

Forward

June 2005

Leinnie Bernard's expression gave nothing away. Although she'd waited 30 minutes to see the Home Secretary the impassive look on her face hid her irritation. It took a lot to upset her calm composure. That and her can-do attitude got her noticed by her MI6 superiors. Within two years she was promoted to team leader. Another five and a few smashed ceilings she was in line for the top job. She'd only been in the MI6 driving seat for six months so, being the new girl on the block, the first woman to become director had all eyes on her. It was the first time she'd been summoned by the Home Secretary.

Kenneth Foreman had only been Home Secretary for eight months himself, so he was also still feeling his way. He believed the first duty of the government was to keep citizens safe and the country secure. The Home Office had been at the front line of this endeavour since 1782. As such, it played a fundamental role in the security and economic prosperity of the United Kingdom. Kenneth knew that what some foreign agencies planned for London had nothing at all to do with the citizens' safety.

Kenneth always came over to the media as being suave and confident so-much-so it seemed as though he carried out his state duties in an effortless way. He was a new broom who's brash new approach had many of the old guard upset. Kenneth had already crossed sabres with MI6, recommending the SIS be downsized, with an emphasis on home-based intelligence. Although influential in such matters of national security he couldn't make any autonomous decisions in that respect. But he did have a good deal of influence where national policy is concerned, this being the reason for summoning Leinnie Bernard.

The Home Secretary invited her to sit down. "How are you finding the top job, Leinnie?"

"Smooth sailing so far, Home Secretary."

"Jolly good. You certainly had some big shoes to fill."

She looked at Kenneth. He just oozed charisma. "I'm sure you haven't just asked me here to pass the time of day."

"True, but I find it useful to catch up with our national security director from time to time. However, the main agenda for today is 'Atlantic Blue'. You will have received a memo."

She had. Apparently, a crisis management exercise was planned for London later that year. "Yes, but it was short on details."

Kenneth looked Leinnie in the eye. "Yes, well I'm here to inform you that 'Operation Atlantic Blue' will take place on July 7."

"That gives us less than a month to prepare," she said poker-faced.

He smiled, "The services of 6 won't be required. Just make sure that all your personnel understands this."

Leinnie looked straight at him, her expression belying nothing. "I'm afraid I don't get it, Home Secretary. 6 has always played a pivotal role in such exercises."

"Not this time. A private consultancy is being used to plan and coordinate exercises on the day."

“With respect, Home Secretary, that is a perilous strategy.”

He looked at her. “There is something you can do.”

Not listening, she said, “Outsourcing national security functions is very irresponsible.”

Kenneth smiled, pointing his index finger to the ceiling. “The decision comes from above, Leonnie. Like you, I am a mere servant for HM government.”

Leonnie didn't buy it for one moment. It was part of the Home Secretary's downsizing plan. She'd wondered when the axe would drop. Now it had. And she had to keep her head. She wondered, who was responsible for such a dangerous decision?

The Home Secretary said, “You can make sure that all VIPs staying in the city are warned to stay in their hotels. But only one day before the exercises take place.”

She didn't push it any further “Who's on the VIP alert list?”

“I'll get it sent to your office. You can start with Any US politicians. Warn them to stay clear of the London Underground on July 7.”

“Very well, but with protest, Home Secretary.”

“Make sure Netanyahu gets a prior warning. He's staying in a hotel in Russell-square, before proceeding on to the TASE conference at Liverpool Street where he is due to give a keynote speech.”

“Of course, Home Secretary.”

“Good. That will be all, Leonnie?” Kenneth said, dismissing her.

She turned to leave, then said, “One other thing. Who made the decision to weaken our national security by hiring a private firm?”

He smiled, “Leonnie, I'm not at liberty to divulge such information.”

“6 not only has the right to know, attaining such knowledge is part of its charter.”

“Let me just say that Netanyahu is not just going to be here by chance.”

“Are you saying that Mossad is running this crisis management exercise?”

Kenneth smiled knowingly. “I'm not saying any such thing.”

Kenneth, having played the servant, now asserted his authority. “You don't need to know.”

Leonnie, still with a passive expression, said, “As always MI6 will do its duty, but I warn you, Home Secretary, We will block any attempts at downsizing us.”

Kenneth knew her threat held no substance. Parliament decided on national security policy, and he was sure he had the numbers to support his radical ideas. Although he would not admit it, he wanted to draw attention to himself. His egotistic character and announcement of foreknowledge concerning Atlantic Blue achieved that, but at the cost of letting the cat out of the bag as regards to whom had planned the event.

Introduction

(Within hours of the explosions on London Transport, Israeli Army Radio was reporting that 'Scotland Yard had intelligence warnings of the attacks a short time before they occurred.' This report, repeated by Israel NN.com, added that 'The Israeli Embassy in London was notified in advance, resulting in the foreign minister Benyamin Netanyahu remaining in his hotel room. In Webster Tarpley's 'Synthetic Terror, Made in USA, p.461', he takes the mistaken view that Israel was a mere passive spectator. It was a damage limitation exercise, to account for Netanyahu's foreknowledge – immediate Israeli news statements tried to pin 'blame' on Scotland Yard for telling Netanyahu in advance – which it denied – but why would it want to do that? It makes no sense. The Israelis had foreknowledge.)

Chapter 1

July 7, 2005

3 am. Abed Hussain looked at the time display on his phone. Why does it have to be this early? He switched on a table lamp. Steeling himself Abed, half asleep, rolled off the sofa onto the carpeted floor. His father had brought it back from Iran. He'd never really studied it before. The weave was very intricate, and the colours blended well with the room. He stood up. He'd slept on the settee so he could slip out of the house without disturbing his parents. The big day had come. He had to go to London. He was a soldier of Islam. That's what Baqer told him on many occasions. As a soldier, he had to do his duty, a task that required the greatest personal sacrifice. Abed, grabbing his thick hoodie, put it on over his grey T-shirt. He then tiptoed through the house so quietly a small rodent would have made more noise. Carefully closing the front door behind him, Abed stepped out into the inky blackness of the summer night. Cloud cover obscured the firmament of stars and scuttled past the moon, which played a game of 'now you see me, now you don't. Pulling up his hood and thrusting his hands into his pockets Abed walked through the deserted streets of Holbeck, guided only by the occasional street light. His family had no idea what their son was about to do. Abed knew he would never see his family again.

The 23 year old Iranian, in jeans and trainers, wandered by Beeston's red-bricked terrace houses, now a far cry from being the most crowded, most filthy and unhealthy village in the country. They had been built primarily for the post-war railway workers, but now that railway labour had been severely cut back over the years, the homes were bought by private owners.

As he walked to a friend's place, as per the arrangement, Abed thought about the events that had led him to this location. Although he'd been born in Tehran Abed had lived most of his life in Afghanistan, where his father worked as a civil engineer. Following in his father's footsteps Abed, the dutiful son, became an engineering student in Kabul. Having been bombed out of their home, by Coalition forces, Abed, along with his mother, sister, and other refugees, sailed off from the Turkish coast heading for Samos Island in Greece. Their boat sank on the high seas on July 7, 2002. His sister was one of the many refugees lost at sea. He still had nightmares of her screaming for help. Abed had tried finding her in the swirling waves but to no avail. Clinging to bits of flotsam, the survivors eventually got picked up by Greek fishermen, who took them to Samos. Abed's mother, distraught at the loss of her daughter, lost interest in going to England; instead, she stayed on Samos, in a refugee camp. Abed had found his way England, and his father, who had gone ahead and prepared a home for his family.

It was the 5th anniversary of his sister's death. A gust of cold wind jerked his mind back to the present. The infidels would pay for bombing his country and causing the loss of his family.

The young Iranian, cold but resolute, arrived at 34 Colwyn Road, Cirus Banweer's house. As agreed he waited outside.

3:15am. Abed was still waiting beside a silver-blue Nissan Micra, that Banweer had hired days earlier. He shivered with cold. It was the English summer, yet it still felt as cold as a desert night. He looked up at the sound of footsteps on the cold hard pavement. Somebody was approaching out of the darkness. The pedestrian was illuminating his way by the flashlight on his phone. Abed sighed, relieved that it was Darwish Khan, who at 30 was the oldest member of the group. They welcomed each other.

Darwish said, "Where is Cirus?"

"He told me to wait by the car. He will be here soon."

“He'd better be if we are to catch our train.”

As if on cue, Cyrus Banweer approached them. Unlocking the Micro, he said, “Get in the car.”

“Couldn't you have gotten something bigger?” Darwish said, squeezing himself into the back seat of the 'compact' saloon.

As they drove away, Abed turned to Khan, “At least you won't have to teach the Infidel's kids anymore.”

“The kids are themselves, infidels, my friend.”

Cyrus, like Abed, had also survived a disaster at sea. Having lost eight members of his family in the storm, he couldn't find a reason for his life anymore. His family had drowned on October 11, 2003, when their boat sank not long after it had left Libya, and just over a hundred kilometres away from the Maltese coast, with hundreds of Afghan refugees on board. 52 people died in that tragedy. He wanted to strike a blow for his family as well as for Allah. He felt he had nothing to live for, so becoming a martyr to the Islamic cause, seemed the only thing to do.

3:30am. After a brief drive along the deserted streets of south Leeds, the Micra pulled up outside 18 Alexandra Grove, in the Hyde Park suburb of the northern city. The trio tiptoed to the front door, which Khan opened with a key. The house, which he was looking after for an Iranian friend, was empty. Khan took his friends to the bathroom.

Abed Hussain, mightily impressed, said: “That's awesome bro.”

Cyrus Banweer looked at the devices lying in the old ceramic bath. “So that's it, Darwish.”

The bomb maker replied, “It wasn't that hard. I learned how to make them from recipes posted on the Internet.”

Looking at the combination of wires, electronic bits and pieces and homemade explosives, Hussain said, “What gives it the big bang?”

Khan laughed softly. “Drain cleaner, bleach and acetone.” He added, “This is the factory. We can make many bombs with this.”

“Must have cost you a bomb, mate,” Banweer, the joker in the pack quipped.

“Very amusing,” Khan said, “It cost a few hundred quid.”

“Any help from Al?” Hussain asked.

Knowing he meant Al-Qaeda, the bomb maker shook his head. “No Mate. I got a bit of help from Mahmoud though. He's a chemist, so he knows something about explosives.”

Banweer's brow furrowed, “Didn't he ask questions?”

“Yes, but I persuaded him not to. His Job at uni is much too important for him to get involved.”

“So what did he suggest?” Hussain asked.

“He said I needed to base, the bombs on a derivative of TNT, called triacetone triperoxide.”

“As long as it does the job,” Abed said.

“Oh, it will do the job all right. Have no fears there. My brother,” Khan smirked.

Chapter 2

Present day

Joab Rackham arrived back home, another day of tedium over. Covering the Fulham Fire Brigade open day was hardly blood – stirring stuff. And reporting jobs didn't get much better than that at the Hamstead and Highbury Times. He yearned for an assignment that would get his adrenalin rushing. But, after his American adventure and near-death experience at the hands of Special Branch, he'd made a promise to Cami that he wouldn't investigate any stories that could put him or her and the baby in harm's way.

Camilla smiled, "How was your day, husband mine?"

Putting on a brave face, he gave Cami a hug then said, "Where's the little man?"

"He got a bit smelly, so I gave him back to the stork."

"Ha, ha."

"I just put him down. So how was work?"

Joab wanted to forget about it. "Mr Pembleton got first prize in the giant marrow contest. It was the third year in succession he's won it. And the Fulham Fire Station was besieged by school kids at their annual open day."

She looked at him. "Joabie, don't forget my mum is coming here to spend some time with her grandson."

"When's that grand event happening?"

"I told you, this Friday."

"Right," he said. Then he asked, "Any messages for me?"

"Not for you, no."

Just then, as though he'd summoned it, his phone rang. "Joab speaking." He listened, turned to Camilla, whispering, "Work stuff," then went into another room. In private he asked, "Who are you and why are you calling?"

"Name's Wilkin. I worked for MI6 at the time of the London bombings."

Joab's ears pricked. He remembered the day very well. "What do you want from me?"

"The official story was a huge cover-up."

"But nobody can prove it."

"I can, or I wouldn't be calling you."

"Why are you calling 'me'?"

"Are you interested in the story?"

"I haven't heard it yet."

“Tomorrow, Hampstead Heath, 1 pm.”

Joab agreed, knowing full well he was approaching the dangerous ground. Still, listening to a source couldn't do any harm - could it?

Joab crept into the small nursery. Tiny Jack lay there in peaceful sleep. Joab smiled, trying not to disturb him.

“Who was on the phone?” Camilla asked when he joined her in the living room.

Joab walked up to her, smiling, just work - a job for tomorrow.”

She looked him in the eye. “You look a bit shaken. Are you okay?”

“Yes. Why?”

“You don't seem the same just lately.”

“Same as what?”

“Your usual bright self.”

He looked at his young wife. “My life is different now. I have a beautiful little family. I just have to adjust - that's all.” He wondered if it was as simple as that?

The wind was a little brisk on the heath, Joab, wrapped up in a muffler, sat on the seat at the highest point in Hampstead, overlooking the sprawling city below. Wondering if he was doing the right thing was foremost on his mind. Then, jolted from his reverie, he looked up and saw a man approaching him. Dressed in warm, casual clothes and trainers, the elderly stranger sat beside him.

“Are you Joab Rackham?”

“Yes. So what's this about?”

“Something much too hot for the Ham and High.”

“So you've been looking into my background, Mr Wilkin,” Joab said, eyeing the lined face.

“Nick. If you hadn't come up trumps, I wouldn't be here.”

“So why am I here?”

Nick looked at the journalist. “Have you heard of a Jules Dupont?”

“Tell me about him.”

“At the time of the London bombing, Jules Dupont ran a company called Masada Consultancy. It's a private company that ran a mock terrorist drill, in the London Underground, with practically the same scenario as what happened on that day.”

“That's old news.”

“Just bear with me. Listen to this like you've never heard it before. The actual mock anti-terror drill that the BBC Panorama programme of May 2004 had outlined had been chosen, by Visor's client, to be carried out on the 'very' same day, in the very same locations that four Muslim suicide bombers, had also chosen for their grand departure.”

“Who was Visor's mysterious client?” Joab asked, excitedly.

“The most likely candidate is Mossad.”

“Oh dear, we're coming perilously close to CT territory, Nick.”

“Forget theory; this is an outright conspiracy, Joab.” He continued, “Do you think it's just coincidental that the exact scenarios that Visor's client had chosen for the mock drill took place with real and devastating explosions on three London Tube trains and a bus.”

Joab stared at the anonymous source. "More than coincidental I grant you."

The former British MI6 agent said, “I could see many similarities between the London Bombings And 9/11, and I spoke out about it.”

“What happened to you then?”

He looked Joab in the eye. “I was sent to prison in 2006 for three years on trumped-up charges. I had to pay the price for blowing the whistle on pay-offs by MI6 to an Islamic terrorist group to kill Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi of Libya. For me, it was the breaking point. I'd turned a blind eye to many British government cover-ups, thinking they were for the greater good. But in the end, I contravened the official secrets act and spoke out. Now I've served my time, and I am a free man.” He paused, then added, “A free man! What a joke that is. I know they're keeping an eye on me, that's why I chose this wide open space for this meeting.”

Joab, irritated, said, "Are you going to show me some proof or not?"

He looked at Joab. “I have sworn an affidavit that I, Nick Wilkin solemnly swear that I know both the London bombings and 9/11 were callously and calculated government events.”

“Fine words Nick, but I need irrefutable proof before I open this can of worms.”

The former spy fixed Joab in his gaze. “Joab, I know, from reading your brilliant book 'Flying False Colours' about 9-11 that you can see through the bullshit. What I want to know now, is are you willing to step up and expose the London bombing sham for what it was.”

Joab wondered the same thing but not for the same reasons. “You'll have to give me something solid before I commit myself.”

Nick took a deep breath. “Joab, we are at a dangerous crossroad. The free people of the world are at war with an enemy within, and either Democracy will prevail, or Fascist rule and martial law will take over. How you handle this story could well be the determining factor. You asked me who the client was. Well, I can tell you here, and now the London bombings were staged and carried out by Mossad, with the complicity of HM government.”

“Yes, but can you prove it?”

“Oh yes, Joab. You see I acted as liaison with undercover Mossad agents leading up to the bombings. And I have secretly recorded conversations to prove it.”

Joab's heart missed a beat. “I have to listen to the tapes before I decide.”

Nick got up. “I will contact you soon about a time and place.”

Joab sat there 'gob-smacked'. The story seemed incredible! But also dangerous - very dangerous. It could be the assignment to get him a Pulitzer prize. Imagining stepping up to receive his coveted award Joab surrendered to the moment. Then reality struck. No, he couldn't do it, not after his promise to Cami. As he walked down the hill, he felt his resolve weakening. Well, there was no harm in just listening to the evidence. He sighed deeply, as his mundane reality took effect. The Ham and High needed him to write an article on a controversial building project.

Chapter 3

July 5, 2005

1:15am. Claus Hoffman, having passed as one of the night maintenance crew at the London Underground Central line depot went about his assignment. The railway workshop, relatively silent during the day, was a noisy hive of activity at night. So Hoffman, dressed as a London Underground train inspector, was able to go under the carriages with no one challenging his actions. Most of the trains underwent just light maintenance, taking around ten minutes per unit - while others that were due got the 'substantial overhaul', where they were put up on jacks over an extended pit, allowing mechanics to go underneath the train to make sure everything was in good working order. Bill Turner had been told by head office to have three distinct trains readied for the substantial overhaul.

Hoffman's instructions were to find train 204 and attach the magnetic explosive device to the underside of the third carriage. Hoffman, a trained professional, who hired himself out to various radical factions, gave no thought to who might be killed or injured. He wasn't the one who would press the button. All he was concerned about was that he had enough Semtex to blow a hole in the floor of the carriage. Having affixed the first device, Hoffman went back to his van, retrieved another package and fixed it under the second carriage of train 216. He then repeated this exercise on train number 311, after which he ticked off the train numbers on his clipboard and handed it to the foreperson on duty. His job completed it was time to get some sleep.

Bill Turner, with 30 years working on subsurface trains under his belt, the last five as supervisor, was approached Toby Brooks a senior maintenance engineer. "Did you know we were getting a new inspector here tonight?"

Wiping his greasy hands on a rag, he responded, "Oh, you mean that bloke Patrick. Apparently, he goes around all the depots doing spot checks."

Turner said, "One of those time and motion bastards from head office."

"He didn't admit it, but I guess that's just what he is."

The railway supervisor rubbed his chin. "That probably accounts for the fact he didn't stay long. Just checked three trains and pissed off."

Toby grinned, "We got through nearly 100 units tonight, so he wouldn't have much to complain about."

Bill said, "I know they're not going to be back in service for a couple of days, but before you go make sure those units are off the jacks."

Chapter 4

July 7, 2005

3:45am. The trio carefully loaded four identical black rucksacks into the boot of the Nissan Micra.

“Be careful” Khan warned, “ten lbs of explosive can make a big mess.” He added, “Besides we want them to go off at the right time.”

Banweer said, “So how touchy is this stuff?”

“The detonators are packed inside plastic bottles, which are inside plastic containers I got from the gardening centre. So as long as you are careful, they’ll be okay.”

25-year-old Darwish Khan, like his friends, had his harrowing experience. Originally born into a wealthy family in Afghanistan he grew up a brilliant boy. His parents wanted the best for him so they sent him to Greece to get a good education. After just four years there, Darwish sat his university exams. He succeeded and then studied Business Administration at the University of Macedonia, in Thessaloniki.

So determined was he to study and get educated, Darwish recalled first going to a Greek school in 2001, without knowing any Greek. In the beginning, he didn’t understand a thing but gradually, thanks also to his teachers, he managed to become one of the best students in his class.

His school years were not easy, however. Every morning he had to get up at 5:30 to go to work. After arriving back home after day school, he had to rush to night school. Fortunately, he had friends to help him with the lessons and Ms. Angeliki, the new ‘mother’ he found in Greece, helped him with all the rest. She cooked, cleaned and contributed to his rent so that he could concentrate on his studies.

When Darwish got into University, he immediately called his ‘real’ mother in Afghanistan, whom he hadn’t seen since he was 14.

His harrowing experience took place when he returned to Afghanistan. His family, who belonged to the Hazaras, lived under the constant threat of the Taliban, until, one day the Taliban tried to run him over with a car. Darwish’s parents feared for his life and sent him to Iran. At first, he cried all the time. It hurt too much being on his own. When things got tougher there too, he headed to Europe.

Banweer laughed, “You disappeared for a while there, Darwish.”

The well educated young Muslim grinned, “Just old memories, that’s all.”

4:10am. David Gregson came over to his officers as a meek-mannered man with a warm disposition. Although, largely correct, lurking behind that soft exterior was a no nonsense individual. But he only showed his wolfish side when he needed to assert himself and his authority. He got Inspector Jo Stewart’s attention as they sat in the ‘ops’ centre at Scotland Yard. Watching the blip moving on the computer screen, he said, “Our boys are on the move.”

Jo, seconded to Special Branch for the operation, said, “Sir, why are we just monitoring them?”

He looked at her. She seemed somewhat geeky, with her old horn-rimmed glasses but David had picked Jo for her unquestioning loyalty. So he was a little surprised at her question. “Because that is what we have been told to do.”

She didn’t question him further.

Gregson smiled, “Now to follow the action,” as the moving red dot, representing the Nissan Micra, headed south, through Leeds’ leafy suburbs.

In the car, oblivious to the tracking device attached to its underside, The three young Muslims chatted as they passed Beeston, where Khan lived, an impoverished district of Leeds soon to become the focus of the world’s media.

After her faux pas, Stewart's eyes remained glued to the screen as the blip joined the southbound M1 at junction 40. She followed its progress as it travelled south along the spine of England. She knew it would be a while before they reached London, so she slid off to top up on caffeine.

4:30am. Grover Knight (Habib Raja) said goodbye to his wife Susanne, who was, heavily pregnant with their second child, and left their rented semi-detached home in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. He then drove off in a hired red Fiat. Negotiating the B489, Raja arrived at Luton train station around 5 am. There, the 22-year-old Muslim attached a pay-and-display ticket to the windscreen of the small Italian car - from which DNA was later extracted to identify his remains.

Jamaican-born Grover Knight had changed his name to Habib Raja when he converted to Islam. Habib had been moderate in his beliefs until he met Baqer, a behavioural psychologist while fitting his home with carpet.

Habib believed Baqer to be a friend. He never knew that the psychologist was a plant, a provocateur put in place to stir the young men to Islamic action. With his psychology skills, Baqer had easily fuelled Habib's dislike of western foreign policy concerning, Palestine, Chechnya and, in particular, Iraq. He subsequently met with the other two young Muslims and, after infusing them with his ideas the plan for their suicide mission took shape. Baqer wasn't involved in that part of the operation. He'd played his part and was paid handsomely for doing so.

Chapter 5

July 5th, 2005

Jules Dupont sat waiting in the studio for the interview to begin. His well polished 'hail fellow well met' mask cleverly concealed his shifty nature. Having failed in many start-up enterprises, Jules ran a cover operation for Mossad, called Masada Consultancy, which was based right in the City of London.

Joe Lane waited for the countdown, and he was on the air. "Good evening. With me tonight I have Jules Dupont the Managing Director of Masada Consultancy, a crisis management advice company. Turning to his guest he said, I hope we're not involved in some mess right now."

Jules grinned widely. "No Joe, but we are carrying out a drill in two days time, which will affect the running of tube trains at certain stations in central London."

"Jules, my intel tells me that you were formally a Scotland Yard official, working at one time with the Anti Terrorist Branch."

That was the cover story to give him credibility. So he went along with the facade. "Yes, Joe."

Turning to the camera directly in front of him, he said, "So, with his experience, we can rest assured that Jules knows what he is talking about." Turning back to his guest, he said, "So why this drill and why the day after tomorrow?"

Jules smiled broadly. "You will have to ask my client that. All I'm saying is that my company is running a 1,000 person strong exercise to deal with the London Underground being bombed at three different locations."

Joe grinned, "So who is your client?"

Jules smiled again, showing off perfect teeth. "Joe, you know better than to ask that."

Joe said, "I guess it would have to be someone at or near the top of the food chain, to bring London transport to a standstill."

Ignoring the host's assertion, Jules said. "Kings Cross, Russell Square and Edgware-road stations will all be affected by the exercise."

"So what times do you want the public to avoid these locations?"

"Joe, for it to be realistic as an emergency requiring effective crisis management we need people there - the more, the better actually."

"So you want the public to be part of these exercises."

"Yes, but the public have to realise they are to treat this pseudo-emergency seriously, and they must respond to all instructions issued by the crisis management teams."

The host nodded. "So what sort of virtual bombs are we talking about and where will the simulated explosions take place?"

Jules said, "We're talking homemade bombs on three trains."

"On the trains, not in the stations?"

"Yes, but as the trains approach the three stations."

Joe asked, "How will the passengers on those trains know a simulated bomb has gone off?"

"The train will stop in the tunnel, and management will make an announcement. Passengers will be asked to take it seriously."

Well, I hope it goes well for you, Mr. Dupont." Turning to the camera, Joe said, "Well folks are you ready for a little excitement in your lives. But remember what Mr. Dupont says and, if you wish to be part of this exercise, follow the emergency workers instructions."

Chapter 6

July 7, 2005

4:54am. Jo Stewart inserted eye drops to alleviate a bit of irritation. Then, looking up from her screen she turned to David. "I don't understand what this has to do with 'Atlantic Blue'."

Gregson turned to her. "Just keep your eye on the car."

She sighed, stretched and yawned. "They've just stopped at Woodall services on the M1, probably to fill up with petrol."

Gregson turned to the images on his screen. Special Branch had a very sophisticated auto feed from CCTV. He said, "Banweer's just gone in to pay. He's wearing a white T-shirt, dark jacket, white tracksuit bottoms and a baseball cap. He's buying snacks, and seems to be quibbling with the cashier over his change. He's looking directly at the CCTV. Now he's going back to the car."

"Why did he look at the camera?"

He shrugged, "Who knows how his mind works?"

Jo thought it was something else. It was as though he wanted the camera to record his presence. "Sir, it doesn't make sense that he's quibbling over a bit of change when he's planning to blow himself up."

The wolf began to emerge. "Inspector, just stick to your job."

"Just one other thing, Sir, Is this vehicle connected with Atlantic Blue?"

Gregson grimaced, took a deep breath, then answered, "We don't think so. We have been asked to monitor it's progress - that's all." He added, "We don't want anyone crashing the party."

"So, are they a real threat?"

"Not as long as we do our job, inspector."

She took the hint.

5:07am. A surveillance team in an unmarked police car watched as the red Fiat Brava arrived at Luton station. "That looks like our man," the detective sergeant said.

The driver yawned. It had been a long, boring night. "He's just sitting in his car. What's he waiting for?" he asked.

"More like who. And if we're patient we might just find out."

Habib Raja sat alone in his car. The only one of the four to not have been born in a Muslim country. In fact he'd never even visited a Muslim nation. Born as a West Indian, he'd lived in England for most of his life. He'd converted to Islam after he and his family had spent years being vilified by racist bigots with hardly a brain between them.

He must have gotten his times wrong, or the others were late. Bored, he got out of his car and walked around. Then he walked into the almost deserted station and looked up at the departure board. The train wouldn't arrive for another hour.

The detective sergeant said, "He arrived too early."

The driver responded, "So what are we supposed to do?"

"Just wait."

"I need to take a piss."

"Then go and do it."

"Sarge, maybe there's somewhere I can get a coffee."

"Not this time of the morning. Take a piss. I'll keep a lookout."

The officer watched their target get back into his car. he heard the engine start.

"Fuck, he's leaving!" *What should he do? Follow or wait for his partner?* "Fuck it!" He shuffled into the driver's seat and started the engine.

Having relieved himself the police officer headed back to his car. But it wasn't where he had left it! grabbing his radio he barked, "Where the fuck are you?"

"Following the rag head's fucking car." Then he said, "Relax mate, he's just pulling into another parking spot."

"Why?"

"I don't fucking know. Maybe he suspects something."

"He bloody well will if you keep following him around."

"So what should I do now."

"I don't know Sarge. Maybe drive out and come back in, hoping he won't recognise it as being the same car."

Habib Raja watched the car stop. *Was it following him?* He waited nervously then saw it leave the car park. He was obviously imagining things.

Other vehicles began arriving in the car park, the surveillance car among them.

The sergeant parked his car three vehicle spaces from the suspect's car, close enough to monitor him without spooking him.

The abandoned cop got back in the driving seat, flashing the sergeant a dark look as he did so.

"What the hell was I supposed to do? Our job is to keep an eye on him."

The driver turned to his partner. "If our target is up to no good why don't we just go over there and search his car?"

The sergeant glared at him. "Because we are here to observe and report – that's all."

By then more cars had turned up in the station car park.

Habib, still unsettled, decideds to test his concerns. He started his car again and drove towards the car park exit.

"Look! He's off again," the sergeant said,

"What the hell is he playing at?" the driver said. Then he asked, "Shall we follow?"

"If he leaves, yes."

Much to their relief the target remained in the car park, taking up a different space.

Habib knew he'd been imagining things. He checked the time. *The others should arrive soon.*

Chapter 7

London present day

Joab was on the floor playing with Jack when the call came. Camilla was at the shops, so he was free to take it. “Joab here.”

“I have a recording ready for you. We'll need to meet somewhere quiet, so I suggest Keats House. It's quiet and private.”

“Sounds good.”

“To make your listening even more private, I have recorded the conversation onto an iPod.”

“Good idea. When?”

“How about 2 pm, today?”

“Yes, I can make that.”

Joab checked his watch. It read 11.50. He hoped Camilla would be home soon.

At around 1 pm she arrived laden with bags of food. Joab helped her with them. She kissed him lightly. “So where are you taking us after lunch?”

Shit, he'd forgotten about that arrangement. “Sweetheart, something came up. I have to go to work.” Joab, seeing the disappointment on her face, said, “I can do tomorrow if you like. Maybe a refreshing walk on the heath and a bevvy at Jack Straws Castle.”

“Isn't that a gay pub these days?”

“Yes, so I've heard, but I don't think it's catching.”

Joab had never visited Keats House before. Gleaming white, it was aesthetically pleasing, set in well-tended grounds full of statues indicating serenity, inspiration and life.

A plaque read:

This building was the home of the Romantic poet from 1818 to 1820 when he left for Rome in the hope of alleviating his tuberculosis (he died of the disease the following year, aged 25).

Joab had a quick look inside while he waited for Nick to show. He was impressed by the care and attention given to the interior restoration. As he moved around among other visitors, Joab noted that the refurbishment reflected the original decoration of the property. The interior designer had lovingly created a living space that Keats would have recognised and approved. The overall effect produced an authentic example of Regency style.

Nick was waiting for him outside. They walked to the garden where the poet wrote his 'Ode to a Nightingale.' The ex-spy handed Joab the iPod, saying, “Here's the proof you requested.”

Joab plugged it in and listened:

A man speaking English with a Middle East accent, said “The Jamaican is the weakest link. He only recently converted to Islam and is full of passion about the cause.”

“Has the doctor agreed to help with the programming?”

“He has no choice if he wants to keep practising.”

“The trap worked then.” He then asked, “Will he be able to sway the others?”

“It's your job to see that he does.”

“It's always risky when people responded to being programmed to carry out certain acts but didn't don't know what was happening. All manner of things could go wrong.”

“But they won't go wrong, will they?”

There was a pause then a narrator said, “Voice one is that of Meir Hagan, the then director of Mossad. The second voice is the of Jules Dupont, CEO of Masada Consultancy.”

There was a pause, then a voice said, “Phase one is nearly complete. Dr Baqer Idris, a behavioural psychologist, was charged with indecent assault against a female client, our honey bee. He was in danger of losing his license to practice.”

“Was he guilty of the charges against him?”

“What do you think?”

“I take it he's with us now.”

“The Jamaican has been laying Dr Idris' carpets. They have become good friends.”

“How is the manipulation going?”

“Very well. Dr Idris assures me that Grover Knight has developed an intense hatred of western foreign policy concerning, Palestine, Chechnya and, in particular, Iraq.”

“Hatred is one thing. Taking action is something else. Has the Jamaican committed himself to martyrdom?”

“Idris has persuaded him it's for the greater good. The Jamaican believes his selfless actions will give his wife and children a better life.”

“Has he persuaded the others yet?”

“He has been infusing them with his ideas.”

After a pause, the narrator said, “Voice one is that of Jules Dupont. Voice two is that of Meir Hagan.”

Joab turned to Nick. “This doesn't prove it is them talking.”

“At the very least it tells you what questions to be asking.”

Joab, intrigued, switched the iPod back on, and heard:

“I'm sorry Meir, but I cannot be party to this.”

“You Already are, Home Secretary. 9-11 gave the American government a mandate to get tough on terrorism. The Patriot Act was put into place and imposed upon the God-fearing folk of US of A. For our joint plans to go ahead your government needs it own Patriot Act.”

“Terrorists with homemade bombs is one thing but military grade explosives on London Underground trains, that's just horrific.”

“Nevertheless, necessary.”

“Who is going to plant the bombs?”

"We have a specialist. We have used him before, and he is excellent."

"I don't want to know any more about it, and this meeting never happened."

The narrator said, "Voice one is that of Kenneth Foreman. Voice two is that of Meir Hagan."

Nick, seeing the shocked look on the journalist's face said, "This is fucking dynamite. Do you want to light the fuse?"

Chapter 8

July 7 2005

6.49am. The surveillance team watched as the Micra entered the car park and parked next to the Brava. The Sergeant set up a camera, with a zoom lens. He set it to multi-shot and took rapid photos as the four men got out of their respective cars. He continued filming as they opened the boots of both cars. They appeared to be moving items between them. The Sergeant wished he was closer to get clearer shots, but it wasn't worth the risk. Then he saw the four men put on identical black rucksacks, looking to all intents and purposes as though they were going on a camping holiday.

Gregson, back at the Scotland Yard ops centre received the same info, but from a security camera. David, getting Jo's attention, said, "They've all just put on heavy backpacks. No guesses for what's in them."

"Not their lunch, I'll wager."

"Could be going on a camping trip," he quipped.

7:10 am. As the London train pulled in at Luton Station, the surveillance car driver followed the passengers as they headed for the platform. The four suspects were just a little way ahead of him. Before they could get to the train uniformed police blocked the entrance to the platform. Alarmed by this turn of events the surveillance officer radioed his sergeant. "There's some hold up with local cops. Cheque with ops to see what going on."

Jo Stewart took the call. She turned to Gregson, "Trouble at Luton railway station. Apparently, the local police are stopping passengers from entering the platforms."

"What the hell! Find out what's going on."

Jo pushed her glasses up to the bridge of her nose and carried out a search. A Northern Line train had stopped in a tunnel for 15 minutes between Tooting Bec and Balham. Passengers, finally, had to disembark at Balham - exiting via the driver's carriage at the front of the train. Firefighters were checking the train, while a maintenance crew scrutinised the bottom of another train already at the station. She radioed the news to the surveillance team.

"Why are they checking the trains?" the Sergeant asked.

Jo said, "We are in the dark as much as you. For all, we know it could all be part of this drill."

The police officers, alerted by loud, angry noises, cut radio contact and went to investigate the cause of the disturbance. Some of the passengers began to make their feelings known. The four suspects, the cops noticed, stayed together and kept calm.

Eventually, the train was given clearance to continue on its journey. Raja, Hussain, Banweer and Khan went through the ticket barriers and onto the platform. The two police officers watched as the four suspects boarded the train, which was now able to continue its journey to London.

"Right, let's check those cars," the Sergeant said. The driver took a small crowbar out of the police car. He used it to smash a window and open the driver's door of the Micra. "Now this looks interesting," he said, eyeing what looked to be explosives, on the back seat.

"Don't touch anything. I'll call the EOD."

The driver scratched his head. "Why would they go off without these explosives?"

"Either they got cold feet and couldn't go through with whatever their plan is."

"Why the hell didn't we just arrest them."

The Sergeant, fed up with such questions, stated firmly, "Because that wasn't our remit." Seeing his offsider just standing there, his eyes glued to the explosives, he added, "Do something useful and bring Ops up to date on the suspect's status."

Jo Stewart passed the info on to a surveillance team waiting for the train's arrival at Kings Cross station. All this staring at a computer was getting to her. She needed something to take the edge off. Weak coffee didn't cut it. She needed a double vodka, her favourite tippie. She had a half full bottle concealed in one of the draws, but with David, in her face, that's where it would have to stay. Getting her mind back on the job, she said, "Why would they leave incriminating evidence in the car?"

Gregson stretched, got up and said, "They're burning bridges. They're on a one-way journey. They don't much care what we find."

"So they are on suicide missions."

"It certainly seems that way."

Jo frowned, "Why can't we arrest them or have them neutralised."

"Jo, do you fancy stopping someone with a bomb in their rucksack."

Throwing her hands up, exasperated, she said, "We have to stop them before they kill people."

"Inspector, it's not our call."

She turned on him. "There's four terrorists with bombs travelling to London. Just how the hell is it not our call?"

He scowled at her, "Just deal with the surveillance team."

Back at Luton Station the surveillance car driver took the operation centre call. He reported, "We have found some other items consistent with the use of explosives, in the Nissan Micra."

"Are the Explosive Ordnance Disposal people there yet?"

"Eta, five minutes."

"Okay, stay there until the EOD deal with the cars."

"There's something else."

"What?"

"We found a 9mm handgun in the Brava."

"Okay, bag it and tag it."

"Yes, but why was it just left there?"

"Don't try working it out. The targets are not exactly rational."

"And why did they bother to get an all day parking ticket for the Micra. Are they planning on returning here later today?"

Jo sighed, "I wouldn't bother trying to read too much into it."

“So?” the Sergeant said when his partner had finished with ops.

“We've just got to bag the evidence and wait for the EOD to do their thing. Then our job's done.”

Chapter 9

London present day

Joab wanted nothing more than to light the fuse. But if it was a short fuse it could end up exploding in his face. In a weird way to do so would be his version of martyrdom. Like The Jamaican-born Raja, he would probably lose his wife and his little Jack. In some respects, death would be preferable to exile and estrangement from the woman he loved. Okay, so he could turn his back on the recordings and Nick Wilkin and simply get on with his life. Joab tried convincing himself that the records were fake, but the recordings made so much sense. As long as he kept quiet about them, Camilla would be none the wiser, and he could keep his integrity and his family. It was the simplest and most sensible path to take. It was also the most difficult. Once his nose caught a whiff of 'cover up' he was like a bloodhound on the scent.

As they walked on the heath, with Joab carrying the baby in what he laughingly referred to as a 'Jackpack', his mind kept wandering to Nick's recordings. The people responsible for killing all those passengers on the bus and the tubes considered themselves impervious to any charges being laid against them. They thought themselves so powerful and well connected they could get away with anything to further their cause. Those recordings were the key to showing them they were wrong. They were wrong in what they did, and the culprits were wrong assuming they could get away with it. Joab also knew by pursuing the truth he would be opening up a huge can of worms, one he'd have no control over.

They sat down on the bench Joab had shared with Nick. There was a slight chill in the air, and a weak sun peeked through cotton wool clouds.

Cami put her arm around Joab, while the baby gripped one of her fingers. "This is wonderful Joabie. I'm so glad you're not going away to work anymore."

He had to say something. They shared everything together, the good and the bad. This subterfuge wasn't good. "Me too. But there is a job coming that will increase my working hours."

"Oh! What job."

"Something to do with corruption in the public service. It's quite a biggie and could get me a bit further up the ladder at the Ham and High."

Frowning deeply, she said, "It sounds dangerous."

Joab smiled, "It's only an article for a local newspaper."

"Yes, but where corruption lurks so do whistleblowers, and they're dangerous people to be around."

"Don't worry Love." It was a pathetic thing to say, almost patronising."

The next day Joab phoned Nick Wilkin from the newspaper office. "Okay, I'm in, but I reserve the right to pull out at any time, to protect my family."

"This isn't some fucking game, Joab."

"I'm acutely aware of that or I wouldn't be sticking my neck out again."

"I have more stuff for you to hear. Meet me at the Freud Museum."

"Where's that?"

"In Hampstead. See you there at 1 pm."

Nick put down the phone. He was about to change his clothes when he heard a car pull up outside his home. Nick, peering between the curtains, saw two men in dark suits approaching his door. They didn't look like Jehova's Witnesses. He recognised one of them. He hadn't seen Abe Moore since leaving the service. Responding to the knock Nick opened the door, "Abe, what the hell are you doing here?"

Although in his fifties, Abraham Moore still had the classic good looks of a film star. He took pride in his appearance and had spent thousands of pounds on his teeth so he could flash his Hollywood smile. With his moustache, he looked a bit like Tom Selleck. Entering Nick's domain, he said, "I've come for a little chat, Nick." As an aside, he added, "Oh, this is Wally Jenkinson. I'm his handler."

"That still doesn't explain why you're here," Nick said, a little uncomfortable.

"Oh, just to pick your brain about a few things. Tidying up loose ends." Taking a seat, he said, "How about putting on the kettle?"

Nick looked at the MI6 man. "Oh, yes. Coffee or tea?"

"Tea, strong, one."

As they sipped their tea Abe said, "You know of a Jules Dupont, don't you?"

"He was the one who ran the Atlantic Blue exercises."

"That's right. We're concerned about a security breach. It seems that somebody is talking out of school."

Playing dumb, Nick said, "About what, Abe?"

"Someone has been spreading lies about Atlantic Blue."

"Now why would they want to do that?" Wilkin said, draining his cup.

"Someone with a grudge, maybe. As I recall you kept asking questions about Atlantic Blue."

"Are you for real, Abe. That was my fucking job. And Jules fucking Dupont was a new boy on the national security block." On a roll, Wilkin continued, "Jesus, Abe, Six was cast aside to let that snotty nosed little no-fucking-hoper Dupont run the show. What the hell was that about?"

"The client had the right to choose who they wanted. They chose Masada Consultancy. End of story."

Nick stood his ground. "Not if it was all the same firm."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you want to me to spell it out, Abe?"

Jenkinson, having no idea to what they referred, kept darting his eyes from one to the other, as though he was trying to follow a Chinese championship game of table tennis.

"There isn't any proof to that conspiracy theory."

Nick rounded on him. "Of course there isn't. We weren't allowed to look into it."

Agent Moore smiled, “Nick, you may find it hard to believe, but I'm here to help you. The boss wanted your hide. I persuaded him to let me handle it.”

Feigning ignorance, Nick said, “And you think I'm the squealer – right.”

“Just leave it alone, Nick. It's history.”

“Yes, and if we don't get to the truth of it, it's going to repeat itself.”

“Nick, you're out of it now. Just grow your vegetables or do whatever you do to pass the time. Leave all this spying shit alone.”

Nick got up and showed Abe and Jenkinson the door. “Thanks for your concern, Abe. Do pop in for a chat again.”

Abe scowled at him. “Be it on your head,”

Nick closed the door, sighed heavily, and went to change his clothes. Then he changed his mind. He sat on his settee and closed his eyes. His bravado was all front. Deep down Nick felt very unsettled by the visit. If Six thought the whole Atlantic Blue op was kosher, why were they so skittish about checking Masada Consultancy's credentials? That was unless the government was scared of the mud being stirred up forcing another official inquiry into why hundreds of Londoners going about their daily business, had to die.

Now the spooks had left, Nick rang Joab. “Can't make the meeting today. Something has come up.”

Chapter 10

July 7, 2005

7:21am. David, having taken a breather, was back looking at his screen. "Okay, we've got them on video."

Jo, having lifted her spirits by drinking some, looked over his shoulder. The Leeds four were all together as they headed to the platform for the King's Cross Thameslink train. She said, "They seem casual and relaxed."

"Yeah, it's almost as though they're just lads visiting the big smoke."

She peered closer at the screen. "Look at Banweer's posture."

David looked. "What do you mean?"

"He keeps pulling at his rucksack straps as he walks. It looks like it's too heavy for him." Getting no response, Jo added, "That's not good news. They could be carrying a lot of explosives."

Gregson nodded, "And he's changed his pants."

Jo looked closely at the screen. "You're right. He wasn't wearing dark tracksuit bottoms in the earlier CCTV."

"So why would he bother to do that, unless he's shitting himself?"

"Is that a joke, Sir."

"It wasn't meant as one. Maybe Banweer's not ready to die."

Then his screen went blank. "Shit, we've lost the picture. Inspector, contact our officer on the train. Find out why we're not getting camera footage."

Gillian Walsh sat observing the four passengers from behind her Cleo magazine. In a witness statement later taken by the police, she said, "They seemed animated and quite loud. All four were standing although seats were vacant. In the light of what happened, I guess they didn't want to take off their backpacks. She said it seemed odd, considering who they were, that they deliberately acted in such a way as to stand out from the crowd."

The surveillance officer on the train hated having to deal with the call. Gillian's ringing phone brought unwanted attention to herself. "Yes," she responded to the inspector's voice.

"Look, we're having trouble getting footage from the train's security camera. Is there a problem that you know of?"

"If you have a problem with it, mother, there's there's nothing I can do about it right now" The undercover officer paused, as though listening, then said, "Because I'm on a train."

“Jo Stewart persisted, “Can you film them on your phone, without them noticing?”

“How's that supposed to work, mother.”

“I don't know, but don't lose sight of them. Just keep tabs on them when they leave the train.”

“I'll see you later, mother.” The officer hoped she was convincing enough to anyone listening.

7:57am. Gregson turned to Stewart, a puzzled look on his face. “London Transport have closed the Piccadilly Line between King's Cross, St Pancras and Arnos Grove from 07:57 to 08:28.”

“What's the problem?” Jo asked, sipping another vendor machine coffee.

“Apparently, there's a defective train at Caledonian Road. The report came from the station master. She says there are five fire engines outside Caledonian Road station.”

“Is it part of the drill?”

“God knows. It's getting like it's difficult to find out what's real and what isn't about this Atlantic Blue operation.”

8:07am. Gregson looked at the inspector, incredulous. “You won't believe this, but now the Bakerloo Line is suspended between Paddington and the Elephant and Castle, in both directions.”

“You wouldn't credit it.”

“This cock up is due to a defective train at Piccadilly Circus station.”

“There certainly seems to be a lot of tube problems today of all days,”

David got up. “Hold the fort. I have to speak with Orson.”

“Is he in yet?”

He's look suggested she was dumb. “Of course, Inspector. But he won't be pleased about it.”

Orson Pearson didn't usually show his face around the 'Yard' before 10 am but this day was different. The Home Secretary had requested, in an ordering sort of way, that he be on board ready for the exercises to begin.

“Enter,” the gruff voice said, as David knocked on the big man's door. Noticing an amateurish dog portrait among all the other average artworks decorating the walls in Orson Pearson's office, David said, “Is that your latest masterpiece sir?”

“Becky, our Red Setter.” Looking at the unshaven, dishevelled officer, the director of Special Branch, said, how can I help you major?”

“Sir, we need to know more about this Atlantic Blue.”

“Anything in particular?”

“We're getting reports of some incidents involving tube trains. We need to know if it's all part of the drill or not.”

Orson leant forward, saying, “As far as I'm aware the exercise only concerns those stations on the list.”

“Yes sir, but apprise me of any changes.”

“Very well, Major, leave it with me, and I'll get back to you.” Seeing Gregson still standing in front of him, Orson asked, “Anything else, major?”

“Sir, we know that the four terrorists are carrying explosive devices, and we found arms and bombs in one of their cars. Why the hell aren't we arresting them before they do any serious damage?”

The director shrugged. “I'm in the dark about that too, major, but the ruling comes from very high up. Just do your job, that's all.”

David wished he could, but there was no point saying that.

Chapter 11

London present day

Adrian Dubrovsky was a free but tainted man. His once lucrative career as director of studies at the US Army War College was in tatters. Although all charges against him got dropped his arrest and subsequent incarceration precluded him from continuing any such career. To be fair, the erudite Englishman had already resigned having realised he could no longer be part of that group and retain his integrity. So he'd retired to his country seat, Melton Manor in Cambridgeshire, where he concentrated on his memoirs. While writing about the Justice League Adrian's attention got diverted when Hopkins, his old retainer, informed him that Joab Rackham was on the phone. Joab Rackham was the last person whom he thought would contact him. Dr Dubrovsky was tempted to ignore the call, but curiosity got the better of him. After Joab Rackham had betrayed the Justice League for the journalist to communicate with him meant it had to be critical. "Very well Hopkins put the call through." His phone rang. He picked up. "Mr Rackham, I never thought I'd hear from you again."

"Dr Dubrovsky, I need help with finding somebody."

"Oh! And who is that?"

"The person responsible for placing explosive devices under London Underground trains."

"You'd be referring to the 7-7 incidents."

"Yes."

"And just what makes you think I'd be even slightly interested in helping you."

Joab wasn't surprised by Adrian's response. "Because It's the sort of thing The Justice League might be interested in,"

"There is no Justice League thanks to you."

"There certainly wouldn't be if it weren't for me," Joab stated.

Adrian, not wanting to get into an argument, said, "How do you know who was responsible?"

"I have recorded conversations."

"And where is this saboteur now?"

"In Germany, I believe."

"If I help you what can I expect to get out of this?"

"You tell me."

"A sizeable fee, of say 50,000 pounds, if I decide to help you."

Joab whistled through his teeth. "That much?"

"And give me a copy of the recording."

July 7, 2005

8:32 am, The four young Muslims hugged each other just before they set off for their individual destinations,

"See you in paradise Khan said, before walking off to catch a westbound Circle Line train.

"For Allah, the magnificent," Banweer said, "Heading off to catch an eastbound Circle Line train.

Hussain headed off to the northbound Piccadilly line train and Raja a southbound Piccadilly Line train.

8.25am. A fire engine waited outside Caledonian Road station.

8.30am A notice at Arnos Grove Underground states, 'Due to fire; Piccadilly Line suspended between Arnos Grove and Kings Cross', but nobody explained why?

8.35am. The Eastbound Circle line train No. 204 left King's Cross station.

8.42am. The Westbound Circle line train No. 216 left King's Cross station.

8:38am. Aaron Bergin, working in at the secret Mossad office in London responded to the ringing phone in reception. He listened to the mystery voice. "We have a pending terror strike about to take place. Make sure nobody leaves your office until you receive the all-clear."

"Who is speaking please?"

"We have alerted your finance minister and Benjamin Netanyahu has been told not to leave his hotel."

"Are you MI6?"

"That is not your concern. I have given you the message."

The line went dead leaving a puzzled and perturbed Israeli worker. It had to be 6, or maybe even Scotland Yard. But why hadn't the warning come directly from Mossad HQ?"

8:46am. Shehzad Banweer looked about him at his fellow commuters, wondering who would die with him. He felt unusually calm as though he was just another commuter going about his usual business. All he had to do was press the small remote button in his pocket, and his martyrdom was assured. His train was leaving Liverpool Street station. Now was the time. Having not made a sound he startled nearby passengers by yelling, "ALLAH THE MAGNIFICENT!"

He reached down to activate the bomb in the rucksack beside him.

Nothing happened!

Then there was blinding light and a deafening blast from further down the carriage! He was thrown backwards, tangled up with other passengers. Banweer, stifled by struggling bodies, seemed to be thrust forwards into the fire and smoke as the train's emergency brakes instantly engaged, causing the forward impetus. Then he saw the ruptured floor of the car, and he knew it wasn't right. Bruised and lacerated he escaped most of the blast. Amazingly his backpack was still intact. HIS BOMB HADN'T EXPLODED! How had that happened? Perhaps Allah the compassionate and merciful

wasn't ready for him yet. Freeing himself from a tangle of limbs, Banweer stood up in the wreckage, forced open a damaged door and climbed down beside the track. He saw flashlights approaching and quickly tossed his rucksack under the train. Staggering around dazed, Banweer got taken to the nearby station platform, where he waited for paramedics to tend his wounds.

It turned out that the blast killed eight people and injured another one hundred and seventy-one, including Banweer. The first report of a 'massive bang' had passengers fleeing from Liverpool Street Station. Some of them may have thought the explosion was all part of the drill, but they didn't take any chances and swiftly evacuated.

Joab Rackham was inside Kings Cross station right after the Piccadilly line blast. He didn't encounter any problem calling into work to tell his Editor that he would be late. Thinking it was all part of the scheduled drill he paid it no heed. Unaware of the carnage down below Joab went to a cafe to wait for the hubbub to die down. Over the radio, he discovered that it was real.

Bombs had gone off on the London Underground. Joab, swinging into reporter mode, left his undrunk coffee and headed towards the platforms. A security guard stopped the reporter and ordered him to exit the station. Saying he was a journalist cut no ice. These guys were serious and would not let him through.

Just over an hour and a half later, he got to the Ham and High office. Radio 5 was reporting that two of the bombers were shot by armed response units, in the Docklands. When he got home that evening, the news reports said that all the bombers died in the explosions.

Camilla was in the kitchen when Joab arrived home. "Put on the news, quick, he urged.

"It's terrible what those Muslim men did."

Joab pressed the remote button. He sat in front of the TV all evening, but there were no repeats of the Canary Wharf incident.

8:49 am. Earlier that day the first report of a major incident at Liverpool Street station was received by the London ambulance service, within just three minutes of the blast.

8.50am. Gregson and Stewart viewed CCTV images of the Liverpool Street platform with the eastbound Circle Line train alongside, seconds before it got blown up. She said, "Where's Shehzad Banweer I can't see him."

"He must have been further back in the second carriage from the front."

They both watched images showing commuters rushing to get on the train. Looking for Banweer among the crowd was like trying to spot 'Wally' in a children's book. Banweer wasn't on the platform after the train left the station, so the officers in the Ops centre surmised that he had caught it. Seconds later after the train pulled out of the station they saw smoke billowing from the tunnel. Shock and confusion reigned on the platform as people made for the exits.

She turned to the SB officer, "We should have arrested the bastards before they had the chance to do this."

We were following orders."

Who's orders, sir?"

"Jules Dupont."

"You do know the media is going to be all over this. Are you going to tell them that we were ordered to let this happen?"

He sighed, "Yes if it comes to that."

"So what do we do now sir. Just wait until the body count goes up."

Chapter 12

Present day

Adrian Dubrovsky was a free but tainted man. His once lucrative career as director of studies at the US Army War College was in tatters. Although all charges against him got dropped his arrest and subsequent incarceration precluded him from continuing any such career. To be fair, the erudite Englishman had already resigned having realised he could no longer be part of that group and retain his integrity. So he'd retired to his country seat, Melton Manor in Cambridgeshire, where he concentrated on his memoirs. While writing about the Justice League Adrian's attention got diverted when Hopkins, his old retainer, informed him that Joab Rackham was on the phone. Joab Rackham was the last person whom he thought would contact him. Dr Dubrovsky was tempted to ignore the call, but curiosity got the better of him. After Joab Rackham had betrayed the Justice League for the journalist to communicate with him meant it had to be critical. "Very well Hopkins put the call through." His phone rang. He picked up. "Mr Rackham, I never thought I'd hear from you again."

"Dr Dubrovsky, I need help with finding somebody."

"Oh! And who is that?"

"The person responsible for placing explosive devices under London Underground trains."

"You'd be referring to the 7-7 incidents."

"Yes."

"And just what makes you think I'd be even slightly interested in helping you."

Joab wasn't surprised by Adrian's response. "Because It's the sort of thing The Justice League might be interested in,"

"There is no Justice League thanks to you."

"There certainly wouldn't be if it weren't for me," Joab stated.

Adrian, not wanting to get into an argument, said, "How do you know who was responsible?"

"I have recorded conversations."

"And where is this saboteur now?"

"In Germany, I believe."

"If I help you what can I expect to get out of this?"

"You tell me."

"A sizeable fee, of say 50,000 pounds, if I decide to help you."

Joab whistled through his teeth. "That much?"

"And give me a copy of the recording."

July 7, 2005

8:32 am, The four young Muslims hugged each other just before they set off for their individual destinations,

"See you in paradise Khan said, before walking off to catch a westbound Circle Line train.

"For Allah, the magnificent," Banweer said, "Heading off to catch an eastbound Circle Line train.

Hussain headed off to the northbound Piccadilly line train and Raja a southbound Piccadilly Line train.

8.25am. A fire engine waited outside Caledonian Road station.

8.30am A notice at Arnos Grove Underground states, 'Due to fire; Piccadilly Line suspended between Arnos Grove and Kings Cross', but nobody explained why?

8.35am. The Eastbound Circle line train No. 204 left King's Cross station.

8.42am. The Westbound Circle line train No. 216 left King's Cross station.

8:38am. Aaron Bergin, working in at the secret Mossad office in London responded to the ringing phone in reception. He listened to the mystery voice. "We have a pending terror strike about to take place. Make sure nobody leaves your office until you receive the all-clear."

"Who is speaking please?"

"We have alerted your finance minister and Benjamin Netanyahu has been told not to leave his hotel."

"Are you MI6?"

"That is not your concern. I have given you the message."

The line went dead leaving a puzzled and perturbed Israeli worker. It had to be 6, or maybe even Scotland Yard. But why hadn't the warning come directly from Mossad HQ?"

8:46am. Shehzad Banweer looked about him at his fellow commuters, wondering who would die with him. He felt unusually calm as though he was just another commuter going about his usual business. All he had to do was press the small remote button in his pocket, and his martyrdom was assured. His train was leaving Liverpool Street station. Now was the time. Having not made a sound he startled nearby passengers by yelling, "ALLAH THE MAGNIFICENT!"

He reached down to activate the bomb in the rucksack beside him.

Nothing happened!

Then there was blinding light and a deafening blast from further down the carriage! He was thrown backwards, tangled up with other passengers. Banweer, stifled by struggling bodies, seemed to be thrust forwards into the fire and smoke as the train's emergency brakes instantly engaged, causing the forward impetus. Then he saw the ruptured floor of the car, and he knew it wasn't right. Bruised and lacerated he escaped most of the blast. Amazingly his backpack was still intact. HIS BOMB HADN'T EXPLODED! How had that happened? Perhaps Allah the compassionate and merciful

wasn't ready for him yet. Freeing himself from a tangle of limbs, Banweer stood up in the wreckage, forced open a damaged door and climbed down beside the track. He saw flashlights approaching and quickly tossed his rucksack under the train. Staggering around dazed, Banweer got taken to the nearby station platform, where he waited for paramedics to tend his wounds.

It turned out that the blast killed eight people and injured another one hundred and seventy-one, including Banweer. The first report of a 'massive bang' had passengers fleeing from Liverpool Street Station. Some of them may have thought the explosion was all part of the drill, but they didn't take any chances and swiftly evacuated.

Joab Rackham was inside Kings Cross station right after the Piccadilly line blast. He didn't encounter any problem calling into work to tell his Editor that he would be late. Thinking it was all part of the scheduled drill he paid it no heed. Unaware of the carnage down below Joab went to a cafe to wait for the hubbub to die down. Over the radio, he discovered that it was real.

Bombs had gone off on the London Underground. Joab, swinging into reporter mode, left his undrunk coffee and headed towards the platforms. A security guard stopped the reporter and ordered him to exit the station. Saying he was a reporter cut no ice. These guys were serious and would not let him through.

Just over an hour and a half later, he got to the Ham and High office. Radio 5 was reporting that two of the bombers were shot by armed response units, in the Docklands. When he got home that evening, the news reports said that all the bombers died in the explosions.

Camilla was in the kitchen when Joab arrived home. "Put on the news, quick, he urged.

"It's terrible what those Muslim men did."

Joab pressed the remote button. He sat in front of the TV all evening, but there were no repeats of the Canary Wharf incident.

8:49 am. Earlier that day the first report of a major incident at Liverpool Street station was received by the London ambulance service, within just three minutes of the blast.

8.50am. Gregson and Stewart viewed CCTV images of the Liverpool Street platform with the eastbound Circle Line train alongside, seconds before it got blown up. She said, "Where's Shehzad Banweer I can't see him."

"He must have been further back in the second carriage from the front."

They both watched images showing commuters rushing to get on the train. Looking for Banweer among the crowd was like trying to spot 'Wally' in a children's book. Banweer wasn't on the platform after the train left the station, so the officers in the Ops centre surmised that he had caught it. Seconds later after the train pulled out of the station they saw smoke billowing from the tunnel. Shock and confusion reigned on the platform as people made for the exits.

She turned to the SB officer, "We should have arrested the bastards before they had the chance to do this."

We were following orders."

Who's orders, sir?"

"Jules Dupont."

"You do know the media is going to be all over this. Are you going to tell them that we were ordered to let this happen?"

He sighed, "Yes if it comes to that."

"So what do we do now sir. Just wait until the body count goes up."

Chapter 13

Present day

Camilla understood that having a baby didn't mean the end of her sex life. But Jack's birth and grappling with parenthood, two huge events in her life, had changed the kind of sex she and Joab had and its frequency. The baby had to come first, and it needed all of her care and attention. Joab understood this and accepted the fact that their romantic life together had become different. There was nothing romantic about feeding and cleaning up babies but the scent given off from their heads and the irresistible cuteness more than made up for sleepless nights and exhausting days. Joab and Camilla also knew they had to work at rekindling their intimate relationship to bring about some balance in their lives. Little Jack settled in his cot beside the bed. Joab and Cami had just succeeded in having quiet but enjoyable sex and were cuddling up together when she said, "How's the article going?"

"Which one," he queried, half asleep.

"The one about corruption. Isn't that what's keeping you at the office?"

Joab so caught up in the London bombing saga, forgot his subterfuge. Feeling a right heel, he answered, "It's coming to a head, but we have to find a witness to corroborate the story."

Just then his phone rang. "Surprised by the rude interruption Joab said, "Who's calling this time of night!"

"Who is it Joabie?"

To her, "Shhh." To the caller, "What now?"

"I have something for you, but you'll have to be quick."

"What are you talking about, Nick?"

"If they get their hands on it first we're sunk."

"What do you mean, 'we're' sunk."

"6 Frognall lane, just off the Finchley Road. And hurry."

Grabbing track pants and hoodie, Joab said, "it's a pain in the arse, but I have to go."

"Go where?"

"Just down the road. I'll be back before you know it."

"What for?"

"They've tracked down the witness." That at least was true.

"Car keys," he said thrusting out his hand."

"In a bowl in the kitchen. I thought it was just down the road."

Little Jack started crying.

As he drove Camilla's Corolla, he thought, This is fucking ridiculous. Why didn't I just say no and still be warm and comfortable in bed? But the urgency in Nick's voice sparked Joab into action. It was a drizzly night, and many of the road name signs were partially hidden or too dark to see. He stopped to programme the Nav Sat. Another precious minute was gone, but at least he knew where to turn.

Number 6 was in the dark, as was Joab. What on Earth could Nick have for him? He rang the bell. Nick came to the door, looked both ways, then hustled Joab inside.

"What the hell is this all about."

"I got a tip-off that they're coming for me."

"Who?"

"Boys from 6. They want to know what I know about Atlantic Blue."

So what have you got for me?"

"A contact. Someone you can trust. This lawyer will help you find Hoffmann."

"But I've already got somebody."

"Her name is Justice Angela Hanley. She has a huge contact network. Even the FBI would be envious." he handed Joab a tiny gift box. "Show this to her, and she'll know you're kosher."

"Why can't you just introduce me to her?"

"Because I'm being picked up pretty soon, unless ..." he handed Joab a pistol.

"What's this for?"

He fixed Joab with his gaze. "My doctor has given me around six months to live."

"Why? What's wrong with you?"

"Never mind about that. MI6 has some very efficient methods to get you to talk. I'm afraid if they torture me I may give you away."

"They can't just come and grab you!"

"Yes, they can. So do me a favour and put this old dog out of his misery."

"What do you mean?" Joab asked, a shiver shooting up his spine.

"Fucking kill me and piss off before they get here."

Joab stared at Nick horrified, "I can't do that."

"I'll probably give you away."

"I'm a journalist, not a fucking killer."

he grabbed Joab's arm. "You are playing a dangerous game with very dangerous people."

"Fuck it! I'll walk away from it."

"Good luck with that." He stared at Joab, "Give me the fucking gun and get out of here."

Joab heard the report as he walked to the car. He froze. Nick Wilkin had done it! He saw headlights as a car drove towards him. What to do? Jump in the car and go, or just walk along the lane as though taking a late night stroll. He decided on the latter and hid behind a hedge, watching them. They went into the house. Joab would love to have been a fly on that wall. They soon emerged. One of them made a call. The other went to check Joab's car. Soon a police car arrived. The officers spoke to the men, then went inside. Joab couldn't get to his vehicle. Christ! What was he going to tell Cami?

One of the police officers was on the radio. Ten minutes went by then another car turned up. Two, what Joab took to be, detectives got out.

They spoke to the constable guarding the house, then went inside. Joab wondered what to do. He could brazen it out and go to his car as though nothing had happened. But what if he was stopped and searched. He looked around for a hiding spot for the message. He was near an old wall with some loose bricks. Using a swiss army knife he usually carried with him, he prized a brick aside, secreted the message and the tiny gift box, pushed it back again. He walked back to the Corolla and saw one of the spooks leaning against it. "Acting the aggrieved driver, he said, "Do you mind?"

The spook stepped away.

Then a copper approached, "Is this your car, Sir?"

"My wife's, yes."

"Licence and registration."

"They're inside if you let me unlock it."

He scrutinised the papers. "What are you doing here at this time, sir?"

"Just walking."

"Why did you pick this lane for your walk?"

"Constable, unless you're going to charge me with breaking some law or other, I would like to be on my way."

A detective asked, "How long have you been here, sir?"

"I don't know. 15 minutes or so."

"Did you see anybody entering or leaving this house during that time?"

"No officer. Now can I go please?"

"Give your contact details to the constable; then you can piss off."

July 7, 2005

8:43am. At Edgware Road, Mohammad Sidique Khan was also in the second carriage from the front, close to the standing area by the first set of double doors. He reflected on what he was doing.

Someone would have to tell the media why they did it. He and his friends would be in paradise so who would convey the message? Without a statement, it would be a pointless exercise. But it was too late to change his mind. He sat with the bomb next to him on the floor. Praying silently to Allah he reached down and fiddled with his rucksack. He pressed the activation button

Nothing happened!

He tried again

Still no explosion!

Then there was one!

Passengers caught in the horrendous blast got thrown around the car, Khan included. He got separated from the bomb which caused a secondary explosion as the fire reached it.

Khan discovered he was still alive, but too helpless to do anything about it. He's addled brain couldn't figure out what had happened.

8:44 am. On the Piccadilly Line, Jermaine Raja was in the first carriage as it travelled between King's Cross and Russell Square. He was standing, wearing his rucksack, in the extremely crowded carriage. It was so jam-packed Khan could hardly move. He reached for the button to set off the bomb.

No explosion!

His mind was racing. Then he twigged. The man had interfered with it at Kings Cross station.

Then the bomb under the standing area of the carriage exploded. Jermaine and 27 other people died instantly in the blast.

The explosions occurred almost simultaneously on three London Underground trains: between Aldgate and Liverpool Street on the Circle Line, and between Russell Square and King's Cross; on the Piccadilly Line; and at Edgware Road on the Circle Line.

Gregson, who only received information needed for him to carry out his job, thought only the Aldgate/Liverpool Street train got bombed at about this time. The Russell Square/King's Cross explosion first got reported at 8:56, and the Edgware Road blast at 9:17. The explosions all occurred within a period of some 50 seconds. CCTV live feed showed injured passengers streaming out from King's Cross and Russell Square. Had he not known about the terrorists, he'd have thought the cause of the explosions was a massive power surge. He turned to Inspector Stewart. "Take a team and go to the Royal London hospital. Start getting witness statements."

"Isn't it a little premature, sir."

We have to speak to them before they talk to the press."

She nodded, pleased to get away from the computer screens.

The victims, she discovered were being treated at various London hospitals. Many with minor injuries got treated at the scene. The severely and critically injured were off limits to all but family members. Bruce Lawson was one of the Royal London patients who had survived the blast with minimal injuries but still needed hospital treatment. At first, the sister did her protective duty

towards her patient, but Stewart's persistent attitude got her a few minutes with him. She introduced herself, saying, "Mr Lawson, I know you have been through a terrible experience but can you tell me what happened.?"

"We'd been on the train for a minute at most, and then something happened. It was like a huge electricity surge which knocked us out and burst our eardrums. I can still hear that sound now".

"Then what happened?"

"The next thing I remember is a copper saying, mind that hole, that's where the bomb was."

Thinking the impact from bomb blasts usually spread outwards Jo said, "

"There was a hole in the floor?"

"Yes, the metal was pushed upwards as if the bomb was underneath the train."

Jo went cold. Underneath the train. The terrorist couldn't have placed it there.

She thanked the patient and left. As soon as she could, she phoned Gregson. "I have a statement from a patient in which he claims the blast came from underneath the carriage."

Gregson did a double take. "He must be mistaken."

"That's what I thought. I need to speak with the police officer who helped him off the train."

"Look, leave that for now. You'd be better off concentrating on passenger statements at present."

"Sir, I know it seems unlikely, but I think I should follow it up, just in case the media starts spreading conspiracy theories and we end up with egg on our faces from not looking into it."

"Just continue getting witness statements. If others corroborate the hole in the floor story, make a note of it but don't plant the idea into their minds."

"Of course, sir."

Chapter 14

Present day

Detective Inspector Jo Stewart looked at the report. The name Nicholas Wilkin rang a bell, but she couldn't work out why. She turned to Detective Sergeant Filch, one of the officers at the scene.

"Have you followed up on this Joab Rackham character."

"We questioned him at the scene, but as the death looks like a suicide, we didn't prioritise him."

She stared at the detective. "Oh, I see. Well, make it one because second sets of prints got taken from the gun."

"And you think they might be his."

"That's for you to find out."

"He's not in the database then."

"If you'd done your job thoroughly, Sergeant, you would already know the answer."

Once the detective had left her domain, she busied herself with finding out about Nicholas Wilkin. She searched for him on the police database and came up with 23 people listed with his name. None of them looked like the deceased.

Having retrieved his prize from the brick in the wall, Joab rang the Temple Chambers and got put through to Justice Hanley.

"How can I help you, Mr Rackham."

"A mutual acquaintance suggested I call you."

"And who is this mutual friend, Mr Rackham?"

"His name is Nick Wilkin."

"Nick. How is he?"

She didn't know. Joab wondered how much to tell her. "I'm a journalist, and he had a story for me. He suggested that you might be able to help me locate someone."

"This sounds all very cryptic."

"Yes, I know. Can we meet and I'll tell you more."

"I certainly am intrigued. It all sounds very cloak and dagger."

Rudolph Giuliani, hampered by his two minders said, "What do you mean; I can't go outside?"

The CIA agent said, "Terrorist activity is taking place in London as we speak. It's too dangerous to leave at present. Giuliani, who was staying at the Great Eastern hotel, close to Liverpool Street station, when the bombs went off, said, "I'm due at the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange conference."

"Sir, the conference has been postponed because of bombs going off in underground trains not far from here."

Giuliani, New York mayor at the time of the 9/11 attacks, later quitted that public function to set up the firm 'Giuliani Security and Safety. His company specialised in 'mock terror drills' and 'emergency preparedness,' which was why Israel's Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the keynote speaker had invited him to the conference. They had met when he, as mayor of the 'Big Apple' had officially welcomed Netanyahu to New York City in 1996. Giuliani also wanted to meet with Jules Dupont who's Masada Consultancy enjoyed business contacts in the same area.

He turned to his minders. "Well, if I can't go out there, I might as well have breakfast here."

Gregson and Chief Inspector Tony Roberts, who had taken over from Jo Stewart, were receiving patchwork reports from the emergency services. Multiple incidents of power failure delayed up to date reports. At 8:53 am a Kings Cross update stated that a train had become derailed in the tunnel and that the Piccadilly Line tunnel telephone system had failed. Aldgate Station Supervisor reported a loud bang and people with injuries appearing at his station.

Gregson went back to his CCTV feed, which started from 8:55 am when he saw Hussain walking out of King's Cross Underground onto Euston station. The bomber was using his phone and seemed a bit agitated. (Telephone call records later showed that he tried unsuccessfully to contact the three other terrorists on his mobile. Despite this, his demeanour appeared to be relaxed and unhurried.

Another report came in this time from Edgware Road. A train had hit the tunnel wall resulting in significant casualties. Other calls stated that the London Fire Brigade and London Ambulance were attending three sites.

Back at his CCTV feed, timed at 9:00 am, Gregson saw Hussain go back into King's Cross and into W H Smith on the station concourse, to purchase something. By enhancing the image, Gregson saw that the terrorist was buying a 9v battery. He surmised it was needed to detonate the device in the bag strapped to his back.

Leonnie Bernard finally got through to Jules Dupont. She launched straight in. Just what the hell is going on?"

"Ah, Director Bernard. I take it you are referring to the terrorist attacks."

"Of course, unless there's some other disaster taking place that I don't know about."

"All I know is that everything was in place for Atlantic Blue, then the terrorist attacks took place. Apart from that, I'm as puzzled as you."

"Oh, come on, Jules. Are you telling me it was mere coincidence that the terrorists targeted the same stations as those you chose for your drill."

"No. But we chose those locations because they are the busiest ones in the morning. It's highly possible that the terrorists got the same information."

Leannie could see that as a possible explanation. "Well, I think you've got a traitor in the ranks. All your people will have to be truth tested."

"On what basis? Do you suspect anyone in particular?"

"No. That's your job, Jules ."

"What about your people. Maybe you have got a mole."

Then that's for me to sort out."

"Who's idea was the drill?"

"Kenneth Foreman. Why?"

"It appears that many people knew about the anti-terrorist exercises, not just my people."

9:00 am. Chief Inspector Tony Roberts, was eyeing a suspicious A suspicious-looking CCTV image, allegedly showing Abed Hussain entering the main concourse from the Kings Cross, Boots' chemist. It appeared that the fourth member of the terrorist cell was still at large and still carried his rucksack.

Major Gregson was waiting to see the Home Secretary when his phone rang. It was Tony Roberts."

"I'm in an important meeting."

"I thought you should know that Abed Hussain is still at large, and he has a bomb."

"Are you sure?"

I'm looking at him now. He's just coming out of Boots Chemist at King's Cross."

Right, get a team and haul him in. It'll be good to get one of the bastards alive."

Leannie asked, "What was that about Major Gregson?"

Abed Hussain is still at large, and we have to contain him before he has the chance to do more damage."

She looked at the Special Branch officer. "Does he still have a bomb?"

He's still wearing the rucksack."

"It's far too dangerous to confront him in public. Keep an eye on him for now."

Gregson, incredulous, said, "What, are we going to wait for something to blow up, like the trains?"

"Major Gregson, are you challenging my directive?"

"I don't want more people dying through our inaction."

"Wait until he's not in among a lot of individuals.'

And if he remains in crowded areas?"

"Just watch him for now."

Gregson exasperated contacted Tony. "Stand down. Only keep a wary eye on him for now."

At Marble Arch, the No. 30 bus turned around and commenced its return route. The bus arrived at Euston bus station at 09:35 am where evacuees were boarding buses. It then followed a diversion from its usual route, purportedly owing to closed roads around Kings Cross, resulting from the earlier tube bombings. Then it called at Tavistock Square.

9:02am. CCTV footage showed Hussain going into McDonald's on Euston Road. He left about ten minutes later.

9:19 am Tony was looking at footage showing Hussain on Grays Inn Road, at a bus stop. Five minutes later he boarded the no 91 bus travelling from King's Cross to Euston Station. He appeared agitated and jostled people to get on the bus.

Why was that bus so necessary? Tony Roberts made a note about that.

Hussain alighted the bus at Euston. He then got on the no 30 bus, which was travelling eastwards from Marble Arch. The bus was full following the underground closures. Hussain sat towards the back on the upper deck. He was sitting beside a mother with a baby in her arms. For a split second, Hussain felt horrified at his intention to kill innocent people. Then he thought of the drowning children screaming for help, with no one to save them as they disappeared beneath the waves. Filled with loathing and hatred at such an uncaring world Hussain pressed the remote in his pocket.

Nothing happened!

How could that be?

He tried again

Still no explosion!

Then a massive blast! Then nothing.

Eye witnesses saw an explosion that tore the roof off the number 30 bus, at the junction of Woburn Square and Tavistock Place. Blood from victims got splattered over the frontage of the British Medical Association's front door. A 'van belonging to Kingstar got photographed near the rear of the bus (Kingstar is a firm specializing in controlling demolition). Bizarrely, some top floor passengers stood about, seemingly unharmed. Ironically, on the side of the bus, the remains of an advert for The Descent, a horror film to be released the following day, proclaimed: 'Outright Terror! Bold and Brilliant'.

The bus explosion just happened to take place near the headquarters of two Israeli-based security firms (Fortress GB and ICTS UK Ltd) with both based in Tavistock House and both of whom had Underground-line security contracts. Also, not far away in Tavistock Square are the British Transport Police headquarters. The BTP had three officers driving behind the bus when it exploded.

Chapter 15

Present day

Angela Hanley received Joab into her chambers at 11:45 am. He introduced himself and handed her the small gift box.

"Nick said it would show I'm kosher."

She opened the box and retrieved a tiny bracelet item in the shape of a dolphin. She smiled then put it back in the box. "How does Nick think I can help you?"

"I need to contact a Klaus Hoffman."

She looked at him blankly.

"Look, Nick gave me some info about Atlantic Blue and what went on."

"My goodness, that's a blast from the past."

"Only ten years ago."

"Yes but so much has happened since then." Then she asked, "What has this Hoffman got to do with it?"

"He was hired to fit explosives to those trains."

She paled. "Surely that just one of those conspiracy theories doing the rounds."

"I thought so at first, but I have proof of a conversation between Jules Dupont and Meir Hagan that suggests something very different. But I need Hoffman's statement to corroborate it."

She stared at him. "Mr Rackham, I need to speak with Nick about this."

"I'm afraid that's impossible. Nick Wilkin was found dead at his home last night."

She froze. "Nick is dead! How? Who?"

"He asked me to see him last night. He was in a very unstable state. He went on about being interrogated by MI6. He said he only had about six months to live and begged me to kill him before the spooks came and took him away. I couldn't do it. As I left his house, I heard a gunshot. I knew what had happened."

Angela sat down. "My God, Nick must have been in terrible anguish." She turned to Joab, "Why is it that when people need help the most, they don't seek it?"

"Nick said you had a good contact network. All I know is that Klaus Hoffman returned to Germany on July 9, 2005. Can you put out feelers?"

"For poor old Nick, it's the least I can do." She added, "If you do find this Klaus Hoffman what makes you think he would turn on his masters. His more likely to tell them about you. Then where does that leave you, Mr Rackham?"

"I'm not going to confront him personally."

"Oh! Who else do you expect to do it?"

"I'm not in a position to go away at present."

She looked at him darkly. "Then I suggest you back off and leave this whole hornet's nest alone. If you can't follow it through to where ever it takes you, you have no right pursuing it."

Joab sat back, recoiling from her words. Deep down he knew it was true. He had to give 100 percent to the assignment or drop it. The journalist sighed, "You are right. I have a wife and baby. I have to put them first."

She shook her head. "You've gotten the scent of something big and dangerous. You can't let it go. When you've stopped fooling yourself, let me know, and I will search for your man."

Inspector Stewart watched the computer flash through a myriad of fingerprints on the screen. Eventually, it got superimposed perfectly over those taken from the gun.

The computer expert turned to her. "We have our match."

She looked at the profile. One arrest for kidnapping, unlawful incarceration, and threatening behaviour. The charges got dropped. But even so, there was much more to the mystery nightwalker than met the eye.

Jo took Detective Sergeant Filch aside. "We have the result of the second set of prints."

"Oh, who is it?"

"Your Mr Rackham. Go and bring him in."

He stared at her, "The bloke who drove the Corolla."

"Yes, DS Filch, the suspect you should have hauled in the other night."

"Then it was n't suicide."

"That remains to be seen. And we won't know until you do your job."

July 7, 2005

9:24 am Alyssa Liddle newspaper journalist for the Express. on the scene at Kings Cross station approached a woman police constable. "There's talk of a terrorist attack. Is that right?"

PC Phylis Mason said, "And who are you?"

Alyssa flashed her press card.

"You have to wait for a report."

The journalist smiled, "Surely you can give me something."

"The latest from the Transport Police suggests that the incident was most likely caused by a two-train collision, a power cut or a power cable exploding."

"Then I'd better speak with the TP."

"The station is off limits to everyone except emergency services."

Then Alyssa saw a man sporting a Transport Police vest. She sidled over to him. He's face looked waxy.

Feverishly puffing on a cigarette, he eyed the woman suspiciously.

"That bad, huh."

he stared at her. "Like a fucking war zone. dead bodies everywhere."

"What caused it?"

"Some explosion,"

"I heard it was a train collision," Alyssa said, pumping for more.

"I saw it. There was a bloody big hole in the floor."

"What would have caused that?"

Finishing his smoke, he stared at her. "Who the fuck are you?"

"I'm with the Express. Who are you?"

"A fucking news hack. I might have known."

"What could have made that hole - a bomb perhaps?"

"Piss off lady, I ain't saying no more."

9:26 am Jules Dupont, in a conference call with Gold Communication Group leaders, said, Metronet, informs me that a power surge caused the explosions."

Heath Mitchell, an executive of GCG, challenged, "The National Grid said there had been no reports of problems."

"And were power surges responsible for the other two tube disasters as well?" another member asked.

Dupont said, "The Police press office have officially declared it as a major incident, but it's too early to tell what has happened at this stage."

9:30am. Home Secretary, Kenneth Foreman, called a Cabinet Office Briefing, at (COBR)2, the Government's national crisis management facility. The meeting, hastily organised in response to the explosions, was attended by delegates from all relevant Government departments, together with the Metropolitan Police Force.

Jules Dupont, CEO of Masada Consultancy, said, "We were in the process of holding a 'terror drill' focussed on the London Underground."

"Why were we not informed of this?" a cabinet minister asked.

"It was a need to know basis. Had it been widely publicised, it wouldn't have been anywhere near as effective." Jules argued.

The Home Secretary said, "Let us hear what Mr Dupont has to say,"

Jules rose and announced, "At nine thirty this morning we were running a crisis management exercise for a company comprising more than a thousand people in London based on simultaneous bombs going off at precisely the railway stations where it happened this morning. Gentlemen, I still have the hairs on the back of my neck standing up as I speak".

A cabinet minister, incredulous, said, "So, you were running an exercise to see how you would cope with this disaster, which just happened to be taking place while you were running the exercise?"

"That's correct. It was around half past nine this morning; we planned this for a client, who do not want their identity revealed. But they're listening, and they'll know it. It was the first time our crisis managers had met, and within just five minutes we had to make a pretty rapid decision. Deciding this was the real one we quickly went through the correct drills of crisis management procedures so that they could get on with the real job."

The Home Secretary said, "So, Mr Dupont, in your view were these incidents caused by trains becoming derailed, unexplained power surges and the like?"

Jules said. As there was only one car was damaged in each train, such scenarios are highly unlikely."

"So, if we can officially rule out collisions or power surges, what did cause the explosions" Kenneth announced.

The meeting got interrupted by a person entering the room with an urgent message for the Home Secretary. He read the message. With his face turned ashen, he announced, "Gentlemen there has been another incident - this time a London Transport bus. It now seems increasingly likely that this is a terrorist attack."

TIL that a crisis management company was running an ... (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.reddit.com/r/todayilearned/comments/27t493/til_that_a_crisis_management

Chapter 16

Present Day

Leannie Bernard head of MI6 turned to Abraham Moore. "Has the problem been dealt with?"

"In a manner of speaking."

"What do you mean?" she asked, as they stood by the Thames, just down from Vauxhall bridge.

"He was dead when we found him. It appears that he took his life."

She nodded, then said, "What about that journalist who's been sniffing around."

"He's a person of interest to the police."

She spun around facing him. "He's of interest to us. Find out what he thinks he knows."

"Do you want me to throw my weight about?"

"No, it's useful to keep in with the Met. Use your source to keep you informed. Meanwhile get our people to dig up the goods on him."

July 7, 2005

As soon as Jo Stewart heard, she drove to Tavistock Square. The scene was chaotic. A cordon of police held back a surging crowd, while the emergency services did what they could at the scene. An ambulance was already there, with more on the way. Jo asked one of the officers who the SOCO was, and he directed her to DCI Brown of the Met. Flashing her ID, Jo said, "I'm not taking over, but I need to get eyewitness accounts of what's happened. "

DCI Brown looked at the ID. This explosion was her crime scene, and she didn't trust anyone associated with Special Branch when it came to territorial rights. She directed the officer to one of her sergeants. "Speak to Sergeant Charters. he may be able to help."

Bill Charters was open and very helpful. Thumbing through his notebook, the veteran Bobby said, "There are reports of some van following the bus. It belongs to a controlled demolition firm called Kingstar."

"Has that been followed up?"

"I'm not sure about that, but I checked their Website on my phone."

"And?"

to quote from their website, 'Demolition in areas where minimal disruption and minimal noise requirements are paramount.'

Jo took out her phone. David, Jo Stewart here. We need to get onto a firm called Kingstar. They deal in controlling demolition, and one of their vans was following the bus that got blown up." She turned back to Bill. "So is there anything else of significance?"

"Have you seen that ad on the side of the bus."

They walked over to the sad looking bus, covered in foam. Jo could just make out an ad for 'The Descent Horror film, proclaimed as being 'Outright Terror! Bold and Brilliant'.

She said, "Uncanny, I'll grant you. But I don't see its relevance to this case."

"Bit ironic, though, don't you think."

Jo shrugged.

Bill said, "A couple of witnesses pointed out that the bus exploded right in front of the headquarters of two Israeli-based security firms, Fortress GB and ICTS UK Ltd."

"And that's significant, how?"

"Both companies are in Tavistock House, and both have underground-line security contracts."

"Curious, I'll admit, but flimsy as evidence goes."

"Also, ironically, we're near the British Transport Police headquarters. And the BTP had three officers driving behind the Kingstar van when the bus exploded."

She turned on him. "Are you suggesting that they're all part of some conspiratorial plot?"

"Well, there does seem to be an extraordinary number of coincidences connected to this whole sorry affair."

Jo was about to turn away when a police constable approached. "Sergeant, I've found something odd on the bus."

"What are you talking about?"

"Come and look for yourself."

Intrigued, Jo followed the pair to the stricken vehicle.

The PC indicated a box-like object hidden under the stairs. Bill shone his torch on the item without touching it. Turning round to the young Bobby, he said, "You did well. Now go and get the bomb squad here."

"Do you think it's a bomb?" Jo asked.

"After today, I'm not taking any chances."

"Ask the bus driver if he knows what it is," Jo suggested

The West Indian driver, shaken but uninjured, looked under the stairs. "Never seen anything like it mon."

Bill, said, "We'll let the UXB boys deal with it."

10:23 am the UXB commanding officer confirmed, "An explosion did take place on the bus."

Jo found it tough to resist saying 'duh'. Instead she asked, "What do you know about the box under the stairs?"

He smiled. "It's not a bomb. it looks like a microwave box."

"What the hell is it doing there."

"Not my problem. If it were going to go bang, we would handle it. But it's not, so we'll be going."

Jo turned to the Sergeant. "Bag it as evidence." She then received a call from the Ops room. "Yes."

"Chief Inspector Roberts here. We've just heard from a London transport union official that he's had reports of explosions on three buses, in both Russell Square and Tavistock-place."

"I haven't heard of any others."

"As you're investigating a bus explosion I thought you'd be interested."

She thought about it. Confirm it with police on the ground. If it's kosher see if the buses have some microwave box under the stairs."

Tony, puzzled, responded, "I'll ask, but what's it about?"

"There was one on the bus here."

As Jo Stewart lifted the crime scene tape a mob of media people milled around, to see what was going on. Unable to reach any of the tube bomb-sites, media attention focused on Tavistock Square.

Someone asked, "Can you tell us what happened here?"

Pushing through them to get to her car, Jo smiled, "No comment."

"Was it a terrorist attack?"

After another six 'No comments' she managed to reach her car. Dead on her feet after being up all night, she sighed heavily. She needed alcohol, food and sleep in that order.

7: The July 7th Truth Campaign - The People's Independent ... (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.julyseventh.co.uk/july-7-timeline.html>

Chapter 17

Modern day

Cami had just settled Jack down and came into Joab's study. "Are you okay, Joab?"

"Why wouldn't I be," he said tersely.

She backed away. "Perhaps because of the way your behaving towards me. It seems as though good, kind, thoughtful Joab has moved out and his nasty, moody, abrupt, twin Joab has moved in."

He smiled, "Just got a few things on my mind."

"That much is painfully obvious. Where's that we'll share everything marriage agreement gone?"

They were interrupted by a knock at the door and the chilling words, "open up police."

"DS Filch and DC Morgan Entered, the former saying, "Are you, Joab Rackham?"

Joab couldn't believe it. The look on Cami's face was that of utter shock."

"Yes. What's this all about?"

Jack was crying. Camilla, torn between soothing the baby and standing by her husband, stood stock still, uncomprehending.

"Jaob Rackham, you are under arrest."

"Under arrest! What the hell for?"

"Murder. Put the cuffs on Mr Rackham, Detective."

Joab, wide-eyed, sputtered, that's crazy. Who the fuck am I supposed to have murdered?"

DS filch read him his rights and bundled him out the door.

"Cami yelled, "Joab, WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?"

"CALL OUR LAWYER."

Shaking, Camilla grabbed the phone. Then everything got to her. She slumped into a chair and burst into tears, competing with little Jack, who was also distraught.

Taking a cigar from his silver plated humidor, Adrian Dubrovsky said, "So what do you think?"

Cravy stroked his moustache. "And he brought up Hoffman's name?"

"Not as such but he did say he had proof of who the saboteur was."

"How reliable is the intel?"

"You've said before that you had your doubts about Klaus."

"Yes, and I certainly have my doubts about Mr Rackham. he did get us banged up, you know."

"Yes, he's a turncoat, He has no stomach to see the job through, and he's unpredictable. But he could have the intel we need."

"Have you contacted Brinkley?"

"I wanted to get your view first."

"I think it's a chance too good to miss."

Adrian lit his cigar, puffing to get it going. "Okay, get Brinkley onto it but for God's sake don't mention Joab Rackham."

July 7, 2005

10.30 am. Cirus waited for Darwish Khan to arrive as arranged hastily over the phone. While waiting for his friend Banweer went over the events that had got him to that palace. Together with most of the survivors, he got taken to one of the refugee camps in Malta. He recalled the horrible day with a broken heart. He had organised the itinerary of his family's flight well in advance from Syria. "Agents" helped them to reach Libya, and from there, according to the deal, Tunisian smugglers should have transported them to Malta. But they got into the hands of a gang of Somalis, Libyans and Tunisians instead. They were locked up in a stable on a farm until the departure date, that is until the smugglers managed to collect the number of refugees they wanted. Nobody was allowed to leave the building even for a minute. Days were passing, and the price of the journey settled in advance rose all the time. Those women who were unable to cover the ever increasing amount got raped by their keepers, while the men got tied up and tortured. All this had befallen him because the infidels had bombed his country, turning him into a refugee.

Khan approached his friend at Canary Wharf. He said, "We should be dead, as our brothers."

"Yes, I do not understand it."

"We have been tricked."

"But if they already had explosives in place why use us."

Khan stared at his compatriot, "To explain their explosions."

"So what do we do now?"

When news of the bombings came through David Gregson had Jules Dupont brought to his office at Scotland Yard. "I need a break down of your exercises for today."

Jules not happy, said, "What started off is an exercise has escalated into a real operation?"

"I'm aware of that, Mr Dupont, and, although it is an extraordinary coincidence your people being in place to carry out emergency operations has been a tremendous help. However, I need to know if your firm has active agents in the field ready to deal with the terrorists involved."

Jules smiled falsely, "That knowledge is for the Home Secretary and whichever security services he deems necessary."

David sighed, "Let me put it this way, Mr Dupont, I have SO19 put on alert to deal with the threat of any more suicide attacks. Should they encounter any vigilante action by unauthorised security services, they may well mistake them for terrorists. So you see the problem of having amateurs in the field."

Jules scowled at him. "My people are not amateurs; they are trained professionals."

"I need to be informed of who and where they are and what they intend to do. Am I making myself clear?"

"You will have to get approval from the Home Office," Dupont persisted.

The Special Branch Major rounded on him, "Mr Dupont, You are obstructing a police operation. As such I can have you arrested and detained. I will give you one more chance to cooperate."

"You can't do that! I am under the remit of the Home Office!"

"Do you want me to quote the act?"

"I want to ring the Home Secretary."

"Mr Dupont, we are wasting valuable time. If you don't want my people going through Masada Consultancy with a fine tooth comb, I'll give you just one more chance to work with us."

"The managing director said, I will report this outrage." Then he said, "very well, I need to contact my office to have the details sent to you."

David smiled, "A wise decision. Now that SO19 is on full alert, they are the only authorised security service to carry firearms."

10:10am. Tony Roberts turned to Jo Stewart in the ops room. "Looks like we have two of the terrorists down at Canary Wharf."

She looked at the screen. "Enlarge the picture." Looking at the grainy image, she said it could be Khan and Banweer, by their clothing. But how the hell did they survive the blasts?"

"We'd better alert the sharpshooters."

S019 commanders sent armed teams onto the streets of London in four Jankel armoured vehicles, bought by Scotland Yard for such an eventuality. The vehicles were designed to protect their passengers from the impact of a suicide bomb blast. Inside each vehicle were marksmen and markswomen from the elite 72-man cadre of Specialist Firearms Officers (SFOs). The SFOs got divided into six teams of 12 which had different colour-coded names. Heavily armed with Glock pistols, and Heckler & Koch MP5 semi-automatic machine guns, the armed police marched off towards the wharf. Some of the officers carried G3 short-barreled rifles, which were small enough to be carried discreetly in a shoulder holster. The rifles, equipped with "red dot" sights, used 'frangible' ammunition that released all its energy into the target's body, instead of passing through it and endangering nearby civilians.

One of the Scotland Yards firearms units propelled into action, arrived at the wharf within a matter of minutes. With eyes on the enemy, the Sergeant in command said, "Shit, they're not wearing backpacks."

"They could still be wearing bombs."

The Sergeant knew the drill. Under secret guidelines codenamed Operation Kratos armed officers were only authorised to shoot if faced with suspected or known suicide bombers. It was a tricky moment for him. His SIC said, "What's your decision Sarg?"

With the huge HSBC office tower nearby there were thousands of potential witnesses."

"If we knew for sure that they're our targets, there wouldn't be a problem," The OIC said.

The targets were walking away. The Sergeant radioed Ops. "Are you sure they're our guys?"

Tony said, "To the best of our knowledge, yes."

The Sergeant, had to make a snap decision, "Right, take them out."

Two marksmen had the two young men in their sights. All it took to snuff out two lives was just a slight pressure on the trigger.

10.30 am. Following the shooting, the eight thousand workers in the 44-storey tower were told to stay away from windows and remain in the building for at least six hours.