

Wednesday, April 20th 2016

The following morning

Waterloo Bridge

I pulled out the sheet of paper that Abby had provided me with the previous evening.

On it was a number: 020 3353 2000 – I entered the number into a cheap pay-as-you-go phone and waited for the connection.

The number rang and then after a few seconds the call was answered by a gruff voice.

The Guardian Newspaper

Kings Place, 90 York Way

London N1 9GU

“Granger...”

“Waterloo Station, south entrance, thirty minutes...”

“Who is this?”

“They call me Hit Girl...”

The man showed mixed expressions – fear, amazement, intrigue; the intrigue won as he began to gather his kit together, his phone still to his ear.

Waterloo Bridge

“You want to talk to me about that subject of yours – you come alone.”

I hung up the cheap mobile, pulled off the battery and snapped the SIM card in two before chucking the phone, battery and SIM into three separate rubbish bins as I walked.

Inside an EDF Energy Van

Kings Place

“You getting an image, base?”

“Copy that, Survey One!”

“Where’s he going?” The Surveillance Tech, Daniels, asked nobody in particular.

“Okay, he’s on the move – Target is mobile!” The Senior Surveillance Tech, Willis, announced.

There was a brief scramble amongst the Surveillance Techs as they activated their systems to keep an eye on the Target.

“Okay, people, look sharp – give me eyeballs on the street...”

The image on the main screen moved and followed the Target as he walked.

“Subject is on the move – Mobile One and Two, move out!”

“Where’s that audio? I want to know where he’s going...” Willis ordered.

Roger Granger
Kings Place

Roger Granger raised his hand to hail a black cab.

Within a minute, one pulled over sharply and he climbed in the rear, seating himself on the backseat on the left of the vehicle. He never noticed the silver EDF van pulling out as the black cab passed it. His attentions were set on the person that he was to meet.

That person had a reputation that preceded her.

Embassy of the United States, London
Special Projects Section

“Feeds up, sir!”

Vossen sipped at his coffee as the image from the van stabilised on the screen before him.

“This is Mobile Two, subject is confirmed.”

“Where is he going?” Vossen asked.

“Seems to be Waterloo Station . . . according to the destination logged by the taxi.”

Roger Granger
Waterloo Station

“Twenty pounds straight, guvnor.”

Granger paid the cab driver as he exited the cab on Waterloo Road, just outside Waterloo Station.

The man moved towards the Waterloo Road Concourse, ignored the entrance to the Waterloo Underground Station on his right and headed for the escalator that would take him upwards, to the Main Concourse and the platforms. He never noticed the short, young girl with blonde hair as she darted easily through the crowd and neither did he notice the girl’s right hand dart into and out of his right jacket pocket.

The phone rang, just as the EDF van pulled up outside the station.

Granger looked around to see whose phone was ringing, but he noticed several people looking at *him*. He reached into his own pockets and was very surprised to feel a vibrating object in his right jacket pocket. He pulled it out – it was a very cheap Motorola. He pressed the green button and raised the device to his right ear.

“Hello...”

Special Projects Section

There was consternation in the control room as they saw the phone materialise from the jacket pocket.

"I need that phone..." A controller ordered.

The image was shaky and the sound was drowned out by people and the ambient sound of a busy Mainline Railway Station.

Waterloo Station

"He has a tail!"

"Any guesses as to who might be tailing him?" Mindy demanded rhetorically.

"Lucky we took precautions..." Chloe admitted.

"Luck had nothing to do with it..." Mindy growled.

"I see Steph – she planted the phone," Josh said, lowering the spy monocle. "She's joined up with Hailee, near Platform 15."

"I have eyes on Granger!" Dave called in and I gazed down from the balcony towards the entrance from the lower concourse.

"You ready, Megan?" Mindy asked as she pulled out a cheap cell and dialled a number.

"I'm good to go, Mindy."

Roger Granger

He stopped just shy of the barrier to Platform 5 and listened.

"Don't ask questions, just listen . . . move towards Platform 15..."

Special Projects Section

"What's the man doing?" Demanded Vossen. "Who the hell is he talking to? I thought we blocked his damn cell?"

"Eddy, I need that phone!" The controller called.

Vossen came to a quick decision.

"Activate the asset..."

The controller turned.

"Sir, we haven't become operational yet..."

"I said: activate the asset; I want options..."

The controller turned and punched a code into a keyboard.

East of Piccadilly

The man was of Asian descent and young, maybe mid-twenties.

He sat in his light blue BMW 3-Series saloon and read his newspaper, whiling away the time, until... His mobile phone buzzed as it sat beside the gear stick. He idly gazed at it, read the code off the screen and casually folded up his newspaper, dumping it onto the backseat. The man, Sanker, started the engine and he pulled out into the slow moving traffic.

He soon turned left and accelerated towards Westminster Bridge. The road sign pointing down the street said: 'Waterloo'...

Waterloo Station

Granger was jumpy and that worried me.

People who were jumpy made mistakes and they often took others with them. I kept a good eye on Stephanie and Granger – he of course had no idea that we had somebody within feet of him. I was about to suggest that we met when Joshua called urgently.

"Angry men pouring into the Station, near Platform 6."

I turned and raised a spyglass to my eye – he was right, as usual.

"Steph, get Granger out of sight!"

Platform 15

"We have to move . . . come with me if you want to live..."

"What?" Granger demanded as he looked down at me.

"They are coming and they will kill you – move old man!"

I seized his arm and led him away from the platform and towards the shops. The man was a little bewildered, but he allowed me to lead him, which was a blessing. I led him straight into a shop and then through the back and into the Lower Service Area.

"Stay here and answer your phone."

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I left Granger and pulled the security door closed behind me. Before I could make it out of the shop, I saw a man enter and make for the rear door. He had an earpiece and I could make out the shape of a pistol under his left armpit . . . CIA. I made directly for him and intercepted him before he got anywhere near the door.

"Get out of the way, little girl..."

I smiled up at the man as I grasped his hand and shoved it inside my jacket.

"Help! Help!" I yelled out loudly. "This man's feeling me up!"

The man yanked his hand back like he had just touched a burning coal and he was instantly grabbed by two large men and thrown against a wall.

“You dirty fucking kiddy fiddler!” One of the men growled.

“Hold him here till the Police arrive,” said the other.

I smiled at the man as he tried to bluster his innocence and I raised the middle finger of my left hand. His eyes went wide as I ran out of the shop.

“You are one crazy bitch, Steph!” Chloe laughed.

“Well done!” Dave chuckled.

I called Granger.

“Just stay there...”

“I can’t...”

I heard banging over the phone.

“They’re at the door!”

The man was panicking; he was way out of his comfort zone and he had no idea what to do. I flew down the twin escalators, with Megan directly behind me. It was all coming apart – fuck! There . . . a man with ‘Network Rail’ on the back of a Hi-Viz jacket was just making his way through a security door. Before the door clicked shut, I caught it and waited a second as the worker vanished to the left.

Once through the door, I drew my pistol, a SIG Sauer P320 Compact in nine-millimetre and secured an SRD9-K suppressor to the end. Megan followed suit with her own SIG Sauer P239 Tactical and SRD9-K. We followed the corridor and took a right; I hoped that we were headed for where Granger was still hidden.

As I peered around the next corner, something struck the same corner, just inches from my head and I flinched backwards.

“Contact!” I called over the comms.

I felt Megan’s left hand on my waist – she was ready to move. It was a left hand corner, so we both came around, fired together and the man with his pistol raised quickly fell to the floor of the corridor.

“Clear!” Megan announced.

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Over the comms, I could hear Dave talking to Granger and he was struggling to get Granger to listen to his instructions.

“Stay where you are, help is almost there...”

“I can’t wait . . . they’re everywhere . . . I can hear somebody . . . oh my God!”

I leapt over the dead body and continued down the corridor – finally . . . Granger was in sight . . . he was right; they *had* found him. Two men appeared from a side corridor and one raised a pistol towards Granger. I holstered my own pistol; there was too great a chance of hitting that idiot, Granger.

Instead, I exchanged a glance with Megan and we attacked from the rear.

Lower Service Corridor

If I survived, a promotion would be in order.

The story would sell by the million and earn me millions! My nerves were shot and I could not stand the waiting any longer. As far as I was concerned, I had to get away from the station and to safety as soon as possible.

The two men just appeared, seemingly out of nowhere, and I froze in sheer terror as the pistol was raised and I stared down the most enormous looking black hole at the business end of the gun. Then my attention was drawn by the appearance of two more people – these two contrasted with the ‘gun for hire’ look of the two men before me. The two girls – neither could have been more than about sixteen, while one looked barely old enough for puberty – they attacked the men with guns before the men knew that the girls were even there.

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What a sight! The younger girl, with her auburn hair hanging loosely, struck with her left foot and kicked the man with the gun in the small of the back. The man yelled out in pain and he lost his footing as the same girl kicked him in the side of the head. The gun clattered to the tiled floor.

The other girl, with her blonde hair tied back in a ponytail, she dived towards the other man and threw him against the wall before punching him hard in the side and then she flipped him over and down to the floor, rather hard. The man’s lungs were emptied in a single whoosh as he landed. That was not the end of his treatment as the girl stamped down hard on his chest – I heard several loud snapping sounds and the even louder bellow of the man’s reaction to his ribs snapping.

I turned back to the younger girl to find her smashing her man’s head against the floor until he lost consciousness.

It was all over in mere seconds.

“Are you just going to stand there looking like a total dick?” The younger girl demanded as she shoved me down the corridor and away from the carnage.

Upper service corridor

I had a perfect vantage point, plus I could hack into the station’s CCTV system.

However, it was the *only* good vantage point in the station – there was a noise from outside the door and then the door opened. It was obvious that he had not expected to find us up there. He was large and he held a sniper rifle in his hands. I snapped my laptop shut and rolled to one side.

Hailee attacked; she driving forwards and shoved the surprised man against the wall. He tried to use his rifle as a melee weapon, but Hailee produced an extendable baton and fought the man – I ran out the door and waited around the corner where I drew my SIG Sauer P290RS from the holster on my right ankle.

I heard the fighting and the scuffling, then there were several muted gunshots and I went back into the room, pistol raised.

“All under control...”

The man was dead, three red-rimmed holes in his chest. Hailee held the man’s sniper rifle.

“SIG Sauer 716 .308-calibre with sniper scope and SRD338-QD suppressor – a very nice piece of kit...”

Hailee disassembled the weapon and pocketed the firing pin before she rammed a cleaning rod up the barrel and snapped it off.

“Let’s move, Abigail...” Hailee suggested and we ran down the steps that led to the concourse.

Lower Service Corridor

I was relieved to hear of the sniper being taken out; that reduced the risk to us all and especially to Granger.

“I’ve got to get the hell out of here...” Granger bleated.

“Grow some fucking balls!” Megan growled back. “Mine are bigger than yours, for fuck’s sake...”

“What do you know about *Urban Predator*?” I asked.

“What . . . oh, yes – I have it here; I made a copy for you . . . here.”

Granger handed me a small USB drive – I placed it inside a small Faraday bag to mask any possible tracking signals.

“Wait here; we’ll check to see that all is clear,” I advised.

“Okay...” Granger replied.

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Megan and I left the corridor via another security door and split up, looking for trouble.

“Fusion, are we clear?”

“We’ve seen nobody, not since that sniper Hailee took down,” Dave replied.

“Clear!” Joshua advised.

“Clear!” Chloe advised.

“Clear!” Stephanie advised.

There was nothing from Hailee.

“Hailee?” Dave called.

If there was a problem, Hailee would have said something – maybe she was tied up.

I rang Granger.

“Standby to move...”

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After one more scan, I gave the order.

“Move! Walk out and turn right, head for the exit past M&S.”

I moved towards Platform 15, where Stephanie was loitering and looking very casual; the girl was very good at surveillance and counter-surveillance. I saw his head come apart before I heard the muted report of the .308-calibre supersonic round. I had only heard the sound because I recognised it for what it was – the bullet had left the muzzle of the rifle at 1,840 miles-per-hour and it had taken a mere fraction of a second to pierce Granger’s skull.

The sniper rifle was suppressed and any remaining sound of the report was lost amongst the thousands of commuters as they milled around the busy and very noisy train station. People may have missed the sound of the round being fired, but they quickly noticed the man’s head as it exploded and the corpse itself as it collapsed to the ground in an ever expanding pool of dark red blood.

The station was pandemonium.

“Scatter!” I ordered.

I instantly grabbed hold of Stephanie and ran towards the south side of Waterloo Station. The purple motorcycle was exactly where we had left it and I grabbed our helmets, handed Stephanie hers and climbed onto the Ducati, starting the engine immediately. I felt the younger girl climb on behind me and wrap her arms tightly around my waist.

“Hey – don’t forget that I’m here, okay?”

Was that fear creeping into her voice?

“Never gonna happen!” I replied reassuringly.

“Let’s go.”

I registered Stephanie’s complete lack of swearing; that meant she was scared. I accelerated away quickly, zipped around a pair of stationary black London taxis and took a right turn at the roundabout.

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We headed northeast, parallel to the station. I slammed on the brakes as a group of people crossed the road at a zebra crossing, just before we made a left onto Baylis Road – the satnav in my visor let me know exactly where I was at every moment. Almost immediately, we took another left onto the A301, Waterloo Road, and we shot past the main entrance to Waterloo Station. The traffic was heavy, as I weaved through the barely moving mass of vehicles and was thankful that we were on two wheels instead of four.

I began to hear many sirens as they approached from all directions.

There were traffic lights everywhere and I had to be careful not to attract too much attention to us – maybe the purple motorcycle had not been the best idea! We negotiated the Concert Hall roundabout and headed northwest towards a bridge over the River Thames.

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The pair of red-painted BMW X5 Police SUVs with blue lights flashing appeared out of nowhere, just as we had reached a fairly clear section of road and then roared over Waterloo Bridge with both SUVs heading towards us. One of the SUVs jumped the concrete median and attempted to block the bridge in front of me as the other one did the same on the other side of the median.

“Fucking hold on!” I yelled to Stephanie and I immediately felt her arms tighten around my waist.

I accelerated at an angle, headed for the concrete median and bounced up the kerb, then raised my front wheel and rode straight over the bonnet of the right-hand X5. The driver did *not* look pleased!

We came down on the far side and I did not look back; I just twisted the accelerator.

We raced past a trio of enormous, red, double-decker buses and headed onto the north bank of the River Thames and then re-entered the built-up area of Central London.

We needed somewhere to stop and check the motorcycle for damage before we relied on it to get us out of trouble. I vividly remembered the warning that I had given out to the team, just over a year previously, on our last trip to the United Kingdom: ‘...*One thing to remember, this is the United Kingdom. This country has the most CCTV cameras of any country in the world and not much in the way of civil liberties. They have a wonderful place, down south, called GCHQ at Cheltenham which basically sucks up every electronic signal in the UK...*’. Hiding in Central London would not be easy, I knew that it was the CIA which was after us, but the Brits may just provide any info that Vossen requested.

We roared through the Strand Underpass and then took a right towards Lincoln’s Inn Fields. I parked up off the road and under some trees; we were effectively shielded from both the street and the sky.

“You okay, Steph?”

“Damn, I’m sweating in some *very* personal places...”

I laughed and proceeded to check out our transport.

***1.5 miles away to the east
Embassy of the United States
Special Projects Section***

“We have a purple Ducati – it was caught on cameras in the Strand Tunnel. We know of one current person of interest who favours that form of transport.”

“Go on...” Noah Vossen prompted, seeing the triumphant look on his assistant’s face.

A picture flashed up on the screen.

“The passenger is short and she could be nine or ten, more specifically, it could be the Walker girl and therefore the rider must be Hit Girl...”

“Very good – where are they now?”

“They haven’t shown up on CCTV leaving the area, so they must be around somewhere.”

“Get it out on the wire – take them both down...”

***Thames House
UK Security Service (MI5)***

“Commander Lawrence.”

“We have a communication that matches your flags – I’ve emailed it...”

“Thanks, Bob – box of single malt on its way...”

Commander Lawrence opened the email and he went pale as he read the lines of text. He picked up his mobile and dialled a number.

“Joseph, I think they’re in big trouble – our ‘friends’ have found them: Lincoln’s Inn Fields...”

Lincoln’s Inn Fields

Lincoln’s Inn Fields was not the safe haven that I had expected it to be.

There we were, a full-scale gunfight in Central London! The CIA had us dead to rights as I returned fire with my G36C and Stephanie kept up fire with her SIG. The four men had appeared out of nowhere in a large SUV; they had started shooting almost immediately and after several minutes, I was down to my last magazine when there was movement behind us and I turned to see the same pair of red BMW X5 SUVs pull up and two Police officers jumped out of each vehicle, G36C assault rifles to their shoulders – we were trapped!

I awaited the challenge, but instead, I was appalled to hear the chatter of the G36C assault rifles sending out 3-round bursts.

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To my utter surprise, I felt no bullets strike my back, but instead I found a Police officer on either side of me and one winked in my direction – they had engaged the CIA! I fired my last round...

“I’m out!” I called.

“Here, have some of mine...”

The Officer to my right passed me two magazines and I nodded my thanks as I inserted one and I began firing again.

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The four CIA men quickly found themselves outnumbered as they were fighting against five assault rifles and a pistol. Two dropped to wounds before they all fell back towards their transport and

made their escape. I saw a Police BMW 5-series sedan appear, blue lights flashing, and race after the fleeing CIA SUV.

As I lowered my weapon, I glanced over to our reinforcements. They were all uniformed officers of the DPG or Diplomatic Protection Group, more commonly known as SO6. The obvious leader smiled and held out his hand.

“Sergeant Joseph Beck.”

“Mindy Lizewski, and this is my daughter, Stephanie.”

“Hi,” Stephanie said with a brief raise of her left hand.

“Good to meet you both; we have been out looking for you!”

I looked a little sheepish as I noticed the large dent in the hood of one of the X5s – it was way beyond requiring with just a bit of polish...

“Sorry about that!”

“So you fucking should be!” One of the other officers griped good naturedly. “The paperwork on that alone is going to keep me busy for hours!”

“You’re a local?” Sergeant Beck asked, looking down at Stephanie and then over at me. “But you are a Yank?”

“Hey, she’s my Mum!” Stephanie growled.

“Just saying, young miss; I meant nothing by it,” Beck chuckled. “How old?”

“Nine,” I said.

“Nearly ten!” Stephanie corrected me.

Two of the officers chuckled, but then the calm atmosphere exploded, literally!

Gunfire ripped out and we all dived for the vehicles.

There were two men across the street firing from behind a Ford Mondeo. One X5 was immobilised immediately, but the two officers kept up covering fire while Beck ran for his own X5 with his partner, with the two of us close behind. I fired my own pistol and shoved Stephanie on ahead of me. Then Beck and his partner received a bullet each; Beck in his left shoulder, and his partner in the right thigh.

Beck shoved me towards the driver’s seat while he guided his partner into the backseat and he then took the front passenger seat. Stephanie climbed in the back beside the injured officer who had a bullet in his thigh. The rear window of the X5 shattered as I pressed the ‘Start’ button and pulled the gear selector to ‘D’. I floored it and Beck stabbed the blue ‘999’ button on the dash; the siren cut in along with the blue lights as I accelerated away from the gunfire.

“Take the next left and then a hard right!” Beck ordered.

I did as I was ordered and made the directed turns. Other vehicles on the road moved out of the way as I kept to the centre of the busy street.

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“Mindy!”

“Yeah, honey?”

“This man is bleeding badly...”

“Shove your fist into the wound and hold it there... Do it!”

The man yelled out in pain as Stephanie applied pressure to the wound. Beck began to punch the satnav, entering a destination to the northwest of London.

“Drop us off at St Bart’s, then get the hell out of London – you can’t trust the Met; they will arrest you at best. Follow the satnav and keep going until you cross the M25 – then dump the wheels. Only trust DPG and SEG . . . it’s been good meeting you . . . Hit Girl!”

“Thanks, Beck – I mean that...”

“Who are you, young lady?”

“Me? I’m Psyche!”

“Look after yourself, girl, and look after your mother...”

I drove the damaged BMW X5 and the two wounded officers east along the A40, we weaved in and out of traffic.

“Ignore the bloody red lights, girl – keep your foot down; tough luck if they can’t see a giant red 4x4 with flashing blue lights!”

As soon as the two officers had climbed out at St Bartholomew’s Hospital, I accelerated away and hit the ‘SIREN’ button on the dashboard. We had received many concerned looks as we had pulled up to the Accident and Emergency department and I was certain that somebody would have made a phone call.

As I roared up the A1, northbound, I enjoyed the power of having the everyday drivers in London pull over to the left to allow me to sweep past. We must have been quite a sight – a red, marked SO6 Police car with a smashed rear window and bullet holes up the left side of the vehicle. Stephanie had climbed over into the passenger seat almost as soon as we had left the hospital. Her hands and arms were covered in the Police officer’s blood up to the elbows. She strapped herself in and helped me keep an eye out for errant pedestrians and drivers. We made surprisingly quick time, only slowing up at junctions to ease our way through the heavy traffic that was stopped at the red traffic lights.

We took a left onto the A501 and we found ourselves heading towards King’s Cross. I had never driven a Police car before, let alone one with lights flashing and siren blaring, and I felt empowered as I drove, trying to obey at least some of the traffic regulations where possible.

Twenty minutes later, we passed King’s Cross and the station at Euston, still headed west.

That was when Dave called. Stephanie answered and she put the phone on speaker so I could hear.

“Where the fuck, are you two?” Dave demanded without any pleasantries. “We’ve heard news reports of gunfire and all sorts of shit!”

“We’re safe, Dad... Mindy’s driving.”

“Do I hear sirens? Are you being chased?”

“Not exactly...”

“Stephanie!”

Dave’s rebuke was savage.

“Okay, Dad...! Mindy’s driving an SO6 4x4 Police car. We’re doing fifty on the A501 towards Marylebone and Paddington with blues and twos... That good enough?”

I heard Dave chuckle and I rolled my eyes.

“Anybody else, and I wouldn’t have believed a word – but Mindy? Yeah...”

“Are you safe?” Stephanie asked as I swerved rather violently around a large red double-decker bus.

“Yes, we made it out of the City. We’re on a train near Wembley.”

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“What the hell?” Stephanie blurted out as she put down the mobile – damn I’m starting to think British!

Two Honda VFR1200 motorcycles roared past with blue flashing lights, while a third came up beside me and the rider, dressed like his colleagues in a fluorescent jacket with ‘POLICE’ imprinted on it, waved for me to follow him as he took station directly in front of me.

“Who are they?” Stephanie asked with barely concealed concern in her voice.

I was actually amazed by what was happening and it was a moment before I responded to the inquisitive young girl.

“They are the Special Escort Group, or SEG – they are a unique British institution and are arguably the best in the world at what they do.”

“They each carry a Glock, openly...” Stephanie noticed.

“These guys don’t stop for anybody and they don’t even use a set route – it’s down to the Lead Rider to select a route as he goes.”

“What’s that sound – a whistle?”

“They don’t use sirens; they use whistles to attract attention . . . and they work.”

I cut the siren on the X5 and kept pace with the Lead Rider as his two counterparts raced ahead to clear junctions and direct us as required onto the other side of the road. I was actually amazed how organised they were as we passed through junctions with barely a pause, keeping a fairly constant speed as we went, and then the two motorcycles would fly past to clear the route ahead yet again.

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We followed the A40 in an easterly direction for several miles, quickly leaving London behind and we started to see more greenery and fields. The A40 had three lanes which made progress fast and we maintained a steady seventy, which covered a lot of ground very quickly. We raced past Northolt Aerodrome and then as we passed over the M25, the SEG riders waved at us before they turned back towards London.

We were on our own, so I entered a new destination into the satnav, which would take us a few miles south and then west. After another fifteen minutes, we turned onto some waste ground.

There, we found a small reception committee awaiting us.

Mindy always did like to arrive in style!

The red-painted BMW X5, with Police markings and blue flashing strobe lights pulled up sharply and the blue lights were turned off. I felt immense relief as two of the four most important people in my life climbed down from the vehicle. I saw the blood on Stephanie's arms as I ran forwards.

"Not my blood, Dad . . . Mindy's neither..."

I grasped both of them into an enormous hug, gripping them tightly enough that both girls squealed. I felt two more people joining the hug, which seemed to go on for ever.