

That Night

Wednesday, May 4th 2016

Cutlass

35nm southeast of Cartagena

Course: 231°, Speed: 58.6 knots

The ride was rough, but the shock absorbers built into the seats helped.

Every team member was wearing a slim lifejacket and a helmet, just in case they were thrown overboard. Although, at the speeds we were travelling at, it would be like hitting concrete if anybody went into the water.

Jackal had the conn and he was in the left-hand seat; his left hand on the wheel and his right on the twin throttles that were located on the centreline. The GPS showed us travelling at 58.6-knots – almost seventy miles-per-hour. Not bad when you considered the overall weight of the craft, plus passengers and equipment. I rode beside Jackal – behind me was Shadow, with Psyche to her left, behind them were Crimson and Nemesis.

On the twin screens before me and Jackal were a chart with a flashing marker which indicated the expected location of our target and on the other screen a FLIR image of the sea ahead. So far, nothing was visible on the FLIR but we fervently expected that to change. Every member on board was connected up to the cordless internal communications system so we could converse between ourselves which was not easy considering the pounding of the craft over the waves and the roar of the twin engines.

I had never gone into battle in such a way before and it was exhilarating.

Forty-two minutes later

59nm south of Cartagena

Position: 36.6076° N 1.1551° W

We had found them.

They were a little over two hundred yards ahead and to port of us. So far, there had been no alarm but anything was possible as we continued our stealthy approach. Our target was a veritable monster; she was over 240-feet long and she displaced 2,200-tonnes of seawater. There were six decks, one of which was a private Owner's Deck. There would be a lot to search and with a 20-man crew, plus a security detail of unknown size, we expected to have only seconds aboard.

The mega-yacht was dimly lit and cruised at nineteen knots on an arrow straight course which aimed the bow of the vessel directly for the Pillars of Hercules and the Strait of Gibraltar with the Atlantic Ocean beyond.

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We approached the stern to port and matched the yacht's speed through the water, the white water of our own wake readily mixed in with that of the yacht's own wake and helped to prevent, or at least postpone, our discovery.

We came alongside the transom and secured the RIB to a mooring post. Jackal cut the engines and we all jumped aboard the *Cummings Delight*. I could see movement three decks above but we were black forms moving against a black ocean. The transom hatch was sealed and we would not be able to open it without setting off alarms, however, it would make a perfect escape route – although, I fervently hoped it would not be needed...

After we had stripped off our helmets and lifejackets, we separated into our three teams – Hit Girl and Nemesis, Jackal and Crimson, Shadow and Psyche. Nemesis and I, along with Shadow and Psyche, took the port staircase that led upwards and onto the Main Deck while the others took the opposite, starboard, staircase which led to the same place but would take them in a different direction. We held our suppressed SIG MPX-SD submachine guns before us as we went, ready to drop anybody as silently as possible.

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The Main Deck was impressive. Ahead, of us there was a spiral staircase which led upwards to the Upper Deck, on either side of the staircase were comfortable square couches and tables. Ahead, and to port of a sliding glass door were stairs that led below to the vessel's boat garage – Shadow and Psyche headed that way.

We made our way down the portside towards the bow. There was a lot of distance to cover and every possibility of being discovered as we scuttled along the dimly lit teak decks. It was the most direct route to the bridge which was our first target of the night.

Course: 248°, Speed: 19 knots

Cummings Delight

Main Deck

Starboard Side

Jackal and Crimson

Jackal led the way down the starboard side while I kept a good eye on our rear so that there could be no surprises.

We could hear voices and laughter from inside the enormous yacht. I prayed that our incursion would go unnoticed for as long as possible. The deck seemed like it was a mile long; we never seemed to reach the end but then we were at our intermediate destination approximately amidships. Jackal took up position to one side of a sliding glass door, while I kept watch down the deck from the after side.

Jackal gently eased the sliding door open and while he covered the deck, I moved inside the yacht and found myself facing a spiral staircase that led up and down. Forward of us was the main accommodation for guests and aft of us were the main dining areas. I kept watch on the corridor that led forward and the door that led aft.

Jackal moved inside and he slid the door closed behind him.

Main Deck

Port Side

Hit Girl and Nemesis

We had made our way two-thirds of the length of the ship without being spotted which was perfect.

We entered the vessel via a crew entrance. The vessel had segregated crew quarters and passageways so the crew could be all but invisible as they worked and moved about the giant yacht. That would work for us, I hoped, as we made for a staircase that would come out directly aft of the bridge.

“Who are...?” A voice called out.

The man said no more as Nemesis rammed her knife into his heart and placed a hand over his mouth as his body convulsed into a heart attack. The security guard suffered greatly before he succumbed and we both shoved his still warm corpse into a convenient locker.

“Well done!” I whispered and I received a nod in return.

We turned back towards the stairs and Nemesis went first; she moved step by step until she could see into the next deck.

Lower Deck

Shadow and Psyche

We had made our way down onto the lower deck and we were in the crew area.

I kept watch while Shadow opened the hatch into the boat garage. We passed between the large RIB and the tender plus several jet skis. There was no sign of any crewmembers as we passed into the main boarding area which spread from beam to beam.

As we entered the crews' quarters our luck began to run out and that was when we found *him*.

Upper Deck

Bridge

Hit Girl and Nemesis

The three men on the Bridge never noticed the two shapes as they converged on them out of the darkness.

Two men were in high-backed Captain's chairs while the third was at the chart table. The closest man suddenly braced up as he felt a stinging pain on his neck and he became very aware of the armour clad arm that came around his left side and held a knife to his throat.

The man at the chart table started to move but a strong hand rammed his head forwards and down *into* the chart. The Perspex cover to the chart shattered and the chart began to soak up the spilled blood as the man slid to the deck.

“Don't fucking move!” The third man was warned as a submachine gun was pointed directly at his head.

Main Deck**Forward****Jackal and Crimson**

We headed forwards, away from the obvious danger.

At the end of the corridor there was a left turn and I covered Crimson while she went around the corner where we made a sharp right into the main guest accommodation. There were four large staterooms on the deck and we had to check each one for anybody who might be on our target list.

I listened at the first door to port and heard nothing. I carefully and stealthily pushed the door open – the cabin was empty. There was a tablet lying on the bed so I grabbed it and shoved it into a Faraday bag. I stowed the device in a pouch on my back and moved back out to the corridor where Crimson kept watch. Next came the opposite stateroom, which was just as empty.

As we moved down the corridor towards the pair of forward staterooms, I noted a sound – was that giggling? The noise came from the port stateroom, so we checked out the starboard one first and as we gently pushed open the door, we noticed that the stateroom was in darkness and we could hear steady breathing that came from the large bed against the forward bulkhead.

While Crimson stood watch, I moved towards the bed and switched on the bedside light.

Thirty-six miles astern**Ocean Vigilante****The Command Centre**

Abby was staring so hard at the screen that Commander Perrin was certain that the screen might actually explode under her intense stare.

Suddenly, there was a muted beep and white text began to stream down the screen. Abby dived forwards and she began to hammer away at the keyboard. A minute later, she sat back with a huge grin on her face.

“Yes!” She exclaimed.

“Well?”

“Looks like somebody planted their device – I’ve got hundreds of megabytes already...”

“If you say so, young lady!”

Thirty-six miles ahead**Cummings Delight****Main Deck****Forward****Jackal and Crimson**

As the light came on, the man in the bed turned and his eyes opened.

The moment when you are awoken is often one of intense confusion, especially when you wake up in a bed that is not your own. It was the same for the chap before us; his confusion at the rude awakening was total.

The man's name was Nathan Hockley and he was a complete bastard, so I was not about to regret my next action.

I heard the muted grunt of pain as Jackal rammed a knife into the man's heart.

In my mind, I could visualise the blade cutting the heart in two and spilling huge amounts of blood into the chest cavity – it was unfortunate, but the man would die quickly. I wished for more, but we did not have the time. Hockley, was the CIA agent who was to blame for the massacre – it was the only name for it – of twenty-six children, in Milan.

Jackal reappeared and he closed the stateroom door behind him. I nodded and we moved onto the final stateroom which was still emitting giggling sounds.

Upper Deck

Bridge

Hit Girl and Nemesis

The two conscious men on the Bridge were now secured with flexi-cuffs and makeshift gags.

I had connected up one of Abby's devices into a network point on the Bridge console. The LEDs on the device had changed to green which apparently indicated a successful connection and that the upload of data had begun.

"You two be good now," I said as I pulled the two throttle levers to the stop position on the console.

I led Nemesis out onto the starboard Bridge Wing and then we both headed aft to the next set of steps which led down to the Main Deck.

Main Deck

Forward

Jackal and Crimson

We both braced for what we were going to find.

"Ewww!" Crimson hissed.

Neither of the occupants of the bed had noticed our arrival – they were totally occupied in some very rampant love making.

"Bit like you and Shadow..."

From our viewpoint, we could see a hairy ass as it pounded away into the woman whose long, shapely legs were visible writhing on the bed beneath the man. Neither were very quiet either. The

giggling was coming from the woman and the man was grunting each time that he thrust deep inside his lover.

Crimson stepped forwards and she dug the muzzle of her suppressed MPX-SD into the man's side; he stopped fucking his woman. The woman opened her eyes and then her mouth to scream as she saw the masked intruders. I aimed my pistol at her face and simply shook my head; she closed her mouth. Despite her lack of clothes, I recognised the woman from our files: Emily Jacobs – she was on the capture list. Her sex buddy, he was *not* on any list – lucky for him.

“Who are you?” I demanded as Crimson hauled the naked man off the bed and onto the deck.

“Fuck you!”

He was British – MI5?

“You're lucky, I have no orders for you...” I growled as I pistol whipped him hard enough to put him out cold.

I turned to the woman who was trying to cover herself up – I had to admit that she had a nice body which was currently all perked up...

“You, however, are coming with us, honey...”

“You can't...”

“That's such a horrible word!” Crimson growled as she stuffed the woman's own panties into her mouth.

Crimson followed up by flipping the naked woman over and she zip-tied her hands tightly behind her back.

“Hope that doesn't hurt too much...” Crimson threw in as the woman was dragged off the bed and then towards the door.

Muffled screams were heard through the panties and the woman's eyes were wide with fear. We pushed her out of the door and then down the corridor towards the main entertaining parts of the yacht. As we passed a head, we shoved her inside and zip-tied her ankles together before we hogtied her ankles to her wrists.

“Be good!” I chuckled as I closed the door on her.

Main Deck

Amidships

Hit Girl and Nemesis

Jackal and Crimson

“About fucking time!”

Hit Girl was *not* amused by our late arrival.

“We had some packing to do...” I explained.

“Packing?” Nemesis echoed.

“Jackal found himself a naked woman,” Crimson stated.

“Okay...” Hit Girl reasoned. “There are eight sitting down to dinner in there. Six guards are patrolling the Dining Room and the Main Salon – no heavy weapons are in evidence but we can’t discount that. The Bridge is neutralised for now and we took out one guard. Three crew members are down.”

“We’ve neutralised two guests and hogtied another,” Crimson added. “Any sign of the dynamic duo?”

“No, they are still down below,” Hit Girl replied.

“Crimson and I will head aft and come in from there – give us two minutes to get into position,” I suggested.

“Have fun!” Hit Girl growled.

Lower Deck

Crew Quarters

Shadow and Psyche

Shadow was behind me as we went, our suppressed MPX-SD submachine guns raised before us. A door suddenly opened to our left and I saw somebody step out directly ahead of us – it was a boy; he reacted almost instantly to the sight of two black-clad individuals armed with submachine guns: he attacked. We were ready for this; we knew that we might come across *Urban Predator* kids. I had decided that they were *not* to be killed outright – they had to be given the chance to surrender.

The kid was good – the first thing he did was successfully disarm me. I fought back – he had a few inches on me and the boy was probably around eleven-years-old. Late Phase 2, I decided as I examined his fighting style. Shadow was unable to help as the corridor was too narrow. I was actually surprised that the boy had not yet sounded the alarm; he smiled as he fought – a nice smile, I thought.

I think Shadow must have noticed that I was unknowingly toying with the boy – she coughed.

“Okay!” I growled quietly and I rammed my elbow into the boy’s neck.

He sank to the deck and for a moment, he struggled to breathe, but then he sprang back up again. I punched him in the stomach and he kicked me hard in the left thigh which sent a wave of pain throughout my body.

‘Fuck this!’ I thought as I grabbed his arm and flipped him over and down to the deck where he landed on his back. I dived on top of him, my left knee deep in his crotch and my right lower arm across his throat.

“Enough,” I growled, “I know you are *Urban Predator* but that fucking shitstorm of an abortion is finished!”

The boy seemed shocked that I knew what he was.

“Yeah, I know about it; I was one of you – once upon a time... Stephanie Walker; maybe you’ve heard of me?”

I had meant that last bit as a joke but the boy immediately stopped his struggling and he looked stunned for some reason.

"You are Stephanie Walker – Psyche?" He asked, dumbfounded.

"Yeah..."

"You're famous – you're the only Phase 2 to ever get their codename..." he replied in awe.

"Oh, fuck!" I growled and I was very pleased that my mask covered up any blushing. "Well, I'm no longer with the program – you Phase 2?"

"Yeah, I suck – but being put down by you wasn't so bad; you have a reputation..."

I smirked at that comment – but Shadow growled.

"Any chance you could take your knee out of my groin?"

"Yeah..." I replied without having properly thought things through.

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Bad move, Stephanie!

As I removed my knee, the yacht shifted and my arm came off his neck but before I could flip him over and secure his wrists...

"You fucking traitor!" The boy growled and he kneed me between the legs, which was not as painful as it could have been, thanks to the combat suit – and yeah, it hurts girls too!

He flipped me backwards where I was caught by Shadow – she kicked out and caught the boy in the side of his head and he went down hard. Either the crew were heavy sleepers, or they were not in their cabins – we were making quite a bit of noise as we fought... We dragged him into a kind of closet off the main passageway and I retrieved my MPX-SD en route.

Main Deck

Amidships

Hit Girl and Nemesis

At the two-minute mark, Nemesis and I moved into the Dining Room but we remained in the alcove by the door.

There was a lot of chatter and some laughter at the large table which could comfortably seat twelve diners but which for the moment only held eight. I heard the sound of suppressed gunshots from the after end of the deck in the Main Salon and then saw Crimson appear in a doorway over to port.

The chatter ceased abruptly as a guard noticed our entry and he went for his pistol but he was dropped by a single shot from Nemesis. The remaining two guards kept their hands visible and they did not go for their weapons.

Jackal appeared in the starboard doorway and he raised three fingers – three other guards were dead or otherwise incapacitated.

Main Deck

Aft

Jackal and Crimson

There had been three guards chatting away in the Main Salon as we had entered.

They had been easy prey and I had dropped two while Crimson had taken the third as they had reached for their weapons. Now, we stood watch over the Main Salon and the after end of the Dining Room but we could hear what was unfolding in the next space.

“You must be Hit Girl... Noah has been telling us about you. A fearless young vigilante, brought up by her father as a weapon to take down the D’Amico mob family. I am also very aware of why you are hunting down Noah and his valiant team...”

“You support...” Hit Girl interjected.

“Don’t interrupt me, young lady,” Cummings said sharply as she cut Hit Girl off.

Ouch – Mindy would *not* like that!

“Yes,” Cummings continued in an even tone. “I support *Urban Predator* – I see it as immensely profitable...”

“You fucking bitch!” Hit Girl growled menacingly.

Cummings chuckled.

“*You* were the template for *Urban Predator*, you showed what a young child was capable of once provided with the right training and stimuli. If anybody is to blame for *Urban Predator*, it would be your father for creating *you*.”

“How dare you put anything on my father – you have made an enemy of me, which is a big mistake. All those who have stood against me have fallen and you shall join that ever-growing list.”

“No, Hit Girl, I shall be the first to stop you and *Fusion* in your tracks...”

Lower Deck

Crew Quarters

Shadow and Psyche

He was still conscious and he looked pissed as Shadow secured his hands with zip-ties. I pulled my knife and placed it to his neck.

“You say I have a reputation – what reputation might that be?”

“They say that you are a cold, ruthless killer and that anybody who pisses you off dies at your hands,” the boy replied sullenly. “Rumour has it that you killed another girl who was four years older than you – naked – would have paid to see that one... Ahhh!”

“Hurts, doesn’t it!” I laughed. “What’s your name?”

“Psyche, we haven’t got time for this...” Shadow growled impatiently.

“Nice!” The boy said as he looked up at Shadow and took in her curves from head to toe and he noticeably paused at her chest and crotch.

“Remind you of anybody?” I chuckled before I turned serious. “Give us your name; we can help you...”

“I am no traitor; I protect my country and I fight for...”

“Yada, yada, yada – heard it all before; star Phase 2 trainee, remember, so shut the fuck up! *Urban Predator* is coming apart and we are taking it down, piece by fucking piece. It’s time to pick which side you want to end up on when the dust finally settles...”

That was when the alarm sounded – we left the boy tied up and we ran.

Main Deck

Amidships

Hit Girl and Nemesis

Hit Girl was focussed on Susan Cummings and I figured that that was probably a bad idea, so I had kept my senses peaked for anything.

I was very glad that I had, too, as within minutes, I heard the sounds of many feet pounding down the decks beyond the windows and also from the other side of the nearest bulkhead. Then an alarm began to sound – we were rumbled.

I dived down behind the bar in time to see six armed men burst out from the crew entrance to the Dining Room. They had MP5 submachine guns in their hands and they opened fire immediately. Hit Girl dived for the deck as the bullets hit the wall behind her. Everybody at the table dived to the floor.

I dropped two of the guards before I then became a target.

Main Deck

Aft

Jackal and Crimson

I saw the men pounding down the port side and I yelled out a warning to Jackal.

We both turned to face the sliding glass doors as both were flung open and a pair of flashbangs were flung inside. At the sight of the grenades we both dived to the floor and covered our eyes from the impending flash.

The loud detonation of the grenade followed the ultra-bright flash that was visible through our gauntlets and I rolled behind a large couch.

Main Deck

Amidships

Hit Girl and Nemesis

The original guards had drawn their weapons and joined in the fight.

We had only one way to go and that was the way we had come. I went first while Nemesis covered our withdrawal. I intended to head out to the starboard deck but the glass door there shattered as machine gun fire tried to cut us down. We dived for the spiral staircase and headed upwards to the Upper Deck. We came under fire the moment we set foot on the Upper Deck and men were coming down from the Sun Deck so we had only one direction left open to use – towards the Owner's Suite.

I threw a smoke grenade and we ran through a two deck high office and then turned right up some stairs. The smoke seemed to have slowed down our pursuers for just a few minutes, so we were able to take stock of our situation.

"I have twenty-four rounds left," Nemesis advised.

"Twenty-one..." I replied sourly as I reinserted my own magazine.

Main Deck

Aft

Shadow and Psyche

We bounded up the aft staircase and found a major gunfight underway.

I dived forwards and stabbed the nearest guard through his neck; he dropped his weapon and fell to the deck in a large pool of blood. One of his colleagues turned and I put three bullets into his face – his grin had annoyed me.

Shadow dived past me like the shadow she was and she sent a short burst into two of the guards before they could turn around. Another dived directly at me and I rolled to my side and put two rounds into his chest as he came down onto the deck; he landed on top of my legs and pinned me.

Jackal was there in a moment and he hauled the man's deadweight off me and then he quickly hauled me to my feet as Crimson backed out of the Main Salon. Jackal and Crimson took off forward up the portside while we headed aft to secure the RIB.

Owner's Suite

Hit Girl and Nemesis

There was only one way out of the Owner's Suite and that was via the staircase that we had entered by.

I smirked as I noticed another potential exit – there were two glass doors set into the forward windows which led onto a private balcony that went nowhere.

"Nemesis – cover me!"

While Nemesis covered the staircase and sent random bursts in the same general direction, I kicked open the portside door. I turned to call Nemesis over just as a flashbang grenade flew up the stairs. I grabbed Nemesis and we dove out onto the balcony just as the grenade exploded and turned night into day for several seconds.

I had covered Nemesis' eyes and buried my own into her back as we had landed, so our night vision was protected and our masks had shielded our ears from the debilitating bang. As the flash subsided, I opened my eyes and turned to see armed men appear in the Owner's Suite.

"Move it!" I growled and we both threw ourselves onto the roof of the Bridge as bullets shattered the windows behind us.

We skidded across the surface and for a moment I thought we were going to fall overboard but Nemesis with great presence of mind, dug her knife into the roof to both slow us down and to angle us towards the bow.

Upper Deck

Forward

Jackal and Crimson

"What the fuck was that?"

"Must be Hit Girl..."

"Holy fuck – *Hit Girl!*" Crimson exclaimed as two shapes dropped onto the deck before us.

"Nice entrance, girls!" I grinned and shook my head as I chuckled.

"Totally planned..." Hit Girl growled as she nonchalantly untangled herself from her MPX-SD.

"Bridge crew are still asleep but things are definitely warming up," I reported.

"Let's find Shadow and Psyche and get the fuck off this bucket of bolts," Hit Girl ordered.

Main Deck

Hit Girl and Nemesis

Jackal and Crimson

We pounded down the starboard deck and took out anything in our way.

As we cleared the starboard side, we negotiated the dead bodies which littered the Quarter Deck and we all dived down the staircase to the Lower Deck and I was much relieved to see Shadow and my daughter waiting impatiently beside the RIB. Both had already pulled on their lifejackets and helmets.

We all followed suit and as soon as we were ready, Jackal made to start the engines just as *Cummings Delight* began to move ahead.

Cutlass

The assault boat was tipped onto its beam ends as the mega-yacht accelerated.

Jackal severed the painter which secured us to the yacht but not before the RIB had turned over completely and thrown us all into the churning water. We all swam away from the yacht's speeding propellers that threatened to chop us to pieces. Our lifejackets inflated as we each tugged the

inflation handle. The lifejackets were of a special design and when inflated, were not Day-Glo orange.

We all followed a strict procedure for this event and while we all moved away from the inverted RIB, we remained within a short distance. Nemesis swam over to the overturned RIB and she steadily worked her way around to the stern.

“Quick – she’s coming around!” Jackal yelled as he saw the yacht’s aspect change.

Nemesis reached down, underwater, to where the base of the A-frame would have been and yanked at a short length of line. There was a loud bang and a giant inflation bag, located at the apex of the A-frame inflated and the sudden increase in buoyancy caused the RIB to rapidly flip over, back onto its keel in a matter of only six seconds. We all made for the sides near to the stern and heaved ourselves aboard. Jackal quickly jumped into his seat and he reset all the electronics before he hit the start buttons.

The sealed engines promptly sprang to life as Shadow pulled back the charging handle of the Minimi in the bow and she sent short bursts towards the approaching yacht; the green tracer rounds readily visible in the dark sky.

Cummings Delight

Bridge

“Get them!”

Susan Cummings was beyond pissed and well past livid: *Those bastards almost destroyed my yacht!*

“Yes, ma’am!” The Captain replied as he set a course for his helmsman.

The two tied up crewmen had been released and were back at their controls. The third crewman was being treated for a severe concussion and the many cuts and bruises to his face.

“Fourteen of the guard force are dead, ma’am...”

“I want them – find their mothership...”

Susan Cummings ducked involuntarily as green tracer fire streaked past the Bridge windows. Machine guns mounted on the Sun Deck above opened fire, sending red tracers back down the same track as the green tracers.

Cutlass

Course: 095°, Speed: 61.5 knots

Jackal pushed the engines as hard as he could.

To try and prevent Cummings from tracking us back to the *Ocean Vigilante*, we were on a course towards Africa. We were well out of range of the weapons on the *Cummings Delight* but she was still coming after us at speed.

“So you never planted the explosives in the engine room?” Hit Girl inquired of Shadow and Psyche.

“Unfortunately, no – we were side-tracked by an *Urban Predator* wannabe,” Shadow growled back.

“Never mind – they were better prepared than we had expected; however, we did uncover some crucial intel,” Hit Girl finished.

Jackal got on the radio.

“Oscar Victor, Cutlass, over...”