

The Present

Monday, May 23rd, 2016

Leeds, United Kingdom

McDonalds, Guiseley

I never realised that I had fallen asleep.

I awoke to a group of girls giggling at me. I was way more tired than I thought.

“Fuck off, you dirty slappers!” I growled as I sat up.

The torrent of abuse washed over me as I left the restaurant in my wake. I returned to the Safehouse and something told me to shift the final four packs. It was what I called my ‘predator’ sense.

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I did not have the energy to take them all the way to Highroyds, so I carried each of them, one at a time outside and about two hundred yards down the road. There, in an alleyway was a decrepit Vauxhall Cavalier on an M-plate. It had not moved in years and probably never would again without a large crane.

The owner of the car was a curmudgeonly old man who lived in the house beside the alleyway. I had used his precious twenty-year-old piece of shit as a drop, plenty of times before. I did not have a key but that was not a problem. One of the lessons at ‘Predator School’, was learning basic automotive skills. I understood that the Cavaliers were so easy to steal that many had up to five keys by the time they were sold – one for the ignition, one for each front door, one for the boot, and one for the fuel cap. Each time the car was broken into, a lock would have to be replaced.

However, there was a much better trick to gain access that did not need a brick, slimjim, or another high-tech tool. I reached into my pocket and retrieved my custom Cavalier key. It was not exactly a key, per se, it was more of a tennis ball cut in half. I placed the open section against the boot lock and smacked it with the palm of my hand. The result? All four doors and the boot unlocked! I placed my four packs into the boot of the hatchback using the tennis ball and I placed tell tails on the car for later retrieval.

After a late dinner, I made the usual preparations before I headed up to bed.

September 23rd, 2013

An unknown location in the USA

Two days passed without us leaving the cage.

Both of us had tried to avoid using the bucket, but we had no choice. We were slightly embarrassed weeing in front of each other, but only because of the strange arrangements. It was easier for me; I was a boy. It was more difficult for Stephanie to wee as she was a girl and her plumbing was different. The smell was horrible as the bucket had no top.

Our cage was not the only one in the room. I had not paid the other three identical cages much attention until early on the second day when two more kids were quite literally almost thrown into two of the empty cages and then just left to sob.

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We had only eaten once per day – a meagre porridge of sorts – which Steph said that we should eat as we had no idea when the next meal might come. The new kids looked longingly through the wire at us eating. They were being ignored, just as we had been. I felt really guilty eating while they starved, but I knew that I had to keep my strength up for whatever lay before us.

The two kids were both boys and they were around the same age as my sister. The same man that had come for us, came for each boy in turn. They boy was dragged out of this cage screaming and then a short while later he returned, without clothes and with wet hair. That night was not much fun for any of us as the two boys cried for hours. Steph had tried to talk to them but she had been threatened with a beating if she dared to talk to them again.

I did finally doze off with my sister's reassuring arms around me.

The Present

Tuesday, May 24th, 2016

CIA Safehouse, Leeds

It was still dark when I came awake.

Instinct had me grasping the butt of the Heckler & Koch P30SK Compact pistol as I tried to figure out what had awoken me. The clock beside my bed showed it was a little after two in the morning – a favourite time for an assault. I sprang out of bed and I instantly went on alert as I heard movement coming from downstairs – I had company.

My eyes were quickly acclimatised to the darkness and I moved forwards very slowly with my pistol held out before me. A short suppressor was fitted to the muzzle – I did not need nor want the nearest West Yorkshire firearms unit turning up on my doorstep. I stopped at the open door of my bedroom and I sensed movement on the stairs. The muzzle of a Beretta M9A3 appeared from the stairs, then a head.

I squeezed the trigger of my H&K twice – two sharp cracks later and the landing needed a fresh coat of paint. The corpse with the destroyed head fell backwards down the stairs.

“Motherfucker!” came an exclamation from below. It was an American accent. It was ‘Bob’, my ex-handler.

October 2nd, 2013

An unknown location in the USA

It was my birthday and I was six-years-old.

Only, I had no cause to celebrate. I was alone. In the preceding week, everything had gone badly wrong. We had both been led out of our cage, on the fourth day of being locked up. We were led down a long corridor and then we were pushed into a room and the door was closed behind us.

We were in a bare room. Something about the room scared me. The floor was white tiles and the walls were lined with plastic. There was only a single metal desk bolted to the floor with a metal chair on each side. Before I could look around more, a door at the far end opened and a man entered. He was fat and he scared me.

“My name is Doctor Hirsch and we need to speak with you both – but separately.”

I gripped onto my sister’s hand even tighter as a large woman entered from the same door as the man. She grabbed a hold of me while the man did the same with Steph. I felt my hand dragged out of my sister’s hand despite our best efforts. We were both crying and yelling. Everything was happening so fast. Then we were separated. Stephanie was dragged out of the room and away down the corridor.

“Jamie!”

“Steph!”

That was the last time I saw my sister.

It was also the last time that I felt any hope of escape.

The Present

Tuesday, May 24th, 2016

CIA Safehouse, Leeds

I had an ace in the hole.

More exactly an ace buried beneath a loose part of the staircase. I did not dare put my head around the banister to see if anybody were climbing the stairs. If I did, then that would be the end of yours truly, just as it was the end for that poor sap whom I had just shot. I listened – my hearing was very good and I heard a slight crunch on the fourth step. Defending You Safehouse Hint #1: Packet of Walkers Ready Salted sprinkled across a step – a very cheap defensive item at only 55 pence a pack.

I reached down to a small hole in the skirting board a foot away from the stairs and pulled out a small green device which was close to 4-inches long, about 1.5-inches wide, and 3.25-inches in height. A thin wire led from the device and into the wall. I took a deep breath before I called out.

“Okay, okay, I give up.”

“Come out you fucking wretch – lucky for you, they want you alive.”

That was complete bullshit!

“Bob – you are standing on a mine. You move – boom!”

“You are so full of shit, Jamie.”

“Didn’t you teach me how to plant a mine on a staircase?”

“Yeah...”

“I’m coming out. I have a Deadman’s switch.”

“Shouldn’t that be *deadboy’s* switch?”

“Ha, fucking, ha!” I growled as I moved to the top of the staircase. Bob was in *the* perfect position.
“Sorry, *Bob*, I lied...”

I smiled at the CIA man as I opened my hand to show what I held. Bob’s face went white and he made a move towards me.

“Bye, bye, Bob!” I said as I squeezed the M57 Clacker twice.

The man had no time to do anything more as the M4 blasting cap received the charge from the Clacker and detonated the twenty-four ounces of C-4 explosive. The man’s head and upper body vaporised as hundreds of 3.2-millimetre steel balls hurtled through at almost four-thousand-feet-per-second. Defending You Safehouse Hint #2: M18 Claymore mine hidden behind a step of a staircase and actuated by an M57 Firing Device or Clacker – a slightly more expensive defensive item at around a hundred quid a set.

“Fuck, yeah!” I yelled as I grabbed my pack and made for the window in my bedroom.

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I fired another M57 Clacker and the entire window frame was destroyed in an instant. I jumped out and slid down the roof of the kitchen. Within a few seconds, I dropped to the ground beside the kitchen window. I saw movement and ducked as the glass crazed over with bullet strikes.

‘Ha,’ I thought – bullet proof glass!

I ran towards the gate that led into the front garden and I kicked it open – that was how they had gained access and they had not latched the gate behind them. It was time for Jamie Carter to disappear for a short while. I could hear sirens approaching and I knew that whomsoever was still alive would be after me too.

I continued to run, deep into the darkness and into relative safety just as the blue lights of a red fire engine came around the corner at the end of the road.

October 16th, 2013

An unknown location in the USA

Two weeks had passed since my seven-year-old sister, Stephanie, had vanished.

In that time, I was used for every dirty job that they could find. I emptied buckets of pee and returned clean ones. I never had to clean out the dirtier buckets – that task was reserved for those kids on punishment detail. They were kept naked and fed bread and water for the duration of their punishment. Those boys, *and* girls, were filthy and they generally varied in age from about eight to ten-years-old. I was determined *not* to become one of them, so I completed my chores to the best of my ability.

I still lived in the cage, alone, but I was let out to do my chores and I was fed reasonably well. Some of the other kids were jealous of the way I was treated and that resulted in a quite a few bruises. I never told on the bullies. I figured that might just make things worse. None of the adults ever

commented on my new bruises – they just smirked. Part of my duties was to bring food to those on punishment detail. Those kids were very dejected and depressed. I had an idea what it was like to be forced to go around naked, but the kids in question, they were older and they would be forced to complete their punishment tasks in front of the other kids who would be dressed. Those unfortunate to be on punishment detail would be jeered at and generally made to feel bad by the other kids.

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I learnt many things in those two weeks.

Principally, I learnt to follow instructions so that I could eat. I also learnt my first bad word: *fuck*. I also learnt to use it in complete sentences: You can go to *fuck*. It also covered the situation that I found myself in: I hate this *fucking* place. A useful word that was bandied about quite a bit and I decided that I should blend in and not stand out, so I learnt to swear.

Something else I learnt was a name for some of the kids. They referred to themselves as *Predators*. I had no idea what that meant, or why they used that word. I also heard another similar phrase: *Urban Predator*. As I understood it, I was not to become a *Predator*, I was way too young, although one boy suggested that my sister might have become one. Apparently you had to be around seven or eight-years-old to become a *Predator*.

As the days passed, I felt so lonely. I never expected to see her again – my sister. I had never been on my own before; at least not for so long. The loneliness was horrible and I cried myself to sleep every night.

I missed mummy.

I missed daddy.

I missed my sister.