcasses slid down the tray and got caught under the tight tarp, blocking their exit.

Sam, hand over mouth and nose, rushed back to the cab and climbed in just as two security guards arrived.

Lance, hearing the whine of police sirens, took off as fast as the truck would go.

Sam stared at Lance, wide-eyed 'The fucking tray is still up!'

Lance could see the police cars' flashing lights in his rear-view mirror, and they were gaining on him fast. As his lumbering truck headed up George Street the bumpy road caused the tarp to rip, allowing the rotting carcasses to spill out onto the road, inadvertently, blocking the path of the police cars.

Sammy gave a huge sigh of relief, then said, 'Fuck! We forgot to leave a message.'

Sustainable development is the pathway to the future we want for all. It offers a framework to generate economic growth, achieve social justice, exercise environmental stewardship and strengthen governance.

Ban Ki-moon

Chapter 10

February 2016

Founded in the 15th century, Ahmedabad, the largest city in the state of Gujarat, was a vibrant business district and rising centre of education. Mason Land gained this information from his chauffeur as he was driven to the Inada estate, the family home of Mahatma Inada.

Mason Land soon found out Inada loved to lay on the entertainment for his guests. Upon arriving at the stately home, women draped him with necklaces of flowers, while Bollywood singers moved to the rhythms of rousing sitar music. Mason followed an entourage of servants across sprawling lawns, past marble fountains to Inada's new palace. Inada was a great believer in mixing business with pleasure, so once Mason had a moisture beaded glass of champagne in his hand, his host got right down to business.

Mason was not sure he had heard correctly. 'One billion dollars. You want the Australian Government to give you 1 billion dollars for the mine.'

Mahatma nodded and smiled, 'Once they see your commitment, Mr Land, the banks will see that you are committed to the project, and they will look more favourably upon us.'

Mason stared at the Indian magnate. 'I agree that the Queensland Government needs to show its commitment. It's in both our interest that the mine goes ahead.'

'Yes, Mr Land, and it's your job to make that happen.'

Mason tried covering up his shock. He had not known what to expect from the private meeting but coughing up 1 billion dollars was not it. 'Mr Inada, I will have to speak to my finance minister about how to help you financially.'

Inada grinned widely. 'We do not need your money. Let us get that straight. You just have to prove your support and commitment.'

Land backtracked, 'Oh, don't get me wrong. I didn't mean to suggest ...'

'Excellent, Mr Land. Now let us look at some other ways we can progress the project.'

Once he was settled in his air-conditioned guest quarters, Mason contacted Sinclair George.

Sinclair said, 'What's it like meeting the great man?'

'He puts on a huge show to impress his guests, but he is really down to earth and introvert.'

'Have you discussed the mine with him yet.'

'Yes, Sinclair. And I have a job for you.'

'What job?' the Deputy Premier asked, warily.

'I want you to raise some money to show the banks our support for the mine.'

'Oh! and what sort of sum are we talking about, Mason?'

'1 billion dollars.'

'Did you just say what I thought you said?'

'Yes. And I need you to work out how this can be achieved.'

'What am I supposed to do, make it appear out of a top hat?'

'Have it worked out by the time I get back.'

'But!'

'No buts. We have to show Inada we're on top of this.'

The next day, as Mason and Mahatma walked around the Inada's expansive garden, with security guards walking a few paces behind, Inada confessed, 'I am not a social person who wants to go to parties.' He laughed, 'I don't have to. Being as wealthy as I am the parties come to me.'

Mason laughed along with his host.

Mahatma continued, 'When my son Arnav married Diya Shayak, the daughter of Gautam Shayak, who founded this country's largest law firm, we invited over 22,000 people. The festivities went on for five days. There were so many private jets they almost shut down the airport.'

Mason smiled politely while wondering how much more of Inada's big noting he could stand. 'Very impressive, Mr Inada.'

The billionaire flashed a toothy grin. 'Mr, Land, my parties get me in front of the right politicians and business leaders, so I can get my message across. I am a businessman. Everything about me is business.' Then he added, 'Not bad for a poor boy who dropped out of school.'

Well, you certainly have got your message across to me, Mason thought. 'You have indeed done very well. Mr Inada.'

April 2016

The ABC news reporter turned to the camera. Tonight we have with us the Queensland Treasurer, Ms Sylvie Lefèvre.' Turning to face her guest, she said 'Thank you for being with us tonight.'

The treasurer smiled, 'Its good to be here.'

'Now, as the LNP treasurer for this state, I guess you have a good grasp of what is going on with the Inada Carnagee mine.'

'Where it has to do with the treasury, yes.'

'You have recently gone on record saying Australia's biggest coal mine will improve the environment. What do you mean by that?'

Lefèvre said, 'The ABC has given no voice to the people of north Queensland in its reports over the mine in the Jericho basin. So your ABC audiences have no idea that lack of jobs is the biggest issue in the region.'

'That's all very well, but it doesn't address the question.'

Sylvie began back-peddalling. 'They caught me out of context.'

'So the Carnagee mine isn't good for the environment then?'

Sylvie snapped, 'That's not what I said!'

The reporter replied, 'So do you or do you not think the mine project is good for the environment?'

Sylvie, regretting the interview, said, 'There are pros and cons for both.'

'OK. So what do you see to be the cons?'

The treasurer could feel herself being pushed into a corner. Staring daggers at her interviewer, she said, 'I know what you are trying to do.'

The reporter answered, 'I'm trying to get a straight answer.'

Sylvie took off her mike and stood up. 'This is a typical example of ABC bias!' And with that she stormed out of the studio, leaving a very perplexed interviewer.

The most important thing about global warming is this. Whether humans are responsible for the bulk of climate change is going to be left to the scientists, but it's all of our responsibility to leave this planet in better shape for the future generations than we found it.

Mike Huckabee

Chapter 11

After Queensland Treasurer Ms Sylvie Lefèvre's disastrous interview on the ABC, Sinclair George jumped into the breach to try and repair the damage. On a Brisbane breakfast talk show, he accused the national broadcaster of reporting fake news. George threw his considerable weight behind the energy giant Inada and, like Lefèvre, claimed the mine would be beneficial to the environment. Unlike the Treasurer, he had to case to put forward.

The interviewer asked, 'How exactly will the Carnagee Coal mine be good for the environment, Mr George?'

'By setting aside land for bird life and by returning water to the Great Artesian Basin, the project will improve the environment.'

The interviewer nodded, 'I see.' Scanning her notes, she said, 'Now that it is news that Inada is under investigation by the Indian finance ministry, is your government still fully supportive of the Jericho Basin mine project?'

Sinclair sipped some water. 'An investigation means nothing. It does not imply guilt, and it has nothing to do with us here in Queensland.'

The interviewer pressed, 'So, despite being aware of the investigation, you have no concerns about the Carnagee mine going ahead.'

Sinclair answered, 'If and when the findings suggest any wrongdoing on Inada's behalf, I will ask the state development department for advice about it. But as of yet, there are no findings at this stage of the investigation.'

The interviewer nodded again. 'I see. Now, on another matter, we hear that your government is considering a one billion dollar loan to Inada for the mine and a railway to Bishop Point. How do you justify such a massive sum?'

Sinclair sipped more water. 'You really should be talking about this with the Treasurer. But as far as I know, if it is agreed upon in Parliament, the loan could be generated through NAIF, the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund. But that's after the railway project has been assessed by the Independent Skills-based Board.'

'Mr George, will you hold off on the loan application until the Indian finance ministry investigations are completed?'

Sinclair smiled, 'That's a matter for NAIF.'

'And if NAIF does not support the loan?'

'As there is nothing in Inada's company structure that is inconsistent with Australian laws, I'm very confident that the NAIF board will approve the loan.'

'Mr George, why do you support this project?'

'I hope the Inada project will be completed because it will deliver billions of dollars to both the Queensland and Federal Governments.'

'Thank you, Mr George, for informing us about some of the Inada project issues.'

Sinclair was not finished though. 'Let me just say that these taxes will go to fund public services like the ABC and the "good work" they do. I know we all have our blind spots and the ABC has a massive one concerning the Carnagee project.'

In another interview on Channel Nine, he was asked whether the Cayman islands structure had been assessed by the government.'

He responded, 'That is no longer relevant as Inada has decided to have its headquarters in Townsville.'

'Does that mean Inada's business registration will be in Australia?'

'Absolutely. And, I might add, this contrasts the decision of the ABC of moving its video journalist from Rockhampton to the Sunshine Coast, leaving Central Queensland without ABC coverage.'

The interviewer responded, 'Rockhampton still has three ABC news reporters, plus two other broadcast journalists and a camera operator who contributes to a range of programs and platforms.'

Sinclair made a mental note to tear strips off his fact-check staff. 'That's still no excuse for the ABC to send one of its video journalists down South,' he said, weakly.

The Channel 9 interviewer, wanting to avoid any controversy regarding a broadcast rival, quickly segued to a safe but controversial topic. 'How is your government addressing public concerns about the Carnagee mine causing environmental damage?'

Sinclair, relieved to be on seemingly safer ground, replied, 'The Federal Government has placed 36 strict conditions on the Inada project, and predicts that the company would improve the environment by setting aside areas for plants and wildlife and using high-quality coal to displace lower-quality coal.'

'Mr George, what is the environmental benefit of high-quality coal?'

'It can be proven conclusively that improving coal quality contributes to an improvement in a power station's environmental performance.'

'So, we're talking about lower emissions.'

'Yes, in both the gasses and particles. But apart from this important measure, Inada is going to protect an additional 31,000 hectares for the black-throated finch,' Sinclair beamed.

Davion Hawe had something to say on the ABC news. 'The fact that Inada is using the environment card to get the caring public onside with the Carnagee mine project shows the lunatic fringe is

calling the shots. For Sinclair George to suggest that the mine will be good for our environment, in contrast to all scientific evidence, shows that the lunatic fringe of the Land government is running the show.'

'What do you mean by that statement, Davion?'

'George's comments are an embarrassment for the Federal Government. If Gregory Hunter is serious about tackling dangerous climate change, he will give Australia an early Christmas present by stopping the Inada coal mine from opening and stopping Sinclair George from opening his mouth. Especially where unfounded criticism of the ABC is concerned.'

August 2016

Davion Hawe was amongst thousands of activists on Bondi Beach, as they formed into human billboards with the message "Stop Inada". A new poll had found the massive coal mine, and a proposed \$1 billion government-funded loan, was lagging in public support. This prompted the protest against the Carnagee mine and concerns about Mahatma Inada's shady business practices. Protesters, many of whom wore Land and Inada masks, had also gathered to hear from leading environmentalists who were against the building of the massive mine. One of these was Campbell Rendall, the well known Indigenous land rights lawyer. He was to follow Davion Hawe, the main speaker, who went on first.

Davion began, 'What a fantastic turnout here today. It's heartening to see so many people here. Apart from you folk here there are also "Stop Inada" demos in forty plus locations around Australia. This is very timely as the Land government prepares for an unpredictable state election. And if the Queensland Labor Party had the guts to come out against the Carnagee mine project it stands an excellent chance of being elected. And hopefully, there will be more Greens on the backbench to keep me company,'

Some of the peaceful activists laughed at Davion's remark.

He continued. 'You people here today represent some of the silent majority who, when questioned, said the mine was bad for Australia. Research carried out by the left-leaning Australia Institute found only 30 per cent of Australians supported Inada's plans for the mine, which is backed by both sides of politics at the federal and state levels. Conversely, 44 per cent of voters opposed the project, including 49 per cent of Labor voters and 29 per cent of Coalition voters, while 26 per cent of respondents said they were not sure or did not know.' Davion added, 'Are these statistics representative of the general population? Well, I guess the Land government will find out at the coming Queensland election.'

A huge cheer went up.

'And, as if the Carnagee mine was not enough, we now have Inada's railway loan to contest. It seems the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund is preparing to reveal the first project to receive a concessional loan of \$1 billion from its \$5 billion kitty. And there are no prizes for guessing who it goes to. Despite the fact 68 per cent of voters oppose NAIF granting a taxpayer-funded loan to support the Inada mine, including a majority of Coalition, Labor, Greens and One Nation supporters.' Forty per cent were "strongly" opposed to the loan. Just 16 per cent of respondents backed the loan, and only 5 per cent said they "strongly" supported it. A further 16 per cent were unsure.'

Another cheer filled the air.

How can the Queensland government continue to bankroll Inada after the ABC's Four Corners programme revealed Inada had unknown ties to the British Virgin Islands tax haven, as well as allegations of corruption, bribery and environmentally destructive behaviour levelled against him. The only way a government would support such a corrupt businessman is by being corrupt itself.'

Davion left the platform to massive applause.

Next, Campbell Rendall explained the case for the Kimala and

Jinnamoora people and the collusion between the Queensland LNP and Inada to take away their land rights.

The third speaker at the "Stop Inada" rally was Alfonso Fernley. He stepped up onto the platform to rousing applause. He began, 'I am proud to be here today as a concerned Aussie, not as the leader of Green Alert. When we started Green Alert many years back, we were mindful of not becoming just another environmental organisation. Many members have their own pet passions when it comes to taking a stand for our planet. We encourage individuals to follow their hearts and to use our online presence to network with like-minded people. Which is why many members, including myself, are very concerned about what Inada plans to do in the Jericho Basin. I spoke with Michael Burrugoo and asked him how we could support him and his people in their David and Goliath struggle with Inada. Michael suggested we organise fund-raisers in our communities, which is what we have encouraged. As a result, support groups have sprung up all over the place.'

Alfonso paused until the cheering died down.' Many people see this whole Inada business to be irresponsible, dangerous and downright shonky. The results of the various polls taken clearly show the major political parties are out of step with public attitudes on Inada. And they go ahead with this project at their political peril.'

More hoots and cheers.

'There are a lot of environmental concerns and lots of questions around Inada's corporate tax structure. It is a hugely controversial project, and the public has every reason to be sceptical of the wisdom of using taxpayer dollars to help fund it. Sinclair George and his LNP Inada sycophants use the employment card as an inducement to garner support for the mine and the railway. George argues that the mine will be a boon for jobs in regional Queensland after Inada announced it would base more than 1000 fly-in, fly-out workers in both Townsville and Rockhampton.'

Alfonso paused for water. Then he smiled broadly. 'But anyone with even half a brain is not going to be sucked in by that rhetoric.' Gesturing to the enormous crowd, he said, 'But look at you lot. And there are crowds attending rallies like this one at 45 locations across this mighty country right now today. Just look at all your amazing billboards with the simple message, "Stop Inada." Right now, people as passionate as you, are rallying in Canberra, Brisbane, Port Douglas, Melbourne, and many more locations. There were also significant demonstrations in Byron Bay and Coffs Harbour. And that's just to name a few.'

More rousing cheers.

'OK, let me finish by saying, 'Well done to all of you. Through your efforts, we are getting the message out there. As people become informed about the cost and impact of the Carnagee mega coal mine, they join the growing ranks who oppose both the mine and Federal Government loan. More and more voters are voicing their concerns about Inada's corporate track record and the environmental impact of the mine. We can win this fight. And we can kick the Queensland LNP out at the polls on election day. And if Labor wants our votes, they will need to shape up and kick out Inada.'

Huge cheers and applause as Alfonso left the stage.

Australians opposed to Adani coal mine and \$1 billion<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/australians-opposed-to-adani-coal-mine-and-1-billion-government-loan-poll-20171006-gyvrvj5.html>

The real cure for our environmental problems is to understand that our job is to salvage Mother Nature. We are facing a formidable enemy in this field. It is the hunters... and to convince them to leave their guns on the wall is going to be very difficult.

Jacques Yves Cousteau

Chapter 12

It's generally assumed that snipers came from rural backgrounds, where, as children, they often went hunting with family adults. But that was not how Skip Bott came to be a sniper. Skippy, as his friends called him, was brought up in the Western suburbs of Sydney, and he had never fired any gun before joining the army. Skip, conscious of this, listened to everything he was told by the instructors. And he turned out to be an incredible shot. At first, Skip was self-conscious when instructors came over to watch him shoot.

Sergeant Pilkington, a firearms instructor, took Private Bott aside. The trainer was a hard-nosed Vietnam Vet who thought he had seen it all. But the rookie private had him flummoxed. 'I've seen lots of great shots in my time, but almost all of them were shooters before they joined up. But you're a fucking blank board.'

Skip looked at the sergeant. 'What do you mean, Sarge?'

'You don't have to overcome any bad shooting habits. That's why you're a fast learner.'

'What do you mean?'

'A lot of good shooters have bad habits that they find hard to break.

Or they'll fall back on them when they get stressed. But you, you're flawless and consistent, even when we deliberately stress you.'

Skip had great respect for the weapons he used. As an army sniper, he developed the patience of a saint. He was of above average intelligence and had a calm character. Skip completed his tasks without supervision or support. He was emotionally stable and psychologically secure and had the constitution to stay in the wettest, darkest, stinkiest, foulest, most disgusting holes possible and even stay there for the night while waiting for his target to show. Skip remembered an army journo saying, 'You have been working in this field for some time now, so what exactly do you feel when you kill a man?' Skip looked at the woman reporter and grinned, 'Sniper recoil, ma'am.'

To be able to do his job effectively, he had to think like that. When he was in the "zone" all that existed was just him and the target. His function was to hit the target. It was as cold and straightforward as that. The killing had become like second nature to Skip. And now he was out of the army he missed it.

Now someone was going to pay him heaps to do what he loved and did best.

'Well, that was one almighty fuck up,' Ossie said when the Jericho Basin Farmers Action Committee finally stopped laughing.

Geoff Bickles couldn't believe it. 'And you never even left a fucking message,' he said, incredulous.

Lance defended, 'At least we stopped the cops from catching us.'

Ossie snapped, 'All you drongos achieved was to leave a mess of rotten carcasses in George Street.'

Sammy Wallington said, 'OK, it was a fucking disaster, but what are we going to do about Inada's

fucking water licence darling deal?'

'What can we do about it, Sam? Charlie Black has screwed us over this.'

'Yeah, but is it legal what they're doing?' Bickles queried.

Ossie sighed, 'Look, mates, a sweetheart deal has been done, and the corrupt Indian bastard gets a year-long extension to pay for his water licence. The bastards have pulled a swifty, citing Carnagee mine timetable delays.'

'Yeah, another fucking underhand deal in Inada's favour.' Lance griped.

After the JBAG action committee had left, Ossie made his decision. He phoned Bott's number. As soon as he heard the soldier's voice, he said, 'O here. It's a go.'

It was the call Skip had been waiting for. 'Roger that, O. I'll contact you when it's done.' Skip had his gear organised, and he was ready to go. Apart from his SR98 7.62mm bolt-action sniper rifle, which he had bought on the dark web, Skip also packed specialised ammo, a bi-pod stand and industrial strength hearing protection. These items were packed into a carry bag, along with personal things that he may well need on the mission.' Skip had two days to find the best shooting location, preferably at least 1000 feet from his target. So he donned his riding leathers, loaded his gear onto his prized motorcycle and set GPS directions for the route to Mackay. Skip bought his 300 horsepower 'R' version in 2014. He was very proud of his ride, which he considered the best bike in the entire motorcycle industry. Having stowed all his gear, Skip set off on his ten-hour journey.

Skip needed a partner to help him fulfil his mission and watch his back. It had to be someone Skip trusted to make sure he was not disturbed while he went into an alpha zone state, as he waited to take his shot. So, two days previously, he rang the only person he knew would fit the bill.

Woody Stone was going about his maintenance chores when his old Nokia flip phone rang. Only a few people had his number, and he just had a handful of contacts. He was surprised to hear Skip's voice. 'What the fuck are you phoning me for?'

Skip grinned, 'I'll have to use that one for my message bank.'

'Yeah, so what's up, Skip?'

'I've got a mission, and I need you to watch my back.'

There was no messing with Woody. 'Where and when?'

'Mackay in Queensland. Be there in a couple of days.'

'Bit short notice, mate.'

'There's 10 thou in it for you.'

'Why the fuck didn't you say?'

'Can you meet me in Mackay then?'

'For that sort of dough, I'll meet you on the fucking Moon.'

'No need to go to that trouble. The Entertainment and Convention Centre will do.'

Skip felt exhilarated as his H2 SX gently growled as he rode through The Sunshine Coast.

Whereas the H2R, and its de-tuned civilian counterpart H2, were built with a focus on speed above all else, the H2 SX has been completely reworked and refined for comfort and everyday rider friendliness. Skip felt this as he quickly left behind the beach resorts, surf spots and rural hinterland.

As he was on a mission, Skip avoided any contact with other people whenever possible. So although he stopped for a break in Rockhampton, he kept away from any hotels, cafes and restaurants.

Instead, he sat down by the Fitzroy River and ate a packed lunch he had made at home. He also drank some coffee from his Thermos. It was peaceful sitting under a sprawling fig tree, feeling the slight breeze that rustled the leaves. No one else was around, except for a pair of passing boys who were ooh-ing an ah-ing about his bike. He kept a wary eye on them, but they soon moved on, leaving Skip to his solitude.

Soon, Skip was on the M1 again, on the second half of his journey. With less than two days before the Mining and Engineering Conference ended, it did not give Skip much time to find his perch and complete his preparations. He had already reconnoitred the area on Google Earth. As Mackay only had a few tall buildings, the tallest being the one on River Street, his options were limited. The best position from which to fire was from the balcony of a River Street unit leased by a Mr Joe Brinson, a retired school teacher. He would have to be persuaded to let Skip use his place for a couple of days.

As Skip rode into Mackay, he did not feel as though he had been riding for 10 hours. The Kawasaki's ergonomic seat had been revised for a less aggressive riding position. The H2 SX had an added rear seat for a friend and 58 litres of luggage-carrying capacity for extended jaunts.

But the civilised bike quickly turned into a beast as the supercharged, 998cc inline-four engine spooled up a titanic 200hp, supplemented with a whirl from the impeller that always coaxed Skip to use more throttle. It was well worth the \$18,000 he spent on it.

Skip saw the tall, pale-faced man, his friend, Woody, waiting by the entrance to the entertainment centre.

Woody eye-balled his friend as he approached. 'OK, you got me here. So what's it about?'

Skip took Woody out of earshot away from other people. 'A big mining and engineering conference is going on here. It finishes tomorrow, and Charles Black is going to hold a short press conference at this entrance. My employer does not want him to leave alive.'

Woody stared at his mate. 'And your job is to make sure he doesn't.'

Skip nodded.

'Fuck! You want to shoot a fucking politician - a minister of the crown, so to speak.'

'I don't want to do anything. It's just a job. A very lucrative job.'

'So what do you want me for?'

'You have to go and see a teacher. Well, a retired teacher really.'

'And why do I want to do that?'

'Because I need his place for a couple of days.'

Woody did not ask why. He knew but made no mention of it.

'So, where're your wheels?' Skip asked.

When they reached Woody's old Nissan Pathfinder with an amateurish, jungle, camouflage paint job, Skip shook his head. 'I reckon you'll have to ride pillion, mate.'

If you can't be in awe of Mother Nature, there's something wrong with you.

Alex Trebek

Chapter 13

Charles Black was in his suite at the Quest, working on the speech he had to deliver the next morning. The Quest Hotel was in a great location in the centre of the Mackay CBD. It had well-designed rooms with all mod-cons. Catering was top notch, staff were warm, friendly and accommodating for Charles' 5-night stay. He looked at Drew Harris' corrections and suggested changes. Now it was looking quite polished. The conference had taken place over five days and tomorrow was the wrap-up. Many of the delegates, having gorged themselves on rich food, too much booze and mining and engineering information overload, had either already left or were suffering from too much excess, and couldn't stand another day of shop talk.

At 6 pm that day as Joe Brinson, a retired school teacher, prepared his simple evening meal of fish, chips and salad, he heard a knock on his door. Wondering who it could be, - he had few visitors, and none of them turned up without warning - he opened his door, to reveal a tall, fair-skinned man, with long black hair tied in a ponytail. 'Yes. Can I help you?'

Woody grinned, 'Well we might just be able to help each other.'

Joe, a straight shooter, said. 'Who are you, and what do you want?'

Woody handed him a fake card. It read Armchair Film Productions. 'I'm Woody, and we're shooting a movie here. And we're looking for a place where we can take some aerial footage over the town.'

Joe, unsure, said, 'So what are you after exactly?'

'I need to come in and look at the view from your balcony window.' Seeing the suspicious looked on the ex-teacher's face, Woody said, 'If we shoot from here you get \$500.'

'\$500, you say.'

'Yes. if you let us use your place.'

Joe stood aside. 'OK, you'd better come in then.'

Woody entered and went to the sliding door opening onto Joe's personal balcony. He took a few digital shots.

Joe said, 'is this view what you're looking for?'

'Oh, yes. It's just about perfect.' Woody looked at the puzzled teacher. 'We're on a tight schedule, so we'll need to start shooting tonight. We'll have wrapped it up in a couple of days. So you won't have to be away long.'

Joe stared at the stranger. 'I thought I'd be here while you film.'

'Oh sorry if I didn't make it clear. We need the place without you in it. It's an insurance thing,' Woody smiled.

'Where am I supposed to go?'

'That's for you to decide.' Woody frowned, 'Of course if it's too difficult for you I can always ask the

people next door.'

'No. No, there's no need for that. Besides, at \$500, I can stay in a motel.'

Woody smiled, 'I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll give you another \$500 for expenses. But you must not come back until I phone you to say it's all clear. How does that sound?'

'\$1000. Great!'

'Fantastic, Joe. So grab a few things you'll need, and I'll give you the money.'

Skip looked for a suitable place to park his bike for a couple of days. He rode around the streets close to River Street Tower and found a cafe with several motorcycles parked outside. Using the principle that the best place to hide a tree was in a forest, he left his pride and joy parked in with the other motorcycles. Then, taking his equipment, he walked back to the River Street Tower, where he had arranged to meet Woody.

Woody let Skip in, gave him the keys to Joe's flat, then left. That was the way it had been arranged. No small talk. Skip had to set up and get into the "zone". He organised the tools of his trade with the reverence of a priest holding up the Eucharist. First, he took his fastidiously maintained SR98 7.62mm bolt-action sniper rifle and his Night force NRX scope from its case. Skip then checked the balcony for suitability. It was a chilly night with a north-westerly breeze about 15 knots. Skip scanned around until he had the entrance to the entertainment centre in his sights. Once he found the correct angle, Skip marked the position on the balcony floor, with chalk. Then he attached his bipod to the rifle barrel and the scope to the rifle. The scope cost Skip over \$600, but it had many smart features, including, extended eye relief, zero-stop, and an extra-narrow tube, all of which helped justify the high-end price.

Skip checked the time. It was four am. Only six hours to go. Six hours to lie prone behind this rifle while looking through the NRX, which was extremely high powered with a top end of 25X. More than enough magnification to make a 1,000 yards shot with inch-precision.

But Skip was not happy. He had to take the shot from the balcony, and that left him exposed. As a professional sniper, Skip knew it was much better to fire from the shadows, but he could only get the correct angle from the balcony. So he had to construct a hide. He hunted around Joe's place and came up with an expanding metal fold-up clothing drying rack. Using this with a bed quilt draped over it, Skip was able to fashion a crude hide. Using another quilt to lie upon, Skip positioned himself behind the SR98 for the shot and waited.

Charles Black gave his closing speech to the 50 per cent of attendees who remained. His encouraging talk included such topics as maximising employee performance, getting the most from individual employees and recruitment & retention in volatile markets. He also spoke about the role of NAIF and how Inada's Carnegie coal mine was a litmus test for other mining companies to follow.'

As the expo/conference wound down, Charles Black and his entourage went to meet the phalanx of reporters, waiting outside.

Skip checked the time. The Minister would soon be having his press conference. But there was something else that concerned him. He had to remain hidden. When he fired, he wanted to mask the noise. He had a suppressor fitted to his barrel, but that did not cover the supersonic crack that would be heard once his bullet broke the sound barrier. Ideally, he needed his shot to coincide with something like an aircraft taking off or landing, road works, noisy construction site etc. Although there was adequate background noise, it was intermittent and might not occur when he fired the rifle.

Charles Black faced the media. 'Ladies and gentlemen of the media, we have just had an exciting

and beneficial exchange of ideas to improve the mining and engineering sectors.'

A reporter said, 'Did you discuss the controversial NAIF loan to Inada?'

'That was one of the topics covered, but the decision lies with NAIF.'

'Do you personally think the loan is a good idea, Minister?'

'What I think or don't think is irrelevant. We decide such issues using our democratic process.'

Skip Bott was about to murder a human being. He had done it many times but not as a civilian. The sniper had no personal feelings about his target. Skip was actually apolitical, so he had no opinions where politics was concerned. All Skip was concerned about was that he had enough common sense, patience and fitness, mentally and physically, to get the job done and disappear without trace. Once, he had asked his sergeant, 'What is a sniper?' Just because someone fires a rifle with a scope, it doesn't make them a sniper. He remembered what the sergeant said. 'There isn't one particular thing that makes a person stand out as a sniper. It is a set of skills that are taught to someone of the right temperament, frame of mind, confidence and fitness. Whatever happened once Skip pulled the trigger, he had to remain as cool as a cucumber.

Skip looked through the laser scope and had his target in the cross-hairs. He tightened his finger on the trigger. Then, allowing for bullet drop and angle compensation, he gently pulled it back, and felt the gun kick back as he fired.

The media people and the Minister were startled by the supersonic bang that rent the air. Almost simultaneously, Charles Black slumped to the steps as blood pooled around his head. None of his minders could believe what had happened. Politicians getting shot! That sort of thing did not occur in Australia. The media were in a frenzy, taking heaps of photos and videos of the tragic event.

Simultaneously the Mackay police received a message from an anonymous caller who used a voice enhancer. It was simple and obvious. 'Stop Inada' or there will be more bodies.'

I do believe very strongly that all of us and all of the other things in the context of our planet with Mother Nature, all of these things absolutely have a profound effect.

Kiefer Sutherland

Chapter 14

Senior Constable Gravely and Constable Cuzzins, the first responders, arrived at the entertainment centre five minutes after the shooting. Amid a flurry of camera flashes, one journalist had the presence of mind to ring the police. Facing a mixture of media types, political minions and other shocked onlookers, Mackay's finest, entirely out of their depth, approached the body of Charles Black.

Gravely put on his best authoritative voice. 'Everybody move back now. This is a crime scene.'

As the media feeding frenzy backed off and the minions moved away, Cuzzins set up a taped off area to contain the crime scene. Some of the more persistent reporters tried stepping inside the makeshift but legal boundary to get some final shots.

Gravely turned to Cuzzins. 'Get rid of those fucking news hounds, Constable.'

Cuzzins went over to the handful of reporters chancing their luck. 'Move away now. Or I'll charge you lot with obstructing the police.'

Gravelly was on his radio. 'Tim Gravelly here. You'd better send some 'Ds' over to the entertainment centre. A politician has been fatally shot. You'd better get Mary over here as well. And a few uniforms to keep order.' With that done Tim approached Janet Blessing, one of Black's senior advisors. Like most other minions, she was busy on her phone. Gravelly interrupted her. 'Keep your colleagues here. We're going to need witness statements from each of you.'

Ten minutes later, Detective Inspector Trevitt and DS Partridge entered the crime scene. By this time, things had quietened down, and most of the media types were busy filing their stories.

DI Trevitt, with thirty years in the service under his belt, had never had to deal with a VIP murder before. He interrupted Cuzzins from questioning one of Black's minions, saying, 'Who has been in charge until now, son?'

'Er, that would be Senior Gravelly, sir,' the young Constable responded.'

'Where can I find him?'

'I think he's inside talking to the manager.'

He was not actually talking. It was more of a heated argument going on.

DI Trevitt approached Tim Gravelly. 'What's the problem, constable?'

'Mr Fairhorn is concerned about his front entrance being inaccessible.'

Trevitt had dealt with many of these managerial types before. 'Mr Fairhorn', the Detective said, addressing the manager, 'your centre is now a crime scene, and I'm in charge. The best thing you can do to speed things along is to stop whining and start cooperating.'

'Fairhorn argued, 'There are important events taking place here today. I can't ...'

'Mr Fairhorn, which part of "murder scene" do you not understand.'

Trevitt took Gravelly aside. 'Have you informed the next of kin yet?'

'No, Sir. We thought you'd organise that,'

'Constable, get on to it right away before this shit is all over the fucking news.'

By the time DI Trevitt went back to the crime scene, 'Mary Wren had turned up. Halfway through donning her plastic suit and boot protectors, she said, 'The victim is Charles Black, the politician.'

Trevitt said, 'That much we know. But we don't know why he was shot and who carried out the hit.'

Mary, the town's longest-serving pathologist, known for her acerbic wit, said, 'I think there's a lot more you don't know about this crime yet, Inspector.'

'Such as Mary?'

The homely middle-aged woman, who fancied herself as a Miss Marples, said, 'He was shot with a high powered rifle which was fired from a great distance.'

'How do you know that?'

Mary, who, after many years of helping the police with violent deaths, was impervious to even the most horrific gunshot, stabbing and bludgeon injuries. Using a pen as a pointer, Mary crouched down close to what was left of Charles Black's head. 'The shell entered the back of his head and exited at the front. So the weapon used had to be a powerful rifle, fired from a great distance.' She added, 'When I heard about this murder, I contacted Hubert, the local weapons expert, he'll be here soon. In the meantime, do not move this body one inch.'

Another 15 minutes had passed when Hubert Sachs turned up at the crime scene. He went straight to Mary. 'So what are we dealing with?' he asked, eyeing the body.

Trevitt interrupted, 'You're dealing with me.'

Hubert, a short, portly man, with a broad knowledge of firearms and ammunition, smiled at the policeman. 'Have you found the bullet?'

Trevitt had not thought of that. 'No. should we start looking?'

'Not yet. 'But I need one of your chaps, who's the same height as the victim, to stand where he would have been standing at the time he was shot.'

'Why do you need that?' Trevitt queried.

Mary answered, 'Because our poor Mr Black can't stand up, himself.'

'If he could, I wouldn't have to be here. be here,' Hubert retorted.

David Cuzzins proved to be the right height, so he got the job of standing still while Hubert worked out the angle of the shot by observing the entry and exit wounds. By following the line of the bullet, Hubert got down on hands and knees and searched along the paving to see if he could find the spent cartridge. And there it was. Embedded in the edge of a paving slab. Using his penknife, Hubert dug around and managed to dislodge the slug, which he put into an evidence bag.

Trevitt, watching Sachs pocket the evidence, said, 'Is that the bullet?'

'Yes. Match grade military. He showed the bag to the Inspector 'These are manufactured to highly exacting tolerances.'

Trevitt asked, 'What sort of rifle fired this bullet?'

Hubert shrugged, 'One of many models of sniper rifle. One that can hit a target from 1000 metres or more. I'll know more once I get the bullet back to my lab.'

'When you've finished with the slug I need it as evidence.'

'Of course, Inspector.'

Commander Reggie Murphy had moved from Sydney to Queensland police headquarters in Brisbane just one week before. She was promoted from Superintendent to Commander to head up a national crackdown on criminal gangs. Her team worked alongside local officers and investigators with other Commonwealth agencies, including the Australian Taxation Office and the Australian Crime Commission.

Reggie was just finding her feet when a shout came in about a politician assassinated in Mackay. This crime was much more part of her remit. She had to get right onto it. There was always some hot-shot detective trying to make a name for themselves by spilling the beans to a ravenous media. Which meant she had to get a police pilot to fly her up to Mackay ASAP. After getting one of her constables to organise her flight, Reggie Murphy phoned her boss in Canberra. She heard his gravely voice and said, 'Sir, a politician, has been murdered in Mackay.'

'Yes. Charles Black has been shot. Why the hell haven't you put a gag on the media?'

'Sir, I only got news of this five minutes ago. I've organised a plane to get me to Mackay so I can take control.'

'Dammit Reggie, the AFP should have been there before the fucking media got their sticky beaks stuck in,'

'Apparently, the victim was holding a press conference when he was shot.'

'Fuck! The media was on the scene, but we weren't.'

'Sir, I need to get going to mitigate the damage.'

With that call dealt with she made an internal call. 'Get me, Senior Sergeant MacTavish.'

Tom MacTavish was busy sharing information with the National Anti-Gang Squad when he received the Commander's call. 'Yes, boss, what do you want?'

'Grab your toothbrush Sergeant. We're catching a chopper to Mackay.'

'The Black shooting, I suppose.'

'Jesus. Is there anybody who doesn't know?'

'It's not every day a Pollie gets murdered in Australia.'

'Don't be flippant, Sergeant. How good are you at putting cats back into their bags?'

'Boss, I'm up to my arse in this Anti-gang business.'

'This takes precedence, Tom. So get your busy arse to the heliport, pronto.'

Donald Trevitt, as the senior officer on the scene, had taken control of the investigation. There was an opening for DCI in Brisbane, and this case could put him in the running. If he ran a professional and productive evaluation of the situation? But it could just as quickly blow up in his face.

Just then, he received a call from the front desk. 'Sir, there are two AFP officers to see you.'

Donald didn't need to ask why they wanted him. Fuck! That was all he needed. They'd come swooping in to steal his thunder. He sighed, 'Tell them I'll be right down.'

Don went over to the desk sergeant, who pointed out the officers, who were out on the street having a smoke.

DI Trevitt walked outside to meet them. A smartly dressed woman, a fiery looking redhead, extended her ID card. Donald read Commander Regina Murphy, AFP

MacTavish stubbed out his cigarette underfoot and showed his ID as well.

The Commander said, 'Right, let's go to your office and see what we can rescue from this dog's breakfast of a case.'

Donald glared at her, 'What do you mean?'

'Let's speak in private,' she smiled.

Once they were settled and DI Trevitt had organised light refreshment for them, he defended, 'We made the best of a bad situation.'

Reggie put on reading glasses and checked some notes she had made on her phone during the flight.

Then she looked straight at Trevitt. 'Why weren't the press and TV media sent packing as soon as the Minister was shot.'

'The first officers on the scene, arrived about five minutes after Mr Black had been killed. Everyone was in a panic, except the reporters, who kept on shooting the scene.'

Reggie said, 'And after the police officers arrived what did they do?'

'They saw what had happened and radioed the station for some senior support.'

'Then you and Detective Gravely arrived. Then what?'

'We got to the crime scene, where the area had already been, cordoned off.'

Reggie eye-balled the DI. 'So, the uniforms who got there first did that?'

Donald grinned, 'Well I don't think it was the media. So it must have been done by them.'

The Commander flashed him a dark look, but let the comment slide.

Trevitt justified, 'Look, a lot was going on. My priority was to preserve the crime scene for forensics and ballistics.'

Reggie paused, then said, 'Right DI Trevitt, your priority now is to make sure that the media has no more access to this case until we are ready to comment. Tell them any more reportage about the case before we give the go-ahead will be considered a breach of national security.'

'Shit, they're not going to like it. The media will ...'

'I don't give a fuck what they like! To rescue this dog's breakfast, we have to do it this way. So get onto it and make sure every news outlet complies.'

Trevitt hid his seething anger as well as he could. How dare that bitch treat him like a fucking messenger boy?

To add salt to the wound, Reggie announced, 'We'll be taking over your office for the duration.'

That was the final insult. 'How dare you come in here and ride roughshod over the good work we have done, and ...'

Reggie fronted up to the taller Detective. 'Because I have the authority. And one more outburst like that and you're off the case.'

'Fuck you,' he said under his breath as he walked away.

'Shit, he was pretty volatile,' MacTavish commented.

'Don't worry about him. We have a case to solve.'

'Yes, Commander, and we'll need local support unless you're going to bring in more Feds.'

Reggie knew MacTavish was right. 'OK, you play the good cop with the locals.'

'And Trevitt?'

'He's an arrogant prick trying to play with the big boys.'

'He's a long-serving cop of good standing who just got out of his depth with this shooting. I think we should cut him some slack.'

Reggie sighed, 'OK, but you work with him.'

Superintendent Crossley listened to Trevitt's gripe.

'And then to cap it all the bitch takes over my office.'

Freddie Crossley didn't like the AFP muscling in either. But he knew where he stood. 'Don, you know the AFP is a law unto itself. But terrorism is the Feds' remit, so Black's death is their case,

which they run as they see fit. Crossley's eyes narrowed, 'Don, be a willing member of the team or take a holiday. Before DI Trevitt could respond, Crossley added, 'If you're smart you can learn a lot from Commander Murphy.'

Trevitt was still smarting when he bumped into Sergeant MacTavish. Donald was about to walk by when the AFP officer said, 'Inspector, where can we get a decent drink around here?'

Don stared at Tom MacTavish. He certainly needed a drink or three.

The Golden Gecko, a nice quiet hotel, just down the road in Sydney street, was Trevitt's favourite watering hole. As Don and Tom drank the local brew, Trevitt said, 'How can you possibly stand working

with her?'

Tom grinned, 'She's not so bad when you get to know her.'

'Well, she seems like a hard-nosed bitch to me.'

'She can be like that at times. But this assignment is not just a walk in the park for her. She has to prove herself, and she's starting with a mess.'

Trevitt mollified a little. 'Any idea how I can silence the media now the fucking stable is well and truly empty?'

Senior Sergeant MacTavish, grinned, 'Don't let them have what they haven't got.'

'Come again.'

'Well, the media has what it's got so we can't do anything about that. So if we get a good lead, we let them know we have one but don't let on what it is.'

'So we don't do anything about it until we have a strong lead?'

Tom shrugged, 'What can you do - nothing.'

Hubert Sachs' main day-to-day work involved collecting, studying and analysing evidence related to ammunition and firearms. A significant component of his job was examining weapons and categorising them according to the Weapons Act. This determined what charges would be laid against the offender. But in this case, he did not have the weapon. But he did have the bullet, a 50 cal cartridge with boat-tailing (narrowing at the base end), providing better ballistic performance, due to the reduced air resistance. Hubert was fine-tuning his model when Commander Murphy entered his lab. Hubert knew she was coming to see him, so her visit was no surprise.

'So, Mr Sachs, what do we have?' She asked with authority

Sachs looked at the Commander, 'The model still needs some refinements, but It's good enough to give us an idea of what went on.'

'Show it to me then.'

The screen showed a scene with wire frame figures. A single red line showed the angle of the bullet as it hit the target, indicated by the only green 3D character. Hubert explained the diagram then said, 'From the perspective of this line, which shows the bullet striking the victim, I can work out the trajectory of the projectile back to its point of origin.'

Murphy nodded, 'Are you saying you know where the shot was fired from?'

Hubert qualified, 'As I said it's a work in progress. Hubert opened up another window, this time showing a satellite view of Mackay, with an arrow indicating the entrance to the conference and

entertainment centre, and a single line in red coming from the River Street Apartments.'

Reggie pointed at the screen. 'Are you sure about this?'

Hubert said, smugly, 'There are few places a shot at this angle can take place in Mackay. This, the tallest building in the town, has a perfect line of sight to the centre. So, yes, I am sure.'

Good environmental policy is good economic policy.

Bernie Sanders

Chapter 15

Sergeant MacTavish listened to the phone message again. It definitely said 'Stop Inada, or there will be more bodies'. He looked up at Trevitt. 'So the hit was political.'

'If the call wasn't a hoax.'

Donald said, 'According to the recorded time of the call, it came at the same time as Charles Black was shot.'

MacTavish said, 'Then it couldn't have been a hoax.'

Just then he got a call. It was from the Commander.

'What are you up to Tom?'

'We've just been listening to a message from whoever is behind the killing. It gives us a motive for the crime.'

'Well get your arse over to River Street Towers. We know where the shot came from.'

'That's good news. We're on our way.'

'We?'

'I'm with DI Trevitt. He's working with us.'

'Just keep him out of my way. Be there in 5 minutes.'

MacTavish finished the call and turned to Trevitt. 'I'm going to check out the Sniper's hide. Do you want to tag along?'

'Sure. Why not.'

Noting the DI's lukewarm response, Tom grinned, 'Don't get too excited, mate. We could be close to catching our killer.'

Reggie was already at River Street Tower when the pair arrived. She gave Trevitt a sour look. Then she said to MacTavish, 'The top apartments are the highest places in town.' There are four units on the top floor, but only one has the direct line of sight the Sniper needed. The owner is a retired teacher called Joseph Brinson. So let's go and see what he has to say for himself.'

The trio took the lift to the 18th floor.

Joe was relieved to be back home, especially as it was pretty much how he had left it. Everything was where it should be, and nothing was missing. The man from the film crew had phoned him when they were going, and everything was alright.

Joe was just about to watch a video when a knock on his door alerted him. Maybe those film people were back. He hefted himself out of his armchair and answered the door. He couldn't see the tall, film man amongst the trio that stood before him. 'Yes, can I help you?'

Reggie asked 'Are you, Joseph Brinson?'

'That's me. Who are you?'

Reggie flashed her ID. 'Commander Murphy and Senior Sergeant MacTavish.'

'And DI Trevitt, Dan added.'

Murphy flashed Trevitt her best look of disapproval. She said to Joe, 'I have some questions, can we come in?'

'Look. What's this all about?' a puzzled Joe, asked as the Commander pushed by him anyway.

Overwhelmed and growing more concerned by the minute, Joe tried feebly, 'Why are you here?'

Reggie smiled, 'OK Joe, let's sit down and sort this out.'

'Sort what out?' Brinson said, sitting down.

Becoming more serious, Murphy said, 'Where were you yesterday between 9:30 and 10:30 am?'

'Now let me see,' Joe said, 'I'd had my breakfast by then. Yes, then I had a swim in the pool.'

Reggie looked around. 'I don't see any pool around here.'

'That's because we don't have one.'

'Reggie, irritated, said, 'So where did you swim?'

'Oh, that would be the Oceanside Central Mackay Motel.'

Reggie stared at Joe. 'Only guests can use that pool.'

'Yes, that's right,' Joe said nervously. 'I was staying there.'

Seeing Murphy showing signs of agitation, MacTavish said, 'Mr Brinson, why were you paying to stay at a motel when you have a perfectly good place here?'

'The film people were using my place.'

'The film people!' The three officers chorused.

'Yes, they paid me some money to use my place for filming.'

Reggie became alert. 'And can you describe these film people?'

'I only saw one of them. He didn't tell me his name. All I know about him is he was tall and a bit pale looking.'

'Not much of a description,' Reggie huffed. Then Murphy said, 'Right search this place from top to bottom.'

Joe ventured, 'Don't you need a search warrant to do that?'

MacTavish said, 'Not if we have reason to believe a crime has been committed here.'

Joe stared at the officers. 'A crime. I haven't even had a parking ticket for 30 years.' Then he said in a plaintive voice, 'Please don't mess up my things,' as he saw his drawers pulled open and the cops rummaging through his personal items.

Trevitt noticed Joe becoming increasingly anxious to the point where he started hyperventilating. He shouted, 'GET ME A PAPER BAG!'

At his yell, Reggie came running into the room. Staring daggers at Trevitt, she sniped, 'Why? Are you going to be sick?'

Then she saw the state Joe was in. 'What's wrong with him?'

'You're making a mess of his stuff. Now get that fucking paper bag.'

When Joe was breathing more efficiently, he said, 'Just tell me what you're looking for, and I'll tell you if it's here.'

Reggie went out on the balcony and pointed, 'The Conference Centre is way over there. How the hell could a person be that accurate over such a distance?'

MacTavish joined her. 'Because he's a professional. We should start looking at army snipers.'

Murphy went back inside and up to Joe, 'Have you got receipts for the motel?'

The fastidious Joseph Brinson said, 'Oh yes. I always keep my paperwork.'

Of course, you do, Trevitt thought. He said, 'Are you feeling better now, Mr Brinson?'

'I will do once I get my stuff back in order,'

Reggie snapped, 'We're not the social services.'

As the police descended in the lift, MacTavish said, 'The shooter fired from the balcony.'

'Do you think it was Brinson?'

'A retired school teacher scared of his own shadow. I don't think so,' Trevitt said.

'So do we believe his film-maker story?' Reggie said.

Tom commented, 'It's plausible and really quite clever.'

'If he's telling the truth the person who took over the flat for a couple of days could well have been the sniper?' Reggie said, as the

lift doors opened.

MacTavish said, 'Possible but highly unlikely. Any sniper worth his salt remains anonymous. It's more likely the guy spinning the filming story was an accomplice.'

Reggie turned to the men. 'Right, your job is to get a list of army snipers.'

'What will you do?' Tom asked.

'I'm waiting for forensics to turn up.'

MacTavish said the place is clean.'

'Criminals always leave something of themselves behind.'

Trevitt said, 'How are you going to explain the people in plastic suits trampling around his place?'

'Leave that to me,' Reggie said.

Queensland Parliament was in a state of shock and mourning. Sinclair George set up an emergency meeting with all members and advisors connected to the Carnegie mine project. Sinclair invited

Mason Land to join the committee, but the Deputy Premier found his boss sitting at his desk, his head in his hands. All the wind had been taken out of his sails. He looked up when Sinclair entered. 'I never thought I'd see the day when a minister is assassinated for his beliefs.'

'It is a terrible thing, Mason.'

'What has this great nation come to when the people's representatives cannot walk the streets in safety?'

Sinclair said 'The Federal police are out in force looking for this perpetrator. They're doing their job, and we have to continue doing ours.'

'Yes, of course, Sinclair. But it's been a huge blow to all of us. We must give Charles a state funeral.'

'Yes, but right now, we need cool heads to work out the best course of action to ensure such a tragedy does not occur again. To that end, I would like you to be part of a special meeting we are holding to discuss increased security measures for members.'

Land said, 'You go on without me. I need to contact Mrs Black.'

With the police gone, Joe looked for his phone. Having retrieved it from under the coffee table, he rang a friend. 'Pam, you'll never guess what happened to me.'

'OK, what happened?'

'It's a long story, but the upshot is. You know about that politician getting shot.'

'Yes, it's terrible. Whoever would have thought that such an evil thing could happen in Australia?'

'Yes, well I think the shooter fired his gun from my balcony.'

The line went dead. Then there was another knock on Joe's door. The forensic team had arrived.

We're running the most dangerous experiment in history right now, which is to see how much carbon dioxide the atmosphere... can handle before there is an environmental catastrophe.

Elon Musk

Chapter 16

Ossie McCarthy watched the news, his eyes glued to the screen. Charles Black was dead. The man who had been pushing for Inada's NAIF loan was assassinated while speaking to the media. Ossie, responsible for the execution, knew there was no going back. He had crossed a line that every killer crosses when they commit murder. Although Ossie had not pulled the trigger, he was just as culpable as the man who did. Perhaps even more so as he had arranged the hit. But what else could he do? If Inada was granted, a free water licence for 20 years, the Jericho Basin cattlemen were finished. He did what had to do to make those dumb ass politicians in Brisbane sit up and take notice. But he was not made of stone, and even his justification for his criminal act could nor assuage his guilt about leaving a family husband less and fatherless.

Ossie's greatest fear in all this was not that he might be caught. He was most afraid of his action, turning out to be a pointless exercise. The LNP's typical knee jerk response was to up security around pro-Inada politicians who were trying to march the Carnagee project forward. Although it was not what he wanted, Ossie, knew that for him to get the Queensland Government to back away from the Inada coal mine, he would probably need Skip Bott's services again.

Skip's motorbike came to a halt near Woody's old Nissan Ute, which had been parked near the conference centre. Woody looked at the blue and white chequered tape fluttering in the breeze. It was a stark reminder of what had happened that fateful morning. He said, 'What do you know about that Pollie you put down?'

The sniper caught Woody's gaze. 'That he was the target,' Skip said, wanting to leave it at that.

But Woody was not ready to let it go. 'Yeah, I know. But don't you feel anything at all for his family?'

'Fuck man! What are you on about? Then he added, 'I was just the instrument. And instruments don't have any feelings.'

'I know mate. But even so ...'

'Just give me your bank details, and I'll transfer the fee.'

'Thanks, mate.'

'Look, can I rely on your help if I get called on again?'

Woody hesitated. Then he stared at his friend, 'Do you think the guy behind the hit is going after someone else?'

'Look, I don't know mate. But do you seriously think knocking off one pollie is going to change anything?'

Woody frowned, saying, 'I guess I'm kind of committed now,'

Joe was intrigued by the people in plastic jumpsuits on their hands and knees out on his balcony. The feisty senior cop gave a plausible reason for the scientists' presence. But surely a wanted person using his apartment as a hideout would not warrant such close inspection. But if somebody had used his place as a shooting range to hit a politician. Now, that's a whole different kettle of fish.

The officer in charge of the forensic science team approached Commander Murphy. 'It's clean, I'm afraid.'

She looked at him with doubt showing in her eyes. 'He took the shot from here. I'm sure of it.'

'That may well be, but there is no forensic evidence to back it up.'

Reggie brightened a little. 'How would he have done it?'

'Done what, the chief scientist asked.

'Positioned himself.'

'Well, I'm not an expert, but if the killer waited for any length of time, he would probably have been laying prone behind his rifle.'

Reggie stepped out onto the balcony. She turned to the scientist. 'It gets pretty cold out here. He would probably have lain on something - like that quilt for example,' she said, indicating the one hanging over the clothes rack.

'We've already checked it, Commander.'

'I'm no scientist but don't you have better equipment back at your lab.'

The scientist turned to a colleague, 'Bag the quilt. It's coming back with us.'

When Joe saw his quilt in the big plastic zipped bag carried out of his home, he asked, 'What are they doing with my bedclothes?'

Reggie smiled, 'Don't worry, you'll get it back after they search it for evidence.'

Joe said, 'You seem to be going through an awful lot of trouble to catch this fugitive you're after.'

Sinclair showed Mason the list. 'These are the people we feel are most vulnerable.'

Mason read the list to himself. The list of vulnerable ministers comprised:

Antoinette Martin The Coordinator General for State Development

Transport and roads.

Harry O'Toole, the new minister for Natural Resources Mines and Energy.

Lou Feather Minister for the Environment and The Great Barrier Reef.

Foster Ward Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries.

Then he looked at the measures the group wanted to take. 'Two bodyguards for each minister 24/7. Where's the budget coming from?'

Sinclair responded, 'I have spoken with Alvin Sheens. And he is willing to provide the security we need.'

Mason argued, 'We need every available AFP officer to be looking for the killer, Sinclair.'

'Yes, Premier, I know.'

'Besides, Sinclair, let us be real about this. Do you really think a couple of bodyguards is going to protect our people from a sniper firing from a thousand metres away?'

'No, but part of the body guard's job is to stop the target from being overexposed. If the sniper can't see you, he can't shoot you.'

Mason threw up his hands in defeat. 'OK, get it organised and we'll review the situation in a month.'

The headline read:

Teacher claims politician killer fired from his balcony.

The article that followed got Joe Brinson an interview on the 7:30 Report.

After Joe explained his story, the Interviewer said, 'And the man who took over your flat claimed to work for a film company?'

'Yes, that's right.'

'But you subsequently found out it was untrue?'

'Yes.'

'So how do you know the sniper used your balcony to shoot Charles Black?'

'The police, not just our local cops, the federal police took a great interest in my place. I just put two and two together.'

'So the police never confirmed that the killer fired from your balcony?'

'They told me they were looking for a fugitive, but that never gelled

with me.'

'Why not, Mr Brinson?'

'Because of all the forensic scientists involved.' They went through my stuff with a fine tooth comb. They even took my bed quilt.'

'And that's why you're convinced you had the sniper in your home?'

'Yes. Well, when you look at the whole picture and the timing and the fact my apartment is one of the tallest in town, it all adds up.'

Joe Fox was on his way into Parliament when the media pounced on him. 'What do you think about Charles Black's murder?'

Joe took a moment, then turned to the journalist. 'It's a tragedy on many levels. Tragically, a politician, has been executed for his involvement in the Inada project. It's particularly tragic for the loved ones he left behind. And it's a tragedy that Australia has lost its innocence.'

A journalist pushed a mike into his face. 'How do you know this has anything to with Inada?'

Joe smiled, 'That's all for now.'

'What do you mean by Australia losing its innocence?'

'No more questions, I have to get to work.'

The journalist had one last shot. 'There are many indigenous people who think Australia lost its innocence long before now.'

Joe, refusing to take the bait, walked on.

MacTavish and Trevitt walked with Sergeant Paul Lee behind the

four firing stations that faced outwards to all points of the compass. The pair had come to the Swanbourne Special Range Facility at Campbell Barracks to find out about army snipers. Sergeant Lee, of the Special Air Services Regiment, had been assigned to them to help them with their enquiries.

The Sergeant said, 'So what makes you think the killer used to be an army sniper?'

'His professionalism for one thing. And his marksmanship at long range,' MacTavish replied.

'That doesn't necessarily make him military,' Lee argued. 'There is any number of rifle clubs with members that have such skills.'

'True, but this is a high profile case, and we have to make sure we've covered all bases,' replied MacTavish.

Sergeant Lee stopped and turned to the AFP officer. 'We do store recent data about soldiers who go on this 10-day training course.'

'Can you show us?' Trevitt asked.'

'Do the reports cover psych evaluations?' MacTavish asked.

'Let me tell you something about army snipers,' the SASR NCO said. 'They are highly competitive individuals who put themselves under enormous stress, and who take great pride in their work. Here they take part in scored range shoots, observational exercises and range estimation exercises, both static and live fire, in rural and urban environments.'

Sergeant Lee took the cops to a Jeep and grabbed his tablet out of a bag. 'Before I show you this list understand that once the soldiers have completed their leadership sniping training here, they go back to their respective regiments. And we've only been keeping these records for three years. So your man would have to have trained here within that time frame.'

Tom said, 'What if he came back for a refresher course?'

'It's unusual but possible.'

Trevitt said, 'Have you trained anyone here who really stands out from the crowd?'

'What do you mean?' the SASR man said.

'Well, all these trainees have certain psychological traits in common - right?'

'Yes.'

'So, if someone were a bit different to the others, you'd notice it, wouldn't you?'

MacTavish wondered where Trevitt was going with his line of enquiry, but he let it continue.

'Yes.'

'And that would go into their report - yes?'

'That's right. But I don't see ...'

'Our suspect killed a man in cold blood using skills he probably developed while in the army.'

The Sergeant proudly puffed out his chest. 'The people we train are not murderers. They carry out their kills in the line of duty.'

Trevitt smiled, 'Exactly, Sergeant. So would you see any signs or indications if one of your trainees was predisposed to murder?'

Lee shrugged, 'I'm not a shrink. You'd have to talk to the regimental psychologist to find out about that.'

'What here, on this base?'

'No, those records would be kept with the regiment he came from.'

MacTavish said, 'But to know which regiment to approach we have to know who the sniper is.'

'That's right, the SASR officer grinned. 'It's all a bit chicken and egg, I'm afraid.'

The 7:30 Report invited Davion Hawe to give his view about the assassination. Davion was deeply shocked by Charles Black's brutal killing, and the interview gave him a chance to put some vicious rumours to rest.

Once they were on the air, the Interviewer said, 'Well, Davion, what has this country come to when our parliamentary representatives have to be surrounded by a phalanx of guards when they speak in public?'

'It has come to a point where the public is scared about the dangerous path along which our political leaders are taking us. It has also reached the point where people no longer trust the system and, as we can see by the Black assassination, are being forced to take a personal stand.'

'Does that mean you support the killer in his actions, Davion?'

Davion stared at the Interviewer. 'No. Of course not. It's a terrible indictment for Australia that such an act of terror has taken place.'

'Yet you have sympathy for those who decide to take a personal stand.'

Davion smiled, 'I don't support any act of violence, but I can see how a person who is concerned about the environment could be driven to commit such an act. The main two parties refuse to stop and listen to the public's concerns about such situations as the rampant destruction of the Great Barrier Reef. Caring Australians are becoming angry and frustrated. And their numbers are growing.'

'So, are you saying the murder of Charles Black was environmentally motivated?'

'Please don't try to put words in my mouth. I have no idea why the shooter killed Mr Black. There are all kinds of rumours flying around, including an accusation against the Greens, claiming we are somehow responsible for the assassination. It's utter rubbish, of course.'

'Davion, do you think the sniper will strike again?'

'How would I know that? It was a terrible thing to happen, and we all pray that no one else will be targeted. Having said that, it is less likely to happen again if the two major parties start listening to the people of this nation.'

'Listening about what?'

'One example is that 86 per cent of Australians do not want Inada in this country. Yet Parliament does not listen and, it would seem, does not care.'

The Interviewer smiled, 'Thank you, Davion Hawe, for joining us tonight.'

The Earth does not belong to us: we belong to the Earth.

Marlee Matlin

Chapter 17

Sinclair George was interviewed on Current Affairs. The female celebrity interviewer said, 'Mr George, Australia had just had one of its darkest hours with the shooting of Charles Black. Apart from increasing security levels, how is the LNP coping with this huge blow?'

'We're getting on with the job. The best way of honouring Charles' memory is by being strong in our convictions.'

'Yes, I see. So in the light of Mr Black's assassination and the message received by the Brisbane police, are you re-evaluating your ties with Inada?'

Sinclair put on his best-puzzled expression. 'Why would we do something like that? Our decision to back the Inada project is the best thing for Queensland. And we stand by that.'

'Yes, but since the shooting, Australia's big four banks have all ruled out funding or have withdrawn from Inada's Queensland coal project. Straight after the assassination, Westbank, decided not to fund the opening up new coal mining regions and, therefore refused to give Inada the loan.'

Sinclair huffed, 'Westbank got cold feet, but there are many more financial institutions for Inada to approach.'

She smiled, saying, 'But surely, reading between the lines, do you think their decision not to support

the mine project has anything to do with the shooting?'

'Whatever the bank's reason for refusing the loan is a bad decision on their part.'

The interviewer said, 'A Westbank spokesperson stated that under the bank's policy, concerning the environment, the coal being mined must also have an energy content of at least 6,300-kilo calories per kg.'

'I have been assured that this is the case with the Inada mine.'

'Mr George, Didn't Inada claim, before the land court in 2014 that their mine would be the first in the Jericho Basin to have only 4,950-kilo calories per kg?'

While his mask smiled, Sinclair's mind reeled, You sneaky bitch. You think you've got me with that one. He said, 'I can only conclude from this decision by Westbank that they are seeking to revert to their original name as the New South Wales Bank, as they are turning their back on Queensland as a result of this decision.' He added, 'May I suggest those Queenslanders seeking a home loan or a bank deposit or some such in the next few months might want to back a bank that is backing the interests of Queenslanders.'

'So you're asking Queenslanders to boycott Westbank.'

When Sinclair heard his unwise comment put plainly, he quickly back-pedalled. 'I'm just pointing out that the bank's decision is a bad one for Queensland. And let me say this. By taking this irresponsible stand, the banks have turned their back on the indigenous people of Queensland, because there is majority support for the project among Kimala and Jinnamoora traditional owners.'

The interviewer smiled. It was the first time she'd heard Sinclair use the race card to support Aboriginal issues.' She said, 'In the light of the banks' decision could the Carnagee mine become a stranded asset?'

He firmed his jaw. 'That will not happen. Mahatma Inada is already inviting international banks to invest in this great project.'

Davion Hawe had a different take on the banks' back down. On a favourite breakfast radio show, he said, 'Westbank has come under pressure from environmental groups and various activist campaigns, including one that targeted its cash machines and a rally that interrupted the bank's 200th-anniversary celebrations in Sydney this month.'

'Davion, are you suggesting that the banks' decision not to invest in the Carnagee coal mine has nothing to do with their environmental stand on this issue?'

'We welcome any decision that stops Inada's ill-begotten mine from going ahead.'

Reggie Murphy knew all about gender discrimination and sexual harassment from her early days in the police force. By the nineties attitudes had improved to a degree, but most women in the police force, still put up with discrimination and lewd remarks so they could keep their jobs. But not Reggie Murphy. She never compromised and gave the men as good as she got. Her lashing tongue soon turned many of her male counterparts into quivering jellies. But life in the police force for any female officer was not easy, and promotion usually came at a price. But Reggie refused to compromise, and this got her noticed. She was very good at her job, but her DI saw her as a trouble maker, which left her at the back of the promotions queue. After 5 years of beating her head against the proverbial glass ceiling, Reggie applied for and got a job with the Australian Federal Police.

Now, after many years of pushing herself forward, she had reached the rank of Commander with the AFP. It seemed to Reggie that her single-minded focus to achieve senior status had paid off. But she felt like a fish in a bowl of water as all eyes were on her, waiting for her to trip up. At first, she was excited about cutting her teeth on the Black murder. But a week into the case, she was still no closer

to bringing the killer to justice. And she was about to face interrogation by media. On the other side of the door a sea of tough, no holds barred, salivating journalists awaited, ready to tear her apart. And she really had nothing to offer them. Reggie, wearing her Commander's uniform, took a deep breath and walked out to meet them.

As soon as the crowd saw her, questions began flying.

'Are you close to apprehending the killer?'

'What was the killer's motive?'

'Was more than one person involved in the murder?'

'Was the killer an ex-army sniper?'

Reggie waited until the noise had died down. Then she said, 'If you people just remain silent for a minute I have a statement to make.' She paused, then continued. 'My team is working around the clock to catch this killer. We are leaving no stone unturned, and no expense is being spared. We are making good progress and anticipate an arrest very soon. We will keep you informed of any further developments.' Reggie smiled, 'Now I will take a few questions, but only if you ask them one at a time.'

A journalist said, 'If you anticipate an arrest very soon who is the suspect?'

'The profile we are building does not include a name yet.'

Another reporter said, 'Why did the shooter kill the Mining Minister. Does it have anything to do with the Carnagee mine?'

'I am not prepared to speculate on that. Next question.'

Another asked, 'Do you know the killers motive, Commander?'

'Evidence points to the motive being nothing more than good old fashioned greed. It looks as though the killer was a hired gunman.'

'Hired by whom?' a reporter asked.

'We are looking at possible prospects.'

'Can you tell us who these prospects are?' a fresh-faced female cub reporter asked.

'No.'

She would soon learn about not asking closed questions.

Another journalist asked, 'Did the killer have an accomplice?'

'That is an angle we are pursuing.'

An ABC reporter said, 'We have heard that Mr Brinson handed his apartment over to a man who pretended to work for a film company. So, my question is, was this man the killer? And, if so, do you have a description?'

At last a sensible question, Reggie mused. 'Yes, Mr Brinson was able to give us a description. But we believe this man is the killer's accomplice.' She smiled, 'That's all the questions I'm taking today. So good day to you all.'

February 2017

Sinclair's first impression of the Northern Territory Parliament house, as his chauffeur drew up to the main entrance, was a sense of grandeur. A blast of scorching, dry, heat hit the Queenslander as he stepped out of the air-conditioned limo, giving him his first taste of Darwin summer. Sinclair, suitably impressed by the modern, white, legislation building, commented, 'I must say it's all awe-inspiring.'

Peter, a smartly attired man of middle age, wearing a crisp white short sleeve shirt and black slacks, was there to greet him and take him to Stephanie Dupont's office. Peter, who was head of security, grinned, 'Yes, The Wedding Cake is quite an eye-opener.'

'Wedding cake?'

He grinned again, 'Yes, that's what this building is known as, locally.'

Peter then took Sinclair through the building to an office, where he introduced the Deputy Premier to Stephanie Dupont, the Territory's

Chief Minister.

The formally dressed woman indicated for Sinclair to sit down. Then she said, 'Can I get you some refreshment?'

The Deputy Premier shook his head. 'I'm fine thanks. I would prefer to get down to business.'

Stephanie smiled, 'Well, I need some coffee, so let's go to the cafe and talk there.'

Sinclair balked, 'That sounds a bit too public for what we have to discuss.'

She gave a tinkly laugh, 'Oh dear me, we don't mix with the public.'

As the two politicians crossed the immaculate garden, Sinclair was treated to a splendid view of the harbour passage into Darwin.

She said, 'This one of my favourite Darwin views. You should see it when the huge cruise ship come in.'

Sinclair did not respond. He just followed Stephanie through the cafe, to a private room, out of bounds to visitors.

As soon as the pair were seated, a waiter arrived to serve them. Stephanie Dupont reached over and touched her guest's shirt sleeve. 'You simply must try our Mangosteen and cream scones.'

'Mangosteen?'

'Yes, it's a favourite fruit in the top end. It's as hard as acorn on the outside, but has a soft, tangy and sweet interior.'

Cream scones and Sinclair's spreading waistline did not go together. But it was all just too tempting. 'He smiled, I guess I'll have to give it a try.'

Coffee and scones were soon served and the scones were the best Sinclair had ever tasted. He wiped crumbs from the corner of his mouth and said, 'Now about this NAIF loan.'

'Yes, about that, I'm afraid we have run into some problems.'

Sinclair groaned internally while putting on a brave face. 'What problems are we talking about?'

'The Productivity Commission claims the mine may have failed the loan criteria.'

'What criteria is that?' Sinclair asked, becoming agitated.

I haven't received the full report yet, but NAIF claims the bid may have failed key hurdles.'

'Chief Minister, unless I know what these hurdles are, I cannot address and assess the problems.'

'Deputy Premier, the Commission is yet to analyse a rival NAIF loan bid by the rail operator Horizon.'

'But the Queensland Coordinator General is considering blocking the Horizon bid in line with an election promise relating to Inada.'

Chief Minister Dupont stared at Sinclair. 'What election promise?'

'There will only be one rail road taking coal to Bishop Point.'

'So both Inada and Horizon put in separate bids for a NAIF loan, not caring who receives the funds.'

'It's not illegal. It's purely business.'

'Well NAIF was not impressed. But, apart from double-dipping, projects seeking low-interest loans from NAIF must not be able to attract finance, but would be commercially viable once constructed.'

'The proposed railway fits within that criterion, Chief Minister.'

Stephanie sighed, 'I'm afraid it's not as clear-cut as that. To justify the cost to the taxpayer, there must also be a public benefit from the infrastructure.'

'There will be a public benefit through employment with the building and running of the railway.'

'Be that as it may, the Commission is also concerned that the return on the investment will not cover the operational costs of the infrastructure and the costs of servicing the loan at market rates over the life of the asset. They believe the project will need to secure more funding and that the small initial level of assistance provided by a concessional loan may simply become another case of inefficient resource allocation.'

Sinclair felt his stomach ulcer acting up. 'I want a copy of the report as soon as you receive it. We have to convince the Commission that there is nothing to worry about.'

Stephanie smiled wanly. 'Good luck with that, Deputy Premier.'

Westpac's Adani decision finds public support, despite

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/may/05/westpacs-adani-decision-finds-public-support-despite-canavans-disapproval>

Adani \$1b loan bid was likely to fail key criteria for <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-01-05/adani-loan-bid-likely-to-fail-before-palaszczuk-intervention/9305040>

Government assistance to industry - PC News and other <https://www.pc.gov.au/news-media/pc-news/pc-news-december-2017/trade-assistance-2015-16>

We are using resources as if we had two planets, not one. There can be no 'plan B' because there is no 'planet B.'

Ban Ki-moon

Chapter 18

'Technically, ballistics is the science of projectile motion and conditions affecting that motion. But

we tend to use the term more loosely to describe the study of firearms and bullets,' Hubert Sachs said into his voice recorder. He didn't see Senior Sergeant MacTavish enter the lab.

'Are you so lonely in here that you resort to talking to yourself, Hubert?'

'I'm recording study notes for a lecture.'

The AFP officer grinned, 'Don't worry, I won't tell your boss you're moonlighting.'

Hubert scowled, 'I am the boss around here!' Staring at the officer, he said, 'Now did you come here for a particular reason or just to be annoying?'

'The bullet that killed the politician. Have you found out anything useful?'

Hubert handed MacTavish a single sheet of paper. 'The projectile was fired from an SR98 7.62mm bolt-action sniper rifle. The weapon is one of the guns used by Special Forces. It was a favourite of our snipers in Afghanistan.'

'So our boy served in Afghanistan?'

'I can't tell you that.' Hubert smirked, 'Ballistics training doesn't include a course in clairvoyance.' Then, pointing to the printed report MacTavish held, he said, 'It's all in there.'

Donald Trevitt reckoned Mick O'Mally's was a decent Irish pub with reasonably priced food and drinks. One of the mainstay pubs in Mackay's Queen St, O'Mally's served cold beer and a good range of options on the menu. Trevitt was not there for the entertainment but to meet up with DI Gerry Marks, who was part of Task force Maxima. Donald had not seen Gerry for around 10 years, so it was an excellent opportunity for a catch-up. But it was not just a casual reunion. Task force Maxima's brief was to crack down on criminal motorcycle gangs, and Gerry said he had some information that may well be pertinent to the political assassination case. Gerry had seen MacTavish's name linked to Operation Hit man, the name given to the Charles Black case. He had not given it much thought until a biker, his team had pulled in on several charges, wanted to make a deal.

Trevitt was enjoying his Guinness when DI Marks approached, having manoeuvred himself through the lunchtime punters. Donald noted that Gerry was carrying a few extra kilos since the last time they had met. He was also carrying two glasses of beer. But he still wore a cheeky grin. Gerry placed the beer on a couple of coasters and sat down. 'So Donny boy, how's it hanging?'

Trevitt looked at the weather-worn cop. 'So what have you got for me?'

Gerry shrugged, 'Could be something. Could be nothing, mate.'

'OK. Why could it be something?'

'I've been working with Task force Maxima, which is about dealing with criminals in Biker gangs. We got wind of an arms deal taking place in this area. About a dozen members of the Satan's motorcycle club were involved. As they were out of their Brisbane territory, they were easy to track. We observed that they hung out at Joe's greasy spoon cafe in Chain Street.'

'Fascinating story Gerry, but what does that have to do with me?'

'Let me finish, and I'll tell you.'

'OK, '

'A couple of days ago we arrested a member of the Satan's motorcycle club. We have solid evidence that he was involved in a drive-by shooting after the arms deal went wrong. While I was interrogating the suspect, he said he had some information about the politician that got killed. Well,

as you can imagine, mate, my ears pricked up. He said that he'd noticed a motorbike that had been parked outside the cafe for a couple of days.'

'So?'

'Well, motorbikes come and go all day, but this one stayed parked.'

'OK. But I still don't see any connection.'

'Look, your killer had to have transport. Maybe he rode a motorbike.'

Don drank up his beer. 'When was this motorcycle parked by the cafe?'

'This is the thing, the suspect said it was left there around the time the politician was murdered.'

Trevitt rubbed his chin. 'How did he know that was the date?'

'Because that was the time we arrested him. And he would remember that date.'

Trevitt nodded. Oddly, it made sense. 'What sort of bike was it?'

Gerry grinned, 'That was his bargaining chip. He was in the shit, and he knew it. So, thinking it was his only chance to get a lighter sentence he agreed to tell me.'

'What did you give him?'

'Just some bullshit about putting in a good word with the judge.'

'And he fell for it?'

Gerry nodded. 'The bike is a bright Green Kawasaki H2SX.'

'Why would he have remembered that?' Trevitt asked.

'Because he's a fucking biker. And bikers would not be seen dead riding one of those.'

'I don't suppose he got the number plate.'

Gerry finished his beer and flashed a look that said, 'you don't want much, do you?'

Queensland State MP Sinclair George met with Gupti Jivandra, in his office. It was the first time the Deputy Premier had met with the new CEO. During the private meeting, the Inada boss questioned him as to how the Queensland government would prevent more savage attacks, like the one that resulted in the tragic death of the politician.

Sinclair said, 'I have been informed by the Australian Federal Police that they anticipate catching the killer soon.'

Mr Jivandra said, 'We need a clear sign the project is back on the rails.'

Mason Land, also present at the meeting told the Inada group chairman, 'Now that the issue of Native title in Australia had been resolved it has cleared the way for the Carnegie mine.'

The CEO said, 'With all these hold ups, Mr Inada is concerned that his company in Australia is unfairly targeted.'

Sinclair said, 'I can assure you we are not targeting Inada. A Senate inquiry threw into question more than 100 mining and pastoral agreements with Native Title holders — including one covering

the Carnagee project.'

The Inada CEO smiled, 'To help get the mine back on track, Mr Inada is after a \$900-million Federal Government loan for a railway link to the port.'

Mason responded, 'Any Federal loan is outside my control.'

'Then, we will need to approach the Federal Government about it.'

'May I suggest caution about that, Mr Jivandra,' Sinclair said, adding, 'The Federal Government is trying to pass legislation which would reverse that court ruling on native title and make it easier for the deals to be registered.'

The Inada CEO said, 'Premier Land, did you not say that the Native

Title issued has been resolved?'

Land answered, 'There are many aspects to this. We recognise this issue is holding up development, but frankly, it's an issue for just about every development in Australia. We have to walk secretly where native title issues are involved.'

'Gentlemen, Mr Inada is sick of waiting. By holding up this project, your government is in breach of contract and ...'

Land tried making light of it. 'There's no need for threats, Mr Jivandra, both the LNP and Labor agree that the recent court decision needs to be reversed again, but we are not able to pass these changes until Parliament returns next month.'

The CEO smiled, 'I will pass this on to Mr Inada.'

Abelard Morelly picked Skip up at Townsville airport and flew him to Ulcambah, Ossie McCarthy's massive cattle station. There, Ossie and Skip Bott discussed their next project.

As they sat drinking iced tea, shaded from the intense heat by the wide covered veranda, Skip said, 'Who's the target?'

'Ossie handed Skip a photograph of Gupti Jivandra, 'A big wheel who has Inada's ear.'

'Fuck!'

Ossie pushed a dossier towards Skip. 'This contains everything you have to know.'

'Where do you want the contract carried out?'

Ossie smiled, 'You did such a good job last time you choose the location.'

'I'm guessing this guy will have heavy duty security around him?'

'It's all in there.'

Skip looked straight at Ossie. 'I need time to read this before I decide.'

'Of course, Skip. Look, I have things to do. You just relax and read the file. If you need anything, just ask Bella. She'll look after you.'

With Ossie gone, Skip read about the Inada CEO's life and regular patterns of behaviour.

The target lived with his wife, two sons and a daughter at Ramaja in Kalara Avenue, Brisbane. Set on almost two acres, the large home comprised six bedrooms and seven bathrooms. The house was federation style with traditional broad verandas running around three sides of the main building. Two armed security guards patrolled around the house while another pair of guards operated inside

the building. 'The CEO always had four bodyguards around him when he travelled outside his home. Jivandra spent a lot of time working from home when he wasn't busy at the Inada headquarters in Townsville, his second home, which was nowhere near as grand as his Brisbane residence. His job also involved frequent visits to the Carnagee mine site.

Under the heading 'Special Events' three were listed.

The Sydney Mining Club presentation looked to be the most suitable. Gupti Jivandra was to speak there to celebrate the construction of the Inada coal mine in Queensland. The police were expecting a massive demonstration against the mine. This would give Skip the distraction he needed to carry out his mission. The police would be so busy with the demonstrators he could take out the target before they knew what had happened. The biggest drawback was that the protesting mob might swamp Jivandra as he got out of the stretch limo, concealing Skip's line of sight.

Skip closed the dossier, his decision made. He needed to get to Sydney ASAP. But first, he had to work out the fine details with Ossie.

Campbell Rendall did not look like a force to be reckoned with. A little under six feet and as lean as a bean pole, he never had his opposition exactly quaking in their boots. But Campbell made up for his physical frailty with his sharp legal mind and the tenacity of a bulldog. He had done what he could for the Kimala Jinnamoora Traditional Owners Council, and now it was time to call on the big guns. He petitioned the United Nations Human Rights Commission, presenting them with the traditional owners Land Rights case against Inada. As events unfolded, this move to gain UN support was heavily frowned upon by the Queensland Government.

Adani: Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull meets with chairman

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-11/turnbull-meets-with-adani-chairman-during-india-visit/8432938>

Plans to protect air and water, wilderness and wildlife are in fact plans to protect man.

Stewart Udall

Chapter 19

August 2016

Mason Land took a headache pill and re-read the letter. It had the United Nations logo at the top and was signed by Ms Blackman, the Commissioner for Human Rights. He was rubbing his temples to relieve the pressure when Sinclair entered his office. He brushed the missive across his desk to his right-hand man, as though it contained an infectious virus. 'Read that.'

Sinclair looked at the letter. It read:

did so and looked up from the letter, which read:

A UN committee raises concerns that if the Queensland Inada coal project goes ahead, it may violate Indigenous rights under an international convention against racial discrimination...

it concluded:

The Land government has a month to formally respond.

'The bastards are playing the race card,' Mason snarled.

'So how do we play it?' Sinclair responded.

'We challenge it, of course. but first, run it by Joan and see where we stand.'

Sinclair left Mason's office and made a call to Joan Tranquill, the Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. He asked her to come to his office to discuss a delicate matter.

Joan did so and read the UN letter, which claimed the Inada project impinged on Kimala Jinnamoora rights. After which she said, 'I will have to run this by our legal department. But to prove their allegations of racism, they will have to show that white landowners are treated differently. In the meantime, I suggest you respond to the UN, asking them for more clarity about this issue. Let them explain to us how Native Title changes have anything to do with racism.'

Later that morning Campbell Rendall stated on the World Today programme, 'The UN Human Rights Commission had listened to the Kimala/Jinnamoora people's case against Inada and supports their claim that the mine project impinges on their rights and they question the Prime Minister's assurance of a fix to Native Title uncertainty.'

The interviewer said, 'Other than protesting our government's behaviour about this issue does the UN really have any teeth to influence the government's ruling?'

'As a signatory to the United Nations about human rights, Australia must abide by the UN guidelines.' Then Campbell added, 'Our Government is attempting to register a spurious Indigenous Land Use Agreement to appease Inada. The Land government is saying they will make legislative changes to allow Inada's fake ILUA to be registered.'

'Is that why you seek the help of the United Nations?'

'The Kimala/Jinnamoora people do not mind fighting their case on a level playing field. But while the Government moves the goalposts to use a false ILUA, they have no chance of a fair outcome. Their only resort for justice is to involve the UN.'

'The Government argues that the land rights issue will not be clear until they have changed some points in the legislation.'

Campbell quickly responded, 'Yes, in Inada's favour. Look, at the moment with other legal cases, we have running Inada can't just rely on the Australian Government to change the law for them. They can't just go ahead and build the largest coal mine in the world in our country and destroy the Kimala/Jinnamoora people in the process.'

The interviewer nodded.

Campbell continued, 'Under the current land right ruling the Government is acting illegally.'

'In what way?'

'Inada now only has six out of the twelve signatures that they need. So at the moment while the amendments have not been passed through the Senate to the Native Title Act, Inada's ILUA is dead.' Campbell looked straight at the interviewer. 'They don't have what they need to even be considered for registration with the Native Title Tribunal.'

'And this is what you think they are doing?'

'They are doing it by taking away the rights of the legal landholders.'

'Well, it will be fascinating to see how this all unfolds. Thank you for coming on the World Today, Campbell.'

October 2016

As if Sinclair did not have enough on his political plate, another problem came out of the left field. It required the attention of the Environment Minister. He arranged to meet her after a house sitting on the Central Queensland drought issue. Sinclair caught up with Leanne Leveridge in the Parliament refectory. There, Sinclair handed Leanne satellite imagery that appeared to show sediment-laden water flowing from the nearby Bishop Point Coal Terminal. He said, 'Now you can see why this is urgent, Leanne.'

'Where did you get these images, Sinclair?'

He eye-balled her. 'That's not the point. The important thing is that nobody else knows about this.'

'But my department will have to carry out an investigation.'

He slowly shook his head. 'No. You have to investigate this yourself. No one else. Not until we know what we're dealing with.'

Leanne protested, 'I have enough to do trying to put a positive spin on the damage the Carnagee mine will do to the environment without this - She pushed the satellite image back at him - landing on my doorstep.'

Sinclair's florid face reddened even more. 'If this got out into the public domain, what with this damned UN interference, Inada will probably pull up stumps and sue the arse off us. So I do hope we are on the same page with this problem?'

Leanne sighed, 'OK, I'll look into it.'

Sinclair mollified a little. 'Good. And let me know your finding. And only me, right?'

'Yes,' she answered behind gritted teeth.

Davion Hawe, a passionate defender of the Great Barrier Reef, got himself an interview on the 7:30 Report, after speaking to the producer about the latest black mark against Inada. Black mark being very appropriate with what he had to say.

A satellite photo came up on the screen showing sediment build up at Bishop Point. Davion explained, 'This sediment build up is the result of Inada discharging sediment water at Bishop Point.'

How do you know the dumper is Inada?'

'Because the Department of Environment Science is looking into it. Inada discharged water near the Great Barrier reef containing eight times the amount of coal dust authorised.'

'So, what steps has the DES taken?'

'They have charged the Inada-owned Bishop Point Bulk coal with one offence of contravening a temporary emissions licence. The licence was granted to help the company cope with heavy rainfall resulting from Cyclone Daisy in 2015.'

'Now, as far as we know, this new charge is the result of an investigation following the company's refusal to pay a \$12,190 fine last year.'

'Yes, and Bishop Point faces a maximum fine of \$2.7 million if found guilty of breaching the licence.'

'Davion, Have any environmental impacts occurred as a result of the contaminated water release?'

'None have shown themselves so far. But Inada is being charged for discharging contaminated water near the reef. So the breach of licence offence still stands.'

Environmental pollution is an incurable disease. It can only be prevented.

Barry Commoner

Chapter 20

Gupti Jivandra reread the letter. It filled him with joy and provided a sense of relief. The message was good news. No, great news! The Industrial & Commercial Bank of China had agreed to provide Inada with a loan to build the mine provided the plan met with the ICBC standards. If he was an excitable person, Gupti might well have jumped up yelling 'YES'. But Gupti was very conservative in his behaviour, so his mind screamed 'YES' for him. Once his temporary internalised euphoria had passed, the CEO took the next letter out of his in box. This one was from the Government Department of the Environment and Science. This one did not bode well because he knew what it was about.

Premier Land was behind Joe Fox in the pre-election polls - and the gap was widening. And he was caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place. Now that the bane of his life, that fucking Greenie, Davion Hawe had let the cat out of the bag with his expose on the Bishop Point water pollution, he had to act on it. Owing to the cursed social media Australian's had their eagle eyes on every move Inada made. The whole business with Inada was a red hot potato, and if there was any chance of Mason Land doing well on election day, he had to somehow distance himself from the Inada mess and start talking up new schools and hospitals.

That was the rock. The came the hard place.

His intercom buzzed. Mason's secretary informed him that Jivandra was waiting to see him. The very thought of dealing with more Inada bad news gave Mason a headache. The Premier took a mild painkiller and washed it down with a whiskey. 'OK, you can send him in now.'

There was none of the usual Indian obsequiousness. Jivandra launched straight in with, 'Premier we have crucial issues to discuss.'

'Very well, please sit down and tell me about them.'

Gupti sat. 'We have finally secured a bank loan to build the mine and the railway.'

Maybe it wasn't going to be so bad after all. 'That is wonderful news. And I can see why you refer to it as a crucial matter.'

The CEO's eyebrows narrowed. 'That's not the crucial news.'

Oh dear! Maybe it was going to be a trying meeting after all. 'What is the crucial news?' Mason asked, tentatively.

'Your damned Department of Environment and Science has charged Bishop Point with discharging contaminated sediment into the ocean.'

'Yes, Ms Leveridge has told me about it.'

'Yet you have done nothing. You didn't even inform me about it.'

Mason looked straight at the Indian CEO. 'I handed it over to Ms Leveridge's department, which was the only thing I could do.'

'Well, now you can make these outrageous charges, disappear.'

'Mr Jivandra, I can't do that. You'll have to work it out with the DES.'

The CEO's eyes narrowed, 'Mr Premier, I don't think you fully appreciate the gravity of this. Our loan from the ICBC is subject to us, complying with all the rules and instructions listed in the contract. One of which states there must be no financial, political, or legal hold-ups.'

Mason sighed, 'You'll have to speak with the DES Minister about that.'

'OK. But you speak with the Environment Minister first.' Gupti stared at Mason. 'I hope you realise the Chinese loan is at stake here.'

The Premier smiled wanly, 'I'll do what I can.'

Woody was out checking his traps for rabbits when his phone rang. 'Skip, what's up, man?'

'We've got another job.'

'Fuck!

'Sydney this time.'

'Fuck man! Is that wise so soon?'

'Are you in or not?'

'This has got to be the last time, man.'

'There's \$20 grand in it for you.'

That sort of money would help him upgrade his solar heating system. Interested, Woody asked, 'When and where?'

'I'll meet you at the lookout in Bellingen, at seven hundred hours in three days.'

Woody hesitated, then said, 'This is the last time. Right?'

'Sure mate. I won't involve you again.'

Skip thought back to his recent meeting with Ossie McCarthy. The cattleman thought \$200 grand was too much for the mission, but the sniper stuck to his guns. He explained carrying out an assignment in Sydney was much more difficult and more expensive. He was proud of his stand, and Ossie had to capitulate if he wanted the job done. They both knew this and Skip got his fee.

After organising himself for his road trip, Skip spent a day making sure his H2 SX worked at peak performance. He admired the new black paint job. The fluoro green had made him stand out like dogs' balls. Skip knew it would have been smart to have changed his bike, but he loved the feel and luxury of his Kawasaki. He knew how it responded, as he was highly attuned to his machine. Besides, there had been no mention of his bike on the news, so he figured it was safe to use it.

Early the next morning, Skip broke down his military bolt-action sniper rifle. With the separate parts stowed in different pieces of his luggage it was easier for him to conceal the weapon. It also helped if he was stopped by police, although he kept within the speed limit, so there was less chance of that happening. Skip checked his itinerary. Although it was a little off route, Skip added Byron Bay in there for a quick stop. On his previous visit to Byron, the smell of marijuana hung thickly in the air. It was too overwhelming for Skip, despite the fact he did not mind more than the occasional puff himself. Plus Byron was a Mecca for petty crime. The place had been taken over by stoners and surfers and the unemployed. But Skip decided to take the chance, hoping it may have improved since his last experience of the bay. Four hours later, after confirming to himself that nothing had

changed in sunny Byron Bay, Skip arrived in Bellingen, locally, sometimes referred to as the Beverley Hills of Coffs Harbour.

With the state election looming Queensland Parliament was the centre of political deals and counter deals. An excellent example of this was Mason Land persuading Leanne Leveridge to waive the criminal discharging charges against Inada in return for the Carnagee CEO praising the courage of the Land Government in supporting and promoting the Carnagee mine project. He spoke at the Brisbane Conservative Club breakfast and began by talking about the energy supplies in his native India. Gupti Jivandra stated, 'In the prosperous western state of Gujarat, India's electricity paradox is plain to see. Along the Kutch coastline, two of the country's biggest coal-fired power plants dominate the shore. There is a certain irony that fishing villages with no electricity exist under the shadow of the power stations. India, which has more people still living without power than any other nation,(approximately 250 million), produces an energy surplus.'

Having explained India's energy problems, Mr Jivandra went on to say. With Queensland's government solidly behind this massive Carnagee mine project and the loan we have arranged with ICBC, together we can complete this exciting project, which, apart from providing thousands of jobs in Central Queensland, will, at peak performance, produce 60 million tonnes of coal a year. By this calculation, we anticipate the mine producing some 2.3 billion tonnes over sixty years. This will be a massive boon for Queensland. And we will not stop there. Exports are to leave the country via port facilities at Hill and Bishop Point after being transported to the coast via rail. The ICBC loan will also let us build a new 189 km rail line to connect with the existing Goonyella railway. Most of the exported coal is planned to be shipped to India. Also, apart from Carnagee being the largest coal mine in Australia and one of the biggest in the world, it is only the first of many mega mines proposed for the Jericho Basin and will facilitate their development.'

There was massive applause from the cashed-up fossil fuel fools.

Gupti finished up with, 'I wish to thank Premier Land and his people who have worked tirelessly, against great odds to help make this great project become a reality. Please give this a thought when you vote at the upcoming election.'

Mason, who was in the audience, cringed at the CEO's remark. He just knew he would cop flack from the media. But, all-in-all he felt Gupti's talk was a great success.

Woody Stone was not a market person. Too many people to deal with, but he had to admit he enjoyed Bellingen Market, while he waited for Skip to show. It was very extensive and well laid out; he did not feel trapped in a set of stalls that offered nothing to pique his interest. There was an abundance of healthy local foods, plants, bric-a-brac and clothes. By the time Woody returned to the lookout, Skip was there to greet him.

They sat under a shady bunya pine in the park, where Skip outlined the mission. Woody listened, his frown saying it all.

'Why the long face mate?'

'Gupti Jivandra is the Carnagee CEO.'

'So?' Skip shrugged.

'He'll have more fucking security around him than Trump!'

'That's not your problem, mate. I'll deal with that.'

Woody shook his head slowly. 'Mate, your problem is mine as well.'

Skip lit up a joint and breathed in the pungent herb smoke. Then he handed the toke to Woody.

Woody asked, 'Why the fucking miners club. Can't you find somewhere more suitable to carry out the job?'

Skip took another pull. 'The guy who's paying the bills wants it done there.'

'Have you scoped the area for your nest?'

'I haven't had a chance mate. We can suss that out tomorrow.'

'And when are you doing this job?'

'In three days.'

'Three fucking days. is that all?'

'That's when our boy is speaking at the mining club.'

Woody exhaled smoke. Then he said, OK, what's next?'

'We hit the fucking road, of course.' He paused, then said, 'I want you to take the rifle.'

Woody stared at him. 'And what if the cops pull me over.'

'For fuck sake mate, don't do anything to draw their attention.' He added, 'They're much more likely to pull over a biker, mate.'

Woody reluctantly agreed.

'Right, see you at the Sydney Mining club in Lindfield tomorrow at 10:00 hours.'

Skip Bott stayed on the Pacific Highway which he discovered had long stretches of road works and reduced speed limits. The completed upgrades sliced around 70 kilometres off the journey. But Having crawled along at a snail's pace for long sections of road works between Woodburn and Grafton, Skip lost the time advantage he had gained. It had also been slow going through Coffs Harbour, which had no bypass.

After more roadwork hold-ups, the sniper took a quick break at Kempsey. Then, mounting his H2 SX, he soon hit the highway again. The Kawasaki's chassis suspension and electronics combo worked harmoniously with the most tractable and blisteringly fast engine Skip had ever experienced. He had at least 200 HP on tap with 110 lbs of torque from his H2 power plant. But he had to restrain himself to avoid expensive radar pictures of his beloved bike as he avoided police speed traps. Skip opened up a little on the 110-kilometre speed limit stretches of highway, but that was where most of the patrol cars hid.

Leaving Port Macquarie, Taree, Newcastle, Wyong and Gosford in his wake, Skip eventually reached the outskirts of Sydney. Using his GPS, another 30 minutes and Skip arrived at Lindfield where he booked into the Killara Inn. Utterly exhausted after the long journey, Skip collapsed on the bed and slept for a solid ten hours.

'For several years we have been covering renewable energy development in India,' Charles Corban said, as he sat talking to Davion Hawe, Alfonso and Ida, at the Fernley's rustic Aldgate home.

It was raining heavily, so the four sat around the slow combustion stove as they celebrated Alfonso's birthday. They toasted the birthday boy, wishing him health and happiness, with the help of some locally made bubbly.

Davion stretched out his long legs and listened intently to what Charles had to say.

'Some years ago India set what appeared to be a lofty target of 175 gigawatts of wind and solar energy by March 2022.'

Davion said, 'So how are they doing?'

'Exceedingly well by all accounts. India has ploughed ahead and happily impressed the world. This week that goal was increased to 227 gigawatts!'

Ida, wearing a flowing multi-coloured caftan and orange bell bottom pants, looked like someone caught in a 1970 retro fashion time warp. She said, 'I read that India has not been able to achieve more than 70 gigawatts of that goal.'

Charles smiled, 'That's true, Ida, but assessing the progress to date on a linear scale, the trend does indicate the country is behind. However, renewable energy growth is not linear.'

Alfonso, his strawberry blonde hair styled in designer dreadlocks, asked, 'Can you explain that?'

Charles answered, 'Well, for a few years, renewable energy prices in India were rather high due to high finance costs. Now that those finance costs have come down substantially, renewable energy investment is accelerating.'

Davion commented, 'Just the other day I heard the Indian Power Minister Piyush Goyal state on the ABC radio that new opportunities had emerged in India creating an altogether new business space in the country. He also said that Indian companies had begun to explore foreign stock exchanges as a source of funds. He proudly announced that India is progressively becoming a most favoured destination for investment in renewables.'

Charles said, 'Last week I had lunch in Mumbai with Rajandur Singh, the Union Minister of State for Power and Renewable Energy. He informed me that although India was not on target for 175 gigawatts, dropping global prices for renewable energy has encouraged the Indian Government to increase its target, using offshore wind and floating solar technology.'

Davion said, 'I don't get it. If all this is true, why would India do a deal with Inada for some 2.3 billion tonnes of Jericho Basin coal

over sixty years?'

Charles looked at him, then added, 'All I know is that Piyush Goyal says the country does not wish to import coal from elsewhere, but he will if it means cheaper power. He told me India aims to generate forty per cent of the nation's electricity from non-fossil sources by 2030.'

Davion frowned, 'Inada had to be aware of India's energy plans, so what fucking game was he playing?'

India Increases Its Massive 2022 Renewable Energy Target

<https://cleantechnica.com/2018/06/10/india-increases-its-massive-2022-renewable-energy-target-by-28/>

The sooner we get started with alternative energy sources and recognise that fossil fuels makes us less secure as a nation, and more dangerous as a planet, the better off we'll be.

Lindsey Graham

Chapter 21

Skip met up with Woody at the appointed place and time. The survivalist had arrived late last night and had slept rough in the back of his car. He handed Skip the zipped bag containing the rifle and accessories.

The sniper looked at his mate. 'Looks like you need a caffeine hit or two.'

They settled on the Runaway Spoon. They had an excellent breakfast, delicious and nutritious. Skip found the coffee a tad strong, but it was precisely what the pair needed. As they breakfasted, Woody said, 'OK, what now?'

'We check out the tall buildings.'

'Tall buildings! There's fuck all around here. The mining club is about the tallest, and that's only three stories, man.'

Skip showed his mate a Google Earth map of Lindfield. 'The churches are taller.'

'The Churches! Jesus!'

'Yeah. You're not superstitious or religious or something, are you?'

'No, it's not that. But aren't churches supposed to be peaceful places, mate?'

'Yeah, and I need peace and quiet to carry out my job.' Skip leant forwards. 'St Anthony's is the closest, and it's got a turret. I need to get up there to check the line of sight.'

Woody stared at his mate. 'How the fuck do you propose to do that? Climb a fucking ladder?'

'I'm sure the priest doesn't use a ladder when he goes up there. There has to be a way to access the roof from inside.'

Woody shook his head. Just how do you propose to do that, Skip?'

'We go and suss the place out. Sit down and pray, light a candle. That sort of shit.'

'Woody said, 'Why not get the priest or whoever is there to show us up to the roof?'

'And you think my idea is crazy.'

'No, mate. Look, just hear me out. My old man was a roof tiler. He took me with him sometimes. People were only too happy to have him check out their roof for damage.'

'Yeah, that was back in the day when people were more honest with each other.'

'Mate, two things haven't changed about that. People don't usually go on their roofs, and they don't know what state it is in. Trust me, this will work.'

The bold headline 'INDIA DOES NOT NEED INADA'S COAL!' on

the front of the Sydney Clarion got just about everyone's attention, including that of Sinclair George and most other Queensland politicians. Especially as the state election was only days away. Sinclair sat down as though pole-axed. Reading the article, his normal ruddiness increased even further as his anger erupted. He barked into his intercom, 'Get me the Premier, right away!'

Mason saw Sinclair's name come up. Having seen the Clarion front page, he did not need two guesses to know why his deputy called. 'Hello, Sinclair. We need to meet.'

'Yes and with Gupti Jivandra,'

'See if you can locate him.'

'Isn't he down in Sydney at the mining conference?'

'Track him down and get him to call me.'

Wearing overalls they bought from a nearby op shop, Skip and Woody entered St Anthony's

Anglican Church. It was a solid stone building designed with a simple layout - rows of pews on each side with an aisle down the centre, which stopped at a modest altar. The church appeared to be empty. Woody looked at Skip and shrugged.

'We could look for a door. Go outside and check the position of the turret.'

Just then, an elderly man wearing civvies and a dog collar emerged from a door near the altar. Seeing two men wearing overalls, he looked at them warily. Approaching them, he said, 'Can I help you, gentlemen?'

Woody said, 'I'm Tony and he's John. We work for a roofing company. We're going around checking roofs to see if everything is OK.'

'My roof is fine, thank you.'

Woody smiled, 'That's great, but I see you have a turret with a flat roof.'

'So?'

'Have you checked the drainage recently? Gutters can get clogged with plant debris, and the next time you have a storm, it can cause flooding, or worse. We at Lindfield Roofing believe prevention is better than cure.'

The priest frowned. 'What do you mean by "worse" than flooding?'

'If there's a problem with drainage, In a storm, your roof could turn into a swimming pool, putting a huge strain on the building. Seeing your turret, I felt it my responsibility to offer you a free check.'

The priest folded his arms. 'I don't know. Look, I'm sure everything is OK and ...'

Woody smiled again. 'No problems Vicar, I have given you a chance, and you have refused. So we can walk away with our conscience at ease.' Woody turned to Skip. 'Come on we have taken up too much of the vicar's time.'

The priest said, 'How long will it take?'

Woody turned to the priest, '10 minutes or so. We let you know if there's a problem, then leave it up to you.'

Taking a bunch of keys out of his pocket, the priest said, 'Well it

can't do any harm.' He unlocked a door leading to a set of stone steps that spiralled up to the tower. 'Follow me,' the priest said, climbing the stairs.

There was a small door that led out onto the roof. Skip noted it only had a slide bolt.

Woody said, 'OK, we'll get on with it then.'

The priest noted the roof was bone dry, but said nothing. 'I'll see you downstairs in ten minutes then.'

'No problems,' Woody said, as the vicar closed the wooden door behind him.'

Skip said, 'You're fucking brilliant mate.' He then unzipped his blue zipped bag designed for carrying sports equipment. But which, instead, held the tools of Skip's trade and took out his scope. He went over to the parapets and scanned around until he could see the Sydney Mining Club venue. The Corporate Centre, Where the Mining Club had its space was on Tryon Street. He had a good line of sight to the entrance of the building. Woody, meanwhile, checked the drainage from the roof.

The priest was waiting for them as they re-entered the church. 'How is everything up there?' he asked.

'Oh, every thing's just fine,' Woody said.

'I thought it would be. But thank you for looking. 'Perhaps I can give you boys some tea?'

Woody looked at Skip, who nodded. 'That would be great,' Woody smiled.

As the trio sipped strong tea and dunked ginger nuts, Woody brought up the subject of homeless people.

The priest said, 'It's a terrible problem that is getting worse.'

'Is there anything you can do to help?' Skip asked, fishing for information.

'All we can do is offer them sanctuary in here, to give them some protection from the elements.'

'How do they get in? Don't you lock the doors at night?'

The elderly priest looked at Skip. 'I haven't locked these doors at night for thirty years.' Woody said, 'Vicar, you are a true Christian.'

'The old priest laughed, 'I should hope so. I've been practising for long enough.'

Election days come and go. But the struggle of the people to create a government which represents all of us and not just the one percent - a government based on the principles of economic, social, racial and environmental justice - that struggle continues.

Bernie Sanders

Chapter 22

Davion Hawe, out in the hustings, spoke to an audience of around 100 people who had gathered in Roma Street Parkland to hear his message. Many demonstrators held up Stop Inada placards.

In a loud voice, Davion said, 'This election is about climate change and changing our attitude about alternative energies. The age of fossil fuels is over, now that we have thoroughly tested better alternatives. Yet, despite this, Inada is still serious about building its polluting mine. A mega mine that will pose a great threat to our natural world. Apart from the pollution to our precious groundwater caused by digging up the coal, burning it will fuel global warming. Large parts of our Great Barrier Reef have already bleached and died because of this.'

People started chanting, 'Stop Inada!'

Davion waited until the noise died down and continued, 'We must protect our planet for the people we love. We will stand up to big polluters.'

The chanting started up again, amid much applause.

'The Inada mine is just the first step to opening up the whole of the Jericho Basin for coal mining. This is a reminder that now, more than ever, we need a rock-solid commitment from our elected representatives that they will put the future of our water, the Great Barrier Reef, and a safe climate first and stop this dangerous mine.'

More enthusiastic applause and chanting followed these words.

Then Davion said, 'Community action has driven our elected representatives to stop these kinds of

dangerous and environment-wrecking projects in the past. The Franklin River flows freely today as a testament to this.'

The old activists, especially those who had played a role in the Tasmanian campaign, attested to this. For many, they saw it as their finest hour. Now, as senior citizens who had not lost hope, they once more stood up for environmental justice.

Davion said, 'The community campaign to stop Inada's polluting coal mine is the biggest environmental movement in Australia since the Franklin River dam protests. Raising his right fist, the Green Party politician emphatically stated, 'We will continue to organise against Inada's dirty coal mine until it is stopped, and the Jericho Basin is closed to any more coal mining.'

Mason Land and Sinclair George watched as India's energy minister, Nadin Mahahranga showed up on the tablet screen.

Mason's secretary had worked hard and fast to organise and set up the link at short notice.

'Greetings Premier Land. Now, how can I help you?'

'Mr Mahahranga, I just need you to clear up a few things for me.'

'What things, Mr Land?'

'Let me just read to something from the New York Times.'

'Go ahead.'

'The NYT Editorial Board has slammed the Australian government for helping a "powerful Indian conglomerate" owned by Mahatma Inada to build coal mines in Queensland. Taking a strong position in support of the environmental groups who have been joined by the public at large to protest against this environmental hazard, the editorial states, Australia is helping Mr Inada to get what he wants, but it's the opposite of what Australia, India or the rest of the world needs.'

'I am aware of the article, Mr Land.'

'And you're now saying India does not need this coal?'

'It is not just us. Surely you understand the demand for coal is falling globally. Many nations, including, India, are committed to drastically reducing our carbon footprint. Yet you politicians go against the trend and help Inada to build a large system of coal mines in a remote stretch of your state.'

Land, getting hot under the collar, reacted. 'When we agreed to this mine project, it was on the understanding that India would be Inada's biggest customer. And now you tell me your government has changed its mind.'

'Mr Land, if you had approached me before embarking on Inada's foolish project, I would most willingly have told you our position concerning burning coal. If you believed what Inada said about this then, I'm afraid that is down to you.'

'Are you saying that your government never had an agreement with Inada to export an estimated 66 million tons of coal a year to India?'

'Mr Land, why on Earth would we do that when we have increased our renewable energy target to 40 per cent by 2030.'

'Are you prepared to take a smaller quantity of coal?'

'That depends on how cheap it is.'

Davion sat in front of the camera as the countdown to start the interview began. It was his last chance to appeal to the voters before the coming election.

The interviewer addressed him, and asked, 'Mr Hawe, are you feeling confident about the election result on polling day?'

Davion smiled, 'This election is not about which party wins. It's about our planet winning. Because if the Earth wins, we all win. But we can't win if short-sighted politicians keep supporting the Inada group and its aim to produce coal from six open-pit and five underground complexes known as the Carnagee mine. Such ill-placed support can only make it harder for the world to meet its aspirations under the Paris Climate Agreement. The Inada project has prompted huge protests from across Australia and will continue to do so until our government finally gets the point.'

'Do you think the Inada mine issue is going to play a significant role in the way people vote?'

'There are a great number of dyed-in-the-wool party followers who

traditionally always vote for the same party no matter how badly they have performed. But I think the Inada fiasco is important to most free thinkers and it will reflect in the voting. Smart people realise you can't have both the Paris Climate Agreement and Inada's Carnagee coal mine.'

'Davion, Mason Land has promoted the mine with the same argument President Trump has made to remove what he sees as impediments to coal mining in Appalachia, framing mining as a job creator in a region that sorely needs jobs. The prime minister has also supported Inada's request for a taxpayer-financed loan of \$800 million.'

'Well, I can't see a question in that. But I will say this. The nearby Great Barrier Reef supports some 64,000 full-time employees, but shipping all that coal to India risks further harm to this environmentally sensitive area, already endangered by global warming.'

'Davion, The Inada Group chairman, Mahatma Inada, plans to use 60 per cent of the Carnagee coal, which is of a higher quality than Indian coal, for his financially stressed Mundra coal-fired power plant in Gujarat, India. Isn't that a good thing for the energy-starved peasants?'

Davion frowned, 'It's a terrible idea! It would be a regressive move for India, which is making great strides with solar and other forms of renewable energy. But I would like to ask Mr Inada what India's energy minister, Nadin Mahahranga thinks of his plan.'

'What do you think he would say?'

'I can't speak for Mr Mahahranga, but it is recorded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has committed India to get 40 per cent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030.'

'Davion, it's also recorded that existing coal-burning plants in India are running below 60 per cent capacity and increased demand for energy may push them to full capacity. And they will need large supplies of coal to do this.'

Davion stated, 'Make no mistake, the time will come when the price of renewables will be lower than the cost of coal.' He paused for effect, then continued, 'In the words of Mr Mahahranga, 'We don't wish to import coal from anywhere in the world. We have sufficient coal capacity in our country.'

'Thank you for making the situation clearer, Davion. And all the best for the election.'

Australia, India Do Not Need Adani's Coal Mine': NYT.

<https://www.thecitizen.in/index.php/en/NewsDetail/index/6/12081/Australia-India-Do-Not-Need-Adanis-Coal-Mine-NYT>

Environmental policy must strike a balance between the earth's best interests and our citizen's pressing needs.

Jim Clyburn

Chapter 23

Skip huddled up against the corner of the brick parapet, his SR98 beside him. So far, the plan was holding out. He and Woody had gone back to the church around 10 pm. Nobody was around. The door to the roof was padlocked, but Skip fiddled around with a lock pick set he had bought on eBay and soon had it open. He had turned to Woody. 'Now you know what you have to do tomorrow?'

'Yeah. Distract the priest so you can slide away.'

Skip had looked at his mate. 'Well, this is it.'

'Yeah.' He had handed Skip his zipped bag. 'See you tomorrow then.'

But tomorrow took a long time coming. Time goes extremely slow when you're waiting for the target to show. Especially when you're waiting in the dark. It was cold as well, so Skip zipped up his leather jacket, and waited. And waited. And waited.

The wait gave him a lot of time to think. And that was not good. He had to stay steady and focused on what he had to do. Skip desperately needed some sleep, but he had to wait awake and alert. He figured he had about 10 seconds from the time the target left the Corporate Centre and got into his car. It was a short-range shot by sniper standards - only about 300 metres. At three hundred metres velocity was 678 miles per second. So, Skip decided to use a slower subsonic bullet, which was much quieter than supersonic ammo. Filling his mind with these logistical details, stopped any moral considerations clouding his brain. For a sniper, only two factors mattered. Make the shot and make a safe getaway. Skip was tempted to swig down the Gatorade he had with him. But it only offered a quick energy boost so he would have to save it until he was in place and ready.

Mason tossed and turned in bed. So much so that Mrs Land told him to stay still. But he couldn't. As soon as he closed his eyes, he could see mountains of coal with nowhere for it to go. He had sold the electorate on the mine generating much-needed employment. Now it looked as though the thousands of jobs were dwindling. His mind was whirling with many questions. Such as, now that India, Inada's most significant coal customer did not want the Carnegie mine coal, which country would he sell it to? Now it was clear that Chinese coal demand has peaked would the Chinese want the fuel?

Mason got up and went downstairs. A shot of whiskey might help calm him. Then before he had fully realised his action, he was phoning Sinclair.'

Sinclair, woken by his phone, looked at his bedside clock. His fuzzy brain made it out to read 3:10 am. He looked at the name on the phone. Why the fuck was Mason calling at that god-forsaken time? 'Mason, what's up?'

'I can't sleep. I keep thinking about this Inada mess we're caught up in.'

'So you wake me up to tell me that!'

'We have to find out Inada's planned strategy to sell his coal.'

'Jesus, Mason, 'Let him work it out. It's his fucking business, not ours.'

'Don't be so fucking naive. We're business partners in the Carnegie project for better or worse.'

Mason grumbled, 'Sinclair, this is bad enough, but what with the election looming and ...'

'I know all about the fucking election looming. I've got a fucking 3 per cent swing against me.'

'OK, so how are we going to play this?'

'Look, I've organised a meeting with Gupti Jivandra after he addresses the Sydney Miners Club today. Then we'll know where we stand. Now let me get some fucking sleep.'

Skip's watch read 4:57 am. The target would not be arriving in his black Mercedes S class limousine, rego inada1, until just before the meeting. It shouldn't be too difficult to spot, Skip thought. It would be an easy kill to hit the target as he stepped out of the car. But Ossie had agreed to the increased fee providing Skip took out his mark with the media present. So it had to happen when the Inada CEO came out of the building. Which meant Skip had even longer to wait. It also meant he wouldn't take the shot till later in the morning, when it would be much busier, making his getaway much more difficult.

Skip was starving, so he ate the chicken avocado wrap he had

bought the day before. He could kill for a coffee, but that would have to wait. He was feeling a bit stiff in his joints, so he went to the centre of the tower and carried out his daily regime of exercises. Skip did them very quietly, almost silently. Until the moment of firing his rifle, he had to do everything silently.

To keep himself alert, Skip dismantled and reassembled his SR98 in the dark in total silence many times. He timed himself to make the exercise more meaningful. By the time the day dawned, he had got it down to 30 seconds. It had rained a couple of times during the night and, as he set up his rifle on its bi pod, it started raining again. Skip covered the weapon with the lightweight plastic poncho he had used during the night to keep himself dry. He was thirsty and thought about drinking his remaining Gatorade, But he needed to save it to give him the extra energy boost if he needed it. He felt the need to relieve himself, so he went to the far side of the tower and urinated against the bricks.

That was the last interruption to his intense surveillance. He laid prone behind his rifle, where he would remain motionless until the job was completed. He had to forget that itch, ignore the drop of sweat running down his face. As a professional sniper, Skip had to transcend his physical frailties and become at one with the killing machine. He looked through the high powered scope and made a minor adjustment. Then he set up his laser range finder that told him the target would be 298.6 metres away. As he had previously calculated the distance at 300 metres, Skip had to make another small change to the focus. 1.4 metres may not sound much to anyone, but a head shot did not allow for any leeway.

All the big names in mining were there with their eyes focused on the Inada CEO. They included the Chairmen of BHP and Rio Tinto and Regina Minefart, a fat, arrogant, sour-faced woman mining magnate, who looked as though she would be far more suited to serving up meals in a school canteen. They all seemed to be excited about Inada to open up the golden gates to mining in the Jericho Basin. Once Inada's Carnegie mine was up and running, they would all be applying for licences to saturate the basin with more coal mines. So, all the mining big-wigs listened intently to what he had to say as they mentally counted the extra billions flowing into their coffers.

Gupti Jivandra went painstakingly through the process that the Carnegie mine had endured to date. But he felt they had turned a corner. Soon they would have the funding for the mines and the railway link to Bishop Point.

There was massive applause from the attendees, who were mostly CEOs and senior executives in the mining fraternity.

Skip Bott ex-army sniper, stayed still and silent in his nest. The sun was up, and the mercury was tipping the 30 c mark. Humidity was around 75 per cent. Skip felt his sweat trickling down into the bandanna around his neck. He just lay there, his rifle painted matt black to stop the sunlight glinting on the barrel. Skip felt nothing about the shooting. It was like adding the finishing touch to a painting or the words "the end" to complete the story. In some respects, it was like the orgasmic finale of a loveless sexual encounter. It was cold and calculating - the natural culmination of a series of mechanical steps to fulfilment.

Woody Stone arrived at St Anthony's around 9 am. The church seemed to be empty. Woody looked around. He had to distract the priest so that his friend could make good his escape without being noticed.

The priest got quite a surprise when he saw the tall, pale-skinned roofer with a deep scar on his forehead. He had not expected to see the tradesman again. 'Can I help you with something?'

'Not really, Vicar. It just felt peaceful in here yesterday. I thought I'd come back to think things out.'

'Is something troubling you, my son?' The old priest asked quietly.

'Oh, it's nothing you can help me with.'

Pointing up, the priest smiled, I can't. He can.' He added, 'I can help you to meet him.'

Skip looked through the scope viewer. There was some activity going on at the club entrance. It looked as though the meeting was over. The sniper fixed his focus on the access to the Corporate Centre, his finger gently curled around the trigger. All it took was a minute amount of extra pressure on the trigger. That was all the tension needed to end a human life.

More people emerged from the club, but there was no sign of the target. Then a TV news van drove up to the centre. Skip watched, eagle-eyed, as more people trickled out. The target, flanked by security, was one of the last people to leave. The reporters clustered around him, making a clear shot more difficult.'

Skip prided himself on never having taken out innocent bystanders.

The bullet was in the breech ready to carry out its deadly mission. The sniper had his prey in the cross-hairs. There was a momentary window when Jivandra's minders moved away from his side to force a path through the members of the media, to get to the waiting limo. It was the moment the sniper had waited for. All it took was just a little more pressure on the trigger. His shot rang out at the same time as Gupti Jivandra collapsed in a heap as the news people clustered around his bleeding body.

'What was that noise?' the priest asked.

Woody was ready. 'It sounded like a shot.'

'A gunshot!' the priest uttered, alarmed.

'Over in the direction of the Corporate Centre,' Woody added.

'That doesn't sound good.'

'Perhaps we ought to go over there to see what's happening?' Woody said excitedly.

'Yes, offering support is the Christian thing to do.'

As soon as Woody and the priest had left the church, Skip emerged with his big zipped bag and made his getaway undetected.'

With the mining sites, I found a subject matter that carried forth my fascination with the undoing of the landscape, in terms of both its formal beauty and its environmental politics.

David Maisel

Chapter 24

It was like a frame freeze in a movie. All the actors were frozen to the spot, unable to move, some with their mouth opened in shock. Somebody screamed, and that broke the spell. The press clamoured to get photographs. Many were talking on their mobiles, most of them to the police.

Centre security guards moved in and moved the media out, away from the body. They stood guard over the corpse until the uniformed police arrived. One of the officers started collecting witness statements. While the other officer marked off a large area with the ubiquitous blue and white chequered tape.

Ian Rutherford parked his car, went under the tape and approached the body. He turned to the cop nearest the corpse. 'Talk me through what you know, Constable.'

The cop looked at the Pathologist. 'All I know is that when we arrived on the scene, I saw a lot of media types hovering around the body of Gupti Jivandra, taking pictures. We moved them away and put up the tape.'

'And the COD?'

'Cod! I didn't see any fish.'

'Cause Of Death, Constable.'

'Oh that. Well the victim was shot, wasn't he?'

'Was it the neat little hole in his temple and the blood running from it that led you to that conclusion?'

The cop ignored the sarcasm. Ian Rutherford had a bit of a rep for smarmy remarks to put people down. But he was a very thorough pathologist so they allowed him a little leeway.

A carload of detectives arrived. DI Scott Sampson headed the team of four. He conferred with a uniformed sergeant, then he went to see Dr Rutherford. 'What do we know about the assassination?'

'I don't know what you know. But I'm certain the deceased was shot in the left temple from long distance.'

'How do you know he was shot from a long distance.'

'Ah, the wonders of modern technology, Inspector. Some of the news hounds actually have the shooting on film.'

Scott called over one of his team. 'Confiscate any device that that recorded the killing.'

'And what if the owners refuse?'

Another voice said, 'We put a news blackout notice on the incident. Any person from any news outlet that airs the story will be prosecuted.'

Scott turned to the voice. 'And who the hell are you?'

'Senior Sergeant Bill Mollop.' He flashed his AFP ID.

'What are you doing in my crime scene?'

'Taking over. I'm the biggest swinging dick around here now.'

'What's this got to do with the Federal Police?'

'You know the pecking order, Inspector. Political killings are down to us.'

'We don't know it if was a political ...'

Senior Sergeant Mollop stared at Scott. 'Are you going to stand around arguing all day or are you going to do something useful?'

As Scott was about to answer, a bunch of people wearing transparent plastic jumpsuits over their clothes, arrived at the scene. Dr Rebecca Schwartz went up to DI Sampson. 'Take us to your body.'

Scott looked at the senior forensics officer, 'Well, it looks like the whole gang is here.'

'Are you the SOCO Scott?'

The DI grimaced and pointed in the AFP agent's direction. 'The fucking Feds are in charge now.'

Rebecca, having known Detective Inspector Sampson for many years, knew he took being sidelined very hard. She nodded at him. Then the senior scientist called her troops together. 'OK people, let's go on a treasure hunt. If any of you come across the slug, bring it straight to me.' She added, 'And I don't mean a homeless snail.'

Agent Mollop located Scott. 'DI Sampson I want you and your people to find out where the shot came from.'

'Lindfield has very few tall buildings.'

Mollop rebutted, 'Then it won't take you all that long, will it, Inspector?'

Dr Schwartz gave a little chuckle. She knew it was a long-winded way of doing what her computer did best. But first, before she got the victim onto her slab, she needed to find the cartridge.' Rebecca got one of her people to stand by the body. The bullet had entered at the left temple, its trajectory causing it to exit out through the right cheek. It was a bloody mess. Next, Dr Schwartz took a thin telescopic metal cane and held against her model's face. The angle of the rod gave her a rough idea from which direction the shot was fired. It was only a guesstimate though, as, apart from anything else, it did not factor in other elements, such as the wind effect and gravitational pull on the bullet.

She keyed some information into her ballistics app on her tablet. The line of sight and bullet entry angle suggested the shot came from a church building on the other side of Tryon Street. Rebecca Schwartz kept this info from the Feds until she had checked out the location for herself. She left her blood spatter expert in charge of forensics, while she followed her lead. The Google Earth satellite map of Tryon Street showed St Anthony's Anglican Church to be the most likely building for the sniper's nest. She packed up her tablet and took it with her as she headed off to the church.

Rebecca Schwartz pushed the arched church door, which opened at her touch. It was unlocked, so she went inside. It seemed to be empty. She walked down the aisle, to a door off to the right near the altar. Her boots made a noise on the timber church floor. The door opened and she found herself facing an elderly priest.

'Yes. Can I help you, madam?' the cleric inquired.

'I'm a forensic scientist. I suspect a gunman fired a rifle from your roof earlier today.'

He looked at her nonplussed. 'I don't think so. The door to the roof is locked.'

'Has anyone been on your roof in the last two days?'

'Only the roofing men who looked at the turret yesterday.'

Rebecca became animated, 'Can you describe the two men who went up on your roof?'

The priest scratched his balding head. 'Let me see now. They wore workman' overalls. One was quite tall and pale. The other one was heavily tanned; not as tall as the other one.'

Rebecca looked up from making notes on her phone. 'Can you take me up to the roof?'

The priest wore a worried frown. 'You don't think they had anything to do with that terrible murder across the road, do you?'

She smiled, 'I'll know more once I've seen your roof.'

'It was stifling hot on the roof, and Rebecca had left her hat behind. She checked the direction of the shot in her app. There was no significant shade on the roof, so it was difficult to see the screen image on her tablet. Then, using her virtual compass, she worked out the direction from the turreted roof. She could see the Corporate Centre, but it was too far away to make out the details. Of course, the gunman would have had a powerful scope, she reasoned.

Back in the church, she phoned her blood spatter man. 'Leo, connect me with Agent Mollop.'

The federal officer took the call. 'Yes, Dr Schwartz?'

'I think I've found the sniper nest.'

'Really! Where?'

'St Anthony's church - on the roof.'

'Are you sure?'

'The angles work out and so does the line of sight to the front entrance of the club.'

'Where are you now?'

'At the church.'

'Right. Stay there. I'm coming over.'

'Bring someone with you to question the priest.'

'Did he see anything?'

'I think he saw the perpetrators.'

Every news story that day ran with the death of a man outside the Lindfield Corporate Club. After being suitably warned no-one disclosed the victim's identity. Sinclair was watching the article on Channel Nine when his phone rang. After muting the TV, he said, 'Hi Colin.'

Colin Hooper, the Queensland Minister of Police, said, 'I take it you've seen the article about the Corporate Centre shooting.'

'I was just watching it when you rang.'

'Yes, well, do you know the identity of the victim?'

'No. It wasn't mentioned on the news.'

'The victim was none other than Gupti Jivandra. He was shot while speaking to the media, after addressing the Sydney Miners' Club this morning.'

Sinclair almost dropped his phone. 'No! Surely not him!'

'I'm afraid so, Sinclair.'

'Where did you get this?'

'The AFP. A Senior Sergeant Mollop.'

'I need to speak to him. Give me his contact.'

In the meantime, Sinclair apprised Mason Land of the situation.

The Premier listened, aghast. 'You're telling me it was the Inada CEO who was assassinated?'

'As you can understand, Mason, this has to be kept under wraps. If the Chinese get wind of this, they could cancel the loan.'

'Yes. That arrangement is already shaky.' The Premier said, 'Organise an Inada emergency strategy meeting this evening. Make sure everybody directly involved with the Carnegie mine project is present. Now I have to break the news to Inada.'

As would be expected, Mahatma Inada already knew about the

killing and the identity of the dead man. He was known for his cool head in stressful situations, and this one had really put him to the test. He spoke into his office, intercom. 'Get me the captain of our corporate jet.' While he waited, Mahatma went over his options. If the Chinese pulled out of the deal, he had to have another plan in place. He contacted his accounting firm.

Rama Dhowtra took the call. 'Ah, Mahatma, how are you?'

Ignoring the empty pleasantries, Inada said, 'I want all the data you have on Carnegie plan "B".'

We won't have a society if we destroy the environment.

Margaret Mead

Chapter 25

Reggie Murphy went through the file again. She looked up at Tom MacTavish. 'Just odds and ends.

Nothing that will stack up.'

'Well, we know what kind of rifle he used.'

'There are dozens of rifles that fire that calibre bullet.'

'Then there's the motorbike.'

'We're clutching at straws, Tom. The bike, if it exists, may well have been nothing to do with our killer.'

Tom frowned, 'Any luck with getting DNA from the balcony?'

'No. The killer must have been wearing gloves.'

'We'll need the killer's clothes to get any DNA evidence.'

Reggie, frustrated, frowned, 'We're at a dead end.'

Senior Sergeant Tom MacTavish looked at the Commander. 'So what do we do now?'

'The Commissioner is pulling the plug. We're handing it over to Trevitt and his team.'

'Shit! After all the work we have put into this,' MacTavish complained.

Reggie shrugged. 'That's the way it goes sometimes.'

With Tom out of her hair, Reggie settled down to work. She heard a double beep which meant her laptop had received a message. The Commander clicked on the new mail icon and opened up her mail server. The news was from a DI in Sydney that she had dated a couple of times. The message read:

There's been another shooting. This time it was the Inada CEO. A sniper shot him in the head after he had delivered a speech at the Sydney Mining Club. I was working the case until someone from the federal police took over. His name is Senior Sergeant Mollop. It'll be all over the news soon, but they can't name the victim. Anyway, I thought it might be connected to your shooting in Queensland.

Regards

DI Sampson

Reggie sat, staring at the message. Another shooting, this time in Sydney. She remembered what she'd told Tom. She grabbed her phone, but he was not answering. 'Fuck!' she uttered. Then she saw DI Trevitt knocking on her door panel.

He entered, saying, 'So I get my office back at last,'

'Not just yet. There's been another murder in Sydney, and they may well be linked,' she smiled.

'Shouldn't you be down in Sydney then?' Dan asked, genuinely puzzled.

'First, we'll see what the Sydney case can offer us,' she said.

Senior Sergeant William Mollop loved his job. Not only did his work help to build a more secure future for Australia and its global partners, but Bill Mollop felt fulfilled working in counter-terrorism and national security, two AFP key priorities. He was by nature a "field" man. As a Senior Sergeant, Bill was involved with the nuts and bolts of the case. He thrived on being a team leader at the coal face, so to speak. Any further promotion and he would have to spend a lot of his time tied to a desk. That life was not for him. He was pondering such things back at headquarters when his phone rang.

It was Commander Murphy. Her reputation as a hard nose preceded her. Bill had never met the Commander in the flesh, but he knew she ascended the promotion ladder at blinding speed. 'Yes, Commander. How can I help you?'

'I think we're in a position to help each other.'

'Oh! How do you figure that, Ma'am?'

'You've just had a shooting down there. A mining boss, I believe?'

'Who told you that, Commander?'

'That's not important. What is important is that our murdered politician and your case may well be linked. I think we should meet and share what we have.'

'Oh, that's what you think, Commander?' Bill responded, masking his venom.

'Well, it makes sense that we work together on this.'

'I agree. Send me what you have, and if there's a connection, I'll draw you in.'

Smart man. In his position that's what I would have said, she thought. 'Sergeant, I really think we ought to meet and share. By cooperating in this way, I will recommend that you stay in charge of the case.'

The bitch is pulling rank, he thought. 'OK, but you'll have to come down here.'

'Excellent. I'll arrange it with the Commissioner.'

The Embraer Legacy twin-jet performed neat taxiing and came to a stop close to a coal-black stretch limo from the government's vehicle pool. The heavily guarded Indian billionaire got into the Limousine, where he was flanked by two armed guards. Inada's car was protected front and rear by unmarked police cars. Inada settled back in the leather seat as they drove through Brisbane to Parliament House.

Mason paced up and down in his office, unable to settle.

'Can't you just sit down?' Sinclair admonished.

'Jesus. Inada is on his way here right now. Just how in hell are we to explain that we let his mine CEO get shot?'

'Well, pacing around like that is making me nervous.'

Mason sat down. 'Any bright ideas about how we play this?'

'If I know Mahatma he'll be more concerned about losing the Chinese loan.'

'He's going to hit us for a shit load of money. I just know it,' Mason moaned.

We have one ace card to play,' Sinclair stated.

'Oh, and what would that be?'

'The one where we question him about the Indian coal deal.'

'What Indian coal deal?'

Sinclair said, 'Precisely. But he led us to believe there was one.'

Mahatma duly arrived and was taken to the Premier's office, where a buffet had been hastily prepared. It was nothing like the extravagant banquets Inada laid on for his VIPs. But it was the best the kitchen staff could come up with at short notice. Mahatma grinned broadly as he shook hands with the politicians.

Mason was amazed at Inada's calm composure. The three men sat down, and Mason began with, 'Mr Inada we are all terribly saddened by Gupti Jivandra's untimely death.'

The Hindu said, 'In my religion no death is untimely.' He stared at the two politicians, 'However, it is the untimely nature of your security services that contributed to his death that concerns me.'

Sinclair's face went redder than a beetroot.

Mason's hackles rose, but he calmed himself internally. 'This is not the time to blame people and

point fingers. Mr Jivandra was shot by a professional sniper. It's complicated protecting a target from a sniper, despite bodyguards and security.'

'And what are you doing to catch this murderer?'

Land said, 'We have the Australian Federal Police collecting evidence and searching for him as we speak.'

'Then you know his identity, Mr Land?'

Sinclair interrupted, 'We are building a profile of him.'

'Is this the same sniper that killed Mr Black?'

Mason said, 'That's one angle we are following.'

Inada ate a sausage roll. Then he said, 'Gentlemen, I confess I am losing confidence in your ability to protect my people.'

'The AFP is pulling out all stops and ...'

'Mr Premier I want to bring in my intelligence people to work with your police.'

Land stared at Inada, a shocked expression on his face. 'Such a thing is highly irregular and probably illegal. However, I'll run it by ...'

Mahatma fixed Mason with his gaze. 'If I have to cancel this project because of threats to my executive workforce, it will be a breach of contract. And you know what that means, Mr Premier.'

Mason did. It meant Australia paying big time.

Inada, smiled, 'I will leave you to think on that. I have another proposal to get my project back on track. But I will tell you about it in the morning.'

Sadly, it's much easier to create a desert than a forest.

James Lovelock

Chapter 26

'What the fuck!' the police driver exclaimed, his patrol car screeching to a halt, narrowly missing the huge lumps blocking George Street. Stinking mounds of flesh that were later revealed as the rotting carcasses of cows. The patrol car was fitted with a dash cam that recorded a film of the truck ahead as its tip tray returned to its horizontal position. As it did so, the mounted camera recorded the rego number. It was blurred, but the Brisbane Police had experts who could deal with that sort of thing. It was a baffling case, though.

'Who, in their right mind, would purposely spill rotting cattle corpses in Brisbane CBD, or anywhere else for that matter? And what would they have to gain by doing so?' Senior Sergeant Graham Rivers asked his pilot, Senior Constable Sid Marshall.

'I guess you'll soon have a chance to ask him, yourself,' Sid said, as he lined up the twin seater, single prop aircraft, ready for landing on the graded, dusty runway.

Graham said, 'I just don't get it. I've always known Lance to be straight as a fucking die, mate. He's just not the sort of bloke to pull off a stunt like that.'

'Nevertheless, it was his truck.'

'Yeah, well let's keep an open mind about this.'

'Sure, Sarge.'

Jabalooka Station took up some three hundred thousand hectares of intensely hot range-land, most of which was arid and empty. As Sid came into land, his aircraft flew low over a dry riverbed, before touching down at the end of the rough airstrip that served as a lifeline to the people that worked on the station.

Bobby, an indigenous jackaroo, sat waiting for the cops, in a beaten up Hilux. He smiled broadly as Graham approached. 'Hi, Sergeant Rivers. I aint seen you in a while, eh?'

'Maybe that's because you blokes are behaving yourselves, Bobby.'

'There isn't much misbehavin' we can do out here, Sergeant,' Bobby rejoined.

Lance Craig, a third generation station owner in his mid-thirties, watched from the shade of his spacious deck, as his employee drove along the corrugated, potholed, driveway that led up to his homestead. He wondered what the cops wanted with him. Graham would not have flown out to his place unless it was necessary. But for the life of him, he could not figure out what it might be.' He brushed away a bush fly as he watched the old dual cab ute come to a halt. 'Reckon you blokes would be up for a cold one,' Lance grinned, as the cops approached.'

'Reckon I could handle that, mate,' Graham chuckled.'

'Well come on inside blokes and tell me what brings you all the way out here.'

'As they settled back, with their XXXX beers. Graham said, 'Lance, do you own an Iveco Power Star 6700 tip truck?'

Now Lance had more than an inkling what the police visit was about. But he did not let on. 'Yeah. Why?'

'Is that your rego number?' Graham asked, showing Lance a photo of the rear end of his tipper.

The grazier laughed nervously, 'Surely you blokes haven't come all this way to give me a speeding ticket. Not that the old, old girl could top 100 anyway.'

'It's a bit more serious than that, mate,' Sergeant Rivers stated, becoming more business-like.

'Serious! What do you mean?'

'It was caught on camera spilling a load of stinking cow flesh on the road in Brissie. How do you explain that, Lance?'

The farmer faked surprise, his eyes wide, 'How the fuck would I know?'

'You'll have to give a better response than that, mate. The Brisbane Council had to clear up your shit.'

'It wasn't my shit. I have no idea what you are talking about.'

Graham stabbed his right forefinger at the image of the back of the truck. 'That is your truck, isn't it?'

'Somebody must have borrowed it.' Lance looked at the date printed on the police photo. 'Come to think of it it was missing for a few days around that time.'

Senior Constable Marshall, breaking his silence, said, 'A likely bloody story. Did you file a stolen vehicle report?'

'Who the fuck is going to steal it all the way out here? look, sometimes my blokes borrow a vehicle,' Graham said, 'Right, mate, give me a list of anyone who had access to that truck.'

Sid Marshall put on his police issue broad-brimmed hat, got up and left.' and headed for his plane.

Graham caught up with him before he reached the ute. 'Where are you going, Sid?'

'Back to Townsville.'

'But we haven't spoken to Lance's people yet.'

Sid turned to Graham. 'You know it's all fucking bullshit.'

'What do you mean?'

'Your mate knows very well who was driving that truck, because it was him.'

The Senior Sergeant said, 'Why the fuck would he take a tipper full of stinking carcasses to Brisbane?'

'I don't know. It was near the parliament building, so maybe he wanted to make some kind of weird political statement.'

'With dead cattle!'

'Why not?' Sid argued, 'How much has he lost in this bloody drought. The Government doesn't give a fuck about farmers out here

and hasn't offered them any real support.'

Graham said. 'It could be a motive, I guess.'

'A bloody good one that those clowns in Brissie totally missed.' Sid added. 'I reckon he wanted to leave that shit at the Government's front door and got spooked by security guards and the mission went pear-shaped.'

'You could be right.' Graham agreed. 'Look, I'm going back to speak with Lance alone.'

'Can you be objective?'

Sergeant Rivers glared at Marshall. 'Are you questioning my professionalism?'

Sid backed off. 'No, Sarge. it's just that ...'

'Just stay here before you dig yourself into a deeper hole.'

Lance looked up as Graham approached. 'I haven't got the list ready yet, mate.'

'Fuck the list, Lance. I want you to come clean with me.'

The farmer stared at the cop. 'What the fuck do you mean?'

'Look, I get it, mate. You're pissed off with the Government because it's not listening to your plight. You guys are trapped in a prolonged drought, and the Government has not offered any aid to help you guys survive out here. So you decide to leave them a message. Or more precisely a mess. But before you could leave the stinking carcasses and a message you were spooked by parliament security. Your plan went belly up, and you tried to make a quick getaway. But the cops were onto you, so you dump your putrid load and high tail it out of Brisbane. How am I doing so far?'

Lance stared at Graham and said, hesitantly, 'What am I up for?'

'I'm not the magistrate. But I'm guessing a heavy fine.'

Seeing the deep frown on his mate's face, Graham said, 'Who was in it with you?'

'Nobody. I did it by myself.'

'I seriously doubt it, mate.'

Lance shrugged.

'OK mate, if that's how you want to play it, we'll send a police van to pick you up and take you to the Bowen magistrate's court lock-up, where you will await trial. So make yourself available.'

Mason Land had a lousy night He had a couple of Bundy shots before bed, but he was still tossing around and could not sleep. In the end, he resorted to a sleeping pill, which got him some much-needed rest but left him groggy the next morning. Sinclair and Mahatma were already in the Premier's office when he got there. Sinclair looked worse for wear, but Inada seemed refreshed and alert. This made Mason feel even worse.'

Mahatma flashed a Cheshire cat grin. 'Good morning, gentlemen. I trust you slept well. We were all a little strained last night, so I hope we can all start afresh and deal with this situation with cooler minds.'

Mason, unshaven and dishevelled, felt ill at ease, wondering what bombshell the Indian billionaire was about to drop on them.

Sinclair, a bit more together than his boss, said, 'Mahatma, you said you have a new plan.'

'More like a fall-back strategy,' Inada said.'

'So, what is it?' Sinclair pressed.

'After what happened to my CEO, I think the Chinese are going to pull out of the deal. So my board have decided that our Carnagee mine and rail project in central Queensland will still go ahead and will be 100 per cent self-financed.'

Mason could not believe his ears. His mind went from disaster to delight in a nanosecond. 'That is incredible news, Mahatma.'

The mining magnate continued, 'The mine will initially begin on a small scale and "ramp up" to a capacity of 27.5 million tonnes a year - less than half the size of the approved project.'

Mason's rapidly clearing mind realised this would solve many problems, including selling the coal.

Inada continued, 'We have allocated the finance, and we are ready to start.'

This was just the kind of announcement the politicians needed before the election.

Inada added, 'We will now begin developing a smaller open-cut mine comparable to many other Queensland coal mines and will ramp up production over time.'

Sinclair, on cloud nine, smiled, 'It's a brilliant solution, Mahatma.'

But what about the rail link?'

Mahatma smiled again. ' Our proposal includes the involvement of a rail corridor that will require, among other things, agreements with existing users and the operator.'

'What does that involve?' Sinclair asked.

'Your job is to clear any regulatory hurdles, approvals and management plans. This includes a free water license, extinguishing native title and securing access to rail lines. And this has to be achieved very quickly with no drawbacks.'

Mason said, 'I'm sure that can all be achieved.'

Inada stood up. 'Then I think this matter is concluded, gentlemen.'

February 2018

In a hastily organised press conference, Mason Land delivered a statement. 'I have just been in a private meeting with Mahatma Inada, who has assured me that the Carnegie Mine project will go ahead and will be self-funded by Inada Holdings. Inada has the necessary finance ready to complete the project.'

A journalist spoke up. 'This must be good news for you, coming up to the state election?'

'It's good news for everyone. Despite the pressure put on financial lending institutions not to lend money to the project, it has not stopped us. The good news is that the Queensland economy will benefit from thousands of new jobs.'

A reporter asked, 'How come Mr Inada has, all of a sudden, found

the means to fund the project? Especially as he has something like \$16.6 billion liabilities tied up in his \$19 billion assets.'

Mason smiled confidently. 'Inada is going to achieve this self-funding by scaling back significantly from earlier plans. Following years of legal and environmental disputes we can finally get on with the job.'

After a few more easy questions from the media, Mason stepped down, much more confident of his standing in the polls.

The ABC Interviewer turned to the camera. 'Good evening. Welcome to the 7:30 Report. With us tonight we have Joe Fox the Labor Party leader.' Turning to Joe, she said, 'Mr Fox, we heard earlier today that the Carnegie Mine project will go ahead as a downsized model. Surely this is good news for The LNP, especially at this time. Do you think this revelation will have any effect at the polls?'

Fox smiled, 'Well, I don't have a crystal ball. But the Inada project is one area that the LNP and Labor have always been in agreement. We have always supported the Carnegie Mine, and we are delighted with the news that Inada is going to fund the whole project themselves.'

'So, you don't think this breakthrough is going to lessen your chances on election day?'

'I think you are narrow-minded if you think this coal mine is the only important issue for Queensland. Labor is about more funding for schools, private and public; more funding for hospitals, equipment and staff, to name just two policy areas.'

'Now, in the wake of Gupti Jivandra's murder, does Labor support the LNP's stance about increased gun control reforms?'

'Look, we are horrified by the deaths of both Charles Black and Gupti Jivandra. I never thought I'd see the day when such acts of terrorism occurred in Australia. But any gun control reforms need to be thought out calmly and logically, not as a knee-jerk reaction to a horrific event.'

'So, what measures would you put in place to ensure such murders do not happen again?'

Joe smiled, 'That's not my area of expertise, I'm afraid.'

The interviewer said, 'Thank you for taking the time to talk to us. All the best for the election.'

Davion Hawe had just finished judging a grade 5 art exhibition of "Images of the Reef". The teacher had invited the Green MP to pick the winners after giving a talk on the Great Barrier Reef to students in the Brisbane primary school.

He was surrounded by members of the media as he left the school. Davion stopped and smiled, 'I will answer a few questions but only one at a time.'

A journalist asked, 'What's your response to people who say the Greens support the sniper who is killing key people associated with the Inada mine?'

'It's utter rubbish, of course. And that's the only comment I have to make about it.'

A television Journalist said, 'Now that Inada is scaling down the mining project in the Jericho Basin will you support it?'

Davion quickly responded, 'Although a downsized mine is better than the mega-mines Inada initially planned, no mine at all is even better. The Greens are totally against the Carnegie Mine for many reasons. We have always warned this Government that further mining in the Jericho Basin will do irreparable damage to our natural environment. Also, burning coal from the Inada mine will cause further damage to our climate. So no, I definitely do not support it, however small it becomes.'

Adani finance secure with construction to begin - MESCA. <http://mescanews.com/adani-finance-secure-with-construction-to-begin/>

Our globe is under new dramatic environmental pressure: our globe is warming, our ice caps melting, our glaciers receding, our coral is dying, our soils are eroding, our water tables falling, our fisheries are being depleted, our remaining rainforests shrinking. Something is very, very wrong with our eco-system.

Richard Lamm

Chapter 27

The Jericho Basin Action Group (JBAG) consisted mainly of graziers who ran cattle on vast tracts of land with hardly any grass for their cattle to graze on. So perhaps, under the circumstances, the term grazier was not an accurate one, especially during a prolonged drought. Long scorching dry spells, sometimes many years in duration, can break the toughest of cattle station owners. The heavy toll on them is not just physical. It's also an emotional and mental struggle for them to keep their sanity. Although some people might question their sanity for farming in such an inhospitable, unforgiving land in the first place.

Ossie, like the other members of JBAG, had watched his cattle, weakened by hunger and thirst, drop in their thousands. Apart from his substantial financial loss Ossie, like most graziers with a heart, felt devastated as the decaying corpses piled up every day. And there was nothing he could do about it. That was the worst part of the drought for Ossie. His sense of helplessness and nobody in government attempting to offer any relief. Instead of looking after the graziers in his electorate, Ben Gaze, the National Party Minister of Agriculture and Industry, put all his energy into the Carnegie Mine project. Maybe he was the next one in Ossie's sights. Or to be more precise, Skip's sights.

With the election almost upon them, the farmers who lived a long way from polling stations cast their postal vote early. Ossie McCarthy was no exception. Although there was a whole swag of Pollie wannabe hopefuls who had thrown their hats into the political ring, there was really only two choices - the incumbent LNP and Joe Fox's Labor Party. Both of whom supported the Carnegie

mine and all that went with it.' Ossie did not want to vote for the big two, but he knew nothing about all the minor parties that Aussie Democracy insisted would have a fair go. But Ossie knew that was bullshit owing to the nations long-winded and overly complicated preferential voting system. Which meant that all votes would eventually trickle into the big two's camp unless they were free voting radicals that disappear down a tunnel of innocuous anonymity.

Over the years of heart-breaking hardship, and what seemed at times, totally pointless toil, somewhere along the way Ossie's humanity took a hit. He was in survival mode, and that is all that mattered to him. Ossie was not only in a war against global warming and the way it threatened his livelihood. He was also in a fight against those self-serving pricks in parliament who made his life even harder. They were his real enemy and, as such were fair game as targets for his revenge. The politician and the mine boss fitted in that category.

But what difference had it made? True, Inada was scaling down his

operation in Jericho Basin. But the bastard was still getting his outrageous free water licence. Ossie determined to get his message over loud and clear. Which meant upping the ante. Which meant getting together with Alfonso Fernley.

DI Scott Sampson looked across the table at the elderly cleric. The priest seemed very confused about being in the police station. The detective said, 'So, you'd never seen the two men before they come to your church?'

'That's right. As I've already told the nice Ms Schwartz.'

'Yes, Vicar. Now you can tell me.'

'Well, I don't know anything else.'

'Maybe you might recall some other details as you walk me through what happened.' The truth of the matter was that DI Sampson needed something useful to pass onto Bill Mollop. So far, the old priest was the only person who knew anything about the killer. So that was all Scott Sampson had to play with.

'Two men came into my Church.'

'Describe these men to me.'

'They said they were roof repairers. Their names were John and Tony. Tony was compelling. He seemed to know a lot about the trade.' The Vicar thought for a moment, then he said, 'Like I told Ms Schwartz, Tony was tall with a pale complexion. John was shorter and heavily tanned.'

'How old do you think they were?'

'Mid-thirties?' The priest shrugged.

'Fat. Thin. Muscular. Skinny?'

'They both looked quite fit. But then, being roofers, that's probably not surprising.'

Scott had to bring the old man back into line. 'They were cold-blooded murderers - not roofers.'

'Oh! Yes, I know that now. But they seemed to be genuine.'

Scott checked his notes, then he looked at the nervous cleric. 'So, how did these men convince you to let them up onto your roof?'

'They said they were roofers.'

'And you believed them, despite them not having any ID to show who they were?'

'They wore overalls and had a tool kit.'

'Were they both wearing the same type of overalls?'

The priest thought it a strange question. 'When I come to think of it, one wore the denim sort, and the other man wore orange.'

'Did they have a company logo on them?'

'I didn't notice that.' The priest then asked, 'Why is this important?'

Scott ignored the cleric's question.

'So you left them checking your roof. Then what happened?'

'They came downstairs into the church. They said the roof was OK and left.'

'And then?'

'I locked the door to the roof and went about my business.'

Scot stared at the tired looking priest. 'When did you next see this John and Tony?'

'I never saw them again.'

DI Sampson nodded. 'Yet, at some point, the killer broke into the church and went up on the roof.'

The priest sighed heavily. 'But I saw Tony again that evening he was in quiet contemplation.'

'Oh! So why did he come back?'

'I got the sense something was weighing heavily on his soul,'

I bet there was, Sampson thought. 'Did he talk about it?'

The cleric slowly shook his head. 'We just talked about the plight of the homeless. I told him my door is always open to give them shelter.'

'Well it seems that the killers went back to your church that night, so did you hear anything unusual?'

'My hearing isn't the best these days. And these stone walls are very thick.'

Scot nodded again. Then he turned off the recording. Looking at the Vicar, he said, 'I will be back in a minute. can I get you something to drink?'

'A strong black tea would be welcome.'

The DI told a constable to get the tea and stay with the priest until he returned.

Bill Mollop stepped back from the one-way mirror. He turned to Dorothy Staines, an AFP profiler. 'Well?'

The human behaviour scientist looked at the senior sergeant. 'His body language fits with what he is saying. He's either telling the truth, or he deserves an Oscar for outstanding performance.'

So he's a witness, not a suspect?'

'I think he has probably given you all he can. To question him further would probably be a waste of his and your time.'

Bill Mollop turned as DI Sampson entered the secret room.

'Well, do you think he's involved?'

Mollop sighed deeply. 'Let him drink his tea and give him a ride home.'

Reggie Murphy arrived early at the Anzac Memorial, in Hyde Park (the one in Sydney). It was the chosen venue for her and Senior Sergeant Mollop to meet. She had never visited the memorial before, and she found it very peaceful as she walked around the building. Her grandfather had fought and died at Ypres, so it gave her a chance to spare him a thought and silently thank him for his sacrifice.

'Commander Murphy.'

The voice snapped her out of her reverie. She turned to see a middle-aged man with a full head of hair, which she suspected was dye enhanced, wearing a nondescript grey suit. Reggie introduced herself. 'Sergeant Mollop, are you ready for some show and tell?'

He looked at the tall, pale-skinned woman with long ginger hair, 'Commander Murphy, let's walk and talk.'

The afternoon was overcast, with rain expected. But so far it had held off. As the pair walked around the Pool of Reflection, just down from the memorial, Reggie said, 'We have reason to believe our shooter is ex-army and he works with an accomplice.'

He looked at her, 'Anything else.'

Reggie smiled, 'It doesn't work like that. I give then you give.'

Bill said, 'Our man used a church roof to fire from.'

'I read that in the paper. Tell me something the media doesn't know.'

Bill said, 'I think you are right about there being two of them.'

'Which begs the question, why did the shooter expose himself if he had an accomplice.'

Mollop stopped and looked at Reggie. 'What do you mean?'

'With my case, the accomplice secured the premises for the killer. So why didn't the accomplice deal with the priest?' She added, 'From what the priest told us the one who called himself Tony may well have had roof repairing experience.'

Mollop said, 'As I understand it the accomplice was the roof tiler.'

'Which brings me back to my question. Why did the shooter show himself to the priest?'

Mollop looked straight at the Commander. 'Look, this is bullshit. Like you said, the media has already put out this info. Now I'm guessing you haven't come all the way here without something to trade. So give.'

Reggie said, 'We think the killer is a biker.'

'You think?'

'There was an unusual motorbike parked outside a biker's cafe. It was there at the time of the assassination. It disappeared soon afterwards.'

Bill shook his head. 'That's it? That's all you have?'

'I know it's flimsy. We've just got it simmering at the back of the stove.' She touched his arm. 'What I'm really looking for is evidence that ties the two murders together.'

'And that's another guess. Right?'

'Did you guys recover the bullet?'

'It's with forensics.'

'Not ballistics?'

Mollop almost cracked a smile. 'Out head boffin is also a weapons expert.'

'Then I want to talk to him.'

'Her. Dr Rebecca Schwartz.' Bill checked his watch. 'I was going to see her today. So I'll take you there.'

Dredging and Shipping Near the Great Barrier Reef.

<https://www.marineconservation.org.au/dredging-shipping-great-barrier-reef/>

Chapter 28

The Forensic and Analytical Science Centre in Lydcombe provided a specialised technical crime scene support service to all Police throughout New South Wales. Its remit covered criminal, coronial and incident investigations. Dr Rebecca Schwartz and her team achieved this by examining, assessing, recording the collecting physical evidence from scenes and items. Apart from the bullet retrieved from the crime scene, there was very little physical evidence from the Miners' Club shooting. Just a few fibres from the roof of the church and a few spots of rifle oil - CRC anti-rust lubricant. Rebecca looked up from her microscope as Bill Mollop, and Reggie Murphy entered her office. She didn't like the police intruding into her world without prior warning. 'I wasn't expecting you just yet, Sergeant. If you're here about the assassination, my report is not yet complete.'

Referring to Reggie, he responded, 'This is Commander Murphy. She has some questions for you.'

Rebecca eyed the tall Redhead. 'What do you want to know?'

'What type of ammunition was used in the Jivandra murder?'

'A subsonic 7.62 mm cartridge,'

'Why, subsonic?' the Commander asked.

'Because a heavy calibre low-velocity bullet excels for short-range deprecation in close environments.' Rebecca added, 'It's also quieter, even when not suppressed.'

'Do you know what sort of rifle was used?'

Rebecca stared at the Commander as though she were dumb. 'Any rifle that handles that calibre of course.'

Reggie gritted her teeth. She wanted answers, not an argument. 'An SR98, for example.'

The scientist, surprised at the Commander's knowledge of sniper rifles, said, 'Why did you choose the particular weapon?'

'We have an ongoing case in which such a weapon could have been used.'

'Could have?' Rebecca responded, raising one eyebrow.

'As you said, any rifle that used 7.62 ammo. Also, we believe our killer is a highly trained professional, who most likely served as a sniper in the Australian Army.'

'It's possible - even feasible.'

Reggie handed the scientist a manila envelope. Inside were hi-res images of a bullet. 'These pictures were taken by our ballistics expert in Brisbane. As you can see, the markings are obvious. I want you to compare these striations with those on your bullet.'

Rebecca frowned, 'I need the bullet to get an accurate reading.'

'It's locked away in evidence.' Pointing at the photo images, Reggie said, 'So do your best.'

The scientist huffed. 'Well, it won't be ready until tomorrow at the earliest.'

Reggie said, 'All I want to know is did both bullets come from the same gun.'

Bill Mollop was slowly warming to the Commander. Her stern green eyes seemed to judge everything she saw. At first, she had been very snooty with him, but he realised it was her method of defence. It helped her stay distant and alert. Bill could relate to that. When he got close to anybody, he inevitably dropped his guard. From Reggie's viewpoint, her first impression of Sergeant Mollop was someone with a broomstick up his arse. A person who lived a highly, self-imposed, regimented lifestyle. Reggie appreciated that. It helped keep them both in business mode and stopped them drifting off into personal stuff, which would reveal the enormous emotional chasm between them.

As Bill started up his car, he said, 'Seeing as you're staying overnight we'd better get you booked in somewhere.'

'Somewhere close and comfortable.'

'I've heard the Meriton Suites on Carter St are pretty good.'

'What have they got?'

'All the mod cons. Comfortable, private and quiet.'

'And the price?'

Bill shrugged, 'Around the \$300 mark, I guess.'

'It's going to put a strain on the expense account, but what the hell.'

'Have you heard what's happened to Lance?' Sammy said on the phone.

Ossie, entirely taken by surprise, said, 'What do you mean?'

'The cops went out to his place and arrested him for the fucking dead cow stunt.'

'You are fucking kidding me, mate. How the hell did they trace it to Lance.'

'Well, it is his truck. Maybe the cops got the rego number. In any case, they might come after me.'

'Only if Lance talks.'

'Yeah, that's what I'm worried about.'

Ossie was secretly worried that the cops might start taking an interest in him. 'Have you had the cops knocking on your door, Sammy?'

Sam Wallington shrugged, 'No. Not yet, anyway.'

'Then Lance hasn't mentioned you. Look, I'll find out where he is and let him know the group will take care of everything.'

'Yeah. OK.'

'But first, we must call a meeting and raise money for Lance's legal fund.'

'Right.' Sam said. 'I'll get onto it.'

'Keep this between us until the meeting. And get that happening ASAP.'

After receiving that troubling call, Ossie pressed Alfonso's contact.

Alfonso Fernley was collecting kindling from his shed when he received the call. 'Ossie, this is a surprise.'

'A good one, I hope.'

Al chuckled, 'I guess that depends on why you're calling.'

'I'll come straight to the point, Al. I'm inviting you and your lady to a bit of R&R on Straddie.'

'Stradbroke Island!'

'It's the only Straddie I know.'

'When?'

'About three weeks. Let me know in the next couple of days so I can get things organised.'

'I'm very grateful, Ossie. But I have to ask why?'

'All will be revealed in good time Al. Just come and relax and we can mull a few things over.'

'Yeah. Sound's good mate. I'll get back once I've told Ida.'

As Al stacked the kindling by the slow combustion stove, Ida walked into the room. Alfonso looked up. 'Guess what. I just got a call from Ossie McCarthy.'

'Shit! what does he want?'

'To shout us a holiday.'

Ida stared at Alfonso. 'A holiday! Where?'

'He's invited us to have a vacation with him on Stradbroke Island.'

'Straddie?'

'Yeah. All expenses paid.'

'Fuck!' Then Ida said, 'Why?'

'He won't tell me until we get there.'

Ida frowned, 'It sounds a bit suss to me.'

Al shrugged. There's one way to find out.'

'Yes, well I can't just drop everything and ...'

'Have an all expenses paid holiday in paradise. Come on, Ida, let's live a little.'

'I want to know what Ossie wants first.'

Alfonso sighed. 'He said He just wanted us to mull some things over. Come on Ida, why not just take a chance and plunge straight in?'

'Because goats don't do that. The reason they don't fall off ledges is that they show caution before stepping on them.'

'Jesus, don't go all astrology on me about this.'

'As my father was wont to say, There are no free lunches. And that goes double for expensive holidays.'

AL stared at Ida. 'So you're not going?'

'I didn't say that. I'm just saying ...'

Al picked up his phone. 'I'm going to ring Ossie right now and accept his generous invitation. Are you going or not?'

Ida felt the pressure mounting. 'Go by yourself then!'

Al saw her dark look and knew it was wise to back up a little. 'Love, I'd rather share this great adventure with you, so I'll wait until tomorrow to phone him.'

Ida mollified a little. 'And just when is this great event to take place.'

'In three weeks. Ossie will send us the itinerary as soon as we confirm.'

Ida half smiled, 'I guess it gives me time to juggle things around.'

Environmental protection is not a burden but a source for innovation. It can increase competition, create jobs, and lifts the economy.

Chai Jing

Chapter 29

Senior Sergeant Graham Rivers called in at Ulcambah Station, looking for Ossie McCarthy. But he was not around.

He saw somebody washing the chopper and walked over to him. 'Hello, Abelard. Is your boss around?'

'No, he isn't. Why do you want him?'

'Police business, mate.'

'When will he be back?'

Abelard grinned, 'When I go and pick him up.' He added, 'Any message for him?'

Graham shook his head. He began to walk away, then stopped and turned towards the pilot. 'You can tell him that Lance Craig is up before the Bowen magistrate tomorrow.'

'I'll let him know.'

Graham nodded, then said, 'Who was with Lance when he dropped his load?'

Abelard had a blank expression. 'How would I know? I'm just the pilot, mate.'

'So he did have an accomplice.'

Abelard laughed, 'Come on, Graham. You know better than to try and pull that one.'

Feeling belittled, the cop said, 'Just make sure he gets the message.'

For Ida Fernley, Couran Cove was a hidden gem, she would recommend to any couple she knew. But she was not feeling like part of a couple. Ossie and Alfonso were still at the table hatching some kind of conspiracy. It was not right Al and her were supposed to be a couple on holiday. Just because Ozzie paid for the vacation didn't give him the right to monopolise her husband. Her grandfather's words about free lunches came to mind. Enough was enough. She marched up to the huddled pair. Grabbing Alf's arm, she said, 'I've come to steal my husband.'

As they went off arm in arm, Ossie took out his phone and pressed a contact. He waited for a response, then said, 'Go ahead with the object.'

Commander Murphy had not got any further with the Black murder, and the clock was ticking. If it were not for the fact that the victim was a high profile politician, the plug would have been pulled on the current case. But that respite would not last forever. She was on her way to see the computer analyst about her list. Reggie thought to herself, 'It was probably a waste of time. But what else could she do to keep the case alive?' She was snapped out of her slough of despondency by a phone call. It was Dr Schwartz.

'Dr Schwartz, how can I help you?'

'We met at my laboratory in Sydney.'

'Yes, I know that. Why are you calling?'

'I may have discovered evidence linking the killer to both murders.'

Reggie became more alert. 'Oh! What evidence?'

'Well, working on the principle that the criminal always leaves something incriminating at the crime scene, I went back to the roof and went over it inch by inch.'

'And?'

'I found three strands of hair. So I ran tests back at the lab and checked the DNA against our crime database.'

'And did you find a match?'

'No such luck.'

Reggie, deflated, snapped, 'So you're ringing me to tell you've got nothing.'

'I haven't finished yet, Commander,' Stephanie responded, brusquely. 'I phoned an old colleague from Brisbane, and ...'

'Which old colleague?' Reggie interrupted.

'Mary Wren.'

'She's the chief forensics officer on the case.'

'Of course. Which is why I called her.' Touché, she thought. 'Anyway, she had lifted a few hair strands from the quilt the killer had been lying on.'

'And?'

'We have a match. We can place the killer at both locations.'

'Great, but we still don't know whose DNA we have.'

'No, but this is a useful breakthrough.'

Enough to keep the case open a while longer, Reggie thought.

Reggie only had one lead left, one that she had hoped she would not have to use. It showed just how desperate she had become. Approaching a computer analyst, she said, 'How are you coming along with that list of Kawasaki H2 SX owners.'

The computer expert turned to face her. 'I've been checking the motorcycle owners database for our target model.'

'And?'

'There are 3,066 H2 SXs in Australia. 5 per cent of owners is female, leaving us with 2,907. Of these, 74 per cent of males is aged 25 to 45, which accounts for another 2,151. Of the remaining 755, only 57 are painted candy lime green.'

Reggie looked at the analyst, 'Why have you picked those painted green?'

'It's mentioned in the report. A biker saw a green Kawasaki H2 SX parked with the Brissie club bikes outside a cafe. It had been parked there for two days.'

Reggie smiled. 'You've done a great job. Now, all we need is the personal contact details of the owners.'

'I'll get right onto it.'

Reggie felt quite buoyed when she got back to her team. She called an instant meeting and apprised her people of the developments.

Sergeant MacTavish deflated her balloon, saying, 'This is all very well, but we don't even know the bike had anything to do with it.'

Reggie countered. 'I'm aware of that, but once we have the owners' details, we can collect DNA samples and compare them with the hair sample's we have from the killer.' She added, 'I'm fully aware that we may not get the result we're hoping for, but we could get lucky.'

'What if you're right, Commander and we take the killer's DNA. That's going to alert him.'

'Then, what do you suggest, sergeant?'

MacTavish had not expected that response. 'I suppose it's all we have to go on.'

'Yes, it is. So once we've got the names and addresses, you each take a state and contact local police and get them to collect the DNA results.'

'What if the bikers refuse?' DI Trevitt asked.

'If anyone refuses to give a DNA sample when required by law, our members can use any force that is reasonably necessary to obtain the sample. But as we are taking cheek swabs to eliminate them from our inquiries, I don't anticipate any problems.'

MacTavish was not so sure, but he kept quiet about it.

Stuart Correctional Centre, Ossie discovered, was a sprawling prison made up of high-security cell blocks, a prison farm and housing for dangerous sexual offenders who are no longer on custodial sentences. The cattle baron was there to visit Lance before his case was heard the next day. When Lance first arrived two days before, he was allocated a room in cell block 3. There were 4 high-security cell blocks, each comprising fifty beds. Ossie met him in the visitor's area.

Lance beamed when he saw his friend. 'How are you, mate?'

Ossie responded, 'More to the point, how are you holding up?'

Lance shrugged, 'So, so.' Then he said, 'Graham certainly showed his true colours. I even gave the bastard a beer.'

'He's only doing his job, mate.' Then Ossie leant forwards. 'Thanks for taking one for the team. Eddie Ferringdon is looking after your place, and the JBAG fund is covering all your legal expenses. We'll pay the fine, and we all put it down to experience.'

'Thanks, mate. And thank the other guys for me.'

'You can thank them yourself mate, once the magistrate sets you free.'

Mason Land felt more relaxed now that the Queensland voters had returned his party, albeit with a smaller majority, and the Inada project was back on track as a downsized version. All in all, he was feeling pretty good about himself. So why was he bathed in a cold sweat? It made no sense. He had to change his shirt three times a day. Mason thought there was something wrong with the air con. But nobody else complained about it. One day in the Premier's office Sinclair asked Mason, 'Have you seen a ghost?'

Mason replied, 'No. Why.'

'Your face looks white as a sheet.'

Mason looked in a mirror. 'I need to get more sun.'

But that was not the problem. 35 years of alcohol, smoking and fatty foods told a different story. Mason's blood was having a hard time getting through his arteries. His heart pumped faster to help compensate. In response, his body tried to maintain a safe temperature. Hence the cold sweats.

Sinclair looked at his boss with concern. 'You don't look too good. I think you ought to see the medic.'

Mason forced a smile, 'I'm alright mate. Fit as a mallee bull, me.'

Then he grabbed his chest and crashed to the floor.

Sinclair grabbed his phone. 'Doctor, Premier's office, Now!'

That evening, on 9 news, Sinclair announced, 'Earlier today, Premier Land suffered a heart attack and was taken to hospital.'

An interviewer asked, 'How serious is his condition?'

Sinclair responded, 'The latest report is that he's stable, but he will remain hospitalised for a few more days for tests and observation.'

'So, you'll be leading State the Parliament now, Mr George?'

'Until Premier Land is well enough to return to the helm.'

'On another subject, Mr George,' the TV journalist said, 'Is it true that Inada is not building a railway line from Carnagee Mine to Bishop Point?'

'Inada has informed the government that it has made a big change to its Queensland rail plan, to save money.'

'What big changes are you referring to?'

'Inada has ditched plans to build a new standard gauge rail line to get coal out of Queensland's Jericho Basin, opting instead for a cut-price solution using existing lines.'

'So the company is no longer pursuing for its own rail link?' the reporter clarified.

'Let me make it abundantly clear. Mr Inada is not looking to build a new 388-kilometre line from Carnagee mine to Bishop Point for export. Inada is leveraging existing rail infrastructure, along with a 200-kilometre narrow gauge rail line, to connect the mine to the port.'

'Has Inada changed its plans because NAIF turned down its loan?'

'Mr Inada's brilliant new plan gives the company greater autonomy with the project. The new rail plan will be cheaper and allow Inada to be self-funded.'

'Has Inada made this big shift in response to your government's decision to veto any federal loan to support that aspect of the project?'

'Sinclair put on his most worried look. At the moment we are more concerned with the Premier's health.'

Ossie McCarthy sat pondering the map. He used a highlighter to draw a line between North Goonyella and Newlands. He carefully folded the sheet and contacted Abelard. 'Get the Raven juiced up.'

'We're going for a ride.'

'Where to, boss?'

'We're flying low over the Goonyella railway line.'

'For what reason, boss?'

'I'm just checking something out.'

Abe did not push it any further.

As Abelard brought the R44 Raven down to 300 hundred feet and followed the track to Newlands, Ossie recorded the flight on his phone, which he filmed at it's highest resolution. The segment he was most interested in was the newly constructed passing loop, which comprised 17km of track upgrading. Ossie took particular interest in the 11 rail bridges - in particular, two rail-over-creek bridges.

Once they reached Newlands, the pilot said, 'OK boss, what now?'

'We fly back home.'

Abelard had no idea what his boss was up to. Well, that was not his business, and it was better not to ask too many questions. But it did seem a little odd.

After the chopper landed back at the station, Ossie switched his phone back on and pressed a contact marked SB.

Skip was carrying out some bike maintenance in his garage when his ring tone played a short rendition of the Magic Flute. Seeing Ossie's name, he thought it must be another job. 'Hi. What do you want?'

'I'm looking for an explosives expert.'

'Why?'

'I need to blast some rocks on my land.'

'Why are you phoning me about it?' Skip said, his suspicion growing.

'I thought you might know somebody who could help me.'

'Well, you thought wrong, Mr McCarthy.'

'Sorry to trouble you then.'

Skip scrolled down the contacts on his phone and pressed WS. Hearing Woody's voice, he said, 'Hello mate, How's it going?'

'Not bad, mate. But I hope you're not phoning to get me involved in another job.'

'No, mate. But weren't you involved in some explosive shit in the army.'

Woody became wary. 'Yeah, but why do you want to know?'

'The guy who pays me heaps of money for doing shit has got a job and ...'

'Look, mate, I told you, I'm not helping you again.'

'Relax mate. He wants an explosives expert. This time you'll be in the box seat. And that's where the big bucks are.'

'What the fuck does he want to blow up?'

'I don't know, mate. Do you want me to pass on your number?'

'Fuck that! You give me his number.'

Alvin Sheens looked at Commander Murphy's report, then up at her. The large man with a big shaved head held his blank expression. Reggie found the Commissioner's poker face unnerving at times. It tended to be a warning, like the eerie quietness just before a tsunami hits the shore.

Commissioner Sheens stared at her. 'You want police in every state to involve their members on a hunch?'

Reggie girded her loins. 'A hunch is all we have, sir. But if we can match the biker's DNA to that taken from the crime scene, we have our man.'

'Yes. I have already read your argument in the report. And it's too much of a long shot to use up police time in this way.'

Reggie argued, 'But, sir, there are only 57 motorbikes spread over six states and two territories. That means just 8 to a whole region. It won't take the police long to take DNA samples.'

The Commissioner's eyes penetrated her with their cold stare. 'You have one week. And don't make me regret this, Commander.'

'I won't, sir,' she smiled.

Back in the incident room, Reggie handed her team members a list of Kawasaki H2 SX owners. 'Take a state each and contact the senior officer and explain what we want.' She added, 'If anybody questions your authority, refer them to me.' Noticing no immediate movement from her people, Reggie clapped her hands. 'Chop, chop. Get with it and get phoning.'

When Warrant Officer Woody Stone was an Australian Army ammunition technician, he learned to face death in the eye every day. His job was to locate and destroy unserviceable ammunition and explosives. His scariest task was in Afghanistan when he was alerted to a mortar bomb, rigged with trip wire and an electrical switch fastened to the barbed wire. Knowing the other end of the fence could lead to a second booby trap, WO Stone had to search with his hands and a bayonet for anti-lifting traps before he could cut the wires and safely remove the mortar.

The other side of Woody's job was packing condemned explosives with plastic charges and attach fuses. The fuse was fired, and WO Stone retired to a bunker to await the result. He prayed that it would work, because failure to do so, meant he had to go back to the bomb, which was faulty and unstable.

After getting out of the army, Woody was only too happy to leave all that behind. He decided on a reclusive lifestyle in his cabin in the forest. He lived in his self-imposed solitary confinement where he became self-sufficient living off the grid. Woody had very few friends, his best mate being Skip. They had stood shoulder to shoulder on the battlefield, a shared experience that created a great bond between the pair. They got separated when Skip transferred to Recon Platoon and Woody to the RAAOC. Now his best mate was getting him mixed up in all sorts of dangerous, bad shit. But he did need a new solar energy system and, maybe, a new car.

Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth... these are one and the same fight. We must connect the dots between climate change, water scarcity, energy shortages, global health, food security and women's empowerment. Solutions to one problem must be solutions for all.

Ban Ki-moon

Chapter 30

Environmental activist Alfonso Fernley was watering his veggie garden when the thought first hit him. It was not really his idea, but he had modified it. It all began when he posted a simple question on the Green Alert page on social media. The problem was, how would you get the politicians to sit up and take notice about the seriousness of climate change? Members responded with a wide array of ideas, ranging from petitions to more extreme actions, including blocking main streets. Large scale demos, graffiti, etc. The main one that caught Alfonso's eye was plastering vehicles with anti-Inada posters and to drive them slowly to the parliament buildings in each state. Ossie liked the idea but felt it needed more impact. Then the proverbial light bulb turned on over his head.

He rushed inside to grab his phone. Excited by his revelation, he pressed Ossie's contact. He heard his benefactor's voice and gushed, 'Picture this. A convoy of vehicles with STOP INADA messages, driving from Canberra to Brisbane.'

Ossie said, 'I like it, Al, and you can encourage other drivers to join the convoy along the way.'

Alf was still on cloud nine when he told Ida about his idea.

Ida, who was making Rosella jam, wiped her hands on her apron. Looking at Alf, she said, 'It's going to take some organising.'

'It's time to reach out to the gang,' Alfonso smiled.

He sent a personal message to Davion Hawe, who, when he heard of Alfonso's plan, said that as a Green MP he was thrilled to put his name to it and would get actively involved as much as possible.

Alf logged onto Green Alert's social media page and sent a message thanking everybody who had contributed ideas about getting politicians from the two major political parties to wake up. He explained how one of those ideas had developed into a project. There was to be a road convoy from Canberra to Brisbane. Drivers could join in or drop out at any stage of the journey. There would be more details later.

Cops were dropping in on motorcyclists all over Australia. The police explained their mission and most of the bikers, who owned Kawasaki H2 SXs provided their DNA samples with no fuss. A handful put up some mild resistance claiming it to be an infringement on their civil rights, but given the option of having a cheek swab taken and being arrested for obstructing police carrying out their duty, they all opted for the swab. All in all, they had 56 DNA samples, none of which matched the DNA obtained from the murder scenes.

'What happened to the 57th sample?' Reggie asked MacTavish as they had a drink together.

Tom looked at her. '56 samples. I'd say it's a good result.'

'It's not 57,' Reggie stated forcefully.

'At least it puts the motorbike rider theory to bed. Now we can concentrate on ...'

'On what?' Reggie snapped. Then she said, 'Which one is missing?'

Tom shrugged, 'What do you mean?'

She patted the side of her head, symbolically rattling her brain. 'Of course. Why the hell didn't I see it?'

'See what?' Tom said exasperated.

'Number 57 is the one.'

'The one what?'

Reggie stood up abruptly. 'We've got to go back to the office and look through that report.'

Back at work, Reggie and MacTavish went through the list of bikers and where they came from.

After thirty minutes or so, she pointed at the screen 'Carina!' she exploded.

Tom looked at her, a blank expression on his face. 'Carina?'

'The missing bike is in Carina.'

Tom stared at her as she pressed her intercom.

'Get me the Carina police station.'

Mike Camber parked his dusty, mud-caked 4WD near a big shed. The collection of anti-roll bars made his old battered 4WD look like a refugee from a Mad Max movie. Mike was back at the station early because his boss wanted to chew the fat over something or other. It was seldom that a ranch hand had a one-to-one face-to-face with the big boss. Mike had worked for Ossie McCarthy for 12 years, most of which had been lean on account of the drought. It crossed Mike's mind that he might be the next hand to get the chop. Mike dusted off his boots and denim and beat some of the dust out of his old Akubra hat. Then he went to the boss's office, a converted container, that allowed Ossie to work near the action, a couple of kilometres away from his home.

Ossie looked up from his paperwork as Mike approached. 'Hi Mike, take a seat.'

'You wanted to see me about something, boss.'

'That's right. You're a bit of a train buff, aren't you?'

'It's always been a hobby of mine.'

Ossie smiled, 'Reckon you could do with a beer?'

'Thanks, boss. I wouldn't say no.'

'Get us a couple of coldies from the fridge.'

Mike did so. 'So what do you want to know, boss?'

Ossie twisted off the cap of his XXXX and took a swig. 'Do you know much about coal trains?'

Mike took a pull on his ale. 'Ah, that hit the spot, boss.' His brow

furrowed, 'What do you want to know?'

'The type of engine. The route. What sort of wagons etc.'

Mike eye-balled at Ossie, a quizzical look on his face. 'Boss, you can find out all about that stuff with a basic online search.'

'How about you do that for me and print it out. I'm particularly interested in the Goonyella system and the whole process of getting coal from the mines and hauling it to the port for export.'

Mike said, 'If I can use your computer, I can probably do it now.'

Ossie clapped the ranch hand on the back, releasing a small cloud of dust from his shirt. 'That's a great idea, mate. But you'd better have a shower first.'

As soon as Mike left the air-conditioned office, Ossie's phone rang. The call was from Skip's friend, Woody. Ossie was expecting the call, having been prepared by the sniper. 'Hi, Ossie McCarthy here.'

'He said you wanted some work done.'

'Yeah, I need a bit of blasting done.'

'Well, I could be interested, but there's quite a bit of expense involved.'

'How about an initial \$10,000 to get you over here.'

'Where exactly is here?'

'Just text me, and I will send you instructions.'

'Sounds fair enough.'

'Right, give me your bank account details so I can send you the advance.'

Goonyella only existed because the railway existed. It was designed to service the junction of two railway lines, one from Goonyella and the other from the Saraji Mine. Woody checked his phone. The arrangement was for him to meet Ossie at the Moranbah Isaac Hotel in Central Queensland, for lunch. The advance allowed Woody to catch a Qantas flight to Brisbane, then a regional flight to Mackay, where Woody hired a car and drove to Moranbah. Woody arrived there first. It was lunchtime and the place was getting crowded, so he grabbed one of the remaining tables.

A few minutes later the grazier arrived and saw Woody poring over a menu. Ossie knew it was Woody from the image he had received on his phone. As he approached Woody, Ossie appraised the tall, pale-skinned man, who looked as though he would make a good pallbearer. 'I'm guessing you're Woody?'

'And you'd be Ossie then?'

'Yeah. Good to meet you. Skippy sings your praises.'

'Yeah, he's a good mate.'

Ossie smiled, 'Let's get some tucker then.'

Woody went for the seafood platter and a schooner of XXXX. Ossie did the same.

As they waited for the meal, which took nearly an hour to arrive, Ossie said, 'I've booked us in for the night.'

'Well, I hope the accommodation is better than the service here.'

'I've stayed before,' Ossie stated. 'It's reasonably comfortable and quiet.'

'When are we going to drive out to the site?' Woody asked.

Ossie leant forward. 'I didn't get you out here to clear some rocks.'

Woody grinned, 'I figured as much. Nobody's going to pay me a hundred grand for breaking up a few rocks.'

The pair became silent as their platters and beers were eventually placed in front of them. Then Ossie said, 'What we have to do is illegal but necessary.'

Woody grinned again, 'I figured that much as well. You don't get paid as much as you're paying me for legit work.'

After lunch, Ossie drove Woody through Goonyella, a small railway town, to Peak Downs Highway, where a concrete railway bridge crossed the dry Thirty Mile Creek river bed. Ossie stopped his ute and led Woody down the bank on to the cracked dried out clay. The farmer walked up to one of the upright pillars and patted it. He turned to Woody. 'How much explosive do we need to destroy this bridge?'

The explosives expert stared at Ossie. 'You want to blow this fucking bridge?'

'I want to hit the fucking mining companies where it hurts.'

'Man, you must have one hell of a beef with those guys.'

'I have my reasons. Now, are you up to the job?'

Woody grinned again. 'For \$100,000 I'll blow up fucking Parliament House.'

Ossie remained straight-faced. 'So, how much explosive will we need?'

Woody looked around the bridge supports. He turned to Ossie. 'Less if a coal train was crossing it.'

The Grazier retorted, 'There's not much point unless a train is crossing it.' He took out the piece of paper with the notes Mike had printed out for him. '

The dual engines will be either 2300 or 2170 models. It will be pulling around 30 coal wagons each carrying around 73t gross weight. These wagons will have independent brakes.'

Woody rubbed his chin. 'Looking at the bridge, it'll probably hold two wagons at a time. So that's around 120t.'

The grazier turned to Woody. 'So what sort of explosive are we talking about?'

'Military grade C4 would be good. But it's hellishly hard to get hold of.'

'How much?'

Woody shrugged, 'I haven't worked that out yet. But with the weight of two wagons on the bridge, we'll only need to weaken the structure.' He rubbed his chin again and had another look under the bridge. He returned to Ossie. 'There are four main supporting uprights. I reckon a kilo of plastic for each should do the job.'

'OK, I'll get onto it. It could take a few days, so just hang out around here and get a feel of the place.'

Woody stared at the grazier. 'There's fuck all to do around here, mate. reckon I might go and check out the coast.'

'Do what you want, Woody. But make sure you're back here when I need you.'

The only way forward, if we are going to improve the quality of the environment, is to get everybody involved.

Richard Rogers

Chapter 31

Carina police station, a low, white building in a leafy setting, looked more like a primary school than the centre of law enforcement. But it was much quieter than a school and seemed abandoned, except for the officer at the desk. Commander Murphy approached him.

'Yes, can I help you?' he asked.'

'I'm here to see an Inspector Finchley.'

'And who should I say?'

She showed her ID 'Commander Murphy AFP.'

Constable Craven had never met anyone from the AFP, let alone a commander. 'Excuse me, Sir, er Ma'am. I'll see if he's around, he spluttered, rapidly rising from his seat.'

'He'd better be,' Reggie muttered under her breath.

A smile played on MacTavish's lips.

Reggie flashed him a dark look. 'What's so funny, Sergeant?'

'You have to know how to deal with these parochial types.'

Craven came back with a dark-haired man with a moustache. Reggie put him in his forties.

He said, 'I'm Inspector Finchley. Come through to my office.'

After removing piles of forms and papers from the two extra chairs, Finchley said, 'Take a seat and tell me what you want, Commander.'

Reggie leant forwards, her hands on his desktop. 'I want to catch a murderer, Inspector. And I want some of your members to help me.'

'Well, of course we are at your disposal.'

Murphy took a folder out of her bag and opened it. She withdrew a photo and passed it to him.

'He looked at it and puzzlement showed on his face. 'It's a motorbike.'

'Yes, well done, Inspector. It's a Kawasaki H2 SX. The owner lives in Victor Street. We need a couple of your finest to assist us when we go around to his place.'

Finchley stared at Murphy. 'What's the guy's name. I might know him.'

'We don't know that yet. We're here primarily to get a sample of the suspect's DNA.'

Finchley nodded, 'I'll find two officers to assist you.'

'There's one other thing. We need you to hold our suspect while we compare his DNA to that found at the crime scenes.'

'OK. We'll get your suspect to help us with our inquiries.'

'And only my sergeant and I will conduct the interview.'

Reggie could not believe her luck. A black Kawasaki H2 SX stood

outside a house near the end of Victor Street. One of the constables assigned to the Commander drove to the bottom of the dead-end street and parked the police car.

Reggie turned to the constables. 'Make sure he knows it's our legal right to collect a cheek swab of his DNA. Once you have it, I'll take over.'

The cops got of the car and marched up to the front door.

Reggie got MacTavish's attention. Then she said, 'It's going to be cramped taking him back to the station. Organise a prisoner pick-up.'

Skip got the fright of his life when he saw the cops at his door. Putting on a brave face, he said, 'Hello officers. Can I help you with something?'

Cop 1, indicating the motorbike parked outside Skip's house, said, 'Do you own that motorcycle, sir?'

'Yes, why?'

'I need you to give me a DNA sample.'

Skip put on surprised look worthy of an Oscar. 'Why?'

Cop 2 said, 'We're not here to argue with you, Sir. We can either do it here or down at the police station. Which is it to be?'

What was it all about? He hadn't left any evidence behind, so why did they want his DNA?

'What's it to be, sir,?' Cop 1 repeated.

Skip bluffed, 'I think I should phone my lawyer.'

Cop 2 said, 'We are only trying to eliminate you from our enquiries.'

Skip did not believe a word of it, but he capitulated anyway.

As the cops took a cheek swab and deposited the cotton bud in a small plastic bag, Reggie and Tom arrived on the scene.

Having carried out a rego check on the Kawasaki, Reggie had two new pieces of information. She turned to the suspect, 'Mr Bott, we need to enter your garage.'

Skip stared at her. 'Just who the fuck are you?'

'Your worst fucking nightmare if you don't cooperate.'

'Have you got a search warrant?' Skip growled.

Reggie smiled, 'Don't need one. We're Federal Police.'

Skip wasn't sure about that, but he did not argue. He grabbed his keys and unlocked the interior door to his garage.

Reggie soon saw what she was looking for. She turned to Skip. Then pointing at some paint cans, she said, 'Is that the paint you used to change the colour of your bike?'

'So, is it a fucking crime to paint my bike now?'

'It is if you don't register the change with the Department of Transport.' Then, becoming all official, Reggie said, 'Mr Skipton Bott, I'm taking you to Carina police station for further questioning.'

'I've got it,' Alfonso said, addressing Ida.

'I hope it's not catching,' she giggled.

'No. The route for the convoy.' He sat down beside her on the cane

sofa and handed her a piece of paper with the route worked out. Now we have to work out what time we'll be driving through the places on the list.'

Ida looked at her husband. 'Why?'

'So other protesters will know when to join in, of course.'

'What in this day and age. Get someone to make a simple app, which alerts people when the convoy is getting close. They apply to join us, and a code is automatically sent to them. They show this code to someone in a marshalling vehicle and join in.'

Alf kissed his wife. 'You're a fucking genius, darling.' He thought about it for a moment, then added, 'We'll make it available on Green Alert for interested members to download onto their phones and tablets.'

Ida said, 'We'd better find someone to make the app.'

'First I'd better let Ossie know what's going on.'

Ossie was drinking with Eddie Ferringdon in the Paddock Bar, Bowen, when his phone played the first few bars of Rawhide, his favourite western when he was a kid. 'So can you get some?'

'Depends on how much you want, mate.'

'Oh, about 4 kilos - and detonators.'

Eddie pushed his battered Akubra back on his head. 'I don't suppose I should ask you what you want it for?'

'No, I don't suppose you should.'

Ossie's phone rang again. 'Look, mate, I'd better take this.' Ossie said, moving out of earshot. 'Alf this is a bad time to phone.'

Sorry, Ossie, it's just that we have a plan and ... '

'Send it to me, and I'll let you know what I think.'

He walked back to Eddie. 'Sorry mate. Now, where were we?'

'You're after Semtex.'

'Yes. When can you deliver?'

'I've got some in a safe back at the homestead. Drop in tomorrow morning, and we'll work out a deal.'

'Great. I'll be bringing an explosives expert with me to check if it's the right stuff.'

'If you tell me why you want it I could probably tell you that now.'

Ossie grinned, 'No, it's alright mate. We'll drop by tomorrow.'

As Eddie left the hotel, Ossie stepped outside to make a phone call.

Woody answered after a third round of the first few bars of John Lennon's Imagine, 'Yes, Ossie?'

'I'll want you ready tomorrow morning at 6 sharp.'

'Shit! Why that early?'

'We have a long drive.'

'To where?'

'I'll tell you in the morning.'

'Yeah, whatever.'

'I want a lawyer,' Skip complained, as he sat facing Commander Murphy and Senior Sergeant MacTavish.

'We could get you a duty solicitor. But we'd have to charge you first. Besides, you're here to help us with our enquiries.' Reggie shuffled through some papers then she showed Skip a log of dates and places. Fixing him with her steely-eyed gaze. She said, 'What were you doing in Mackay on those dates?'

'Skip held Reggie's gaze without blinking, a trick he had learned as a sniper. I wasn't there. I've never been to Mackay.'

Reggie nodded. She pointed at the log. 'What were you doing in Sydney on these dates?'

Skip pushed the document back at the Commander. 'Don't know what you're talking about. I wasn't there.'

MacTavish said, 'Mr Bott, you may be a good sniper, but you're a lousy liar.'

Skip tried to hide his nervousness.

Reggie smiled, 'You don't think we would be asking you these things if we didn't know the answers, do you.'

'Fuck you! I want my lawyer.'

'Very well, the Commander said. 'Skipmore Bott I am charging you with two counts of murder. You do not have to say anything, but anything you do say will be recorded and used in evidence against you. Do you understand your rights?'

'Murder! You must be fucking joking.'

'Shooting people is no laughing matter Mr Bott,' MacTavish said.

As Reggie and Tom left Skip Bott to make his call, she turned to her sergeant, 'I hope to Christ the DNA comes back as a match.'

Tom said. 'I'll give them a bit of a gee-up.'

A dozen vehicles displaying signs with the slogan "STOP INADA" lined up in the road near the big lawn outside Federal Parliament. Alfonso welcomed the drivers and explained a few simple rules to keep the convoy together and safe. He explained to the journalists present, 'We are not a convoy. We are more like a wagon train in the American wild west. Individual families joining together in a single cause. Our cause is to stop Inada from building their polluting coal mine in the Jericho Basin. And to stop them dredging in the Great Barrier Reef.'

'And do you think your convoy of vehicles will make the government change its mind?' A journalist asked, cynically.

'I don't know about that. I hope that what we are doing will help raise the awareness of people as we pass through the cities on the way.'

'Are you expecting other people to join you along the way?' another reporter asked.

'We welcome people to join us in our mission. They just have to go to the 'Green Alert' website and download the 'Stop Inada' app. Then they will know when we are close to their area. We will stop for a break to allow others to join us.'

A TV journalist said, 'How do the police view what you are doing?'

'We are not breaking any laws. This is explained in the app. As long as drivers stick to the legal guidelines, there won't be a problem.'

'And if any of them don't adhere to your rules and find themselves in trouble with the police?'

'That has nothing to do with us. We are individual drivers with a common cause who just happen to be on the road at the same time. Now we really must get started.'

'Thank you, Alfonso. Best of luck. We hope it all goes well for you.'

Environmental pollution, terrorism, and many other global threats do not stop at borders. We all bear global responsibility and thus need a global identity to enable us to cope with them. We must learn to integrate different levels of identity in ourselves. What matters is not either/or, but both/and.

Klaus Schwab

Chapter 32

Tom MacTavish looked at the piece of paper, Reggie held in her hand. 'Well, don't keep me in suspense.'

The Commander stared at Tom. There was a long pause, then her face split into a wide grin. 'We have a match! We have a fucking match!'

MacTavish stared at her wide-eyed. 'Fuck me!' he extolled, grabbing Reggie in a huge hug.

'We have the bastard, Tom. We have him bang to fucking rights.'

He grinned, 'Time to break up the party.'

Reggie walked in on Skip and his solicitor.'

'Do you mind?' Angela Solace remarked. 'I'm having a private conversation with my client.'

Reggie smiled, 'I thought I'd save you some time.'

'What do you mean?'

The Commander produced the lab report and handed it to the duty solicitor. 'The DNA sample Mr Bott gave us matches the DNA we have from two crime scenes.'

Angela said, 'Yes, my client has already explained that you took the sample from him against his wishes, and you searched his garage without a warrant.'

Reggie grinned, 'You can argue that all you like, because this,' she said, pointing at the report, 'trumps whatever little plot you're cooking up.'

Angela knew there was no argument against DNA evidence. She looked at the Commander. 'If you'll excuse us, I have more to discuss with my client.'

Reggie grinned, 'Take all the time you want. I'm going home. She turned to Skipton Bott. 'And I'll see you in the morning.'

'Did you see the look on her face.' Tom laughed as the Federal officers left the interview room.

Ossie and Woody were travelling to Berribong Station to see Eddie when they caught an item on the news. Woody heard the name Bott used, 'Quick turn it up!' he said.

They listened to the intro. 'The federal police have arrested the man who allegedly shot and killed Charles Black and Gupti Jivandra. We are now crossing over to a police media conference lead by Commander Murphy who headed the team that made the arrest.'

Ossie and Woody both chorused, 'FUCK!'

They listened intently as the story unfolded.

The Commander explained. 'Our theory that the killer rode a motorbike paid off. We tracked the motorcycle, a Kawasaki H2 SX to a house in Carina, Queensland. We took a sample of the owner's DNA which, when compared to DNA taken from both crime scenes, proved to be a match.'

A reporter said, 'Did the killer work alone or did he have an accomplice?'

'We believe he had somebody working with him.'

Ossie pulled the ute over and stopped. 'Jesus Christ! What do we do now?'

Woody said, 'What does she mean the police believe he had an accomplice.'

Ossie said, 'We have to remain calm. How solid is Skip if pushed into a corner?'

'He's a good mate. He's not a fucking dobber.'

'The AFP has more powers than the usual cops, and they're better trained in interrogation techniques.'

Then they heard something that piqued their interest.

In another TV interview, the host of the show asked Angela Solace, the legal representative for the defence, 'Do you think the police have a strong case against your client?'

'My client was forced to give a DNA sample, and the police snooped around his garage with no search warrant. We, therefore, argue my client's arrest was unlawful.'

The interviewer said, 'The AFP claim to have found your client's DNA at both the Mackay and the Lindfield crime scenes.'

Angela responded, 'This has nothing to do with my client's guilt or innocence. This is about the police overstepping their bounds to get an arrest.'

The interviewer looked at the solicitor. 'Thank you, Angela Solace. We look forward to seeing how the case unfolds.'

'As do we,' Ossie commented. He slowly shook his head. 'So what do we do now?'

'Blow up the fucking train while we still can.'

'You'll have to go and visit Skip. Tell him I'll get him the best QC money can buy.'

'What, now?'

'No. After we've seen Eddie.'

'Then we'd better get going.'

Ossie fired up the motor.

Alvin Sheens the Federal Police Commissioner looked at Reggie. 'So your hunch paid off. Well done for that,' he said his expression hardly changing.

'Thank you, sir. I guess we got lucky.'

'It wasn't just luck, Commander your instinct was spot on. He paused, then said, 'Now that we have the killer, the trick is going to be keeping him.'

'What do you mean, sir?'

'Bott's solicitor is crying foul play. So let me ask you this. 'Did you do everything by the book.'

'Yes, sir.'

He held her in his long gaze. 'So nothing is going to come back and bite us on the arse.' He paused a while then said, 'After you got a constable to take the DNA, what did you do?'

'We went into his garage, where I discovered the black motorcycle paint.'

'And Mr Bott was happy with you entering his premises without a search warrant.'

'Sir, under Queensland law, the police have the power to enter premises without a warrant to conduct a search for evidence connected to a crime.'

Alvin Sheens nodded, 'Aha. So the question is who informed the suspect that no warrant was needed?'

Reggie stared at the Commissioner. 'I did.' Immediately she saw her mistake. 'Oh shit!'

'Precisely, Commander, the Queensland police officers have the jurisdiction to carry out a warrant less search, but you do not.' Alvin shook his head. 'Bott's defence is going to have us for breakfast over this.'

'But Sir, we have a solid DNA match.'

'But you only had that confirmed "after" you made the arrest.'

'Sir, I didn't arrest him. I brought him in to help us with our enquiries.' I made the arrest after the match was confirmed.'

'Hmm. Well, that's something anyway.' He shook his head again. 'If only you hadn't conducted the search.'

Reggie frowned, 'What can I do to put this right?'

The Commissioner shuffled in his seat. His haemorrhoids were playing up again. 'Have you found any firearms?'

'He's probably got them stored away from the house.'

Alvin added, 'Get a legal search warrant and turn over his place.'

After another 3 hours of driving Ossie and Woody arrived at Berribong cattle station. The land was as dry as a bone with hardly a blade of grass within 200 metres around the homestead. As the pair got closer, they came to a narrow strip of grass and shade trees, plus a vegetable garden with tomatoes and leafy greens.'

'I didn't expect to see a veggie garden in this drought.'

Ossie turned to Woody. 'It gives us hope. Makes us feel like we still have some control over the weather.'

Eddie approached the pair. 'We got a few rumbles last night. Reckon there might be a bit of rain on the way.'

'That would be good. As long as it doesn't come all at once, mate.' Then Ossie said, 'This is Woody, the explosives guy.'

Eddie shook Woody's hand. 'Good to meet you, mate.' Turning to Ossie, he said, 'Reckon a coldie or two is in order before we get down to business.'

Nobody argued with that.

After the drinks, Eddie took Ossie and Woody to a shed where he lifted a metal toolbox off a shelf. He produced a key and unlocked the padlock. Inside, there were six blocks of plastic explosive. They were individually wrapped and had C4 written on them.

Woody took each one out of the toolbox and checked it over. They were bone dry, and there was no sign of the plastic sweating. He nodded at Ossie. 'It all looks good to me.'

'I'll go and get the detonators then,' Eddie said, going to another part of the big shed.

'Is there enough for the job?' Ossie asked.

'Four would probably do the job. Six, no question.'

Eddie was back with the detonators and 100 metres of fuse wire.

Ossie said, 'I'll take them all. \$1000 each. No questions asked.'

Eddie grinned, 'Ten grand and I throw in the detonators, wire and the toolbox.'

Ossie scowled, then grinned broadly. 'You push a hard bargain, you bastard.'

They both laughed and shook hands. The deal was done.

The Stop Inada road show was on the move and approaching Goulburn, the first port of call. The convoy, with Alf driving the lead vehicle – a Toyota Hilux left the Hume Highway and cruised to Hume Street, which led to the city centre. The call had gone out, and another dozen vehicles, decked out with Anti Inada signs waited in the Belmore Park car park. They cheered as the main convoy arrived.

A police car was parked across the road, but the officers remained in their vehicle. One of the cops was taking photographs. Alfonso expected this kind of intimidation, so he took no notice of it. Instead, he addressed the drivers and welcomed the new people to join them. The Green Alert people took a small break and then hit the road. The convoy drove out of the car park in an orderly fashion, and the police officers remained in their car.

Maxine Markham sat opposite the federal police commissioner. The Public prosecutor had terrible news for him. She sighed, 'I'm afraid Ms Solace has the law on her side.'

Alvin Sheens was incredulous. Do you mean to say that because Commander Murphy led the search, and not the two Queensland police officers present, the murderer can walk away, and we can't touch him?'

Maxine nodded, 'I know it must be frustrating, Commissioner, but the law is the law.'

'Is there nothing we can do to hold the suspect?' Alvin asked, rubbing his shaved head.

Maxine looked straight at the heavily built senior officer. 'I'm afraid not, unless ...'

'Unless what?'

'If you charged Mr Bott as a terrorist, the rules of arrest and search are different.'

'In what way?'

'Under the new security laws, federal police have the power to secretly search a terrorism suspect's home; to enter through an innocent neighbour's property and impersonate people, And they can do this without having to notify the subjects of the warrant, which is active for six months or more.'

Alvin beamed, 'Then that's what we will do. We will charge him as a terrorist.'

Maxine frowned, 'The problem is that terrorism remains a contested term. There is no set definition for the concept or broad agreement among academic experts on its usage.' I have been looking through data about this, and quite frankly it's a legal nightmare.' She paused, then said, 'Bruce

Hoffman of Georgetown University has defined terrorism as "violence—or equally important, the threat of violence—used and directed in pursuit of, or in service of, a political aim".'

'That description fits our guy, So what's the problem?'

'How can you prove he was politically motivated?'

'He assassinated a politician, for God's sake.'

'Yes, but that does not mean he was politically motivated. He may have been someone's hired gun. In which case, he could have been financially motivated.'

Alvin exhaled air. Feeling deflated, he said, 'So the terrorist angle nullifies the arrest and search problem but opens up a whole new can of worms?'

'I'm afraid so,' Maxine smiled weakly. If we go to court, and we

can't prove there was a political aim behind the shootings, they will be deemed merely as violent crimes.'

'Bloody hell, Maxine, there must be some way around this.'

She shrugged, 'If there is I have no idea what it is.'

Destroying rainforest for economic gain is like burning a Renaissance painting to cook a meal.
E. O. Wilson

Chapter 33

Tom MacTavish slapped the search warrant on Reggie's desk. She had been keeping a very low profile around Carina police station. She could not believe she could have stuffed up so badly. To top it all, Alvin Sheens was flying up to see her, and that did not bode well. She looked at the search warrant, which had been signed by a magistrate. 'A bit late for that, don't you think. We're going to have to let the bastard go. Fuck! Can you see the yolk running down my face?'

'Yeah, I know, boss. But we can still turn his joint over and see what turns up.'

'It's a bit desperate, Tom.'

'Aye. As desperate as you with the motorcycle connection. But that paid off. Right?'

'You lead the raid. I couldn't stand seeing Bott's smug face.'

Tom eye-balled the Commander. 'We focus on getting the bastard, not getting caught up in his pathetic games. He'll want you to react. So don't,' Tom said. 'We have the warrant. We go in together. We go in strong. and we take his fucking drum apart.'

'And we go before the Commissioner gets here,' Reggie smiled, for the first time that day.

As the patrol car pulled into the kerb behind Skip's Kawasaki, Reggie Murphy and Tom MacTavish watched and waited. They saw their suspect get out of the police car and walk to his door. The cops waited until he was inside. Then they turned their car around and drove back towards town.

The federal cops waited five minutes, then Reggie knocked on Skip's door.

When he saw who it was, he opened his door. 'Oh, it's you. Haven't you been humiliated enough, Commander.'

Without responding to his barb, Reggie thrust the search warrant at him. 'Read that, Mr Bott, while we carry out a search.'

Skip stared at the Commander. 'You bastards can't do that. I'm phoning my solicitor.'

Tom said, 'Good idea. You phone her, and we'll carry on with what we're doing.'

The federal cops went around emptying drawers and cupboards; scattering things all over the place. As they did so, Skip became frantic because he could not reach his lawyer. He yelled at the cops.

'HOW DARE YOU COME HERE AND MESS UP MY FUCKING PLACE!'

MacTavish pushed Skip onto a chair. 'Where do you keep your guns,

Mr Bott?'

'I don't have any guns,' Skip snapped.

Just then half a dozen uniformed cops came into the house.

'Search this place from top to bottom. Rip up the floorboards if necessary,' Reggie ordered.

'You can't do that?' Skip bewailed.

She got into Skips face. 'Tell us where the weapons are, and we won't make your place look like the renovation from hell.'

'I haven't got any fucking guns.'

Reggie turned to Tom. 'OK, go for it.'

The police took Bott's home apart but found no guns or other weapons. There was a small garden shed, but there were no weapons there either. It was the same in the garage. But the Commander was not ready to give up. She ordered, 'Get a police van to take away the bike.'

Skip's ears pricked. 'You can't take my fucking bike!'

Reggie got close to him. 'Yes we fucking can, Mr Bott. We can confiscate anything involved in the commission of a crime. Of course, if you were more cooperative and told us where you have stashed your guns, we may leave the bike alone.'

Just then, MacTavish approached her. 'Commander, I think you should come and see this.'

She followed Tom out into the backyard, where two police officers stood by a trapdoor, covered with turf. One of the officers pulled up the trap door, and the Commander took out her phone and shined its torchlight into the hole. Wooden steps led down to an underground room with Besser block walls and a concrete floor. She climbed down the steps, and Tom followed. There were shelves up against the wall. A large zipped holdall contained carefully wrapped parts of a very fancy rifle. There were also other rifles and handguns, a variety of ammunition and paper targets; tools for maintenance and modification. Reggie turned to Tom. 'Well, I think we have what we came for.'

Alfonso's Road show stopped near the University of Wollongong, where he addressed a crowd of around 200 students and other Green Alert supporters. Alf briefly outlined their mission and invited others to drive with them to Brisbane where they would deliver their message to Queensland Parliament. As a result of his pep talk, the convoy's numbers swelled to forty vehicles. But the more extensive the road train became, the more significant the parking problem. A detail not overlooked by the police. The nearest place they could park near to the university was the TAFE college car park. But they soon drew the attention of a security officer who told them they had to move on. Alf

said they would be gone in thirty minutes, but the guard contacted the police. By the time the convoy drivers had returned to their vehicles, each one had an infringement notice tucked behind a wiper blade. They had each been hit for \$250. Alf decided it would be best to let the cops know their intentions up front. He would put it to the test in Gosford, their next port of call. But it was not that simple. Ida pointed out that informing the cops of

their plans would indicate they were travelling in a convoy.

That evening, Alfonso addressed the protesters, gathered around a camp-fire off the road near Gosford Quarries. 'As there are now more than 40 vehicles involved in our road train, safety has to be our watchword. So we need to follow certain rules when travelling in a group. These guidelines are listed on the Green Alert app, but I need to go over them with you.'

There was a lot of chatter in the group, so Alfonso banged a saucepan with a metal spoon. 'I know this stuff is boring, but it is necessary.' Having got the attention of the anti-Inada activists, he said. 'Everyone in the group has to drive with their lights on. We have to operate at the speed of the slowest vehicle or within the speed limit, whichever is lower. We have to leave enough distance between cars so faster vehicles can safely overtake one car at a time. No tailgating in the convoy! Alf emphasised. He added, 'If a semi-trailer is slowly gaining on you, make sure there is plenty of room between you and the vehicle in front for it to slip in. Also, we need a rearguard driver to display a sign warning they are coming up to a convoy. Thanks for listening.'

Ida grabbed her husband, 'So we are now officially a convoy?'

'I think it will save a lot of trouble.'

With Skip Bott back in police custody, Commander Murphy faced the microphones at a hastily organised news conference. Looking out at the large group of TV, radio and newspaper journalists. She announced. 'The Australian Federal Police, with the help of officers from Carina, have arrested and charged a local man with the murders of Charles Black and Gupti Jivandra. Now I will take questions one at a time.'

'Robert Savage, Radio Carina FM. Is this the same man that you released this morning?'

'Yes, it is. Next question.'

Robert interrupted, 'This is a two-part question.'

'Then you should have emphasised that. Next.'

Celia Cameron, 9 News. 'Why did you release the suspect then immediately re-arrest him?'

Reggie remained calm. 'We discovered a technicality that could have caused problems for our case. So we had to let the suspect go.'

Thomas Jordan, local ABC, 'So by re-arresting the offender, you got a second bite of the cherry, so to speak?'

Reggie smiled, 'I'm not sure if that was a question. However, we served a search warrant on the suspect and found several firearms and ammunition on the premises. This, along with forensic evidence, put our man at the scene of both crimes.'

There was a barrage of other questions. Reggie took three more, then wrapped the media conference up for the day.

Davion Hawe faced the interviewer. 'In answer to your question, 'The fact that 160 Stop Inarda vehicles are headed through the Gold Coast on their way to Brisbane and the amount of support they are receiving should give politicians who support the Carnagee mine project pause for thought.'

Most Australians do not want this mine built. And if we truly lived in a Democracy, the major Political parties would heed their wishes.'

The 7:30 Report interviewer said, 'So you support this mega convoy, which is still swelling in numbers?'

'I support the right of people to get their message over in a peaceful protest.'

'The New South Wales police cited a massive traffic hold-up as the convoy travelled through Coffs Harbor, where the Pacific Highway goes through the city. It caused other drivers a great deal of anger and frustration. How can that be called a peaceful protest?'

Davion responded, 'The NSW traffic police said they were surprised that there had been no reports of accidents; not even a speeding fine and that the drivers had mostly been behaving responsibly as they drove through the city on the Pacific Highway.'

The interviewer smiled, 'Since crossing over the border into Queensland, the convoy numbers have doubled. This presents a far greater problem for the police in Queensland. So perhaps it's time for Alfonso Fernley to pull the plug.'

'I can't speak for Alfonso about that. But if they make it through to Queensland Parliament, I will be there to welcome them.'

'Davion, the Queensland traffic police have said, If many more people join in with the convoy they will be forced to shut it down. Doesn't Mr Fernley have enough vehicles in his Road show?'

'You'd have to ask him that. But if that means the police will let the convoy continue, with its current numbers, to its goal unhindered, I see that as a fair compromise.'

'Would you ask him, on air, right now, to do that?'

Davion smiled, 'Even if he agreed to this compromise, it's not that simple. anti-Inada people are already waiting to join the procession, and they have the right to be a part of it. Although on the face of it, it may seem like an olive branch, it could cause dissension in the ranks and spoil what has so far been peacefully achieved. I think the convoy has to progress naturally without limiting its numbers if it is to reach its goal.'

'Thank you, Davion, for your considered thoughts on this matter.'

While eating lunch, back in Moranbah at the Nebo Hotel, Woody said, 'Looks like they got poor old Skip bang to rights this time.'

Ossie tried not to show the concern he felt. 'Look, I know you said he is solid under pressure, but ...'

Woody leant towards the grazier. 'I told you he's not a dobber.'

'I understand that. 'But who knows how anyone will react under tremendous pressure. Skip is facing life imprisonment. How do you know what he'll do to get a lighter sentence?'

Woody shook his head. 'We were the best army buddies before we went our own different ways. And that means something.'

'Well I got him into this, so I need to give something to help him in his resolve to stay silent.'

'What do you suggest?' Woody, said between mouthfuls.

'Something to sweeten the pot. 'A \$1,000,000 bucks could buy Skip a few privileges.'

Woody's eyes went wide. 'A fucking million bucks. Are you

serious?'

'Never been more so.'

'Jeez mate, that's fucking huge.'

'You'll have to visit him and tell him before his trial.'

'What about our project?'

'I have to get some details. So we've got a couple of days up our sleeve.'

'I'll need more time than that, Ossie.'

Ossie fixed his stern brown eyes on Woody. 'OK, I'll give you seven days, but make sure you get to see Skip.'

As the road train, which had now swelled to 200 vehicles, travelled on the M1 into Brisbane many other road users beeped their horns, which was a popular way of offering moral support. Pedestrians also acknowledged the protesters, as they made their way into the city. There were also negative responses to the road train, those who accused the Green Alert people of causing unnecessary traffic congestion. Many other people, who supported the mine project either gave verbal abuse and, or rude gestures to show their feelings on the matter. The police were also keeping a close eye on the big convoy.

Alfonso had spoken to the head of Brisbane traffic police, and after

a discussion of how to handle the event, both parties agreed to have the vehicles in the convoy park legally at Wilson parking on Margaret Street. Alfonso phoned The Wilson parking head office and spoke to a lady who listened to his plan. Alfonso said he would pay for all the vehicles to stay in the car park overnight. The lady pointed out it was an unusual request, but as he was willing to pay upfront through online banking, she would accommodate it. As it was only \$10 for each vehicle, most drivers paid Alfonso back. But he did not make it compulsory. With their cars parked safely for the night the, "Stop Inada" people slept in them, ready for the demo the next day.'

I. Introduction and Summary - wanganjagalingou.com.au. <http://wanganjagalingou.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Request-for-Urgent-Action-by-Wangan-and-Jagalingou-People-to-CERD-31-July-2018.pdf>

China will soon emit more greenhouse gases than America, but its regime knows if it caps aspirations there will be a revolution.

James Lovelock

Chapter 34

Skip watched as Sergeant MacTavish set up the recorder in the interview room. It sounded so much better than the interrogation chamber, Skip mused. Then he saw Commander Murphy enter.

She sat down beside MacTavish. 'Mr Bott, were you John or Tony?'

Caught by surprise, he said, 'What are you on about?'

She looked at the prisoner's statement. 'The Vicar of St Anthony's church said you called yourselves John and Tony. He said Tony was tall and pale. John was shorter and deeply tanned. The priest also mentioned that Tony had a scar on his forehead. So I guess you were John.'

Skip shrugged, 'Guess away. I'm not saying anything else until my brief gets here.'

'We know you have an accomplice, so who is he?'

Skip remained silent.

Reggie said, 'Mr Brinson also gave the same description of the man who hired his flat in Mackay. So this man was your accomplice in both murders.'

Skip remained silent.

'We will find this man. But if you help us, we may be able to help you.'

Just then Angela Solace swept into the room. 'I wish to speak with my client alone, Commander.'

As the federal police officers, got up and left, Reggie said, talk some sense into your client, and we will reconvene in 30 minutes.'

With the police gone, Angela fumbled around in her briefcase and extracted her notes. 'Looking straight at her client, she said, 'What did they mean about talking sense into you?'

'Oh, they want me to give up my friend.'

'And you refused?'

'Of course. I'm not a fucking dobber.'

'A noble stand, Mr Bott, but perhaps not the most sensible one. The police have a description of your accomplice. It's only a matter of time before they haul him in. Perhaps you should think about looking after yourself.'

Skip turned on Angela. 'You know nothing about comradeship between brothers in arms.'

'That's true, Mr Bott. But right now you're facing life imprisonment, and you need to do anything that can shorten that sentence.'

Skip said, 'I agree, that's why Kenneth Barrington QC is going to represent me in court.'

Angela looked at Skip, wide-eyed. 'I haven't heard anything about that.'

'That's because you don't need to know.'

'What do you mean?' Angela responded, tersely.

'I don't need your services any longer, Ms Solace.'

When Commander Murphy and Senior Sergeant MacTavish re-entered the interview room, they found Skip alone. 'Where's your solicitor, the Commander queried?'

Skip looked up at the detectives. 'I fired her.'

'That wasn't exactly a brilliant move, Mr Bott. Who's going to defend you now?'

Skip puffed out his chest. 'Kenneth Barrington QC.' he said with a smirk. He added, 'So I won't be answering any more questions until he gets here.'

Reggie knew who Kenneth Barrington was. He was something of an expert when it came to the psychological effects of war on ex-military personnel. But he was very expensive. So who was paying Skip Bott's legal bills? Could it be the person who paid for the kills? She wondered. Commander Murphy responded, 'That, of course, is your right. But you're not doing yourself any favours. Being non-cooperative could make the charges against you even worse.'

'I'll take my chances.'

MacTavish, on the same page as the Commander, said, 'So Skip, who's paying your legal bills? It has to be someone with deep pockets to afford the likes of a top Sydney QC.'

Skip shrugged. 'Well, Tom, I guess you'll have to ask my new brief.'

Skip knew who was paying his bills, but he was not about to let on. Woody had laid out the deal, and Skip was happy with it. Kenneth Barrington was part of that deal.

Protesters wearing Adani masks and other forms of fancy dress, holding up Coral not Coal colourful banners, generated a carnival atmosphere. The police in riot gear made sure there was a stand-off between ranks of Pro-Inada and Stop Inada demonstrators outside Queensland Parliament. George St was swollen with people who had travelled to Brisbane to be part of the Stop Inada campaign. Both sides of the argument kept a respectful distance from each other, as the police tried to keep George Street a right of way for non-involved pedestrians.

The protest was at times loud - with a group of pro-Inada demonstrators chanting "INADA MEANS JOBS". The Green Alert supporters countered with. "STOP INADA! SAVE OUR WORLD".

'It's a corrupt deal!' said Davion Hawe, who had joined Alfonso on a makeshift platform outside the Legislature building. He continued, 'Every thinking Australian knows this, except Labour and the LNP, who have trashed land rights, trashed the Great Barrier Reef and polluted the Great Artesian Basin with their foul mines.'

There was massive applause from the swelling crowd.

'Sinclair George needs to wake up to the reality that coal power belongs to the Victorian Industrial Age, and coal pollution is helping to destroy this world. But he's just interested in making deals with the greedy coal barons for his own selfish ends.'

The protesters applauded, yelled and chanted as the supporters

waved their distinctive red, white and black banners displaying the diamond-shaped motif.

Like many of the protesters, Davion wore a Red T-shirt with the words "STOP INADA". He said, 'We're fast approaching the Federal Election and, today with your help, we are sending the LNP and Labor a strong message. Kill the Inada deal and get serious about clean alternative energies.'

More cheers from the crowd.

'Let us get behind Michael Burrugoo and the Kimala/Jinnamoora people and demand that this crooked government restores their Native Title in the Jericho Basin.'

More applause and chanting.

'And we demand that this recalcitrant Government puts real funding into repairing the Great Barrier Reef.' Davion paused and looked out at the mass of supporters, many of them wearing Green Alert T-shirts and waving anti-Inada signs. 'Labor has a real chance in this election, but we will only support them if they get off the fence about Inada and kill the whole corrupt deal. Otherwise, they will be sidelined on this whole issue.'

Next, Alfonso took the microphone, to huge applause. 'Everyone who is here, whether from our hugely successful road train or by other means are here because they feel passionate about a clean energy future for their children. But we also feel fanatical about what we are doing. We have had enough with government climate deniers, like Sinclair George, dragging their heels behind the rest of the world at the expense of the next generation of Australians. We'll show the LNP this at the election. But for now, we want to hear what Mr George is going to do about representing the people

of this great nation to put things right. And I challenge him to come here now and explain why his deal with Inada is going to impact negatively on our children and their children to come. Let him explain why coal is more important than Australian health and lives.'

More huge applause and STOP INADA chanting.

The contingent from the pro-Inada Jobs lobby, also out in force and growing, waved their INADA MEANS JOBS at motorists, eliciting the occasional supportive honk of the horn.

There was massive applause from the anti-Inada demonstrators as Michael Burrugoo walked up to the podium. He began, 'I am here today representing the Kimala/Jinnamoora people. And I am here today to report a crime. So, all you cops out there do your job and arrest Mason Land, Sinclair George and all those other crooks who have stolen our land from us. The United Nations has looked into our case and states that Australia, by failing to protect our culture, cultural resources, and sacred sites, is violating its obligation to eliminate racial discrimination against Indigenous peoples.'

More loud applause and chanting.

'We demand that no part of our ancestral homelands is compulsorily acquired or transferred to Inada and that our native title rights and interests are not extinguished, without our free, prior, and informed consent. Furthermore, we demand that all permits and approvals for the Carnagee Coal Mine are immediately suspended and a full review is conducted in collaboration with our people of the violations of our right to free, prior, and informed consent, and alternatives are identified to the irreversible destruction of our lands.'

The applause became even louder.

Michael Burrugoo continued, 'The Kimala/Jinnamoora Land Council demands that the development of the Carnagee Coal Mine, or any other development project on our ancestral homelands, is prohibited in the absence of good faith negotiation and our free, prior, and informed consent obtained through our own decision-making processes.

We further demand that no public money is used to support the development of the Carnagee Coal Mine, or any other development project on our ancestral homelands, in the absence of good faith negotiation and our free, prior, and informed consent obtained through our own decision-making processes. We take these measures to fully and effectively ensure that our rights to own, control, develop, and use our ancestral homelands are adopted and implemented.' Michael paused then said, 'Thank you all here today for standing with us in this difficult but crucial fight.'

And so the day went on.

The two leading 2300 class diesel locomotives left the Gregory Thermal Mine at 6:40 am, hauling 110 fully laden coal wagons along the narrow gauge track. Its destination was the port of Bowen, where the coal would be loaded on enormous bulk carriers for export. The engineer, Gary Tulk, a big built man, known as Hulk by his mates, had driven most of the Horizon trains on the new Goonyella railway network, which had taken hours off the previous slow journey to the coast. Billy Spiffel, the Hulk's offsider looked out at the miles of track ahead. Apart from the train movement, everything seemed still and lifeless. The air-conditioned cab protected the drivers from the scorching heat that heralded another stifling day.

As the train trundled along past Foxleigh and German creeks, Billy went on about the ball games at the weekend. The Hulk listened to his mate, whom he called Verbal, on account of his constant one-sided conversation, which the big man called verbal diarrhoea. Hulk was content just enjoying the silent solitude, and there were times when he could willingly have throttled his offsider, to keep him quiet. But he would have missed his company sometimes during the long journey,

Woody swatted a few bush flies away from his face as he positioned the C4 at strategic points under the bridge. He figured four blocks of explosive would do the job, but six would make sure the bridge crashed onto the Thirty Mile Creek cracked clay that was baked by the sun. He inserted the wire connections and walked back to where Ossie was waiting. Woody preferred radio controlled C4 explosions, but Eddie only had the wired type. Woody inserted the six detonator connections into the hand-held device, which had a red button for detonation.

Ossie said, 'So, is it all set then?'

Woody grinned, 'Yeah, already to blow.' He added, 'I just hope your contact got the timing right.'

Ossie smiled, 'These trains run at different times each day, so it's not easy to work out a precise time.'

'Yeah, but can we rely on your source's info?'

'He just rang me to say the train is approaching Moranbah and should be with us in around two hours.'

Woody turned to the grazier. 'What reason did you give him for our interest in the timetable?'

'We're just train enthusiasts, and we want to get close up and personal with those huge 2300s.'

'That much is true,' Woody grinned.

Woody was musing over what to do with his \$100,000 windfall as he waited for the coal train to cross the bridge. As he sat in the shade of a big gum tree, Woody saw crossing the bridge as a watershed moment in his life. In the army, he had blown up all sorts of shit, but by sabotaging the coal train, he will have crossed a bridge which made him a terrorist. And for what? Other than \$100,000. He needed to hear Ossie's justification for causing the disaster. Feeling this angst, Woody walked over to where Ossie sat. Looking down at the wealthy grazier, he sighed, 'Why are we doing this, mate?'

Ossie, jerked from his thoughts, reacted, 'What do you mean?'

'OK, I get that you want revenge against Inada. But the coal doesn't even come from the Carnagee mine. And another company, Horizon, owns the trains that carries the coal from the mine. So what the fuck does that have to do with Inada?'

'Ossie stared at Woody. 'You're not having second thoughts, are you? Because if you just give me the detonator and I'll happily press the fucking button.'

Woody retorted, 'Look mate I'll happily take my fee for this job, but just tell me where you see Inada fitting into this.'

Ossie responded, 'It's a fucking message. A warning about what will happen to their trains, once they open up their mine.'

'A message from who? The Government won't even know who did this unless you're planning to say you represent some bullshit activist group against Inada.'

Ossie snapped, 'Just give me the fucking detonator and piss off.'

'Fuck you mate,' Woody growled taking the detonator with him.

Ossie ran after the demolition expert and lunged at him to grab the detonation device. Somehow, in the struggle that ensued, somebody accidentally pressed the red button. There was a frozen moment when both saboteurs realised what had just happened. Then Woody yelled 'TAKE COVER!' just as the bridge exploded showering the nearby creek bed with jagged pieces of steel

and chunks of stone and concrete. The noise was deafening, leaving a hollow ringing in Woody's ears. So much so that he could not hear the approaching train. Disorientated, Woody looked around. He saw Ossie, but the man was not moving. Woody yelled out Ossie's name, but there was no reply. Scrambling over the twisted steel, concrete rubble and broken timber Woody shook Ossie, who, suffering from a nasty gash on his head, was in a half-conscious state.

Hulk could only see a cloud of sand and dust ahead. 'What the fuck's that?' He said to Verbal, who for once was speechless. As the dust cleared, his eyes stood out on stalks as he saw the massive gap ahead. Instinctively he slammed on the brakes. But with 110 wagons holding over 8000 tonnes of coal rolling forwards, there was no way the two 2300 class diesel power plants could stop in time. The locked wheels created a deafening screeching noise, as showers of sparks flew out from the tracks.

As the screeching engines approached the end of the track, Woody gathered his wits and hauled the injured grazier to relative safety.

The scene that happened next was indelibly printed on Woody's mind. The lead diesel seemed to ride on air as it ran off the end of the line. To Woody's mind, it seemed as though it was hovering in mid-air forever. But gravity had other ideas, and the first of the 2300 class locomotives plunged into the dried up 30 Mile Creek, pulling the rest of the snaking train behind it.

Hulk and Verbal might have had a chance of survival if it were not for the horrifying fact that the other engine and wagons, each hauling over 100 tonnes of coal, came crashing down on top of them.

Woody stared wide-eyed. 'FUCK!' was all he could manage.

The same sentiment was shared by the light plane pilot flying over the derailment scene. Mel Williams could not believe the pile of tangled wreckage covered in coal on the Thirty Mile Creek bed. He saw a ute leaving the scene, but he couldn't make out the details. The pilot quickly got on his radio and reported the disaster.

Climate change is an economic, public health, and environmental issue that we have a moral responsibility to address.

Brad Schneider

Chapter 35

Kenneth Barrington QC stood up to face the selected panel and make his opening remarks. 'Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury this is a serious case, and for several reasons. The defendant served as a sniper in the Australian Army in Afghanistan. Like many young veterans, he found the transition back to civilian life extremely challenging. This is especially so when coupled with one or more of the well-publicised problems faced by veterans, including mental health issues, skills translation and the stigma surrounding their military service. Also, there are several myths regarding the apparently inevitable transition from military service to a life of crime. These are, at best, unhelpful. Two of the most essential things a soldier has is mate ship and a sense of being part of a team. The army sniper does not have such luxuries when he or she is lining up on a target. They are alone and separated from their comrades. They carry out their duty in isolation. Many ex-army snipers say that to carry out their task, they and their rifle become one machine with its only purpose being to hit its target. There is no feeling, physically or emotionally. There is just them and their prey.'

Kenneth paused, then said, 'Ladies and gentlemen of the Jury this does not excuse the defendant for murdering two people. This trial is not about guilt or innocence. The defendant is guilty of these

criminal acts, and there is no argument about that. But we owe it to both the defendant and his victims to find out what led him to carry out these criminal acts. One thing you need to bear in mind regarding the level of guilt to be ascribed to the defendant is that the military is about death and destruction. It takes young civilians off the street and turns them into professional killers. And, whether we like it or not that is the long and short of it. The main problem occurs when these trained killers have to fit back in civvy street, with jangled nerves and emotionless minds. The defendant is one such person, and it is sometimes difficult to see who the victims are here. Is he just the perpetrator or is he also a victim of society? That is for you to decide.'

Rachel Coombs, appearing for the Prosecution, gave her opening remarks. 'Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury we are faced with specific facts in this case. The defendant shot and killed men with a sniper's rifle. He did so knowing full well what he was doing. The Defence told you that the defendant was psychologically damaged by his wartime experience. That he is as much a victim of his crimes as the innocent men he brutally murdered.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Jury, we do not know the state of the defendant's mind when he carried out these heinous acts. We do not know if he had a skewed sense of reality, but we do know he was able to ride a motorbike long distances to commit his crimes. We do know that he chose the locations to carry out his murders. We know he had the skill, discipline and accuracy to hit and kill his target a thousand metres away. He also had the wherewithal to leave the scene undetected, covering his tracks. If it were not for the astuteness of the forensic scientists who were able to extract a sample of his DNA at each crime scene, that the defendant would most likely not be standing before you today. So I think we can rule out mental diminishment as a mitigating factor in this case. Rachel smiled, 'I'm sure you good people will be able to see through the Defence's ploy.'

Justice Cromarty said, 'Will the Defendant now rise.' Once Skip Bott was standing, he said, 'Do you plead guilty or not guilty to the charges levelled against you.'

Kenneth held his breath. Sometimes desperate defendants changed their guilty plea at the last moment.

The silence was palpable. Then Skip uttered, 'Guilty, your Honour.'

The QC could breathe again.

The judge addressed Barrington QC. 'This will certainly speed up the process. But what do you hope to gain by having a jury trial?'

'Your Honour, my client is guilty of the crimes, but our case will show that he is not guilty by reason of insanity.'

The judge looked over his glasses at the QC. 'Does your client realise that by using the NGRI plea, if he is successful, will result in his being committed to a psychiatric facility for an indeterminate period.'

'He does, your Honour.'

'Very well, the court accepts the plea.'

The Prosecution was unhappy. The police were expecting a not

guilty plea. Owing to Bott's strict military sniper code, the prosecution lawyer was ready to paint him as a killing addict, a perfectionist who only felt satisfied when he had a target in his sights. But Kenneth, having circumvented all police and forensic evidence, had turned the trial into a battle of expert witnesses. It was a risky gamble because the outcome of the Prosecution relied upon the Jury struggling with understanding much of the expert witnesses' explanations. But an innocent plea would have played right into the AFP's hands. Ironically, it was Commander Murphy's cast iron

case against Skipton Bott, that made him take the guilty plea. But now that Barrington QC had included the NGRI plea, Murphy had lost her day in court; her successful ploy to bring the killer to justice was soon relegated to a mere footnote in AFP history.

The Prosecution's first witness, a military psychologist, explained that a large number of returned veterans ended up on the wrong side of the law.

Kenneth addressed the witness. 'Major Dense are you not inflating your argument to get the result you want?'

'No, your Honour.'

'Then let me cite recent government research that estimated military veterans make up just 3.5% of the Australian prison population. Doesn't this show that veterans are less likely to offend than the general population?'

'They may be less likely to offend, but they are more likely to be in prison for violent or sexual offences, and they made up the largest single occupational group in prison.'

Casting a glance at the Jury, Kenneth said, 'This is a one-dimensional statistic that doesn't consider the internal and external factors associated with offending. Instead, there seems to be a general, unchallenged assumption that the crimes were a result of their military service.'

The next witness for the Prosecution, a military careers officer, stated, 'The military is not just a killing machine. It offers many benefits to young people who feel direction-less in life. It offers stability, education, skill learning and monetary incentives – for individuals that may not have achieved these benefits otherwise.'

Kenneth listened to the army promo. Then it was his turn to cross-examine. He turned to the witness. 'Captain Whelkson do you not agree that your research shows that those young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds are most likely to enlist, in a bid to escape poverty, unstable home lives and antisocial peers; both individually and collectively. And have not these factors have also been found to boost the odds of criminal involvement.'

'That is true, your Honour. But our job is to take these unstable young people and shape them into adults who no longer see their lives to be worthless. They stand straight and dignified with a sense of purpose. They leave the military as better citizens ready to face civilian society.'

'But it does not always end up that way, does it, Captain? My client is a case in point?'

'Not always, no.'

'Is it not true that army snipers, like the defendant, who came from a troubled background were, having been trained to kill, more likely to commit firearms crimes as a result?'

'It's possible - yes.'

'Thank you, Captain. No more questions.'

Kenneth listened intently as the Prosecution's next witness, Professor Barker, who had carried out a psychological assessment on the defendant, had concluded that the defendant showed no signs of excessive anxiety. In fact, he remained cool and calm and answered the questions put to him with no hesitation. The psychiatrist concluded from his assessment that the defendant was fit to stand trial for murder.

Kenneth, who had a copy of the Professor's report, had underlined points he wanted to explore. He said, 'Professor if I may bring your attention to Mr Bott's statement that during an especially bloody phase of the war, Skipton Bott, thirty-one at the time, had distinguished himself amid the violence. That summer, he recorded his hundredth career kill—ninety-one of them in Ramadi. He was on his way to becoming one of the deadliest snipers in Australian history, with a hundred and sixty confirmed kills.'

'Yes, what about it?'

'This young Australian had personally shot and killed a hundred and sixty people, and you say, what about it?' What sort of effect do you think it had on his psyche?'

'I did not observe any serious damage.'

'OK, let's move on. What happened when Skipton Bott, a decorated sniper, tried to help a troubled veteran mate?'

'It did not work out.'

'Wouldn't you go as far as to say the result was tragic.'

'Yes, you could say that.'

'And why was that so?'

The professor explained, 'Skipton Bott and his team-mate were on a roof not long before they came under enemy fire. A single round hit the M-60 machine gun held by Bott's partner, a twenty-five-year-old named Brian Masters. Metal fragments tore into Brian's face. Critically wounded he was evacuated in a tracked personnel carrier.'

'And Mr Bott said he felt useless and helpless being unable to help his mate.'

'Yes.'

'So here we have a trained killer who cares deeply about his army mates, so much so that he had to be medicated and sedated to help him deal with the terrible experience. Then what happened to him?'

'He was sent to a psychiatric facility for treatment to help him cope.'

'Did he not say he kept reliving that traumatic moment, imagining over and over what he could have done differently. As a result, his blood pressure spiked, and he could sleep only sporadically.'

'Yes.'

'And is sleep deprivation not a key component of post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.? And was Mr Bott not diagnosed with PTSD by a military psychiatrist?'

'Yes.'

'Then it beggars belief, Professor, that you diagnose the defendant as having no anxiety issues.'

The psychiatrist blinked and stared.

Kenneth said, 'Are you saying the army got it wrong and that Mr Bott does not suffer the effects of PTSD?'

'No. I am not questioning any previous diagnosis.'

'So, the defendant miraculously got better before you assessed him. Is that what you are telling the Jury?'

The Professor wished a big hole would open and swallow him up.

And so the case went on.

A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children.

John James Audubon

Chapter 36

Somehow, by dragging Ossie, Woody got him back to their car. The head wound looked severe. Woody rummaged around in the cab to find something he could use as a bandage. There was an old scarf. He tried staunching the blood by wrapping the scarf tightly around Ossie's head. He thought about phoning for an ambulance, but that would have tied him to the crash site. Instead, Woody decided to drive to the nearest medical centre, which turned out to be in Moranbah. Ossie McCarthy was rushed into emergency and after a swift diagnosis was very quickly flown by Mediflight to Townsville Hospital. Woody was allowed to go with him.

An emergency team was waiting as the chopper touched down on the large 'H' symbol on the emergency centre's heliport surface. Once there, Woody had to sit in the waiting room while Ossie was rushed into emergency surgery. Thirty minutes elapsed, and there was no word from the operating theatre staff. Thirty minutes for Woody to think about what had happened. It all seemed like a dream - a horrible one. He had blown up a train. It was all too outlandish and frightening for him to even think about it. Yet it had happened. He had no idea what had happened to the crew. But as the engine was covered in wreckage and tons of coal, Woody did not give much for their chances. Of course, it was an accident. But the police would not see it that way. Planting the plastic explosive was no accident, which meant what happened afterwards was also his responsibility. After all, he was the explosives expert, not Ossie. If only the silly bugger had not tried to get the detonator off him, the train crew would still be alive. So it was Ossie's fault the train wreck happened the way it did.

Just then he got some news. A tall, middle-aged doctor approached, 'I'm Doctor Wilson. Are you Mr McCarthy's friend?'

'Yes. How is Ossie doing?'

'He suffered severe trauma to the back of his head. We have stopped the bleed and stitched him up.'

'So is he going to be OK?' Woody asked.

'He is still in critical condition. There could be some brain damage, but we will not know until he regains consciousness.'

'Oh, dear! It's that bad.'

'He will need the support of his family. Can you let them know he is here, Mr ...?'

'Stone.' At this point, Woody realised how little he knew about Ossie. They had not verbally exchanged anything about their personal lives other than what was necessary to get the job done. He added, 'We're really only working colleagues. We never discussed personal stuff.'

'Phone his workplace then.'

Woody never had the number, but he did not say so. Instead, he phoned Berribong cattle station and asked for Eddie. It seemed to take ages for Eddie to come to the phone.

'Yeah. Who's calling?'

Eddie, it's Ossie's mate, Woody. Look, Ossie has had an accident.'

'A fucking accident! The old bastard hasn't blown himself up, has he?'

'No. But Ossie's got a severe head injury, and he's in Townsville Hospital in Intensive care.'

'Fuck! How did that happen?'

'He fell and bashed in his skull. Look, can you ring his family and let them know?'

'Family. He hasn't got any around here, as far as I know. Look, I'll give his pilot a bell and tell him.'

'Thanks, Eddie.'

'It didn't have anything to do with the C4.' Eddie queried, concerned.

'No.' Woody lied.

'Jesus. I'd hate to think that I...'

Woody cut him off. 'No, mate. Nothing to do with it. He felt his nose grow a bit longer.'

Woody was nodding off on his seat when he heard a voice say, 'Are you the bloke who came here with Ossie?'

Woody became slowly alert. 'Yes. Who are you?'

'Abe Morelly. Ossie's pilot.' Then he asked, 'How is he?'

'It's not good. I'm waiting for an update on Ossie's condition.'

'Fuck man, what happened?'

'He slipped and banged his head on a rock.'

'Bloody hell, mate, it's a good job you were around.' Then he said, 'Why were you around?'

'I was helping him with something.'

Abelard wondered what that something might be. But since his boss had become politically motivated against Inada, he thought it best not to probe any further.

Then Doctor Wilson approached. 'You people may as well go and grab some rest. Mr McCarthy is asleep and resting comfortably. Leave a contact number in case his condition takes a turn for the worse. Otherwise, come back tomorrow.'

Abelard gave the doctor one of his cards. 'All my contact details are here.'

Dr Wilson took the card. 'I hope I won't have to ring you.'

Woody hoped so, too.

The mysterious train wreck made star billing on the news that evening. Sinclair George the caretaker Premier of the Queensland Parliament watched as the chief Australian Transport Safety

Bureau investigator explained that his team were yet to rule on the

cause of the Thirty Mile Creek bridge collapse that caused the coal train derailment just north of Goonyella earlier that day. He further explained that the narrow gauge railway line near Peak Downs Highway remained closed as his team worked with Horizon to develop a recovery plan to clear the wreckage and the vast amount of spilt coal.

When asked what caused the crash the spokesperson from the ATSB told The ABC News the matter remained under investigation but confirmed that the concrete bridge over Thirty Mile Creek had been destroyed causing extensive damage to the line. When the interviewer asked what had happened to the two-man crew driving the train, he was told they would not know until they had removed the wreckage from the dry creek bed. This meant having to lift the two diesel locomotives and around 20 coal wagons. He said that they would be using a drone to survey the site. Then they would have a better idea of what they had to do.

Horizon Rail CEO said it was a serious disaster and the rail line was expected to remain closed for a week or so. He said the train was fully loaded and was travelling towards the Port of Bowen pulling 110 wagons, 22 of which were derailed. All freight services through the area were currently suspended.

Mary Bright, the announcer on the morning breakfast show, said, 'We have an update on the cause of the terrible rail disaster in Central Queensland. With me on the show today we have Mr Mel Williams, a pilot who was flying over the area just after the crash. So let us cross over to the satellite link.

A man close to sixty with thick grey hair came on the screen.

The interviewer said, 'Mel, I believe you have quite a story to tell?'

'Yes, Mary. I happened to be flying over the Goonyella area when I saw a stationary coal train and what looked like a dust storm over the dry creek bed. Then it cleared, and I saw what had happened.'

'So what did you see, Mel?'

'Well, Mary, I saw a terrifying sight. Somebody had blown up the bridge, and part of the coal train had plunged into the hole.'

'Mel, what made you think the collapse had been caused by an explosion?'

'I saw a ute quickly leaving the scene.'

'Do you have any description of the vehicle?'

'I think it was white, but I was too far away to see any details.'

'Was there any other reason for you to think an explosion caused the disaster?'

'Reinforced concrete bridges don't just collapse for no reason. It was out and out sabotage.'

'Thank you, Mel, for that update.'

The show announcer turned to the camera. 'So there we have it from an eye in the sky witness. If there was an explosion, who was behind it? Who would want to blow up a coal train? Unless it was somebody, who was against coal mines. We shall just have to wait and see.'

Sinclair was on the phone to the new Carnagee Mine CEO.

Warren Jones picked up his phone. 'Yes?'

'Good morning, Sinclair here. Have you seen the Morning Show today?'

'No. Why?'

'Some fucking amateur pilot is saying he saw the train wreck just after it happened.'

'So what does that have to do with me?' It's Gregory and Horizon's problem, Nothing to do with us.'

'If only it were that simple,'

'What do you mean?'

'Warren, anything to do with coal fuck ups in central Queensland is going to end up at Inada's door.'

'But we haven't completed our mine yet. So how can we be implemented in ...?'

'Guilt by association. The fucking pilot is mouthing off about the bridge, saying it was blown up.'

'Sinclair, I wasn't aware the ATSB had signed off on the reason for the crash yet.'

'They haven't, but once fucking social media is ablaze with conjecture and false news, it'll give a huge boost to the anti-Inada lobby.'

'But we have the green light now that Inada is funding the whole Carnagee project.'

'Warren, I know you're a businessman, not a politician. But if Labor gets in at the looming federal election, it will only happen by Labor doing deals with the fucking Greens. If that happens, it's bye, bye coal mine.'

"Shit!"

'Precisely. Which is why I say if only it were that simple.'

It seems to me like Mother Nature's mercy and forgiveness have run dry, as we ceaselessly abuse her and take her for granted in order for us to continue our addiction to using fossil fuels. I've gotta say, I don't blame her. Not one bit.

Gloria Reuben

Chapter 37

The Prosecution, in its closing comments, stated that from a psychiatric perspective, depression can be a debilitating condition, and it can lead to disorganisation of thought and irrational thinking. But from a legal perspective, it doesn't seem to meet the legal test for mental impairment. He went on to say, 'In Australia, there is a law of 'mental impairment. It clearly broadly states that to establish a defence on the grounds of insanity, it must be clearly proven that at the time of committing the act, the accused's state of mind meant that they did not know what they were doing, or if they did, had no idea they were doing anything wrong.

When the accused pulled the trigger, he knew exactly what he was doing, And the defendant knew what he was doing, was wrong. Being depressed can be debilitating, but it does not meet the criterion of being mentally impaired. Psychosis and depression are illnesses that are viewed differently in our legal system. Although to be fair, both conditions can lead to mental impairment.

The lawyer paused, then said, 'However, the defendant was not suffering mental impairment when he rode his motorbike interstate. And he was not suffering mental impairment when he set up his nest and waited hours behind his rifle, for the target to place himself in its cross-hairs. He followed

his army training and simply added two civilians to his death toll. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury the Defence's plea for insanity caused by what happened to him while serving in the Australian army has not been corroborated. So, the defendant has to shoulder responsibility for his criminal acts.'

Kenneth Barrington walked over to the Jury to deliver his closing argument. 'Skipton Bott came back from the Afghan war diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, as did many other returned servicemen. But they, unlike the defendant, didn't go out and commit murder. The defendant had also been trained as a sniper and has, as this court has been told, carried out 160 kills for the Australian Defence Forces.' Kenneth paused then said, 'What do you think that does to a young man's psyche?' He paused again to let the impact sink in. The army turned Skipton Bott into a highly efficient killing machine. Now, whether or not he suffered from PTSD before or after he specialised as a sniper is a moot point. What we do know is that shooting at targets alive or inanimate was what Mr Bott lived for. It became a hunger for him. It did not matter whether or not the target was live. To Skipton Bott, it was merely a target.

Kenneth paused again then said, 'Your job, ladies and gentlemen of the Jury is to work out as to whether my client is guilty or not guilty.' Kenneth grinned, 'Well you don't have to concern yourselves with that. The defendant has already pled guilty. What you have to decide is to what degree he is guilty. So in making your decision bear in mind that a substantial part of Skip Bott's defence is that he was mentally ill at the time of the offences.'

But despite Barrington QC's plea, the Jury did not accept it, and Skipton Bott was sentenced to life in prison with a 32-year minimum sentence period.

'The bastard only got 32 years. Probably 15 with good behaviour,' Reggie sighed.

MacTavish sympathised but remained philosophical about Skip Bott's sentence. 'It was a better result than Barrington wanted.'

'Yes, and a worse one than we expected. Bott should have been executed as a fucking terrorist.'

Tom sighed, 'That was then, this is now. He said this as he parked the late model Holden Commodore alongside other police vehicles at the perimeter of the crime scene. A uniformed constable on guard duty checked their IDs and lifted the blue and white chequered tape to let them through.

Two 350 tonne slew cranes were busy picking up large pieces of wreckage and dumping them in the back of Volvo FMX 10x6 large tippers. The screeching, scraping noise was deafening as metal scraped on concrete and other hunks of wreckage. It was along and exacting task. Commander Murphy approached the ATSB chief.

Malcolm Sim was busy with members of his team when the AFP officers approached him. He turned to the Redhead, who seemed to be in charge. 'And who are you, he asked.

'Commander Murphy AFP and Senior Sergeant MacTavish.'

'What are the Feds doing here?' Malcolm asked.'

'Come on, Mr Sim. You're not talking to the news hounds now. You and I know somebody blew this bridge. Which makes it an act of terrorism. Which involves us.'

Sim agreed, 'It certainly looks like an explosion, but we won't know for sure until we get rid of all this wreckage.'

'How long is that going to take?'

Malcolm shrugged, 'At least another week, I'd say.'

'Right. In the meantime, we'll be treating it as sabotage.'

Leaving The ATSB chief to his work, Reggie and Tom got as close to the train retrieval site as they could. It just looked like a pile of scrap mixed with coal. Murphy said, 'We've done all we can do here. Let's get away from all this noise and go somewhere we can think about this.'

They drove to Moranbah and had lunch at the Isaac Nebo Hotel, which turned out to be a good thinking and drinking place. 'Reggie said, 'So what do you make of it, Tom?'

'Well, terrorists usually leave their calling card. But nobody has claimed responsibility.'

'Yes, it's odd. I suppose it could have been a single person with a grudge. Get in touch with Horizon.

See if anybody has left the company under a cloud recently.'

'OK, Commander.'

Reggie slugged back some beer. 'This is probably the closest hotel to the rail crash location. So maybe the bomber stayed here.' Reggie got up. 'Stay here. I'm just going to check something. Reggie walked out into the hotel reception area. She approached the receptionist, a bored looking woman, doing some social networking.

'It doesn't look like you have many people staying here this time of year,' Reggie smiled.

Joan Crawley stared at the fiery looking Redhead who had a snooty look about her. She shrugged, 'Any time of the year. You may have noticed this isn't exactly the Riviera.' Then, getting business-like, Joan said, 'So, what do you want?'

Reggie showed the woman her warrant card. 'Can you check to see if you had anyone staying here last weekend.'

'No. Not last weekend. There was a couple of blokes staying here the weekend before, though.'

'Oh. Can I see your register then?'

Joan pushed it over to the policewoman.

Sure enough, there was no one staying there the weekend of the train disaster. But the previous weekend bookings listed a Mr Oswald Smith and Mr Woodrow Jones as Nebo Hotel guests. She passed the register back to Joan. 'Can you remember anything that stood out about the pair?'

Joan giggled in a tinkly way. 'One was a tall, tanned cowboy sort of bloke. He was really nice.'

'And the other one?'

'Oh, he was even taller around six feet six I'd say. He had pale skin; he didn't say much.'

'So, who was who?'

'Oh, Oswald was the hunky cowboy.'

Reggie thanked the receptionist and left. She wondered if the guests had been elderly women would Joan have been so astute in her observations. So what if Joan was a horny, frustrated and bored woman working in a downtrodden hotel at the arsehole of nowhere, she had still delivered the goods.

'It's tenuous at best,' MacTavish said when Reggie told him what she had found out.

'That's what they said about my motorbike rider theory.' She reinforced her argument with.' They were the only guests staying here at the time.'

'Smith and Jones. Come on, boss.'

'So the names are bullshit. We still have the descriptions. And when the ATSB gets it's collective head out of its arse, and we find out what explosive the Saboteur used, we'll have more evidence to work with.'

Tom frowned, 'So we hang around in this shit hole while we wait for the ATSB report?'

Reggie flashed a smile, 'You do. I have to get back to head office in Brissie.'

Tom scowled, 'And just what am I supposed to be doing stuck here?'

'Detective work. You work it out. But if I were you, I'd go and chat up Joan. And find an artist to work up a facial description.' Reggie got up to leave. She turned to MacTavish. 'You'd better check in with the local constabulary and get their help.'

'What chance of Inada getting a fair go with anti-coal activists holding influential positions in the State Environment Department?' Sinclair George bewailed to Mason Land, who was convalescing at home, after his heart attack.

Mason nodded. 'This explains a lot about all the last minute excuses for delaying a project that has passed every test for eight years.' He reached over for his cup of tea. After taking a few sips, he stared at Sinclair, a puzzled look on his face. 'I thought we had the green light on that since Inada decided to fund the whole project himself.'

'If only it were that easy, Mason. Canberra is getting very nervous because of the delays and the coming election.'

'It seems we need to take a close look at what is going on in the SED.'

Sinclair sighed, 'We need someone on the inside. Somebody who will not arouse suspicion. Any ideas?'

Mason shrugged, 'I don't know. Unless!'

'Unless what?'

'Who's that nutty professor who wrote The Energy Revolution?'

'What the one who keeps a pet rat with him?'

'Hamster, not a rat.' Mason became thoughtful. Rubbing his chin, he said, 'You'll have to get him trained.'

Sinclair, excited about the covert operation, said, 'Yes. I will get straight on with it.'

Mason eyed his second in command. 'This stays between us. You tell no one. Is that understood?'

Sinclair nodded.

Then, as an aside, Mason casually mentioned, 'The doc says I can be back in the saddle in six weeks. So keep the seat warm for me.'

Sinclair had other ideas but said nothing.

Woody told himself all kinds of stories about his reason for sticking by Ossie. Reasons like he needed to be around if and when the Cattle Baron came out of his coma. Or he felt genuine compassion for Ossie, and he felt guilty about running off with the detonator and causing the premature explosion. But if he was honest with himself, Woody hung around Ossie's bed a lot of the time to look after his healthy fee for services rendered. It was a handshake deal that nobody else knew anything about. If Ossie remained in a coma, there would be no pay-off.

As Woody mentally prepared himself to come to terms with his sad lot, Ossie's eyes flickered and opened up. Woody, amazed by this turn of events, was not sure how to proceed. Then he saw the call button beside the bed. He pressed it and waited until one of the nursing staff appeared.

Ossie muttered, 'Where am I?'

The nurse said, 'Can you hear me, Mr McCarthy.'

Ossie stared at her. 'Yes. So where am I?'

The nurse said, 'You are in Townsville Hospital. I will just go and get your doctor.'

After the nurse left, Woody got close to Ossie. 'Thank God you're awake. You had us worried, mate.'

Ossie focused on Woody. 'Are you a doctor?'

Woody looked at the patient, puzzled. 'No. I'm Woody. He leant in closer. 'I helped you do, you know what.'

Just then, Dr Wilson entered the private ward. Seeing Woody, he said, 'I need you to go and wait outside, Mr Stone.'

He didn't know who I am Woody pondered, concerned, while sitting in a small waiting area. It was a scenario he had not considered. Woody mentally kicked himself. Why the hell hadn't he asked for the money up front?

While he waited for an update from Dr Wilson, Woody rang Abelard to tell him his boss had come out of his coma.

'That is good news, Woody, I'll get onto his sister and let her know.'

Just then Dr Wilson came up to Woody. 'Your friend had regained consciousness, but he can't remember what happened to him. It could just be a short term memory loss, but we can't be certain at this stage.'

'Can't he remember anything, doctor?'

'Let me explain. Mr McCarthy is suffering from a form of amnesia, making him forget the accident and all that has happened since.'

'So he can remember what happened before his accident?'

'Initial tests suggest this to be the case. But we will need to keep the patient here for observation, for another few days.'

Eduardo Murray professor of environmental sciences sat looking at Sinclair George, his facial expression a mixture of cherubic innocence and puzzlement. 'You want me to advise the SED on the transition from fossil fuel to clean alternative energies?'

The caretaker Premier put on his best smile. 'The department needs the guidance of a senior climate change scientist. We think you are best-placed for the job.'

'Excuse me, Mr George, correct me if I'm wrong, but I thought your party did not hold any store in projected climate change effects.'

'Professor, you are absolutely correct. Let me explain why we need you.'

'I wish you would.'

Sinclair stared as a little furry head popped out of the Professor's top pocket. He knew about the famous hamster and tried not to show any surprise. 'You have an animal in your pocket, Professor.'

'That's good. It's when Hamish makes a bid to escape that we can have trouble.'

'Yes, well, there is a strategist in the SED driving the Green's' aggressive propagandised federal election campaign attacking the state's coal industry.'

'Surely you know my views on the subject.'

'Yes. I have read your energy revolution book.'

'Then I confess I am puzzled.'

'Your book gives a balanced view and offers practical solutions during the transition from fossil fuels to clean alternative energies. I was very impressed, Professor. That's why I think you can help add some objectivity to SED decision making.'

Eduardo narrowed his small hazel eyes. 'This all very general, Mr George. So what are we actually talking about here?'

Sinclair frowned, 'There is a clutch of veteran environmental activists now holding influential positions within the state Environment Department, which has stalled Inada's Carnagee coal project in central Queensland.'

'But I am against the coal mine!' Eduardo snapped, brusquely.

'Yes, but you are also against some of the more radical Green policies. The Greens, with the help of the SED, are holding up proceedings by using insignificant issues to delay mine construction. We need your evaluation of this.'

Senior Sergeant MacTavish stuck a couple of sketches on a large whiteboard that had other photos and lines connecting them. He turned to his small team of local detectives. 'We don't have a great deal to go on.' Pointing to the two pictures he had just attached to the other data, he said, 'These are just rough sketches of two men who stayed at the Nebo Hotel one week before the sabotage. A receptionist gave us this verbal description of these two men who signed their names as Mr Oswald Smith and Mr Woodrow Jones. We suspect Smith and Jones are aliases. But we don't know for sure. So, it's time for some good old foot slogging. Show people pictures of these two men and see if it rings any bells.'

One of the team members, said, 'So we haven't got a hell of a lot to go on?'

Tom MacTavish sighed, 'I'm afraid not. The only other clue we have is that a local pilot saw a ute, possibly white, leaving the scene shortly after the explosion.' He added Moranbah is just a small place. Someone may have noticed two strangers in the area.'

Just then, Commander Murphy entered the room. Strolling up to Tom, she said, 'I just received some info from the ATSB that might be useful to us. They have found splashes of dried blood at the crime scene. Forensics have tested it, and it is definitely human. So, it looks as though one of the perpetrators got injured in the blast. So start checking all hospitals in the area from Townsville to Mackay. We could just get lucky.'

One of the AFP officers said, 'So Ma'am, we think there were two saboteurs?'

Reggie said, 'We don't know for sure. But we'll work on that basis for now.'

Tom said, 'In the light of this new info I'll check the hospitals. You lot get on with door knocking in beautiful down town Moranbah.'

When they were alone, Reggie said to Tom, 'Still no one has claimed responsibility for the disaster.'

'So we can probably rule out the saboteurs being part of a larger organisation.'

Reggie shook her head, 'It's strange that no activist group has come forward. But what did the saboteurs have to gain from their brutal action?'

'Hopefully, we will soon be able to ask them,' Tom responded.

Reggie retorted, 'If all we have is hope, then we're in big trouble.' Then she nodded as though she had just come to a personal decision. 'I'll come with you to the hospital.'

A plea of insanity: mental illness and the criminal

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/allinthemind/mental-illness-and-the-criminal-justice-system/6535790>

If our system continues without modification involving environmental and social concern, we will face an economic and social breakdown of our outdated monetary and political system.

Jacque Fresco

Chapter 38

As Ossie packed his belongings into an overnight bag, and as Abe waited to fly his boss home, Woody, agitated, said, 'Ossie I have to speak to you, alone.'

The pilot said, 'That will have to wait. I need to get my boss back to the station.'

Woody glared at him. 'It can't fucking wait! I need five minutes with him alone before you two disappear. It's an urgent business matter and ...'

Ossie said, 'I am here, you know, and I can make my own fucking decisions.' He turned to Woody, 'I don't know who you are or what you want, but I'll give you your five minutes.'

Abe backed off and left the private ward.

Ossie said, 'So what's this all about?'

'I'm Woody, and we had a business arrangement. You hired me to do a job with you. But you haven't paid me for it.'

Ossie stared at the taller man. 'What job?'

Woody left the question hanging. 'I can understand that you don't remember it. Because you copped your head injury while doing the job.'

'What fucking job?'

Woody fixed Ossie with his steely gaze. 'OK, there's no easy way to say this.' He took a deep breath.

You hired me to blow up a railway bridge with a coal train on it.'

Ossie stared at Woody as though he had just stepped off a spaceship. 'Blow up a railway bridge! Just what the fuck are you on about?'

It was not going well. And Woody's next statement made it even worse. But he had to say it. You offered me a \$100,000 to do the job.' But you haven't paid me and ...'

Ossie could not contain himself any longer. 'So you're fucking blackmailing me!'

'No. No, I'm not. It was a simple business arrangement, that's all.'

'So you're putting the hard word on me for \$100,000, and if I don't pay up, you'll claim I blew up that fucking bridge!'

'No, it's not like that. I'm not trying to shake you down. I just want the money you promised me.'

Ossie glared at Woody. 'Just fuck off, you bastard!' If you contact me again, I will tell the cops what your game is.'

Woody stared at the grazer. 'I don't fucking believe this! I rescued you from the explosion and flew with you to this hospital. If it weren't for me, you'd be fucking dead, you miserable bastard.'

'And I only have the word of a fucking extortionist.'

'Ask your doctor who brought you here, He'll tell you.'

'So you want me to pay you a few bucks for helping me. Just leave me your details, and I'll deposit a hundred bucks.'

Woody glared at the cattleman. 'Fuck you! I don't want your fucking loose change. I want what's owed me.'

'Just get the hell out of here before I call security,' Ossie snapped.

'You won't get away with this. I will get my due, one way or another,' Woody said, leaving the room.

The SED, otherwise known as the Department of the Environment and Science, claimed to recognise the enormous value of a clean environment. It also promoted an innovative society and a healthy economy, in a vibrant culture that contributed to a healthy lifestyle to all Queenslanders. The mission statement sounded good and was emblazoned on the wall behind the reception desk in the entrance lobby. It was the first thing that Eduardo Murray saw when he entered the DES. As an environmental scientist, Professor Murray knew that ecology and economy were complicated to balance when managed by the same government department. In his experience, one of them always had to lose out. And it was usually environmental protection. The Carnagee Mine was a pertinent case in point. And Eduardo saw finding that delicate balance to be his mission in the department.

Leanne Leveridge did not hold with that point of view. The Queensland Environment Minister, being head of the Department was angry at not being consulted about the professor's obscure appointment. She looked at the odd-looking man wearing baggy, poorly fitting clothes. All the Minister knew of the academic were his eccentricities, such as his habit of carrying a small animal in the top pocket of his jacket. True, he had excellent environmental credentials, but for the life of her, she did not know why he had been foisted on her department. After appraising him with a highly critical eye, the Minister said, 'Thank you for taking the time to visit us, but for the life of me I do not know why you are here?'

His puffy lips curved into a smile, 'I have been asked to serve as your advisor.'

'We do not need any more advisors, Professor. So I fear you have had a wasted journey.'

Eduardo said, 'I see. Well, I'd better phone the Premier and let him know.'

Leanne Baulked. She hadn't known who was behind this embarrassing situation. 'The Premier sent you here?'

'Mr George, yes.'

She threw open her hands. 'I don't understand why he would do such a thing.'

At this point, Hamish popped his little furry head out of his pocket prison.

Leanne, shocked, said, 'You can't bring that thing in here!'

Eduardo wiped a dewdrop from his bulbous nose. 'Dearie me, he's so quiet I sometimes forget he is there.'

Leanne sighed deeply. 'I'll ask you again. What do you propose to advise us on?'

'The energy revolution.'

'Do we have one?'

Eduardo thought it strange that the Environment Minister, of all people, would even ask such a question. 'Indeed we do, Minister, especially in the transition from our dependence on fossil fuels to cleaner and more efficient energies.'

She eyed the weird looking man with disdain. 'Very well, I suppose we'll have to find you a desk.'

Sinclair was contented to remain number two until he was forced into taking on the Premier's role. He knew that Mason Land would never re-assume his role as a leader. With his weak heart, the job would prove too much for him. Sinclair also knew that some aspects of the LNP would see his caretaker function as an invitation to push for the top job. In a private closed meeting, Sinclair turned to Sylvie Lefèvre the Queensland LNP Treasurer. 'Sylvie, Have you heard any rumbles in the ranks about hats being tossed in the ring?'

The Treasurer always had her finger on the pulse. 'She smiled, 'There are two main challengers, Sinclair. And I think you can guess who.'

I'm guessing 'Peter Dudden and Julia Christensen?'

'Go to the top of the class,' Sylvie joked.

'I you want the top job it's time to make your move, Sinclair.'

'But have I got the numbers?' Sinclair queried, responding to her.

'You definitely have the moderates. And the two independents. But you'll need to get the backing from a few right soft-liners.'

Sinclair asked, 'Sylvie, in your opinion, who's my biggest threat?'

'The sabotaged train is bringing all the stricter Law and Order supporters out of the woodwork, which is good news for Dudden. Julia's Jobs for Queenslanders drive is attracting members from both sides of the Assembly. I would say, on balance, you need to concentrate on jobs.'

'A big thumbs up for the mine then.'

Sylvie responded, 'Yes, but you also need to get tougher on terrorists.'

Reggie Murphy walked up to the unattended desk at the Townsville hospital and pressed a button that rang a bell. A middle-aged black woman appeared from a nearby office. She looked at the tall, pale woman with a mass of fiery hair. 'Yes. Can I help you?'

Reggie flashed her warrant card. Then she passed over a copy of the rough sketches of the two suspects. 'We're looking for two fugitives, one of whom may have had an accident and was admitted here a few days ago.'

The Townsville Hospital receptionist shrugged. 'Sorry, but I can't help you.'

'The injured fugitive may have been treated here in the last few days. Look at the pictures and tell me if you have seen anyone who looks like these men.'

The receptionist scanned the pictures and shook her head.

Reggie tried a different tack. Pointing at the drawings, she said, 'They went by the names Oswald Smith and Woodrow Jones.'

The black woman shook her head. 'No, I can't recall anyone with those names.'

'Smith and Jones are probably aliases. So let's concentrate on the first names,' Reggie said, trying to keep her calm.

The receptionist stared at the Commander.

'Surely you have an admissions list on your computer.' Reggie snapped.

'Of course. But it's private information.'

Reggie, who had enough by now, threatened, 'Obstructing the federal police is a criminal offence. If you can't tell me what I need to know then get me in contact with somebody who can.'

The hospital employee said 'I guess I could have a look at the list.'

'Look for any patients on your list called, Oswald or Ossie and someone called Woodrow or Woody.'

The black woman brightened, 'There might be something here. A man called Ossie was admitted fourteen days ago with a serious head wound. There is a note saying the person who came in with him refused to give his name.'

'Is this Ossie still here?' Reggie asked.

'Hang on a minute. I'll check.' After consulting her computer she came back with, 'He left this morning.'

Damn! Reggie thought. Do you have a forwarding address for him?'

'There's nothing in the records.'

Shit! 'Did he leave with the man who took him to the hospital.'

'No. It says here that a man called Abelard Morelly picked him up in a helicopter.'

'A helicopter!'

'That's what it says.'

Reggie thanked the receptionist and called Tom MacTavish. 'Our man was admitted to Townsville hospital. He was treated here for fourteen days, and he left by helicopter this morning.'

Having been forced off the political fence, Sinclair was obliged to throw his hat into the ring and make his move to become the leader of his Party. Being a caretaker Premier was just a stand-in role until either Mason Land resumed his leadership role or some other wannabe jumped into the breach. It was pretty much realised that Mason's weak heart meant he would have to give up being Premier and take a back seat or leave politics altogether. Either way, Sinclair thought he was well placed to get enough votes to push him over the line, before the coming Federal election, which was just two weeks away.

He held a private meeting with Sylvie Lefèvre. 'So what are your little dickey birds tweeting about?' Sinclair asked.

'The general consensus from your moderates is that it's a perilous path to take to have a change of leadership this close to the election.'

The Premier nodded. 'And the Duddenites. What is their take on this?'

'Do you really need to ask that question?'

Sinclair gave a little shrug. 'Probably not.'

'One point in your favour is that perhaps 75 per cent of the legislative body is pleased with the work you have done on the Inada project.' She added, 'The problem is that a little birdie tells me all is not well between Inada and the Indian government.'

Sinclair tried brushing off, what was of great concern to him, as though it were nothing. 'That's got nothing to do with us.'

'What happens if Inada falls into a financial hole and he pulls stumps on the mine?'

'Heaven forbid that it should come to that.'

Sylvie looked straight at the Premier. 'You will need a fall-back strategy.'

'So what do you suggest?'

'You organise a loyalist think tank. You'll need to get intel from a source I have in India. I can set up a contact, but you have to do the rest.'

'What do you mean by "the rest"?''

'You'll have to work out a deal with him. It's the only way you can be certain you're not dealing with false news.'

Sylvie Lefèvre had set up the initial contact, and Sinclair received a call from Professor David Singh of the University of Mumbai. He said 'A certain party asked me to bring you up to date on a certain issue.'

It was evident to Sinclair that the academic suspected or knew his call was insecure. 'I appreciate your help in this matter. Firstly, Mr Singh, are these investigations very damaging?'

'The Indian Directorate of Taxation thinks so.' It is the premier Indian government agency investigating financial crime.'

'Have they found any wrongdoing on behalf of - he almost said, Inada - the target company?'

'Before we go into detail, there is a fee involved for my services.'

'I thought there might be, What sum are you talking here?'

'\$10 million US,'

It was more than Sinclair hoped but less than he expected. 'What do I get for your consultant's fee?'

'Mr George, I will keep you apprised of any news concerning the subject company.'

'It will take me a couple of days to arrange it.'

'I will be ready to give you more once the fee turns up in my account.' Mr Singh added, 'To show my good faith, Mr George, I can confirm that the Indian Directorate of Taxation is charging the Indian target company with siphoning money offshore and artificially inflating power prices at the expense of Indian energy consumers.'

'Thank you, Mr Singh. I look forward to doing business with you.'

Woody realised the longer he stayed in Central Queensland, the more he risked being arrested. He was also aware that he had to be very cunning to get his fee from Ossie McCarthy and that meant having to hang around in the area. Woody was unaware that Ossie owned Ulcambah, the biggest cattle station in the Jericho Basin. But he figured the private helicopter meant the farmer had a property way out in the bush. Woody knew Ossie did not trust him, so he would have to communicate with the grazier through someone Ossie trusted. The only person Woody knew of who fitted that description was Abelard Morelly, the helicopter pilot. But how would he get the man to listen to him without it sounding like some sort of con?'

Woody phoned the number on the card that Abelard had given him in the hospital and much to his surprise, the pilot agreed to meet over coffee. The pilot had to pick up supplies in Townsville, so he met with Woody at the Tide Cafe, a favourite coffee shop. Woody enjoyed the lamb omelette with freshly squeezed OJ. Abelard went for eggs on toast with avocado. The service was quick, and the servers friendly. Woody found the Queensland humidity oppressive and the buzzing flies annoying.

As they drank the best coffee, Woody asked, 'Has Ossie got his memory back yet?'

Abe shook his head. 'He still can't remember anything about the accident.'

Woody nodded, 'Look, I have to leave here soon, but I have some unfinished business with your boss.'

'What do you mean?' Abe queried warily.

'He hired me to do a job for him, but he hasn't paid me my fee.'

Abelard looked up at Woody. 'And you're telling me because?'

'He doesn't remember hiring me so he won't pay me my due. He trusts you, though. So I need you to put in a word for me.'

'How do I know what you're saying is fair dinkum?'

Woody sighed, 'If it were a small fee I'd probably wipe the slate and go back home. But 100,000 bucks is another story.'

Abe stared at Woody. 'You reckon he owes you \$100,000! What the hell was he paying you to do?'

This was the crunch moment. Woody knew he had to either be straight with the pilot or walk away empty handed. He took a deep breath. 'To blow up a railway bridge.'

Abe felt an icy chill shoot up his back. He leant towards Woody. 'Are you suggesting that my boss got you to blow up that train?'

Woody nodded.

Abe glared at the man. 'So that's your fucking game. My boss can't remember anything surrounding his accident, so you take advantage and have him believe he blew up the train. What sort of fucking sicko dreams up such a fantastic tale to extort money off a man who is suffering from partial amnesia?'

Woody rejoined, 'It may sound crazy, but it's absolutely true - and I can prove it, either to you or the cops. Your choice.'

Abelard frowned, 'All right, I'm listening.'

Woody leant in towards Abe and spoke quietly. 'Look, I planted the

C4, but then I had second thoughts. But Ossie wanted to go ahead with it, so he tried to get the detonator off me. In the struggle one of us accidentally pressed the button prematurely, causing the train to crash. I dived for cover, but Ossie was knocked over by the blast. That's how he got injured. Then I got airlifted with him to the hospital.'

Now that Woody had explained about the accident in more detail, it sounded more plausible to Abelard. But he was still very sceptical. 'You had plenty of time to cook up this shit while Ossie lay unconscious.'

Woody stared at Abe. 'Ask Eddie Ferringdon if you don't believe me. We went to his place and bought the C4 off him.'

Now that Woody had given him some checkable information. Abe thought there may be some truth in what the explosives expert had said. But Abe still didn't trust the man.

Woody bewailed, 'Look, I just want my money - in cash. 100,000 bucks appearing magically in my bank account might arouse suspicion.'

Abe still could not believe it. 'You're telling me that the owner of the largest cattle station in Jericho Basin is some sort of fucking terrorist who blew up that train, with you as his accomplice!'

'Look, if I don't get the money I have nothing to lose by going to the cops and confessing everything.'

Abe responded, 'And if he thinks I'm trying to scam him and refuses to play along?'

'Ask him about the hits on the politician and the mine boss.'

Abe stared at Woody. 'What the fuck does that have to do with ...?'

'Ossie bankrolled Skip Bott to make both kills.'

'That's preposterous. If that was the case, why didn't the sniper cut a deal with the cops?'

'Because Ossie gave him a million bucks to keep his mouth shut.'

'That's bullshit!'

'Ask him if you don't believe me. Look, get me my fee and I'll disappear, and you guys will never see me or hear from me again. And you can tell your boss that he has one week to cough up the dough. If I haven't got it by then, I'm turning my self in and singing like a fucking dickey bird. Got it?'

Truly, we do live on a 'water planet.' For us, water is that critical issue that we need. It's the most precious substance on the planet, and it links us to pretty much every environmental issue, including climate change, that we're facing.

Philippe Cousteau, Jr.

Chapter 39

Reggie faced her team. 'We got a result at the Townsville hospital. A man called Woody flew with an accident victim named Ossie to Townsville Hospital where the grazier was treated for a severe head wound. Unfortunately for us, a man called Abe Morrelly picked this Ossie up in a chopper and flew south to the Ulcambah Cattle Station earlier today.' Reggie said, 'I'll be following the McCarthy lead; you lot get out there and find this Woody character. So let's get an all states alert organised.'

As Commander Murphy and Sergeant MacTavish flew over the Jericho Basin on their way to e Ulcambah Station, she was horrified by what she saw below. Reggie had never experienced such drought devastation so close up, despite being 500 feet above the ground. There were only cattle, no more than standing skeletons, and sun-scorched yellow grass to be seen. Tom MacTavish, also shocked by the pitiful sight below, said, 'How the hell do the farmers survive in this hellish heat?'

Reggie said, 'They're desperate for water and have to pay a lot for it.' She turned to her sergeant. 'He does know we're coming, right?'

'Oh yeah. And Mr McCarthy has got his lawyer with him.'

'Of course, he has,' the Commander sneered.

The light aircraft descended over Ulcambah Station - some 500,000 hectares of flat arid territory. The police Beech 900D touched down on the makeshift dirt runway and taxied up to a large tin shed that served as an aircraft hanger and agricultural equipment store. Abelard Morrelly came out of the shed to greet the visitors. Pointing at an old white ute, he said, 'Hop on-board. I'll take you to see Ossie.'

Ossie stood on his deck near the three wooden steps that led up to his front door. He shook hands with the police officers and welcomed them into his home. Then he introduced the other man in the room. 'This is Campbell Rendall, my attorney.'

Reggie looked at the tall thin Aboriginal man. 'Hello, Mr Rendall. We are here just to ask Mr McCarthy some simple questions. So this is probably a wasted journey for you.'

Campbell smiled, 'I'm just here to ensure that my client's rights are respected.'

Ossie invited them to sit down and ordered some cold refreshment.

Reggie began, 'I hope you are feeling better now.'

'Much better, thank you, Commander.'

'Good. Then perhaps you can help us clear up a few things.'

'If I can,' Ossie smiled.

The Commander said, 'Right let's start with your friend, Woody.'

Where did you meet him?'

'He's not a friend.'

'He saved your life and stuck by you in the hospital. That's what I'd call a friend, Mr McCarthy,' Reggie smiled.

'I may have been his friend, but I don't know him from Adam.'

Reggie, incredulous said, 'Oh come on! He was right with you when you got your skull injury. So you must know him to some extent at least.'

Campbell butted in, 'If I may explain, Commander, Mr McCarthy is suffering from what's known as a window of amnesia. This memory loss occurred as a result of the brain injury my client sustained in the accident. He has no recollection of the accident or what led up to it.'

Reggie stared at the lawyer, then she met MacTavish's gaze.

'Bullshit!' he mouthed.

'You are joking!'

'I'm afraid not,' the lawyer said. 'My client knows nothing about where he was when the accident occurred, and he has no memory of what caused it.'

'And when exactly did your memory loss begin?' Reggie pressed.

Ossie stared at the Commander. 'Sorry but I'm not clear on that.'

Reggie produced a photocopy of the two drawings. 'Well let me see if I can clear some cobwebs'

Do you remember staying in Moranbah at the Nebo Hotel with this Woody character?'

Ossie shook his head. 'No, I'm afraid not.'

Reggie stabbed her forefinger at the pictures. 'Well, I can help you there. I spoke to the receptionist who booked you in. She's the one who gave us these descriptions.' Reggie smiled, indicating the artwork. 'This was a few days before your accident. And we remember that date well because that was when someone blew up the 30 Mile Creek railway bridge just as a coal train was about to cross it. You, Mr McCarthy, may claim not to remember it, but two innocent railway engineers died that day, crushed under tons of coal and their families remember the date very clearly indeed.'

Campbell interrupted, 'Commander, are you accusing my client of being involved in that terrible disaster?'

She glared at him. 'We know you were with this Woody person days before your accident. And he must have been with you when the accident occurred. We will find him, and when we do, he will help us find out what happened to you during your period of amnesia.'

Campbell said, 'OK, Commander, are you finished with my client.'

'For now. But once Woody sings his song, we will be back.'

Once the police left, the lawyer said, 'This is more serious than I thought. The longer Woody Stone hangs around, the greater the risk that the police will find him. I'm afraid your best bet is to pay up and get him out of your life.'

'But I know nothing about staying at a hotel with him.'

'Ossie, mate that doesn't matter. What is essential is that the police are following a trail that ties you to this Woody.'

Ossie went cold as the horrific realisation hit him. 'Could I really have been involved with that terrible train crash?'

Campbell frowned, 'I don't know, mate. But the cops are making that connection. Just organise the cash and get it to him as soon as you can.'

Sinclair George, in a 7:30 Report interview, stated, 'We will not give in to activists. And I have this message for them. Their last-minute bid to block the Carnagee Mine in Central Queensland is a waste of time for all concerned. They will not stop construction, which will start before Christmas.'

The interviewer said, 'What message do you have for the murderers who sabotaged the coal train near Peak Downs?'

'All they achieved is depriving two families of their fathers and husbands. It was a brutal, cowardly act, and we can only pray the culprits are soon brought to justice.'

The interviewer asked, 'Are there any other obstacles holding up the mine construction process?'

'Not that I know of.' Sinclair said brusquely, wanting to end the interview.

Raising awareness on the most pressing environmental issues of our time is more important than ever.

Leonardo DiCaprio

Chapter 40

With the Federal Election just days away, the main parties ramped up their campaign messages. The LNP boasted about having cleared all the obstacles stopping Inada from going ahead. The Labor Party also wanted the mine but did not want to take the blame if something went drastically wrong. One Nation, as usual, tried uniting the people through fear and paranoia. The Greens went full out to stop Inada and save the Great Barrier Reef from further destruction. In fact, the Inada mine became the main focus of most environmental activists, even though other coal mines had been approved or upgraded throughout the neighbouring Bowen Basin, as Queensland's coal industry enjoyed a resurgence in the past year due to high international prices. Hundreds of school kids and anti-fossil fuel activists took part in a sit-in in the foyer of Parliament House in Canberra to protest against the Inada mine and call on the Federal Government to do more on climate change. They were joined by Green MPs - who took selfies in front of the protest - and some independent MPs, including former Liberal, turned independent Janet Blenkinsop and Karen Phelps. Despite their courageous stand, the protesters were inevitably removed by the police.

December 2016

But the main Greens game was being played somewhere else.

Davion Hawe was holding a press conference. He announced, 'The LNP thinks the Carnagee mine is a done deal, but they are holding back on certain important details. Details, such as the fact that Inada is facing multiple financial crime and corruption probes, with Indian authorities investigating Inada's companies, which are also under investigation for siphoning money offshore and artificially inflating power prices at the expense of Indian consumers.'

Davion had the attention of every journalist and reporter present. He continued, 'My Indian source has assured me that two separate investigations into allegations of trade-based money laundering by Inada companies are under-way. Yet our Government, the Australian partner of this unholy alliance has just fast-tracked a contract that allows Inada the water rights to use some 26 billion litres of water from Central Queensland's drying up water systems.' Looking at his audience, he stabbed with his forefinger, yelling, 'THIS IS SHEER LUNACY!'

A journalist said, 'Can you give us more detail about this investigation?'

Davion said, 'Companies under the Indian Taxation Department's microscope include Inada Enterprises Limited, the ultimate parent company of the massive mine planned for the Jericho Basin. We still have time to pull out of this bad deal, but we have to act fast.'

'Who is this inside source, Davion?' A journalist asked.

'I will take questions after I have brought you all up to date.' He continued, 'The allegations involve substantial sums of money with major losses to the Indian taxpayer. As you can imagine, Inada denies any wrongdoing. But my source has provided me with the modus operandi of the alleged fraud, which is outlined in a circular issued by India's Directorate of Revenue Intelligence. This intelligence obtained by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence indicates that individual importers of Indonesian coal were artificially inflating its import value as opposed to its actual value. The alleged fraud's objective is to siphon off money abroad while availing higher power tariff compensation based on artificially inflated costs of imported coal. This is where the Carnagee mine comes in because the profits gained from fraud will be used by Inada to self-fund the mine. If Inada is found guilty, the LNP have to ask the question. What happens to the pit?' Davion smiled, 'Now I will take a few questions.'

A female reporter asked, 'Mr Hawe, are you saying that without illegal profits Mr Inada can't build the mine?'

To answer this, I think we have to get a grasp of the enormity that's involved in the Indian Government's investigation. There are five Inada Group companies among several power companies named in the circular as under investigation. These include Inada Enterprises Ltd, which holds the environmental approvals for the planned Carnagee Coal Mine and a railway to the Horizon owned rail line. On top of this, Inada, Enterprises Ltd is also accused of involvement in large-scale illegal iron ore exports and bribery of public officials. So I think you can probably answer your own question. Next.'

'Do you have any details about Inada bribing these public officials?' a seasoned journalist asked.

'This has been ongoing for some time. According to a 2011 report by the ombudsman of the Indian State of Karnataka, obtained by my source. The report states, police seized documents from Inada Enterprises in raids which revealed that money has been regularly paid to port authorities, customs authorities, police department, mines and geology and even to MLAs/MPs.' Davion paused, then shook his head, showing disbelief. 'In the light of this, we have to quash this outrageous free water license right now!'

There was a barrage of questions from the floor.

Davion said, 'You have your story, so go and write it.'

'What's the name of your source?' a TV reporter asked, chancing his luck.'

Davion grinned, 'You lot know better than to ask that.'

'How the fuck did that Greenie prick get that info?' Sinclair ranted, pacing around his office.

Mark Thorpe looked at his agitated leader. 'We'll have to respond.'

'We follow the American example and deny everything. We challenge the fucking tree hugger to reveal his source.'

Mark stared at him. 'Surely it's our source double dipping.'

'Yes, most likely, but he doesn't know that.'

'It could backfire on us, Sinclair.'

The Premier turned on him. 'What do you mean?'

'He might call your bluff and offer up his/our source to gain credibility with his story.'

'Do you really think he would do that?' Sinclair said, unsure.

'It's probably best not to mention his source.'

The Premier agreed, 'Yes, we need to play our cards carefully.'

Mark nodded, 'Outright denial with no explanation.'

But it did not turn out that way.

Sinclair George, the special guest on Channel 9's TV breakfast show, answered the interviewer's questions with supreme confidence until it came to the more difficult ones about Inada, which was becoming an albatross around his neck. 'Well, of course, we deny it. The whole thing is nonsense.'

'So, Mr George, are you saying that what Mr Hawe revealed is nothing more than fabrication?'

Sinclair coughed and cleared his throat with a glass of water. 'He answered, 'We are just days from an important Federal election, and now that Inada has finally passed all the tests thrown at it, the Green Party has become desperate.'

The interviewer smiled, 'Are you saying that reports that the Inada corporation is being investigated for allegations of fraud are false?'

Sinclair stared at him, 'No. of course not. What I'm saying is that the Green Party should have waited until the Indian investigations are concluded before suggesting Inada is guilty.'

The interviewer said, 'Mr Hawe said that, in the light of Inada being found guilty of fraud and corruption, it would be wise of the Government to delay signing the controversial water licence. What

is your response to that?'

Sinclair said, 'We have a deal with Inada, and it stands.'

He left the issue like that, desperately hoping it was sufficiently dealt with.

But the media was just getting started. And now, only two days before the election, it lined its guns upon the Federal Government and Gregory Hunter in particular.'

The ABC asked him if the Queensland government's approval of a free commercial water license was appropriate in the light of Inada companies facing multiple fraud allegations.

The Minister responded, 'As far as I know it's not unusual for the Indian Government to check on the financial dealing of large corporations. The water license application was well under-way before these allegations became known.'

'Yes, Minister. So, is it true that the Government used due diligence when it granted the free water license to Inada?'

'Of course.'

Minister, In the light of the Green Party source saying Inada's self-funded mine model is ultimately owned by a private company in the Cayman Islands, a secretive tax haven. And that this is under

investigation by the Indian tax department. How can you be assured the funds for the project are available?'

Gregory Hunter was silent for a moment. Then he said, 'The water license is Queensland's business, but we are aware of the investigations into the license deal, and I am seeking advice about it.'

'Minister, Would it not be prudent to hold back on this license until Inada is cleared of any wrongdoing?'

Gregory sighed, 'It not always as easy as that once a process is in motion.'

'What do you think about the ATO's statement today that no Australian bank or financial institution or government should finance any transaction where there are allegations of financial impropriety or crime on foot.'

'I think it was irresponsible and uncalled for. The ATO should have waited until the investigations are concluded before they come out with such statements.'

'Doesn't the ATO have the right to show their concern about a company owned in the Cayman Islands, that are connected through their parent companies to allegations of fraudulent invoicing and trade-based money laundering.'

'As I have pointed out, nothing has been proven against Inada.'

'Minister, do you think the Indian Supreme Court would have appointed a special black money investigation team to examine the Inada power companies in India on a whim?'

'Of course not. But nothing has been proven yet.'

The interviewer changed tack. 'Minister what do think about the energy commission findings that Inada's mega mine is neither viable nor justified. Their spokesman, Dr Cranwell stated that with what they know about Inada's dealings the Carnagee mine project, and the fact that India is turning away from coal casts doubt on the future of the Inada mine.'

The Minister tried to hide his scowl. 'We have Inada's word that Indian coal import market will be viable for many years to come.'

The interviewer smiled, 'Yes, Minister, we have Inada's word.'

Adani companies facing multiple financial crime <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-22/adani-companies-facing-multiple-corruption-probes/8140100>

If we want to address global warming, along with the other environmental problems associated with our continued rush to burn our precious fossil fuels as quickly as possible, we must learn to use our resources more wisely, kick our addiction, and quickly start turning to sources of energy that have fewer negative impacts.

David Suzuki

Chapter 41

Tom MacTavish sat in the passenger seat of the unmarked police car, chuckling to himself at the picture in the Townsville newspaper. It showed Green politicians taking a selfie in front of anti-Inada protesters in Parliament House.

Commander Murphy yawned, 'What's so funny?'

'Nothing. Just election shit.'

'So who are you voting for?'

'You do know what secret ballot means.'

Reggie changed the subject. 'How do we know he'll be coming here today?'

The Sergeant turned to the Commander. 'He's a man of habit. He parks the chopper, picks up a Grey Commodore and goes to the Farmers Cafe for breakfast.'

Reggie frowned, 'I hope we're right about this.'

'You put yourself in McCarthy's shoes. His memory loss has given him a Hail Mary pass on the train crash, and only this Woody can link him to the murders. So he'll pay up to get Woody out of his life. It's simple logic for an intelligent man. And the cattle baron is certainly that.'

Reggie sighed, not totally convinced but willing to go along with her Sergeant's theory.

A half hour later the R44 Raven landed at the Townsville transfer point for Magnetic Island and Abelard Morrelly climbed out carrying a large canvas holdall.

The federal police officers watched as he walked to the exit. Reggie spoke into her radio. 'Red one are you in position?'

The officer answered, 'Yes, but no sign of Target 2.'

'Wait for target 1 to arrive.'

'Affirmative, Commander.'

She then said, 'Red 2, what's your status?'

'Just got eyes on target 1. Morrelly getting into a grey Commodore. He has a bag with him.'

'OK, Red 2, follow him but do not approach.'

'Yes, Commander.'

5 minutes later Red 2 reported, 'Target one has just parked his car in Woolcock Street, just down from the Farmer's Cafe.'

'OK, hold your position.'

'Affirmative.'

Red 1 reported, 'Tall fair-skinned male approaching cafe. It may well be our man.'

'Let me know if they sit together or communicate with each other.'

Right, Commander.'

She turned to MacTavish. 'Let's move. The show may well be on.'

Abelard felt very uncomfortable acting as the middleman. Although he had done nothing wrong, he still felt uneasy. All he had to do was eat his bacon and eggs with two slices of toast, wait for Woody to arrive, leave the bag on the seat and leave the cafe. It all seemed very simple. He also felt uncomfortable because the little devil on his shoulder whispered into his ear, telling him to walk away with the money. He could set up his own tourist flight business, and his boss was not about to report the cash missing. But Abelard held honesty and loyalty as the two mainstays in his life. He shrugged the devil off his shoulder and stuck to the plan.

Reggie and Tom entered the cafe.

Woody looked up at them and smelled cop. He panicked, leapt up seized the waiter and held a sharp knife against his throat.

The Feds pointed their guns at Woody.

'One step closer and I slit his throat,' Woody snarled.

Reggie said, 'Come on, Woody, you are only making things worse for yourself.'

'It couldn't get much fucking worse,' Woody moaned. holding the blade close to the waiter's neck.

'Come on, Woody. None of us wants this to end badly.'

'Come any closer, and he's a dead man,' Woody said. But he was trapped, and he knew it. His mind worked feverishly. What did the cops have on him about the train crash? They would question him about the money, but they could not prove anything from it.'

'PUT THE KNIFE DOWN NOW,' MacTavish, barked.

As the fugitive put the knife on the table, Tom moved in a grabbed the waiter, pulling him out of harms way.

Reggie snapped, 'GET DOWN ON THE FLOOR, NOW!'

As Woody fell to the tiled floor, his dreams of wealth collapsed with him.

The cafe owner came out of the kitchen. 'What the hell's going on?' he demanded.

Commander Murphy approached the shocked proprietor. She flashed her card. 'Sorry about the disruption But this is official police business.'

'And what about my business, my customers?' the annoyed proprietor said.

'Come on. Look on the bright side and think of the publicity you can get out of this, Reggie grinned.

Abelard resisted being cuffed. 'I'm an innocent party here. I was just delivering a package for my boss.'

Woody, deflated, was totally subdued and let the cops lead him away without a word.

The day before the election environmental activists ramped up protests against the Inada mine in the foyer of Parliament House in Canberra. This followed an announcement the Indian parent company was given the final go-ahead to export 10 million to 15 million tonnes of thermal coal a year, with the capacity to expand up to 27 million tonnes a year.

The Environmental Defenders Office Queensland, on behalf of the Australian Conservation Foundation, asked the Federal Court for a review of the federal Environment Minister's decision not to activate the water trigger provisions of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC). Which concerned a 110-kilometre pipeline to the mine. The conduit was to be used to transfer water from a storage dam to the mine to wash the coal before export. EDO Queensland chief executive Barbara Anne Brannigan said the Environment Minister, Gregory Hunter made an error of law in failing to apply the water trigger under the EPBC Act regulation in respect of the pipeline. Owing to this oversight, the impact of this massive project on dwindling

groundwater resources would not be federally assessed, and EDO Queensland considered this to be unlawful.

Police removed anti-Inada protesters from Parliament House. Davion Hawe who protested with them, argued, 'The minister's decision needs to be examined by the court, and ultimately overturned. If this challenge is successful, the minister will need to go back to the drawing board and require an assessment of the impacts of this project on our water resources.'

A spokesperson for Inada said the company did not need the water pipeline, known as the North Jericho Water Scheme, finalised to begin construction on the project. He complained that the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Environmental Defenders Office were wasting the court's time and resources, while also wasting taxpayer funds and the ACF's own charitable donations. He maintained that Inada would continue to deliver the Carnagee project and would do so in line with approvals, along with the strict regulations and legislation that govern the Australian resources industry. Once again, anti-mining activists were trying to stand in the way of thousands of jobs that were desperately needed by regional Queenslanders.

Inada said its environmental approvals had already been backed by the courts nine times, but environmental activists continued to reject the process. Inada Mining CEO called on activists to stop demonising the mine which has been scaled back from the original proposal for a \$16.5 billion, 60 million tonnes a year project.

Woody and Abelard were separated and interviewed in different rooms at the Townsville police station. Reggie stared at the suspect. 'So, where did all that money come from?'

'A job.'

'Do you mean a crash-a-coal-train sort of job.'

'I don't know what you mean.'

'What I mean, Woody is that somebody paid you \$100,000 to blow up the Thirty Mile Creek railway bridge.'

Woody flashed his best-surprised look. 'I had nothing to do with that.'

Reggie fixed Woody with her gaze. 'So what did you do to earn all that money?'

He shrugged.

'Are you a top contract killer, like your mate Skip Bott, or drug trafficker. Or maybe a white slaver. Or maybe, as I suspect, a saboteur who got paid for helping to destroy a coal train.'

Woody, feeling trapped, said, 'I want my lawyer.'

Reggie sneered, 'You're not dealing with your local bobby, Mr Stone. We are the federal police, and different rules apply. Nobody, apart from us knows you are here. So let me tell you what is going to happen. You will be taken to a special lock-up where you will stay in solitary confinement. And each day you will be allowed to make a statement.'

Woody stared at the Commander. 'You can't fucking do that! I have my rights as an Australian citizen.'

'As a terrorist, you have no fucking rights.' Then Reggie smiled, 'You have one chance to make a statement now. To help you, I'll tell you what we know.' She pushed a pen and paper at the suspect. 'Listen carefully now. We know that Ossie McCarthy paid you \$100,000 thousand to blow up the railway bridge. We know something went wrong and McCarthy got injured. We know you helped him get to Townsville hospital. We also know you stayed there until he regained consciousness. So

why did you hang around the hospital and risk being caught? Simple. He owed you this money,' Reggie smiled, indicating a photo of the cash.'

'No, you've got it all wrong,' Woody blurted.

'But you hadn't counted on Mr McCarthy losing his memory about his dealings with you. So you needed leverage to get him to pay up. So what did you have on him? Something that made him willingly part with such a huge sum of money.'

Woody felt a chill run up his spine. How the fuck did she know so much?

But Reggie was not yet finished. She hit him with her coup-de-grace. 'You knew that Mr McCarthy had paid you friend Skip Bott to assassinate two prominent people. You know this because you assisted your friend, the sniper to carry out those contracts.' She paused, 'How am I doing so far, Mr Stone?'

Woody, crestfallen, held his drooping head in his hands. He mumbled, 'It was an accident. I didn't mean those railway drivers to die.'

Reggie handed him the pen. 'Write it all down and make it easy on yourself.'

The election came and went, as did the Liberal National Party. Billy Long and his Labor Party just scraped in with a small majority. One Nation got trounced, losing seats to Labor. One Nation's fall from grace was probably tied to their dirty, secret deals with the American NRA. Labor ended up with a hung parliament with the balance of power held by the Greens, who had gained six more seats in the election. Apparently, people were becoming concerned about climate change and alternative clean energies.

Davion Hawe, the new leader of the Greens, was engaged in a private meeting with Billy Long. He looked at the Labor leader. 'Mr Long, your party, needs us for you set up a Labor government and we need you to implement our policies. Apart from changes to environmentalism, our four core values are ecological sustainability, social justice, grassroots democracy and peace and non-violence. There must be no more fence-sitting on these issues, Mr Long.'

Billy smiled falsely, 'I'm sure we can work something out amenable to both parties.'

The End

Epilogue

Sinclair George stared, horrified at the secret report he held in trembling hands. He broke into a cold sweat as he read:

My dear Premier George, I am sending you this latest information before the media gets hold of it. I have it on competent authority that the Indian Tax department has found Inada guilty of deliberately defrauding taxpayers and laundering money while trading in cut and polished diamonds and gold jewellery.

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence has convicted Mahatma Inada of fraud and corruption after a decade of investigating Inada Enterprises for laundering money and dodging \$195 million in taxes. It came to light, during the investigation, that Inada attempted to evade charges and hide the proceeds using the trade of rough-cut diamonds and gold jewellery. Inada set up a complex web of front companies specifically to fleece Indian taxpayers by misusing various government export incentive schemes. Inada then attempted to hide its illicit profits by storing imported diamonds in a bond, then re-exporting them at artificially inflated prices.

Dear Sinclair, the overwhelming weight of evidence collected by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence was upheld in a civil court case. As a result, Mahatma Inada was arrested yesterday and got taken into custody. This shocking news has placed a question mark over the future of all Inada holdings domestic and overseas.

Sinclair sat frozen in a cold sweat. He could already hear the knives being sharpened as the sharks moved in to challenge his leadership.

Ossie heard the police sirens as the land cruisers created dust clouds driving up to his homestead. He wondered why they were using sirens on an empty road? Ossie also wondered why Abelard was not there to support him. But most of all he asked if he would have the courage to pull the trigger of the shotgun, the barrel of which was pressed up under his chin?

Last minute legal challenge to Carmichael mine a waste of

<https://www.afr.com/news/politics/last-minute-legal-challenge-to-carmichael-mine-a-waste-of-time-says-adani-20181205-h18r54>

About Chris Deggs

Chris Deggs was born in 1948 in Bury St. Edmunds, England. For many years he has lived in Australia. He is now happily retired and lives in the Tweed Valley in Northern New South Wales, Australia. He writes contemporary works of fiction: mysteries, adventure, crime, ethics, conspiracy, global domination etc., as well as reference books for the betterment of the human condition. He has published a number of articles on the Academia Website reflecting ethics and Human Survival. Chris has written 24 books to date. Writing and painting are Chris' two main passions in life in which he is always looking for new ways to express himself.

Books by Chris Deggs

Anunnaki – the greatest story never told – book 1 -gods, gold and genes

Anunnaki – the greatest story never told – book 2 - challenge, change and conquest

Anunnaki – the greatest story never told – book 3 – prophesy, power and politics

Black Pope – secrets of the Vatican

Democracy on Trial – the verdict

Entropicus book 1 – the mastery of alchemy

Entropicus book 2 – the mystery of Atlantis

Entropicus book 3 – the madness of androids

Hack – world bank in crisis

Investigation – the nunnery murders

London Lies - the terror agenda

Marlowe – a quantime experience 2

Millennium – countdown to chaos

Nanofuture – the small things in lifePlane Truth – what happened on 9/11

Stealth book 1 – the silent invaders

Termination – the eugenics agenda

Vincent – a quantime experience 1

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Outernet

If you are in the area you can catch up with Chris and say G'day at local art and craft markets in Tweed Shire, New south Wales, Australia.

First Sunday of month Tweed Heads Men's Shed Markets

Second Sunday Chillingham Markets

Third Sunday Uki Buttery Markets

Fourth Sunday Murwillumbah Showground Markets