

1

The Accident

I was only 12 when the catastrophe occurred. On the 1st of November, I was around a mate's house. We were messing around in his garden. There was a zip wire already set up in one of the trees and we couldn't resist but have a go. That's when it happened. I didn't realise I wasn't secured in the rope properly, lost my grip and fell about 10-15 feet. I landed on my head! Tim, one of my closest friends rushed to check if I was alright after witnessing my fall. As he got closer to my body he became aware of the extent of my injury and became scared. I uttered no sound. I was unconscious, unable to hear Tim's shouts and screams.

This was weird that I couldn't hear Tim's voice seeing as though myself and him were best friends and I went to school with Tim on a daily basis, we had spent, shared so many jokes and pranks together whether it be at school or out of school. The driveway to Tim's house was off a remote country lane, it had a row of tall trees down both sides. There was a huge garden running the length of the driveway and at the end there was a long

bungalow and this was Tim's family home. Tim lived here with his Mum, Dad, one older brother; Sam, and two younger brothers; Luke and Matt.

Tim alerted his brothers Matt and Luke to be at my side while he sprinted to the phone and dialled 999. I had only been at Tim's house an hour when disaster had struck. We had planned to go to the Horsham fair that afternoon to meet Alex, another close friend of ours. Alex lived and worked on his family's livestock farm just outside Horsham. Tim and I found we had some time to spare before we had to leave for the fair, so we decided to play on the zip wire that spanned the two largest oak trees in Tim's back garden.

It took twenty minutes for the ambulance to arrive. From the time my head had hit the ground I was drifting in and out of consciousness.

"What's this young man's name?" asked one of the paramedics.

"Chris, Christopher Manson" Tim replied.

The paramedics kept trying to ask me questions to check my level of consciousness and for possible brain damage. They persevered with questions like, "what is your name....how old are you?" They also asked if I had been on a zip wire before. I was unable to answer. The paramedics then carefully put me on a stretcher and carried me to the ambulance. They then gave up asking me questions and started talking to Tim and his

parents, who were huddled together in fear by the back of the ambulance. At one point I must of stayed conscious long enough to recognise Tim's voice in the background.

"I don't know how I am going to tell the rest of the class tomorrow that this has happened to Chris and I haven't even told his friend Alex yet!"

We set off towards the accident and emergency department at the Princess Royal Hospital in nearby Haywards Heath. Tim's Dad, Terry, came with me and Tim and my other friends stayed behind to enjoy Luke's birthday party. Terry was distraught. He was frantically rummaging around in his bag to find his mobile. He knew he had to spill the beans to my parents. He was anxious about this and extremely concerned about me. At this point I was unconscious.

In the ambulance one of the paramedics looked after me in the back, whilst the other one concentrated on driving. The paramedic driving was in contact with the hospital telling them my details, the circumstance of my accident and my current condition, so that the doctors would be ready for me when I arrived. The ambulance flashed through the lanes of Horsham with the sirens blaring all the way.

On arrival at the Princess Royal Hospital, the doors to the ambulance were immediately opened from outside, where lots of medical staff were gathered, including my Mum. I was taken straight out of the ambulance and wheeled into the intensive care room where loads of doctors started to work on me. After what seemed to be a very long time, my

Mum was allowed to see me briefly. I was then whisked off to have a CT scan on my head. There followed a lengthy discussion as to what they were going to do with me next.

From the numerous tests, the doctors concluded that I had sustained a severe head injury and would need to go to a specialist unit in London for further treatment. It could be either a unit at Kings College Hospital in South London or at the Atkinson Morley Hospital in Wimbledon, depending on which one had an ITU bed available first. The final decision could not be made until the last minute as situations are changing all the time on ITU wards. The next decision to be made was how I was going to get there. Should they use an Air Ambulance or send me in an ambulance by road? In the end they decided to send a specialist team of two doctors and a nurse down from London to accompany me in the ambulance.

I was then wheeled through the corridors from the accident and emergency department to the back of the hospital. Here I was pushed through an adjoining corridor to the specialist Hurstwood Park Neurological Unit. This is where the doctors got me ready for the team from Atkinson Morley to take me to their specialist Neurological Unit in Wimbledon. By now my right eye had swollen to the size of a tennis ball. I had all sorts of tubes going into me and a ventilator tube had been pushed down into my lungs to breathe for me. A neck collar was placed around my neck for protection and I was lying on a spinal board in case I had broken any bones in my neck or back.

It took a number of hours for the team of doctors and nurses to stabilize me for the journey up to London. Finally, I was ready and the specialist team had arrived to accompany me. My Mum unfortunately wasn't able to accompany me, as there was no remaining room in the back of the ambulance. Luckily she had been able to contact my Uncle who would drive her, as my Mum was in no fit state to travel up to London alone.

I was loaded into the back of the ambulance and once secure we set off. As my condition was critical, the ambulance driver had to drive quite carefully. The slightest jolt could have been fatal. It took about an hour and a half to get to Wimbledon, but at least I arrived safely. I was then met by a new team of doctors and nurses who had already been brought up to date with my condition. They also planned to carry out a whole load of new tests to see what could be done to help me. At that time my Mum still hadn't arrived.

I was wheeled down to the very last bed in ITU. They transferred me from the trolley to the bed with the usual "On my command one, two, three..." that you hear in all the popular TV hospital dramas. Little did I know that I would be hearing those words about twenty times a day for the next eighteen months?

It wasn't long after that my Mum and Uncle Bernard had arrived. There continued to be lots of people frantically doing things around my bed. The medical staff were trying to get me to do all kinds of things like move my arms and legs, asking me whether I could hear them and testing to see if I reacted to pain by jabbing me with needles throughout

my body. These were all the things that doctors did to test for brain activity, to judge how badly hurt I was. It was then decided to sedate me so that I could have a nice sleep to give my body a chance to heal.

2

Tim's Story

Tim awoke at 4 o'clock the following Monday morning, three hours before he usually woke up. It was the first day of school after the half term break and the first day back after my terrible accident. Tim, unable to go back to sleep, tiptoed past his brother's room along to the kitchen, where he poured himself a bowl of cereal. As he sat down to

eat his cereal, Tim contemplated what he was going to tell his friends later on that morning about the accident. A job he wasn't looking forward to.

Later that afternoon, Tim glanced at his watch. The fourth lesson was about to start. Tim knew that during this lesson he would have to face Danielle, my girlfriend. Danielle was a petit girl who had the most amazing smile; she had short brown hair and was in the same lessons as Chris. He had managed to avoid seeing her all day, but as they were in the same group he couldn't put it off any longer.

"Where's Chris today?" she asked.

"Do you want the bad news first or the good news?" Tim replied.

"Bad news first." she said thinking that this was one of Tim's' jokes.

"As you well know Chris is a dare devil! – it was an accident waiting to happen."

"What! You're scaring me Tim!" exclaimed Danielle.

"Here goes." Tim went.

"It was about 12 o' clock last Thursday during the holidays when Chris was dropped off at mine by his Mum. He wanted to have a go on the zip wire before we went to Horsham Fair later in the afternoon. He got on it ok but his landing wasn't what anyone could have expected. He fell off the zip wire and landed on his head. The fall has apparently affected Chris's brain."

"Where is he now?"

"At the Atkinson Morley Hospital in Wimbledon"

Tim got to his feet to walk to his next lesson, leaving Danielle in a state of shock and unable to absorb what she had just been told.

Tim's next lesson was English. Walking into the classroom he felt overwhelmed, in a state of shock himself.

"Tim, are you alright?" asked Miss Shales, the English teacher.

"Tim, what's wrong?" Becky, one of the girls from the class asked.

Tim then broke down in tears and just stood there with everybody looking at him. They all stared at him with an expression on their faces that would only be achieved by placing a chilli in their mouths. Through the tears and sobs, Tim started to speak.

"You know your friend Chris; well he had an accident in the holidays..."

"How?" everybody shouted at once.

"He fell off a zip wire in my back garden and must have landed funny."

Tim then continued to recall the story he had previously told Danielle and got a similar response. Understandably, the class only managed to get a limited amount of English work completed when the bell for break sounded. Tim walked out of English, feeling as if he alone had been given the arduous task of telling the school about me. He felt that the whole weight of the world was on his shoulders.

Tim still had all the cafeteria staff to tell and when he did they all burst into tears. The cafeteria staff were all usually filled with smiles, but not this time. After that he went to

tell the PE staff. Tim was dreading telling them even more than the other teachers because I had such a good rapport with them. Then Tim told Mr Hay, the rugby teacher, and was surprised by his reaction.

“Oh well, you win some, you lose some.” Mr Hay said unsympathetically.

Tim then went and told Mr Raydon, another PE teacher, and was greeted with a more familiar reaction to the news. Mr Raydon was also moved to tears. When Tim told Alex about how unsympathetic Mr Hay seemed and how Mr Raydon was so emotional, Alex was puzzled about this too. The whole experience was quite draining for Tim, so he was relieved when he had finally told all the staff and was glad to be going home.

When Tim got home, his little brother Matt asked about me. He was unaware of how seriously ill I was.

Matt had long Blonde hair and was the youngest of the four offspring, I had played with him on his PS1 a couple of times, but never really got to know him

“How’s Chris? When is he free again to come round?”

“I don’t know yet” replied Tim.

Matt was outside cutting the grass near to where I had fallen. Tim looked down at the grass and saw the mark where I had landed, so he took the mower off Matt and tried to get rid of the mark. It wouldn’t budge.

3

Alex's Story

Alex Crass lived on a farm in Mannings Heath near Horsham. He was lucky to have a large room. Alex had an afro hairstyle and was very smart, needless to say he was in most of the top level classes at school. As most school days started Alex got up and started to get dressed. He put on his shirt, next came his trousers and lastly Alex did up his tie – short, which was the fashion at the time. In one breath he greeted his mum and said goodbye to her, just as she was opening the morning paper to browse through it. Alex had to run down the lane so that he wouldn't miss the number 89 school bus which would take him to his school, Warden Park, in Cuckfield. He jumped on to the bus just in time for it to pull out of the bus stop. As he moved further down the bus, he noticed that all the boys were sat downstairs and therefore presumed that all the girls must have been upstairs. This seemed very strange to Alex that the boys and girls would choose to sit in different parts of the bus, so he decided to ask his mate Sam why.

“I think it is because they are all sad about Chris's accident.” Sam replied. “Girls and boys tend to talk differently amongst themselves about these things.”

Alex and Sam had a music lesson with Mr Powello first thing. Alex was on the keyboard, but he couldn't play any song apart from the one Chris had previously taught him. He tried but he couldn't bring himself to play anything else. The rest of that lesson was filled up with Mr Powello asking him what the matter was.

“You're not your usual self today, what's troubling you?”

Alex couldn't answer. Alex was relieved when the bell sounded for break because he could get away from Mr Powello and his insistent questioning.

The break was for ten minutes so Alex just had time to go to the canteen and buy a Swiss roll something he always looked forward to. No sooner had he put the first bite in his mouth, he lost interest in it and decided he wasn't hungry after all. He went to the language block and up the stairs for his next lesson, Spanish. Then he had information technology to look forward to after Spanish with Miss Fincelk! The previous night, Alex hadn't had time to cope with homework on top of doing farm work. The class boffin, Kathryn, walked in smiling to the teacher knowing that Alex hadn't done any work on his assignment. She had done it for him to say thanks for helping her litter pick, which was part of a detention she had been given falsely. Kathryn had previously been dobbed on for something she hadn't done. Alex knew that Miss Fincelk wasn't one for accepting any excuses and he couldn't face her fierce tongue, it felt a relief to have Kathryn's help.

Alex had information technology next which was as much fun as watching paint dry! He walked in to the Learning Resource Centre, put his bag down, greeted Miss Charkle and sat down on his usual chair. Harry came through the big double doors and put his bag down next to Alex's. Sam followed closely behind, then Holly-Anne, Robin, James, Mattie and Olli. Then the inseparable threesome Adam, Andy and Omeed, looking as though they had something to hide. Miss C came out of her office with the Sunday Mirror newspaper in her hand; she put it down and looked around the room indicating that everyone should now get on with some work. Alex turned the computer on, he only needed to print off stuff for his biology coursework for the Tuesday coming. Miss C walked around the class, checking that everyone was actually doing some work. She was

only about three people away from Alex so he quickly clicked on “Word” and opened the document “Darrell Blunder”. It didn’t matter which file he opened just as long as he looked as if he was working.

After I.T Alex was due to go home and the only thing that mattered was that he caught the bus in time so that he could get back to Horsham and relax. As he lay on his bed that evening he found his mind drifting onto Chris and wondered how ill he really was.

4

Wolfson

After several months of being in a coma whilst at the Atkinson Morley Hospital, Tim finally came to visit me when I had regained consciousness.

“Hi Chris, Chris hi it’s me Tim”

This was what I heard coming from the edge of my bed with flashes of Tim coming into view. At first I wasn’t sure if it was a dream or not. When I realised it wasn’t a dream I sat bolt upright.

“Chris are you hungry, can you hear me, are you alright?”

It was like he was asking twenty questions all at once. I tried to talk but nothing came out. Tim called a nurse over.

“What am I doing wrong? He doesn’t answer me? I don’t know how to communicate with Chris, what do I do?” Tim said sounding very stressed.

The nurse seemed to ignore Tim’s pleas for help, coming over to me and addressing me rather than Tim.

“Gosh Chris you had a sore ride, how are you? Can you tell me how you are?”

All I could do was make an involuntary noise, which she responded to.

“Don’t worry Chris you’re in safe hands, can you nod your head for yes and shake your head from side to side for no?”

I tried with all my strength but I had lost my ability to move my head and neck.

“Ok Chris let’s try something else, what about blinking twice for yes and once for no?” she asked.

I blinked twice.

“Oh good, well done Chris, you are back with us.”

The nurse went away for about 10 minutes to continue discussing my case with the doctor, leaving Tim to talk to me about football. He hoped that by doing so he would get a response.

“Which out of these football teams is your favourite?” said Tim, showing me a football annual.

“Liverpool?”

I didn't respond.

“What about Chelsea?”

Again I didn't respond. I wish I could have said to Tim that I didn't like football much. Instead, thinking he was being kind he brought me a load of football videos for me to watch. Watching them kept me busy up to till 9pm that night; I have little interest in it anyway.

The next day I woke up to the noise of someone using a food blender, presumably to churn someone's breakfast up. To me it sounded more like someone trying to kick-start a Harley Davison it was so loud. I heard the kettle in the ward kitchen click on and off five times before I even got to see a nurse on the ward again!. Later that day Angie and Val from a rehab unit in Chailey, close to where I lived came up to see me to discuss the possibilities of me going there once I was well enough. Angie piped up.

“I wonder how long Pat will be in the lane.”

That was obviously a joke, which I hadn't got to grips with yet, but it turns out that Pat was a smoker and she used the lay-by in the lane outside the rehab unit to have a crafty cigarette. So when Pat was down the lane it always meant she was having a cigarette. Pat later joined Angie and Val next to my bedside once she had satisfied her craving. Pat was to be my future physiotherapist from Chailey. She spent ten minutes or so studying my physique, it was clear that I wasn't ready to move onto Chailey just yet, when she said.

"I'll have to get back to you in a month or so".

It was about ten minutes after they had gone, when this random couple male and female, who looked to be in their late twenty's early thirty's, came up to my bed and pulled chairs round to the side of it sitting down. It couldn't get much worse for me than being beaten by two fully grown adults. It started with punches and then they stood on me, it felt like, my head was in pain for the rest of the night and I'm not sure what it ended with. The clock had struck quarter past eleven when I next came to. I stayed up the rest of the night wondering why they had come and attacked me without even a word of explanation.

Looking back I now know that this was my active imagination being corrupted by the severity of my brain injury and the pain my body was experiencing.

5

C.H.I.S

Within a month it was decided that I was ready to go to the Children's Head Injury Service, in Chailey for further rehabilitation. On the morning of my move, Dean the porter had pretty much packed up all the urgent bits to the best of his ability, when Fiona a nurse came in.

"Dear, dear me and you're meant to be going to Chailey today, what happened?" She asked, looking at the mess Dean had made of all my worldly possessions. I was just looking at her all wrapped up in the bed covers. Fiona had a Scottish accent, which reminded me of my Dad, I wish I could have told her what had happened but I was still unable to talk.

What then proceeded was like playing pass the parcel with the patient - first the doctor came to see me, then the nurse and then the doctor again! After the second time of seeing me he decided that I should have another head scan in this huge brain scanner which looked like a giant washing machine, before I would be allowed to leave for my journey to Chailey, luckily the scan only took about 5 minutes. I spent the rest of the day resting in preparation for the journey, which was now scheduled for the following day. I didn't know what to expect, but was looking forward to being closer to home.

I woke up the next morning all hot and sticky. I waited for breakfast, watching "Time Team" because that was the only thing that my TV was tuned into. I did have my video player with me, which helped to entertain me, but I had seen all of the videos on the ward a 1000 times before. Finally I heard the bell for breakfast; I knew what ever breakfast it was, it was going to be slimy. I ate it none the less, it was like liquefied Weetabix. Then

the nurses came up to me with this giant card with all their names in and wishing me luck. Once I was ready I saw two men wearing paramedic uniforms, one was tall and bald, and the other was short and plump. For some reason I have decided that the plump one was probably the driver. Then they whisked me off in a wheelchair from the ward to this separate part of the hospital; it looked like it was a garage, then the paramedic asked. “Chris, can you lie down on this stretcher?”

They could have been kidnappers for all I knew, I eventually blinked twice for yes and with their help I got onto the stretcher and very quickly I was asleep.

I woke up after what seemed to be about 30 minutes, by then I was in the back of the ambulance and travelling along a motorway. Twenty minutes later we pulled off the motorway, onto what seemed to be a winding road. I knew we were getting close to Chailey as the winding roads were a good indication that we were in Sussex.

“Five more minutes Chris” the paramedic informed me.

I didn’t mind the paramedics chatting to me but their choice of radio station of Radio 4 with its dull and its dreary sounding presenters was another matter.

I finally arrived at the Children’s Head Injury Service or C.H.I.S, just short of 12:45pm. There were two nurses on duty, one blonde young nurse and an older lady. At first they were in the kitchen talking, the blonde one was washing her hands in the sink, whilst the older lady and another young lady who was a carer came to the door of the unit.

“Hello and welcome to C.H.I.S.” they said in unison. They had put a “WELCOME TO C.H.I.S” banner up on the stair well.

“First I suppose you want the grand tour?”

I blinked twice for “yes”. Chris P, the carer showed me around, she was another blonde haired lady. They had everything at C.H.I.S even a “Dark room” which I was intrigued by. The head injury unit had even been opened by Danny & Nicky from Southern FM, a radio station from Brighton; there was a plaque on the wall.

After the grand tour I was taken into the lift by this nurse named Debbie. Where we were transported up to the first floor, then Debbie pushed me all the way down to the end of the corridor to the last room. Once there she put a hoist sling under me and I was “winched” over and on to my new bed. I felt as though I was Superman! After so much excitement I fell straight to sleep.

I slept until 9 o’clock the next morning. When I finally woke up I was aware that there was somebody in the room with me. I made eye contact with Chris P.

“Are you going to lie there all day?” she said light-heartedly.

I’m new here! I thought to myself.

“Well you’re going to have to get up for dinner at six if not before because Danielle can’t wait to meet you.”

I got up half an hour later with the help of Sue and John who were also carers. Sue took me down in the lift whilst John used the stairs adjacent to the lift. The lift made a low humming noise as it went down. When we got out of the lift a lady was standing in front of the notice board.

“Hi!” she greeted me “I’m Hilary one of your speech and language therapists”.

There were apparently two of them but I wasn't sure whether that was a good thing or not. There was also a physio, an occupational therapist and a computer guy called Mario, who specialised in teaching I.T skills.

Next I was introduced to Danielle who was also a patient at C.H.I.S. She was thin and pretty, but she also had the most incredible personality. I was later to discover that she had one of the loudest laughs I had ever heard. Then the manager of C.H.I.S introduced herself.

“Hi I'm Val W the manager, how are you this fine evening?”

I blinked twice for yes meaning I was alright. I was really tired now, being in new places did that to you, and there was so much to take in. A night carer, Shelley took me upstairs in the lift, along the corridor to the shower room where she helped me to get undressed. Then she got a shower chair for me to use.

“Chris you're light!” she remarked, as she helped me get into the shower room. I didn't have time to check after my shower how I looked before I went to my room, I was so tired. Shelley took me along the long corridor to my room at the end, where I once again did a Superman impression on the way to my bed.

At 7 o'clock, the next morning the nurses came to haul me out of bed and if the early morning call wasn't bad enough, once I was downstairs at the breakfast table I discovered there wasn't any Coco Pops. I wasn't impressed! Talk about trying to make sure you got enough fibre. In the end I chose this unmarked cereal box. It tasted what I imagined dried wallpaper paste would taste like, and it was going down my throat like the queues

of traffic on the M25, moving very slowly! At that point I thought to myself, what's the point in having breakfast, if it is going to be that unpleasant. After breakfast Danielle and I were reminded to go and fill our timetables out from the board at the end of the downstairs corridor and opposite the lift. Before I could do mine I had to wait while Danielle did hers and wait for someone to push me there. After I sat there for a while looking needy, I managed to get Sue a short lady with jet black hair to push me towards the board.

“How are you this morning Chris?” she enquired.

I nodded my head to indicate that I was ok.

“I think you're going out in the bus today with Patrick” she continued.

I filled out my timetable as best as I could. On the way back to the dining room I heard Pat the physio cough, then the kettle click. Pat was reading out the headlines from the Daily Mail newspaper, “When will Bin Laden strike again...?” this session was called “orientation”.

The first session on my timetable was speech and language therapy with Val, then physio with Pat then I had a bus trip. I got Angie to take me to Val's room where Patrick, another patient of C.H.I.S was just putting his guitar away. My first impression of Patrick was obviously he's a musician but he also let me know he was from Ireland

“Hello Chris, I'm Valerie. I believe you met my counterpart Hilary, yesterday and this is Patrick just leaving. Right let's see what your voice is like”

I thought this was funny; I chuckled for 5 seconds and then let out a noise -

“Jes” which was my attempt at yes.

“Right then Chris we’re going to have to work on that, what’s your favourite instrument?”

I shrugged my shoulders.

“Have you heard a guitar or keyboard before?”

I indicated that I preferred the keyboard.

“Well that is lucky we have some here, what can you play? Do you know “what shall we do with the drunken sailor?”

Later that evening, Tim came to visit me at C.H.I.S. However, Tim didn’t seem his usual self. The tone of his voice was different, as if he had left something behind. I later found out that he and his family were planning to move to New Zealand quite soon. Shortly after Tim finished his visit I had Chris P who was my favourite carer as well as others. The fun didn’t stop there I had Shirl on duty that night who we had just heard coming to work on her pop pop bike, it was only a 200 cc moped, with learner plates, it was a running joke that she called it her “Harley Davidson”. As soon as I had my bath I got dressed into my Homer Simpson dressing gown and tidied my room up to the Mum standard.

The next morning I looked on the board when I got out of the lift. I was due to have S.A.L.T, which was speech and language therapy, O.T, which is occupational therapy, then PT, which is physiotherapy, followed by a half hour break and finally C.Z, which I hadn’t had before. I was thinking what it could stand for, when almost out of nowhere a lady introduced herself to me.

“Hello, my name is Christina I’m the educational psychiatrist.”

I read her badge it said “Christina Z” it was all fitting in to place now.

Patrick, Danielle and Mattie were the other patients at C.H.I.S. I liked everything about

Danielle, Patrick was all right, he was Irish, but that didn’t stop us from having fun.

Mattie was the youngest out of the four of us and the quietest around the breakfast table.

I was soon to learn however, that when we were all in S.A.L.T it was Mattie who was the

loudest! Lorie, a helper was playing his keyboard and Val was humming along to the

music. Mattie was just shouting really loudly! I personally thought he was pushing it but

what do I know? Danielle was having no trouble singing along. I found out later that she

had either belonged to a singing club or had a private singing teacher. Then Hilary the

other speech therapist came into the room, Patrick saluted to her and said –

“standby your beds:”

Which I thought was cheeky but it was apparently a pretty normal thing for Patrick to do

as nobody took any notice.

O.T was next – a quick half an hour session with Eleanor the therapist. The day wore on

with physio which was interesting but it made me tired. Finally I had Christina the

educational psychiatrist, who when I went in the room greeted me like an old friend

which I thought was nice but strange as well! When I entered the room I realised that

there wasn’t just Christina sitting there, but Dr B was also in the room. The session was

the longest half an hour I have ever endured!

After I had completed all my therapy for the day, I congregated with my fellow inmates in the dining room, so it was my first opportunity to find out more about them. Patrick was the biggest male chauvinist I had ever met. This fact was well known amongst the nurses and that evening Angie, one of the nurses, got her own back by somehow forcing him to do the washing up. Danielle, me and Mattie all took the mickey out of him that night; I think one of them managed to get a photo of him actually doing the washing up, as proof.

The next morning at breakfast Patrick still wasn't very happy. Danielle was putting in a piece of toast and she asked me –

“As it happens my friends Rebecca and Emma are coming over tonight so could you ask your friends Harry and Jimmy not to come tonight?”

“Well, I can't control who comes to see me. Why anyway?” I asked.

“Because they're annoying!” she answered.

It was Friday and at 1 o' clock the sun was shining and I had swimming as usual.

Danielle was trying to get out of anything that took place inside as it was a hot and sunny day. None of us minded but Patrick whispered something in her ear, he obviously thought it was funny but Danielle didn't look impressed, but it had done the trick. So we all went over to the swimming pool. On the way I saw three abandoned looking houses and saw bright lights coming out of one of the windows. I said to Pat the physio –

“There's a light coming out of that window.”

“Which window?” she asked.

Then Patrick piped up –

“Danielle have you been giving Chris them funny fags again!”

By then I was annoyed with Pat for not believing me. We carried on towards the swimming pool. The mystery would have to keep for another day.

6

The Abandoned House

Three days later Mattie unbeknown to me had snuck out of physio while Pat was in the lavatory, he wanted to join me on my quest. We then had to persuade the other nurses that I needed to go over to Westfield, a separate building close to the abandoned house which was mainly used for admin. I tried everything from needing to see a doctor because I had a cold. The nurses knew I was trying to pull a fast one; the symptoms I described sounded more like I was dying from the bubonic plague. So instead I asked if I could go over to the fields near Westfield to look at and draw the horses. That seemed to do the trick. Unfortunately Danielle seemed to get the wrong end of the stick, saying that she wanted to see the horses too, so I had no choice but to go with her, with Mattie following close behind. We were just about to make our escape, when from over our shoulder we heard Sarah, our main nurse shout out our names. We froze, glancing at each other in disbelief.

“And where do you think you lot are going?” she demanded.

“We’re heading off to Westfield to get the post, we thought it would be nice to be useful!” we said smugly, lying through our teeth.

We were almost as far as Westfield, when Mattie offered to take over from Danielle who was pushing my wheelchair. Danielle looked at us suspiciously.

“Where are you two going and what are you planning to do over here?” she asked.

Mattie remained silent; I guess he didn’t know how to get out of this one. So I said to Danielle –

“Oh leave us alone won’t you!”

So without any more questions she left us to it. As I pushed the button for the doors to open at the entrance to Westfield, Mattie started running whilst pushing me towards the opening doors. As we got closer I quickly glanced around and saw Angie, Mattie’s nurse of the day yelling -

“Stop!”

We took no notice and carried on through the doors. As Mattie tried to catch his breath I took the opportunity to ask why he had decided to come with me.

“Because I believed you about the lights in the window and I thought you would like some company!” he replied.

Mattie pushed me towards the back entrance of Westfield, where we could then continue our journey alongside the road.

“To the abandoned house!” I said enthusiastically, pointing towards the house’s entrance.

We then carried along up the road past the bungalows, under the bridge, past the church and then into the house that I saw the lights coming from. We both checked the time; it was dead on 7'o clock. As we walked inside we entered a grotty room that was covered in a range of high-tech equipment and a man who looked as though he was in his 20s with long hair, sitting in front of a large computer, staring so intently at the screen he didn't seem to be aware of our presence. Mattie leaned over towards me and whispered into my ear.

“You were right.”

“I knew something dodgy was going on. Right this must be kept between me and you; you're not allowed to tell anyone what went on tonight.”

“You'd better go back now, Angie's probably got your death certificate ready” I said to Mattie.

“But how are you going to get back and what am I going to tell Angie when she asks me where you are?”

“Say I've gone to get some fish and chips.”

Meanwhile the man sitting at the computer noticed me and pleasantly offered to show me around some of the rooms upstairs, using the lift that was in the far corner of the room, obscured by wiring. As we stepped out of the lift the brass plate on the door opposite read “Mario”, I guessed it was the same Mario from C.H.I.S. This struck me as being odd, was he using his I.T skills for something more sinister. The room next door to Mario's office looked far more interesting. On the door it said “*Warning High Voltage Equipment*”, but to my disappointment all it had inside was a large old spotlight, like one

maybe used in World War II to spot enemy planes. Why on earth would they be keeping something like this here! Behind the spotlight I could see a large window that had been covered in a heavy black blind. Whilst the man was shutting down his computer I pushed myself towards the window and peered behind the blind. Behind the abandoned house were vast open flat fields that spread out into the horizon. As I stared out into the distance I wondered what the fields were used for as there didn't seem to be any animals grazing or crops being grown there. My imagination was running away with me. The man turned his head towards me just as I replaced the blind; he had obviously noticed the sun glinting in from behind the blind. I knew that it was time to head back to C.H.I.S before I arose anymore suspicion.

As I headed towards C.H.I.S I thought about who was on duty, Sue and Shirley were on shift. Both Sue and Shirley are usually easy going and understanding. However Sue didn't appear impressed with my explanation of where I had been. Even when I told Danielle the truth of what we had been up to she thought we were nuts. But I was convinced that Mario was up to no good and in some kind of underground terrorist group.

The next morning both Mattie and I were up early, getting to the abandoned house by quarter to eight. We didn't want to give Sue a chance to handover to the day staff about our evening escapade. At the door to the abandoned house I let out a big yawn, with all the excitement the night before I hadn't managed to get much sleep. We sneaked around to the side window to see if anything was happening. This time there was a different man sitting at the computer console. He looked Asian, and by the side of him was a large box,

which he seemed to be desperately trying to cover up with a blanket of some kind. He then proceeded to brush the floor, apparently to get rid of his footprints that were obvious on the dirty floor. The Asian man then went upstairs, from where we could hear him talking quietly to someone. It was difficult to distinguish what they were saying, but we did hear amongst the muttering the word “launch” and then the sound of an engine start up. That was when our inquisitive natures got the better of us and we decided to take the risk and go inside to investigate. We quickly glanced around the rooms, finding everything pretty much the same as the night before, until Mattie found an odd looking archway.

“Hold on a minute Chris what’s that archway?”

“What archway?” I asked.

“This one, behind this old washing machine, it looks as though it leads to a corridor”

I looked down onto the corridor floor where a set of old clothes were piled up next to a manhole cover. I struggled in vain to lift it but it was far too heavy. We went back to C.H.I.S with dirty mud up our arms. On our return, Danielle instantly twigged that we had been up to something. “What have you been up to?” she asked.

“We’ve been talking to Shelley, the old nurse from here, the one that helps with the horses.”

“How do you explain your arm then?” She demanded, pointing to my mud covered arms.

“I had to hold a horse still whilst I was talking to Shelley.”

“Suppose that figures.” She said in a huff.

Chris P then came through the door followed by Claire, another carer.

“Another day, another beginning” they said in unison.

We then gathered in the dining room. Danielle had her normal toast, I had Coco Pops and Patrick had marmalade on toast. As we chomped through our meal Pat the physio arrived holding a Daily Mail in her hand.

“Morning all!” she said.

When we had finished our breakfast we all went back upstairs. Whilst I changed my top, Chris P did my hair and I told her about last night. At first she was convinced I was telling the truth until I told her about the hidden corridor and the archway, which seemed less easy to swallow. Later in my speech and language therapy session I reflected on what I had let slip earlier to Chris P. How stupid did I feel, she wasn't renowned for keeping her mouth shut. By now she had probably told everybody apart from the man in the model shop about what happened last night to me. As Val didn't say anything about what happened last night during our session I thought that Chris P had managed not to say anything. Paula another carer came to S.A.L.T to pick me up and to take me back to my room, on the way back she told me about Danielle leaving C.H.I.S.

“By the way Danielle is going, I'm sure she'll keep in touch.” Paula said.

A tall guy came in through the main doors of C.H.I.S and addressed Penny.

“Where are the hatches?”

Penny giggled to herself and said -

“What the kitchen hatch or do you mean my hair?”

Penny then surprisingly took off her wig. He shook his head.

“What do you want to do then?”

Then the penny dropped, Penny apologized.

“Sorry you’re the fire inspector, if there’s anything else I can get you just ask.”

“A cup of tea would be nice.”

Just then, there was an immense noise coming from upstairs.

It sounded like a sledge hammer was hitting the side of the building from outside, which was obviously the fire alarm. It stopped after 3 minutes. Penny was standing on the heels of her feet with her mouth wide open in shock. The fire inspector soon returned to Penny after checking the downstairs corridors to reassure her.

“I don’t think you should look so frightened, it was only a false alarm!”

Once the fire inspector had finished inspecting C.H.I.S.’s fire alarm system he drove away satisfied that everything was in order. Later that evening I had mashed potato with beans for my tea.

The next day I had John the carer looking after me all day. I slept until quarter to nine, apparently. I had yet another busy day in front of me. First of all I chose a purple t-shirt with three-quarter length shorts. I decided to have Shreddies for breakfast for a change, it was whilst I was eating that Mattie came downstairs to join me and Patrick, who was sitting opposite me.

“Morning” he said.

“Morning Mattie.” I spluttered through my Shreddies.

Mattie had a bowl of Weetabix. I’d just finished my Shreddies when Pat the physio came through to the dining room, looking at her watch and then her diary.

“Come on Patrick!” she said “It’s your turn first to see me this morning.”

My first session of the day was S.A.L.T with Val in the music room. I heard Patrick's crutches go past the music room at about half past ten when Hilary and Lori entered the room. Hilary and Val started singing, while Lori accompanied them on the keyboard. It wasn't long until I realised I was getting dirty looks as I was meant to sing too!! That seemed to make the time go quicker and before I knew it Claire arrived to pick me up at the end of the session.

"Unfortunately you've got Eleanor. Patrick and I are making a cake" said Claire.

She then dropped me off at Occupational Therapy. It turned out that I would have two Occupational Therapists with me today. The other woman with Eleanor introduced herself as Jayne. She was about 5'6'' tall, fair hair and with blue eyes. My first question was-

"Do you smoke?"

"Why do you?" she replied

"No, although I did try one when I was eleven!" I said regretfully.

She then showed me how to make slide shows on Power Point, and how to make a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel. By the time we had done all that it was about it for the day.

7

The Hatchway

Whilst thinking about the abandoned house, that I hadn't visited for a while, I also wondered if Patrick believed me about the house or not. So I grabbed the bull by the horns and asked him.

"I didn't to begin with, but you seem to be so sure", was Patrick's reply.

"What about?", I questioned him further.

"About there being something not quite right going on at that abandoned house."

"Aah - that stuff with Mattie?"

Later on that day myself, Mattie and Patrick went over towards Westfield, where we saw Eleanor and Claire.

"What are you three doing?"

"We've just finished a visit to the dentist to get our teeth checked" we said in unison, lying through those less than pearly white teeth.

Our explanation obviously seemed plausible to Eleanor and Claire to let us be on our way and we quickly moved towards the abandoned house as soon as they were out of ear shot.

Just before we reached the front door of the house, I checked the time with Patrick.

“We will only have 15 minutes to search.” I said.

We went inside and found ourselves standing in the main hall, which had three corridors leading off it. Patrick straight away headed upstairs. I went into the laundry room, where I found a hatchway; could this possibly lead to a hidden room? Patrick started to complain that his tummy was rumbling and that he was feeling hungry.

“Hold on a minute Patrick, don’t you think we should check this out first?”

I said as I knew he was eager to get back to C.H.I.S for his dinner.

“What!”

“That hatchway on the floor, don’t you think we should take a look at it?” I said with more persistency. Patrick sighed and gave into my demands. On a closer inspection the hatchway looked almost the same as a Russian submarine hatch that I saw in a recent film, but this one seemed to be sealed with 8” nails.

Once I was satisfied that we had seen as much as we dared in the free time allowed we reluctantly gave up for the night and went back to C.H.I.S. On our journey back to C.H.I.S we all realised how dirty we were, surely this wouldn’t go unnoticed. I was wet and mucky. Patrick looked as though he was a builder who had just done a full day’s work and needed a damn good wash. We had been gone longer than we had first thought and I got told off by Penny for not coming back for her delicious curry. Luckily they had

saved us some. Fortunately we were back in time for Sheila to play cards with us; this was the routine for Thursday evenings.

Sheila was about five foot six, she was very well spoken a kind-hearted woman who lived in Hove, who gave up her evenings to play a whole array of games with the kids at C.H.I.S. The evening of card playing began with a game I hadn't played before. It was called "Katie's sevens" The aim of the game was to get rid of all of your cards. Patrick lost the game every time and Mattie didn't seem to be doing much better either. Each game seemed to be between me and Sheila as to who would win.

Looking at Sheila whilst playing cards I wondered if she would know anything about the abandoned house, but how to broach the subject without admitting that we had been up to no good and had already been snooping around the house. So I decided to just introduce the subject during some idle chit chat. I asked Sheila about how long she had been working at C.H.I.S and if she knew any history about what had happened nearby in the past. Sheila told me that her family had been living in Chailey since before the Second World War, her father was involved in the Home Guard being too young at the time to fight. Sheila's parents didn't meet until after the war had finished and she wasn't born until the mid-1950s. We chatted about what we thought Chailey might have been like during the war. This lead me on to ask her about C.H.I.S, I knew that some parts of it were obviously recently built, by its architecture. I asked her about the abandoned house in the distance. Sheila wasn't sure what it had been used for or how long it had been

there for. Sheila did say however, that her Father used to tell her stories of fields close to C.H.I.S being used as air fields during the Battle of Britain.

“Apparently Chailey was used by some pilots to refuel on their return from defending the coast, my Dad said that when he could see the Spitfires returning home safe and sound he would give them a cheer and a wave” Sheila said.

“To think all that was happening so close to where we are now” I said.

After several games and some TV I felt it was time I went to bed. I desperately tried to get to sleep, but all I did was toss and turn thinking about the mystery at the house and what Sheila had told me about the old air fields, no wonder the fields behind the house seemed so open and flat. After about ten minutes of wondering about our adventure to the house I decided to get up. On sneaking out of my room I decided to try and get Mattie or Patrick to come with me to the abandoned house again. I pushed my chair down the corridor to Mattie’s room and then to Patrick’s to see if they were awake. Luckily they were and up for another adventure and soon we were back inside the abandoned house.

8

The Airfield

We made our way back along the corridors towards the laundry room where we had discovered the intriguing hatchway. Together we tried in vain to get the hatch to move, when I saw there was a large iron lever. We pulled it together, there was a jolt and the hatch opened. As it started to open we glanced at each other guiltily, as if we felt like we were being naughty little children. Mattie went through the hatch first, as he was the smallest, followed by Patrick and then me. We looked around; we were inside a ventilation duct, with strange steel murals on the walls. Patrick suddenly started to quicken his pace; he had obviously heard or seen something he didn't like. Was it a security camera on the wall or a guard? We both noticed the alarm on Mattie's face and

started to follow him as quickly as we could. We reached a corridor with five separate doors coming off of it. The last door on the left was the largest, a double steel door. Above the door there was an emblem of an eagle, its wings were splayed out and it had what seemed to be a rolled up parchment between its claws. We gingerly pushed open the door, trying to keep as quiet as possible to avoid getting caught.

Directly in front of us we saw a set of narrow steep stairs that on further investigation seemed to go up into the roof of the house. Patrick and Mattie started to climb the stairs while I stayed at the bottom to keep watch. As I did a bright light appeared to be coming from a small window in the corner of the room. I moved towards the window, squinting my eyes. As I did so I was able to glance into the fields behind the house. The field was lit up with two vertical lines of lights spanning out into the distance. Then with a roaring sound a huge freight plane flew over just skimming the top of the abandoned house. I suddenly realised what that old spotlight we discovered earlier was for, to guide the planes in.

I watched the plane circle around the field before coming in to land. When the plane came to a halt the door opened and three people stepped off the plane. I looked closer trying to look at their faces and realised that they were three of the world's most deadly assassins Edward Ellis, Becky Dark and Harry Howler who I had heard Pat informing us about in orientation. I recognised their faces from their mug shots in the national newspapers describing that they were suspects in numerous terrorists' plots. I wanted to alert Mattie and Patrick to what was going on so I looked up the stairs and whispered

their names but they were nowhere to be seen. Where had they gone? Had they been captured? I knew that for my safety and theirs I needed to find Mattie and Patrick, so I decided to come out of hiding. I opened the window as far as it would go; I was sure I could fold up my wheel chair and throw it out of the window. I looked down the wall to see if there was anything I could use to scamper down. All I could see was a precarious looking down pipe and I didn't fancy taking my chances. Suddenly my attention was drawn back towards the planes cock pit, where a heated argument between the pilot and his navigator had ensued. They continue to argue while the pilot removed three large bags from the cock pit, while the navigator winched an Avario Computer system out of the tail compartment of the plane. Once the computer system had been removed from its hiding I realised how surprisingly long it was, it must have been about five metres in length. Once the computer system was safely on the ground, several men in white coats stepped out of the tail compartment, their attire reminded me of the technician assistants that worked at my school.

I resolved myself that our only means of escape would be to back track. I went to the bottom of the stairs that lead up to the top of the house and shouted with all my might.

“Mattie, Patrick where are you? We need to get out of here”

To my relief within minutes two scared faces appeared from the darkest corner of the house.

“What was all that about?” asked Mattie

“We managed to see everything from a gap in the roof tiles” said Patrick

“Why didn't you answer me the first time?” I asked crossly, “I was so worried”

“We couldn’t hear you over all the noise from the roof, we had to stand right next to the gas boiler to get a clear view” Mattie said.

“Well it doesn’t matter now, just get down and let’s get a move on” I said.

Mattie scampered down and stood behind me ready to help me push my wheelchair for a quick getaway. Patrick on the other hand had different ideas. He jumped down from the last few steps and landed awkwardly on his left foot, bending it the wrong way. Patrick was obviously in pain but managed not to scream out, biting his lip instead.

“I think I have sprained my ankle”

“Do you think you can walk on it” I asked him.

“Yes” Patrick said pressing his left foot to the floor, his face contorted in pain.

“But I need to go slow and I think I need help, Mattie can I lean on you”

We made our way back towards the hatchway; I pushed myself while Mattie struggled to support Patrick. As I reached the hatchway first I poked my head back through into the laundry room of the abandoned house, I sighed in relief, the coast appeared clear of any dangers. As I turned the door knob of the laundry room I froze in stop motion, like an old cartoon, I had relaxed too soon, Mario was wandering around the corridors. He spotted me but said nothing, I knew that we had to get out of there or else I would be in trouble with the team at C.H.I.S. I shouted back towards Mattie and Patrick, to let them know about my fears. They agreed that I should go ahead and that they would come as quickly as they dared. I felt guilty leaving them behind but consoled myself that they had each other.

9

The Mystery Man

I got out of the abandoned house as quickly as my arms could push my wheel chair. Out of breath but now out of sight of the abandoned house I pushed myself slower down the hill onto the road. As I started to calm down I heard the roar of a helicopter engine start up back towards where the plane had landed. I began to quicken my pace, fearful that the helicopter had been sent to look out for me. A moment later I heard another engine rev up behind me, it was a stretched black Mini. A blonde haired man stepped out the Mini

with mirrored sunglasses. His hair appeared to be bleached rather than natural blonde he was fairly well built and he was dressed in a suit top with a pair of salopette type trousers. Which led me to ask “what have you been up to? “There will be plenty of time later on to ask me later, but we have to be off now!

“Quickly get into my car I will take you to safety” the man demanded.

“Do you really think I am stupid enough to get into a car with a total stranger, especially after what I have just witnessed” I said with sarcasm in my voice.

“Hi, pleased to meet you, my name is Ben, now I am no longer a stranger!” he said.

“You are in danger. I have been keeping these guys actions under heavy surveillance for some time, you were lucky to get away from them alive. We have lost some of our best men trying to spy on them”

Possibly against my best judgement I believed his story and jumped into the car whilst he slung my wheelchair into the mini’s back seat.

“After what I have witnessed of your escape I believe you have the potential to be a good spy. I work for an organisation that could use someone like you. Take my number; ring me as soon as you can.” Ben insisted.

We had almost reached the entrance to C.H.I.S when Ben slowed down and gestured towards the car door. I started to get towards the edge of the car as Ben got my wheelchair out of the back seat for me and before I knew it he was gone. “Just ring me!” I heard from the distance.

Pat my Physio had just stepped outside for a cigarette break. Pat had obviously seen me leaning into Ben’s car window before he drove off.

“Who was that?” she asked, “An old girlfriend?”

“No, I’m not quite sure who it was” I said with a puzzled expression on my face.

I pushed myself through the main doors of C.H.I.S, there didn’t seem to be anybody about, so I quickly went back to my room and waited for the others to return. About half an hour later Mattie popped his head around the door of my room.

“Oh” I said “I was getting worried, I am glad that you got back okay, and how is Patrick’s ankle?”

“I think one of the nurses is looking at it now I don’t think he has done any real damage, as the closer we got to C.H.I.S the more he could weight bear on his left foot”

“That’s good, what a weird night” I said not daring to tell him about my strange meeting with Ben.

“I think we need to do some more research and visits to that house” suggested Mattie.

“Well it can all wait, I am absolutely knackered, I’m going to bed ”I said.

I was desperate to get into bed and quickly wished Mattie a good night’s sleep.

At first I quickly fell into a deep sleep, but something was obviously playing on my mind and I woke up with a start. I tossed and turned, unable to get what Ben had said out of my mind. As all of the other patients were tucked up in bed I sneaked out of my room towards the end of the corridor towards the nursing station. I was sure that I had timed it right, the night staff were receiving their hand over from their shift, there would be no one about for the next thirty minutes. I pushed myself closer to the nurse’s desk and grabbed the telephone. With excitement but with apprehension I punched out the mobile number Ben had given me.

“This is the Orange voice mail service for the S.P.O.P.R, push one if you want to leave a message.” a recorded voice instructed me.

It suddenly dawned on me that C.H.I.S may be able to trace the call if I was on the phone too long so I decided against leaving a message. Who on earth was the S.P.O.P.R?

Besides I could feel myself drifting off to sleep, so with heavy eyes I pushed myself back towards my room at the other end of the corridor and was asleep soon after getting back into bed.

10

The Belfast

The next day I had Angie looking after me. As I opened my eyes I awoke to find her sitting on the chair beside my bed. When Angie realised I was waking up she turned my radio on to “Southern FM”. She knew that I loved its breakfast show and found “Jack the lads weekly wind up” hilarious. Just as I was having my toast in the dining room I could hear Patrick’s alarm going off from his bedroom. Sarah soon arrived to join me at having some breakfast; as per usual she was loud and bubbly. I looked through the window in

the direction of the abandoned house, there were no planes landing, everything appeared to be back to normal. I wondered for a minute if I had dreamt it all.

After breakfast I went back to my bedroom cleaned my teeth, washed my face and put gel on my hair. Now I was ready for another exciting day, not! I decided to watch TV for a bit. As I started to relax Sarah entered my room.

“Morning, Mario is ready to see you for your I.T session.” she announced.

“Would you mind if we quickly went to the other computer room to check if I have any emails?” I asked.

So we went along to the computer room near Mattie’s room. I quickly checked my emails, finding none; I decided to play pinball on the computer for a while. After several attempts I concluded that I was as good at playing pinball as I would be at selling chocolate kettles. Chris P then came into the room about half way through my tenth attempt at pinball and told me it was time for me to go.

Just as I reached the end of the corridor Mario was waiting for me just as Sarah had said to me earlier.

“Morning Chris” Mario greeted me in a half Russian accent.

After saying good bye to Chris P, Mario pushed me down to the O.T room to where the computers lived.

“What do you want to do today Chris?” Mario asked me.

It took me a few seconds to decide.

“I want to look up an old aeroplane.” I finally said.

“Alright what is the plane called?”

“I’m not sure.”

“Ok what does it look like?”

“It has four propellers, eight windows plus a separate cockpit window.”

“What colour is the plane?”

“I didn’t notice” I said.

“You’re best bet is to try and find it on Encarta or on the internet. Why do you want to know anyway?” Mario asked.

“No reason.” I lied to try to cover up what I had seen the previous night.

I tried looking for a plane that fitted my description but could only find photos of Spitfires, Mosquitoes, Blenheim’s and B-25 Bombers. So I decided to call it quits for the time being. I left Mario and went along to the lounge to join the others. The first person I saw was Mattie.

“Mattie, would you like to come to the abandoned house with me again?”

“Sorry I really don’t feel up to it tonight, maybe next Tuesday we could do something when I get back from my weekend at home.” He replied.

“Okay then, I’ll ask Patrick if he’s up for some adventure tonight instead.”

Later that day I found out the name of the four propeller aircraft via a Google search it was called a “Belfast”. On further investigation I discovered that it could carry five tanks as well as up to thirty passengers. I also managed to track Patrick down and he agreed to come with me to the abandoned house. Now all I had to do was to think of a believable alibi to get away from C.H.I.S. My last therapy session of the day was with my private tutor, during which we read “Biggles”. I was miles away in my own world, when I heard

Patrick shouting down the corridor that he wanted a chat with me. Between us we managed to come up with an alibi that sounded realistic. We planned that after dinner we would tell the staff, that we were going over to Westfield to meet up with another support worker who recently had some information regarding a local charity that could help us find voluntary jobs. This alibi wasn't all a pack of lies we had arranged to visit a support worker from Westfield to discuss voluntary work but that meeting had been planned for next week.

The plan seemed to work and we were both at the abandoned house by 7pm. Together we tried to get in by the back door but it had obviously been locked. Patrick sighed in defeat and turned around as if to turn back. I protested and Patrick stopped.

“Don't you think we should try the windows first before giving up?” I suggested.

They wouldn't budge so we decided to smash a window. As Patrick was the tallest and could easily reach the window frame he would be the one to climb through. As Patrick's feet disappeared behind him as he slid through the window I heard Patrick let out a sigh of relief when he came face to face with Mario. Patrick quickly ran to the back door to unlock it to let me in. As soon as I realized that Mario was standing there I shouted to Patrick;

“Don't trust him!”

No sooner were the words out of my mouth when Mario pulled out a handgun and pointed it in our faces. Both myself and Patrick recognized the gun from the detailed description of it in the morning paper, it was reported that it had been the weapon of choice in a series of recent callous murders in the London area. We knew that we had got

ourselves into a tricky situation and that we needed to take action. I glanced at Patrick and once I had his attention I nodded my head towards a gas canister that was lying close to Patrick's feet. Patrick winked at me to indicate he knew what I was up to and within a flash I punched Mario in the groin while Patrick picked up a gas cylinder off the floor and whacked him over the head with it. Mario instantly dropped to the floor, letting go of the gun as he fell. I quickly picked up the gun as Patrick kicked Mario to check he was unconscious. Mario let out a groan, Patrick had only stunned him and soon he would be ready to fight us again. I pointed the gun directly into Mario's face, who instantly knew he had been outwitted and quickly made a run for it.

I sighed in relief and I started to relax. No sooner did I lower the gun when I heard a deep roaring sound from behind the house. The noise also made Patrick jump who dropped the gas canister to the floor with a clang.

"What the hell was that?" said Patrick with an anxious tone in his voice.

"Let's find out" I said gesturing to the back window.

Together we looked sheepishly out of the window. We saw a plane flying away from the back of the house. I didn't recognize the model but I did clock that the plane was about three quarters of the size of a Belfast plane.

"I think we better get going" I suggested.

Patrick nodded in agreement and he began to push me towards the door. Patrick suddenly stopped in his tracks, his leg began to vibrate. He retrieved his phone from his pocket and placed it to his ear.

‘I’ve got a message from Dad, I think he wants me to go home tomorrow. He said something about ringing me at C.H.I.S in about half an hour, so I’d better get a move on’

I suddenly remembered that Mum was also due to phone to arrange what time she was picking me up tomorrow for my weekend at home, so I too was eager to get back to C.H.I.S.

The next day during yet another boring therapy session I began to reflect on what a week it had been and was looking forward to relaxing at home, away from the lure of the abandon house and its mysteries. By 3.30pm I was knackered and was grateful when I saw my mum getting out of her car with yet another box of chocolates for me under her arm. I quickly wheeled myself to the main entrance to meet her.

‘Hello Chris, I’ve got some of your favorites’ she said.

‘Hi Mum’

‘Put these in your room and get whatever you want to bring home with you’ she continued.

We got home just on the stroke of four, so I had time to relax before dinner.

‘Your Dad’s home’ Mum shouted from the kitchen as she started to prepare dinner.

Sitting in the lounge I started chatting with Dad about aircraft and I broached the subject of Belfast planes.

‘Yes I used to fly one, what would you like to know about it?’ he said.

‘How much can it carry?’ I asked.

‘5 light tanks.’

‘What do you mean by light?’

“About 15 tons” he answered.

Me and Dad were in deep conversation when Mum shouted from the kitchen to make our way to the dining room table as dinner was ready. That night we had sausage and chips for tea. After tea I looked at my emails, most of it was from sales people trying to flog me something that I’d probably never use! Then I noticed that I had a message from one of my friends saying that a few of them would like to come around to visit me either on Saturday or Sunday afternoon. On Saturday Mum and I went shopping, I didn’t buy anything. My mum on the other hand bought me a bag full to the brim of clothes from M&S and she treated me to a Swiss bun in the café, which is one of my favorite cakes.

11

The Assassins

On Sunday I had arranged for some of my friends to come and visit me after I had been to my local gym for a session with my allocated personal trainer John. During my work out when I was using the rowing machine I glanced towards the door and to my astonishment one of the assassins that I had seen sneaking off the plane a few nights ago was in my gym. As bold as brass, there he was, Harry Howler.

“What the heck is he doing here?” I thought.

“Up to no good, I expect, I’d better warn someone”

I watched him walk across the room towards the changing rooms. I was still in a dilemma as to what to do when Becky Dark, another known assassin also walked into the gym. This was getting serious I thought, I am definitely out of my depth. I decided to hold fire and observe. Harry Howler was soon out the changing room and was speaking to one of the personal trainers. Becky Dark walked straight over to the stepper once she was changed into a pink track suit. She looked quite feminine and dainty in her outfit.

You would never know that according to the newspapers she would snap a person's neck with her thighs. I was still staring at Harry Howler when, John my personal trainer came over to me and suggested that I change machines. Another personal trainer came over to chat whilst I was on the tread-mill hanging on for dear life. I was obviously looking to John as though I was struggling.

“Do you want to go down stairs and try something a little easier?” John suggested.

I could see that John was the sort of guy I could be great friends with, but unfortunately our friendship would have no time to develop as he had already planned to move up to Cumbria to be with his girlfriend.

I was down stairs with John discussing what exercise machine we should use next when suddenly there was an almighty bang from upstairs. The noise was so loud that it sounded as though it was the supersonic boom from a Concorde. People were screaming and trying to flee. People downstairs sprinted towards the fire escape, people from upstairs crawled down the remaining stairs dazed and burnt. Some people were obviously trapped upstairs as we could hear people screaming and trying desperately to smash the double doors at the entrance to the gym. Through the chaos the din of an alarm sounded and an authoritative voice spoke over the tannoy –

“There is a terror alert, please go to your nearest exit.”

The noise we had heard was obviously a bomb rather than any other unintentional explosion. I tried to shout to John for help but over the screams and now the added noise of the alarm he struggled to understand what I had to say. He was also distracted by other

people trying to ask him questions and giving reassurance to them that everything would be all right.

Then a team of paramedics carrying stretchers came in to help the injured. They were quickly followed by the police. We were helped out of the gym by one of the police officers and I was checked by one of the paramedics while John, once he knew I was safe went back inside to help others to escape. As the paramedic shone a small torch into my eyes to check my responses I looked over his shoulder at the dramatic scene unfolding around me. The bomb squad had just arrived with their dogs. As they were unloading their equipment I noticed that one of the bomb squad was carrying a really odd shaped pole with a strange triangular funnel on the end, something they obviously used to gather forensic evidence. I was certain that the bomb attack had been at the hands of Harry Howler and his accomplices. I was also sure that I had seen Harry leave the gym after supposedly finishing his gym routine a split second before the blast. This was all planned, I was sure of it.

The paramedic checked me over and found nothing wrong with me other than being covered in brick dust. I was one of the lucky ones I was sure several people had died or at least been seriously hurt. I left the area where all the ambulances were parked and began pushing myself back towards the gym. I was pretending to be curious so that I could have a look at the damage. I looked around as close as I dared, mindful that any minute I was likely to be escorted out of the area for my own safety. A policeman suddenly put his hand on my shoulder. I span around expecting to be greeted with a

dressing down for poking my nose in where it wasn't welcome but to my astonishment he said -

"I am arresting you on suspicion of trying to blow up the gym. Anything you say will be taken down in writing and maybe used in evidence. It may harm your defense if you say anything that you later rely on in court."

He then quickly handcuffed me.

"Now get in the van." He ordered.

I wanted to shout out with all my might that I was innocent but I couldn't form the words, I was dumb struck.

12

S.P.O.P.R

The cells in Haywards Heath police station weren't as nice as I had imagined and the police officers were even worse. Mike, my private support worker, surprisingly came to see me just as I had finished eating my bowl of revolting and unknown cereal. I guessed that the police had realized their mistake and that Mike had come to clarify the situation and take me home. But instead he just came to make sure I was okay. When I asked him to tell them they had made a huge mistake all he said was – "I haven't known you long enough to get to know you properly so I can't say anything to help you." A lot of use you have been I thought to myself. Mum came up to Haywards Heath looking extremely agitated and told the policeman –

"Chris couldn't kill anyone!"

"Well we're keeping him in our holding zone till we can prove he wasn't responsible" came the reply.

"How on earth could you believe that my young son could be responsible for such a malicious act"

“We’ve had a tip off and as such he is a suspect in the case” the policeman said without looking my Mum in the eye. “We will hold your son here until we have completed all our enquires”

Later on that morning, Ben turned up in his black Mini and parked it outside the police station. I could hear him walking outside in his size 11 boots, through the grating of my cell.

“You’ve got the wrong boy!” he said as soon as he walked up to the counter, slamming his fist down onto it.

”What... Why?” said the policeman who had arrested me the previous day, looking perplexed.

“Because he was with me at the time the blast went off.” Ben lied.

“We are unable to release him until we try to cross match his DNA with the samples found at the bomb scene”

“Well release him into my care for the time being and I will assure you that if you find any incriminating evidence I will return him” Ben said

Ben obviously had some serious jurisdiction over the police, as they immediately released me into Ben’s care.

“Where are we going?” I asked.

“I’m taking you to my base.” Ben replied. “All will be revealed when we get there.”

“Where is your base?” I asked.

“It’s a small place off Folders Lane in Burgess Hill.”

I thought he must be mad if he thinks he could have built a base the size that he was talking about around Burgess Hill without anyone noticing. He drove me down near to Ditching Common and then took a breather in the common car park before completing our journey.

We finally arrived at his base. At first it looked to me to be quite a dingy place. We went into a dark room with four computers in it. Funnily enough it looked pretty similar to the abandoned house at Chailey. Ben turned on one of the computers and frowned, I knew something wasn't quite right.

“What’s wrong with your computer Ben?” I asked.

“Nothing much, maybe it’s some kind of glitch, we get them from time to time. I’m sure the lovely Penny here will be able to get it sorted” said Ben gesturing towards a beautiful young lady who suddenly appeared by my side.

“Pleased to meet you, my name’s Penny” she said offering her hand in greeting.

Behind Penny were two men in white shirts with black bow ties. They initially showed no emotions on their faces. Only when they spoke did they show any hint of being normal human beings.

“Would it be alright if I showed Chris what we do here?” Ben asked the men.

“Why not.” They replied in unison.

“The first question I have for you is what does S.P.O.P.R. stand for?” I asked, half expecting that I wouldn’t like the answer.

“It stands for the Specialist Protection Of Public Rights”

“Right, well that sounds a bit vague” I said. “That can mean you pretty much protect everyone and everything then” I said, slightly sarcastically.

We started to walk around the base as Ben started to explain the development of the organisation.

“S.P.O.P.R was originally set up by a group of ex-secret agents who were disgruntled by the governments lack of innovative ideas to prevent terrorist attacks. Over the last ten years we have been able to recruit an elite force of ex-spies and individuals just like you who have a natural aptitude to espionage” Ben explained.

I grinned at Ben, embarrassed by what he was suggesting.

“At the moment we are trying to catch the suspects who we are sure are responsible for the recent terror attacks in both U.K and the U.S. You’ve probably heard all about it on the news or maybe seen it in the newspapers.” Ben went on.

“Yes” I nodded in agreement “I suspect that what I had just witnessed at the gym was a terrorist attack” I said.

“Yes, according to our undercover surveillance we suspect that it was Harry Howler and his gang who were responsible for the latest attack, you are very lucky to be alive” said Ben.

“So what do you want from me” I asked.

“We thought that you might be interested in spying for us, they’re hardly going to suspect a teenage boy in a wheelchair”

At that very moment a man who Ben greeted as Keith entered the room.

“Hi you must be Chris, how the devil are you?” he asked as if we had been friends for all my life.

“My name’s Keith.”

“Right” I said looking confused.

“No need to look so astonished.”

“Don’t worry all will be revealed in time; all you need to know at this stage is that I am the head of special equipment here. Please follow me to my office”

It wasn’t what you would normally call an office - it was the size of an aeroplane hangar!

I guessed it might be used for testing prototypes or something.

“What do you think of my office?” Keith said spanning out his arms

“Wow”

“We want you to complete one of our training programs Chris? It’s really meant for adults but I think you’re ready now to have a go”

“Yes I’m well up for that!”

13

The Training Begins

Ben escorted me into a training sphere that was located on the side of the main building. I stepped inside and discovered that it was totally white, as I turned around to look at the door I had entered, I heard a voice from above.

“You ready?”

“Yeah.” I replied even though I wasn’t.

Suddenly in front of me the wall began to move and a hatchway revealed a small room.

“Please enter and choose” the voice from above commanded.

Inside I was presented with a choice of weapons- an Uzi, a sniper rifle, a Cougar Magnum, or another handgun . I of course chose the sniper rifle because it was less clumsy and more precise. As soon as I wheeled outside the room the wall began to move again and the hatchway disappeared back into the white void. A voice from above instructed me to move towards a steel door and informed me that the task wouldn’t commence until I went through the door. I put my ear up against the door before pushing it open. I expected to emerge into another plain white room on the other side, instead I found myself outside in the middle of an airfield. I glanced around as a plane was taxiing

towards me. I quickly leapt out of my chair to get out of the way, rolling into a ball as I hit the ground. I lay silently still looking around trying to grasp where I was and what my objectives would be. Then I heard shouting, I stood up using my chair to try and get a better view. There standing by the hangar was a group of people they appeared to be having some sort of disagreement as the shouting became louder and they started to shove each other. Suddenly one of the lights from a plane lit up my face and I was immediately spotted by one of the people.

“Who are you?” a member of the gang shouted in a husky foreign accent.

But before I was able to answer the question a machine gun started firing from a pillbox on the other side of the airfield. I immediately fired a series of bullets in random directions. Suddenly the gang simultaneously stopped firing at me. Looking around bewildered I realised that not only had the shooting stopped but everything else including the wind had come to a sudden halt. Then I realised that there had been a pause in the computer training program. The scene before me began to melt away and was replaced by the white void which engulfed me once more. It certainly was a strange experience being in a hologram.

“Well done, you were great!” said a voice over the speaker, I’m sure that I recognised it as Ben’s voice.

“What for?” I asked.

“You have just completed one of the levels in an incredible time! You should be very pleased with yourself. What training have you had?” Ben asked.

“What do you mean by training?”

“Have you ever had a go on this program before?”

“No, not really I’ve had a go on my mates BB gun a couple of times.” finally feeling pretty chuffed with myself.

Later on I decided to go back home with one of the staff from Ben’s Base in a green van, when I got in to my house about 3:30 pm. Mum told me off for not telling her where I was.

I turned my back on my mum and wheeled myself to the staircase and got out of my chair, straight up the stairs, in to my room, drew the curtains, went to bed. I tried to get to sleep but all I could hear were people being noisy across the street shouting. The rest of my weekend at home dragged on slowly with the monotony only broken by playing a game of cards and Monopoly.

By late Sunday afternoon I was totally fed up and craving some excitement so I went to the Folders Lane estate to try and visit Ben. As I got closer to the buildings I noticed that there didn’t appear to be any signs of life and there weren’t any cars in the car park. I thought that was suspicious, surely an organisation like this one would be on the alert 24.7. I let myself in by the side entrance, it was secured by a key code but luckily Ben had trusted me with the code. I pushed myself around the building expecting to bump into someone any minute. The building was deadly silent only for a hum of a large computer that dominated a room that I wandered into as I paced up one of the corridors. As I pushed myself along up to the screen I noticed that it had a picture of a Wolfar PPK hand gun. It seemed a bit inappropriate for a screen saver because this was a protection

organisation. I continued to wander down the corridor feeling anxious. As I continued down the corridor deeper into the building I began to feel scared and then decided to bolt up towards the entrance and get out of there. When I began my journey back home from Folders Lane I began to feel relieved that I still wasn't in that building all alone. I began to have a debate with myself on how sensible it was for me to have become embroiled with such an organisation; I mean I didn't really know what they did in that building, maybe the best course of action was to tell someone what I have already witnessed. The best people to tell about my adventures were probably my parents. But my Dad was at Shoreham today washing his Piper Warrior plane and I am sure that my Mum wouldn't believe me anyway. So instead of revealing all I just spent time in my bedroom watching TV.

The following morning I was due to return to C.H.I.S by mid-morning. Therefore I got out of bed at half eight, it gave me an hour to get ready to go back. I got myself ready in about fifteen minutes. Mum was due to take me home as my Dad was working, he was a pilot and would be away for the rest of the week. My mum used to work as an Air Hostess for Laker Airways before they went into liquidation. I jumped into my Mum's Volvo 440 to begin the journey back to the slave driving therapists! My mum started up the car's engine and we set off out of our drive onto Barnside Avenue, into Kings Way, then down Folders Lane past Ditchling Pond into the winding road of Chailey, passing Chailey Common and finally up the curved slope to C.H.I.S.

I pushed myself into the main entrance, eager to catch up with my mates, when I quite literally bumped into one of the nurses.

“Hi Claire!”

“Hi Chris!”

“What have I done?” I thought to myself as I pushed myself past the office door.

Angie and Sarah walked in to the office giggling away, as though they had been on the funny juice all last night. I looked back at Claire who was now frowning at me.

“Now then, where were you on Thursday night?” Claire demanded.

“Apparently Angie saw you and somebody else go over towards Westfield and then go into the abandoned house” She continued.

I just stared at her.

“That house is out of bounds, don’t you know that?”

Angie and Sarah had now come into the office and sat down.

“We were only over Westfield to see if there was any late post for us” I tried to explain.

She looked unconvinced, and said sternly “you know that place is out of bounds, if you get caught there again it’ll be more trouble than it’s worth.”

Monday dragged on with its usual excitement. My last appointment of the day was with Jenny, my private tutor. I was looking forward to today’s session; Jenny was bringing her copy of “The River Riders” along with her today which was by the author T.C Bridges. It is a book about a boy who gets sent by his parents to this lumber yard as a punishment, but he ends up getting into all sorts of adventures chasing a pair of villains.

14

The Westfield Plot

My week at C.H.I.S was pretty uneventful and I returned home for my weekend leave on the following Friday evening. It was a very quiet Saturday, so I went to bed early. I woke up the following morning at about 7o'clock and turned on my TV to watch morning cartoons when my mobile phone started quivering on my desk. I obviously hadn't turned it off last night. I glanced over at its screen, it indicated that I had received a message but I decided to ignore it. I spent most of my morning relaxing on my bed watching cartoons and it was about 11o'clock before I was ready for the day. I decided that I would ride the bike that Pat my Physio had lent me for the weekend. It was a three wheeler called a 'Tricycle' so I couldn't fall off it, well that was the theory, but I had my doubts. With a deep breath I rode down our road, and then down Kings Way into the Folders Lane Estate. I couldn't remember how to get to S.P.O.P.R's base. I rode on for about another twenty minutes hoping that my wanderings would help me recognise something distinctive. I retraced my journey to the post box, then to the bus stop. I looked at my watch and thought I'd better go home even if it was only to let my Mum know that I was

still alive! I would have to try and find the base another day, maybe next weekend to continue my training.

The next day I was back at C.H.I.S and returned the tricycle. I gave it back to Pat; I was in the foyer when Mario called down the corridor –

“Chris!”

Angie pushed me to the Occupational Therapy room where Mario was due to have a session with me.

Angie left me by saying “I hope you don’t mind, Patrick’s decided to have Chilli Con Carne tonight, we were wondering if you would like to join Patrick and have the same?” asked Angie.

“As long as it’s not McDonald’s I’ll be alright!” I replied, as previous attempts of eating McDonald’s had resulted in me being violently sick.

I was quite nervous of Mario now as I roughly knew what he was up to outside C.H.I.S. Even though I was reluctant I knew that I had to confront him and get answers. So later during our computer session I started to ask him some awkward questions.

“What do you do with your spare time Mario?” I asked.

“I either go to Russia to meet up with my family or at weekends I run a youth group in Bolney.”

“I saw your name on a door at Westfield.”

“You don’t know, there could be another Mario. Is that the time already I’m afraid we’re going to have to stop there” Mario said uncomfortably as he phoned upstairs for Angie to pick me up from the session.

“How was your session Chris? We’d better get a move on as its rest time now.” Angie said as she pushed me into my room.

She left me on my own but reminded me to push the alarm button if I needed any assistance. I wheeled myself over to the window of my room to see if there was anything interesting going on outside. There wasn’t much outside – across the drive there was Chailey Heritage. I decided to count Chailey Heritage’s windows to pass the time. I counted up to 19, when my attention was drawn to some skips which were at the back of the car park. As I looked closer to my surprise Mario was putting something into them and then he pulled out a mobile phone to answer it. At that very moment Chris P came through the door.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

“I’m looking at Chailey Common.” I replied.

After my rest session my day continued full of therapy sessions. Later whilst I was sitting on one of the dining room chairs waiting for my dinner I saw some lights in the field opposite C.H.I.S. Suddenly I could just make out a faint muffled voice coming from the field opposite.

“Could we have clearing for Alfa Juliet Papa Alfa to take off from Alpha Bravo 21 please?”

When the voice stopped talking I went and found Angie.

“Where’s Mario?”

“He’s probably at home by now” Angie suggested.

As I was pushing myself away from Angie back towards my room there suddenly was an almighty bang. I pushed myself up towards the window facing Westfield, from where I could hear a fire alarm from across the road blaring out. It was a constant deafening note that was coming from Westfield. I was wondering what could have happened and if it was something serious like a bomb and whether anybody was injured. Then there was a blast of light as a Belfast freight plane flew over C.H.I.S above our heads. Angie went into the office to try and contact Westfield. She managed to contact one of the nurses who was upstairs in Westfield who told her that the stairs were blocked by debris and the lifts had automatically been sealed off in accordance with the usual emergency procedures. The people in Westfield could not get out or phone externally from the Westfield site. Immediately Angie phoned the emergency services explaining that there had been some mysterious explosion at Westfield, Angie showed another side to her personality of vulnerability. She also tried to phone my parents to let them know I was alright but the phone was dead when trying to make external calls for C.H.I.S as well, the explosion must have cut the phones off.

Just as Angie replaced the handset, three fire engines had just arrived in front of Westfield. I glanced out of the window intrigued about what was happening. Angie told us to remain calm and not to vacate the building, as it was safer for us to stay inside. In all the commotion another aircraft landed behind Westfield, it looked from Dad's description when we were chatting about planes last weekend as if it was an Argosy, which wasn't as big as the Belfast. We continued to look through the window as Westfield burned and the firemen started their rescue. We all chatted amongst ourselves

surmising what had caused the explosion. Most of us suggested that it was an innocent fire and the explosion could have been caused by the oxygen canisters that are stored in the cellars of Westfield for patients that required support breathing. But I knew better, I was sure that it was another terrorist attack by the assassins. Angie tried to divert our attention by asking what we all fancied to eat. Angie switched on the oven, five minutes later she said

‘Fish & Chip’s alright with everybody!’

15

The Holocaust

Since the explosion at Westfield, Mario had mysteriously taken seven weeks leave and no one had seen head nor tail of him since. So while Mario was away I would have double Speech and Language Therapy instead last thing on Friday. I had had a bizarre week at C.H.I.S since the explosion no one seemed to want to talk about it and being back at home on Saturday couldn't come soon enough. I only found out that the explosion was confirmed as a terrorist attack because I overheard two nurses whispering what had been reported in the local newspaper. I told Ben and Keith from S.P.O.P.R to meet me at half eleven on Saturday in Folders Lane so I could inform them of the recent suspicious events at C.H.I.S. Once inside the S.P.O.P.R base I explained to them what I had witnessed they couldn't quite believe that someone could be stupid enough to bomb a hospital. Keith then handed me two boxes one was shaped like a cylinder, the other more rectangular. I opened the cylinder shaped parcel expecting to find some kind of gadget

but I found that it was nothing of the sort; it was just some new clothes and some shoes, with a note on from Keith.

“Please don’t connect the laces together because I’ve replaced them with explosives, try not to go near open fires with them”

On the sideboard next to the computer next to where we had congregated there was a DVD with my name on in italics, I opened the rectangular box and found the latest iPhone. From the other side of the room I could hear the DAB radio: “Good morning we’ve just been informed by our overseas co-ordinator Gene Seers that the Channel Tunnel is closed, flights to and from France have been cancelled after a boat crash in the channel injuring 23 of the 100 people on board , the remaining 77 people have claimed that they were held at gun point, until they crashed, and now for the other news: The Albion drew 1:1 with Cardiff and here’s Lindsey with the weather: “The weather forecast for today is going to be wet at first, then gradually as the day goes on it will get better”.

Meanwhile Mario had promised to pay the pilot £1000 to get to Austria and, a further £250 for not attracting any unwanted attention. He walked to the terminal which wasn’t as busy as he had expected, there was a line of about 20 men with boards with names on and it didn’t take Mario long to find his name, it was in white on a black background. The driver looked in his 50’s.

“Where do you come from?” the driver asked.

“England.”

“Where in England?” Mario could see that he was getting impatient.

“Chailey.” The taxi driver pulled out of the airport going at 40mph, he finally got his Skoda up to 50mph.

“Do you want to go on a short cut?” he asked.

“Yea go on then.” Mario replied.

They stopped in front of some trees, the driver got out the car, he pushed the trees and shrubbery to one side to leave a rocky road but then he pushed a button in the palm of his hand. As if by magic all the rocks had gone. Mario hadn’t anticipated his next move. He drove with his foot flat on the floor towards a huge boulder. It suddenly deflated and they carried on down this empty road at such a speed Mario didn’t even dare to look at the speed dial. The driver dropped Mario off at a ski chalet in Austria named the “Royal” where another man called Mark, another terrorist was waiting for him.

“So Mario how was your journey?” Mark asked.

“Quiet” Mario replied.

“Good! Now I’m sorry Mario we’re going to have to get down to business straight away. How did your coda bomb go off at Westfield?”

“It went off as planned in fantastic style; it got all the media attention.”

16

The Explosion

As Patrick had gone there was me, Mattie and a new arrival by the name of David Deckton. I didn't like that time at C.H.I.S as it was not as before because very early on I found that me and David didn't have that much in common. The weeks dragged on slower than ever. On Tuesday I came over all funny.

"Morning Angie." I said whilst sniffing

"Hello Chris, how are you feeling?"

"A bit under the weather" I replied.

"We'll see what Sarah has to say when she arrives."

I heard Pat's car arrive just before Sue C's Land Rover, Pat arrived with her head in the newspaper, as she sat down two seats away from me she read out the headline.

"A captain of a boat is at the wheel." She showed us a picture of a wrecked ship; it appeared to have crashed into a wave breaker and capsized. Mattie handed her some of the tissues that were on the table, then I realised she was crying.

"Pat what's the matter?" I asked.

"Nothing." She replied.

"Come on." She gestured with her hand for me to stand up with my crutches and follow her. When we reached the gym she confessed as to why she was so sad before.

"I was shocked to find out that it was my brother James who was the captain of the boat that crashed in France."

I didn't know what to say so I just got on with my exercises.

I did some standing on my right leg hanging on to the wall bars and then on my left, then some calf stretches. The K walker appeared out of Pat's amazing cupboard where she kept all sorts of things including Patrick's old crutches. This signalled the end of my physio session and as if by cue Eleanor my O.T. walked in.

"Hi Eleanor, what are we doing today?" I asked.

"We're going over the road to Westfield; the area of the building that was unharmed.

We went over to Westfield going up to the meeting room on the first floor. It was two in the afternoon; I was getting hungry, Eleanor sat beside me. The others sitting around the room had come to discuss my return to school. Sitting round the table was Miss B my old religious education teacher, Mr M who I knew and a Mr P (I wasn't sure about him as I didn't really know him).

"Should I introduce myself?" he was talking directly to me.

"I'm Mr P, I'll be your new technology teacher at Warden Park Secondary School." He went on.

This really nice lady sat next to me her name was Gail who I gathered must have worked in additional support. Eleanor asked me.

"Are you getting bored?"

"Yes." I replied.

"Shall we go?" Eleanor suggested, "Anyway I think we may have a theory driving test for you to try and complete." I thought Destruction Derby on my Play station was bad enough. We went back to C.H.I.S to find all the staff in the office.

"Shhhhh... we're having quiet time that means you should be in your room resting." One of the nurses told me. I went up to my room, I slept for ten minutes I then reached over to

get my remote and checked that everything was in the same place as I had left it that morning.

The following day when I woke up I turned on the TV. Fern was on Diggit and then Sue C, a nurse came through the door.

“Morning Chris.” She said brightly.

I liked Sue because she was so good natured. Sue was a shorter woman with jet-black hair who was really quite funny, because she was chatty “Morning Sue.” I replied.

Sue wheeled me in my chair out of the room. I had to be weighed on the scales every Tuesday. When I looked down at the gauge I saw that I weighed 300lb with the chair. I looked out the window by the lift, I saw a bird box and the woods but not much else.

Next we went in to the lift to go downstairs to the dining room. I was intrigued by what seemed to be a chocolate cereal as there had only been toast for the past couple of days. I looked in the lower cupboard there were Shreddies and porridge - I didn't fancy either of them. I had already looked on the board to see what I had today - later I was going to the library with Chris P but before that I had physio with Pat then occupational therapy. Pat arrived five minutes late, carrying her usual copy of the Daily Mail.

“How are you both today?” Pat enquired as she walked in.

“Fine.” I replied.

Pat looked and sounded tired. She looked really anxious during my session. The time seemed to be dragging on forever. Finally she let me go. It was Sarah who came to get me and luckily for her she only had to push me to the next room along the corridor which I had already walked two lengths of using my K walker with Pat earlier. Eleanor

was waiting, she was at her computer. I could see Mattie playing basketball out on the patio.

“Hi! How are you?” I greeted Eleanor.

“Fine.” She replied.

I could see what I was going to be doing for the next half an hour. I was wheeled past the other two computers to the one which Eleanor was using.

“Do you know that Mario isn’t here?” I asked.

“Yes – why, do you know where he has got to?”

“I think he’s in France, are we going to get on with it?”

I played a rally car game on the computer. I ended up coming third, which Eleanor said was good. Meanwhile a big white van with a black and sunset orange emblem on pulled into the lay-by outside. The driver got out of the van holding an order form. Apparently he was delivering some new gym equipment for Matthew. It was quiet time next so Angie took me upstairs. As I had read all of my J.K Rowling books and there wasn’t anything worth watching on the TV at 2pm I decided to go to the room where I usually had my private tutor to look for a book or two. I was almost there when I heard a load of banging closely followed by the sound of the smash of windows. It seemed to be coming from the upstairs toilet and bathroom. I quickly pushed my chair up to the bathroom and went to see if I could find out what was going on. I pulled the emergency cord outside the bathroom expecting it to bleep but nothing happened. Obviously the person or persons who were responsible for the noise had cut off the electricity supply. Suspecting that someone was looking for me I quickly swapped the name plates on the doors so that

Mattie's door had my name on and my door had Mattie's name on. I had just finished when two men rushed up. I managed to jump into my bed as a man in some kind of uniform and wearing a protective helmet with a visor entered my room. He pulled me out of bed and put me into a black material sack. I was then hauled down the stairs, outside, lifted into the van and then lastly chucked into some kind of metal box.

Now I was kind of wishing that I hadn't swapped the names round on the doors. I could hear the man who had kidnapped me talking to someone inside the van that he referred to as "Harry H." I then heard a familiar voice, which sounded like Harry Howler, the known assassin.

"You know we're going to enjoy spending all your fathers' money, think of all the things we can buy Barry." said Harry.

I kept quiet. They then drove the van a short distance. When we stopped I was taken out of the van and taken into another place.

"We've got the boy, can we go now?" said Barry.

"Affirmative. A more sinister voice replied.

I heard the clatter of feet above my head; I wanted to test my theory to see if I was alone.

I used my quietest voice to see if I was in any immediate danger. I then started getting louder, leaving a pause of about five seconds for a reply in between to test my theory.

I managed to get out of the bag quite easily and then climbed out of the metal box. I pushed the door open, half expecting to see Harry pointing a gun at my forehead. I was relieved to find there was no one in sight just an empty bunkroom. I crawled past the bunk beds and saw two clocks on the wall, one showing Greenwich Mean Time and the

other French time, which gains an hour. I crawled up the spiral staircase of what turned out to be a Belfast aeroplane. I got to the top of the stairs on my bum and then there were two doors, I guessed that one of them lead to the cockpit. I took the left door and found myself in another room but this had a proper single bed and a sink cupboard with a mirror built in, there was a door at the far end of this room, I crawled under this bed, where I stayed.

17

Escapology

I woke up with a sticky back, flying about 2000 feet above the sea, I could hear the engines roaring, we were going slowly it seemed, but we were definitely on the move and now my ears were ringing. I crawled over to the window, pulled myself up on a bar and all I could see was what looked like a range of mountains. It certainly didn't feel as cold

as winter but there again I was inside an aeroplane. I felt as though we were going down when my stomach felt as though it was getting heavy.

“We’re approaching Salzburg control. This is Hurricane George requesting permission to land.” the Captain requested.

I looked around for somewhere to hide; I started to push myself down the stairs when I heard the landing gear go down. I knew it was only a few moments before Harry Howler came through the door of the cockpit. I got in to the black sack with my arms free to haul myself back under the spiral staircase and into the cold steel box. I heard a clatter of feet coming down the staircase. The next thing was that Harry Howler picked me up in the sack and carried me down the aircraft slope at the rear of the Belfast. A Hummer limo was waiting expectantly on the airfield. I was thrown in the back of the limo. I saw through the hole in the bag a man who looked vaguely familiar. There were two more people sitting on the other side of the limo, one was apparently called Hugo the other Theo.

“Harry when are we going to get paid?” asked the one called Theo.

“Soon.” Harry replied.

I could only see half the driver; Harry H then got out his handgun, there was a huge bang as the helium erupted out of the bullet into Theo burning his insides.

“Theo nice to have known you.” Harry exclaimed.

I couldn’t really believe my eyes as the bullet hit Theo he simply shrivelled. Then Harry pointed a handgun and shot Hugo as well.

“You in the bag, get over here and sit next to me like a good boy!”

They had definitely got the wrong boy but I wasn't going to say anything. Harry Howler was in his forties, bald and he had three ear piercings in one of his ears, he looked light enough, I thought that I could probably take him on or at least give him a good run for his money. I whistled to try and lure him closer to me - he kicked me over the head. I found myself feeling like I wanted to burst I was so angry, but as Karen my personal trainer had once said to me "when you rush you lose." I slowly crept up behind Harry and grabbed his legs straight into a leg lock. In the excitement he managed to struggle away and tried to strangle me. It seemed to take forever for me to get him off me. Fortunately my friend Greg had started Judo lessons, he taught me five of the most painful moves in Judo, luckily we would practise the moves all the time. After I disarmed Harry I started looking around the airfield trying to get my bearings, it had a watchtower with four huts, then someone shouted -

"Oi you! Get on the floor."

Then a man came into view driving a golf buggy - it was Mario with two suitcases one on his lap and one in the boot of the golf buggy, which had some skis in the roof rack. I was wondering what would happen next as Mario got closer, he almost had me in his reach when he was distracted by Harry Howler's shouts as he was regaining consciousness. Mario went over to Harry, offering him his hand to help him up. When Mario's hand touched Harry's Mario immediately dropped to the ground. He was out cold as soon as his hands connected with Harry's. It seemed that Harry had injected him with some kind of instant anaesthetic. Mario had completed his assigned mission. Harry Howler then started approaching me.

“I suppose you’re going to kill me now.” I asked.

“No but I do want you to phone for an ambulance on 112.”

I had been given a mobile phone by Keith it was a special edition flip phone. It had built in to it an electric security shock wave which paralyzes the user if they don’t enter the correct code. Finally it also had a mini remote control camera plane which I’m a bit sceptical about but looking forward to using. It also had the usual games. I switched on my phone, dialled my code in and dialled 112 the emergency number for Austria.

“Guten tag.” The operator said.

“Hello.” I replied.

“Hold on one moment please.”

There was a pause for about three seconds. She must have been finding somebody who spoke English.

“Hello, this is the Austrian 112 number which service can I provide?”

“Can I have an ambulance at Salzburg airport please?”

“What has happened?”

“Someone was messing around with security equipment and someone’s been hurt, I’ve got to go now!”

I heard the siren blaring out along with another following closely behind. As the sirens got louder Harry was getting more frustrated. As the paramedics drove into one of the airport’s parking slots they got out and asked one of the two security guards –

“What’s happening with your equipment?”

“Nothing as far as the equipment is concerned huh?” in a confused tone

“We’ve had a call out by 112.” Said the Austrian paramedic

“We made a mistake.”

“Wait we’re just receiving something - there has been an accident but its airside, there has been shouting. Is that right?”

No sooner had one of the ambulances arrived, Harry Howler pushed the driver out of the way, got himself into the driver’s seat and put the keys into the ignition.

“How do you want to do this, the easy way or the hard way Mattie?”

“Well I’m not fussed.” I replied.

“Alright smart Alec I’ll make your mind up for you shall I?”

“I don’t see why not.”

“We’re going!”

I’d already started making a weapon out of the two seat belts that were next to me to try and make a release mechanism for my harpoon that I had fashioned from my parker pen, a length of rope and the seat belt releasers. I checked to see if Harry was still concentrating on the road ahead. I fired but I missed. Harry twisted round and started to swear at me. He tried to move quickly, I hadn’t realised I had hit something. He had fallen into my trap the harpoon may have missed Harry but it had gone into the upholstery on his right and ricocheted into the seat belt holster on his left side. Confining him, as Harry turned around with a handgun in his left hand.

“Get out! I want you to act as if you’re my son and if anyone asks we’re a normal family coming back from a holiday in England.” As Harry found himself foiled again by a twelve year old boy, Harry was harpooned into his chair by my contraption.

18

THE C.H.I.S KIDNAP

As I couldn't walk Harry Howler had to get a Mitsubishi company coloured van to get me to the terminal. Once there Harry instructed me to get out of the van and into my wheelchair which he had ready waiting for me. I was surprised no one tried to stop him.

Some people had just started opening up the shops across the way from us. I was wondering how Harry Howler was going to get me past security. The next thing I knew I was being held at gun point by another man, who stunk of cigars and alcohol.

I had a plan but I didn't know whether it would work. I had spent a year blowing up stuff in my old science classes. When the man's attention was drawn away I quickly undid my lap belt and then slid down to the floor. I got my Uncle's lighter out my right trouser pocket and stroked the flint against the steel bar to light it, then I crawled away from the man with the gun and threw the lighter still lit in his direction. His alcohol ridden jumper spontaneously combusted! While Harry tried to help the man engulfed in flames I took the opportunity to crawl away and when I got outside I managed to get myself into the nearest car.

The next thing I knew a woman came running towards the station wagon that I was in. She was about five foot tall with black hair; she opened the door and got in.

"What are you doing in my car?" she asked, "Were you trying to steal it?"

"I'm only twelve, I can't even reach the pedals! Please help me" I replied.

"I will have to drive then, I'm Becky by the way." She said.

She had just offered to put me up in a hotel for the night when there was an almighty crunch. Whatever it was it only missed my leg by centimetres. A car had run into the side of Becky's car so we were now at a standstill. Suddenly a man appeared by my door, opened it and tried to apologise. Becky then said that the accident had been as much her fault as his so she said don't worry about it and we were soon on our way again.

Becky and I stayed at a three star hotel for 1 night. In the middle of the night I received a call from Ben, he was aware of my kidnap and escape and was now trying desperately to work out a plan to get me home. During breakfast I briefly explained to Becky where we needed to go to get me back home safely. I ordered a fry up for my breakfast that consisted of a rasher of bacon, two slices of buttered toast and a crispy-bottomed egg. Becky tried to hurry me along to finish my breakfast quickly; but then she got up to indicate that it was time to go and that I should leave my bacon and egg which I hadn't got to yet. So I decided to eat my food as quickly as I could. When we eventually got out of the hotel doors we got into Becky's car. She drove down the road for about ten minutes and then we turned into a lane which had a row of bungalows on either side. However there was something rather odd about these bungalows, they all seemed to have at least five tombstones in front of them. When we had driven as far as we could up the lane we stopped. I got out of the car into my wheelchair. Becky and I waited in an old farm building for what seemed like half my life. The next thing I knew we were confronted by two guards with hand guns, which they pushed into our faces. I was then escorted on to a private jet and made to sit down in a separate compartment to the other passengers and the pilot. I don't know what happened to Becky, as I got into the plane she was still standing with the guard but now she was pointing a gun in his face. I then realised that she had double-crossed me.

The plane was long and thin; it had nine seats and could fly up to 500 miles per hour. I couldn't see the pilot as it had a private cockpit in the passenger compartment. I really couldn't appreciate the surroundings with a gun in my face, it wasn't very nice.

"Do you know anyone at Shoreham airport?" The man with the gun asked.

"No why?" I replied.

"We want to be as inconspicuous as possible."

We took off and seemed to be heading in the direction of Shoreham. Before long we were landing at the airport. I then tried to distract Harold who was another one of Harry H's accomplices – but no joy there. When the pilot had parked the plane, Harold started to unload. I then had time to think of a way to escape. Harold was still unloading when I swung open the passenger door knocking him out cold. By hanging on to the fuselage I stumbled along the outside of the 12.5 metres of aeroplane, I then pushed 1 on my flip phone (which had still been in my back pocket) and waited two seconds for my hazard light to come on, then I pressed 85 on my flip phone to activate the electric blast. Then I threw my Mobile over the plane, waited yet another four seconds for the Mobile to give out an electrical blast which would paralyse the rest of the gang who were getting off the plane for two minutes. By now people across in the bar at Terminal two were beginning to grow concerned about the events that were unfolding in front of them. Someone from Terminal one ran across to see what had happened. Two armed security men came across to the plane. The security guards looked puzzled; I told them my account of what had happened.

"Well you better arrest him or do something pretty quick because they are only temporarily paralyzed." I said.

“I can’t arrest anyone if I don’t know what they’ve done, I can’t do anything I’m afraid. How’s about we go down to the Shoreham security office and we sort out who’s in the wrong?” The security guard suggested.

Meanwhile Harold was forced out of the plane and escorted towards a different part of the security building; I was wishing I was back at school doing my maths, science and English rather than getting involved with all of this. I then went with the man to a tower block; it was more like a hotel lobby with water features in every direction. I was made to wait in a plain white room which reminded me of a hospital. After a while three men aged between 30 and 60, the youngest one asked – confronted me –

“How are you? What’s your name?”

“Chris.” I replied.

“We believe you’ve got some explaining to do.” He went on.

I told them the mystery of how I had been kidnapped. Two of the men were in agreement that I was innocent, the third man announced –

“Well as its two against one I suppose we’ll have to let him go.

I had an escorted trip in a security van back to C.H.I.S. By now it was eight o’clock in the evening, I was quickly rushed into the lift with Sarah, and I had a quick brush of my teeth and then straight to bed. I slept until three in the morning because the light was coming through the top window in my room as I hadn’t closed the curtains the previous night. I had seen a NHS van down the end of the drive from my window but I was consumed with watching one of my “Only Fools and Horses” DVDs, later that morning

when I was getting ready for the day, however I heard this all mighty crash in the bathroom. The next thing I knew a crane came through the wall a couple of rooms away from mine. Mattie immediately came running down. After what seemed to be a split second later we were face to face with Harry Howler. He got out of his crane platform, he grabbed Mattie, Mattie tried to make a speedy get away to get a nurse to come and save the day, or at least us, and me but Harry had other ideas!

We were taken down the road to a field that was a supposed secret. A big double decker Belfast was waiting expectantly. We were taken on board and soon we took off. We flew for about an hour and then we landed I heard voices outside which sounded like French to me. Before long the engines started up again, both Mattie and I tried to open the cockpit door, we twisted and pulled the handle, but there was no hope so we gave up and we went down the spiral staircase to where we were originally dumped. After what seemed like five minutes I heard the engines slow down again and the under carriage come down. We landed and I felt the brakes jerk on. Harry H came down the spiral staircase and out of the crew door, and then we heard some talking again this time it sounded like an Austrian dialect. I heard them say something to do with their summer holiday, something to do with some sun cream. It must be in the cargo I thought to myself. I looked around and found some. Meanwhile Harry was out of the plane. Sun cream, what would a group of terrorists be doing with sun cream. My thoughts were answered when I accidently squeezed the bottle and where it landed it began to dissolve the curtains on the small window in front of me, I then concealed the sun cream in my hip pocket, which might come in useful later. I quickly crawled back along the gangway of

the Belfast and back into the same position as before, so as not to make Harry Howler suspicious. The Belfast then started to roll back there from its stationary position. Then I felt the engines roar up, as we were preparing to take off again. Mattie and I were afraid to breathe let alone talk to one another; we were silent, as though we were having a rest break at C.H.I.S.

I heard the engines slow down to a dull roar, then the landing gear came down and about a minute later there was this huge crashing sound as the wheels connected with the grass of the field. When the plane came to a complete stop I crawled back along the gang way and quickly looked out of the window. I saw that we were in a remote field that I presumed was somewhere in England. Later I realised it was the field outside of C.H.I.S. When the plane landed there were scores of policemen waiting expectantly, some of them dressed in riot gear. Obviously someone had become worried whilst we were away and contacted the police to investigate. I could see they weren't prepared to say please or thank you. I could see that they were ready for an interrogation and maybe they wanted to arrest us. I couldn't remember anything else from that moment, as I felt a piercing dart penetrate my arm and it quickly put me to sleep. I presumed that Mattie had also been hit with a dart.

19

The Abseil

I woke up at 7am in the morning on the edge of my bed with a chill running down my spine. I quickly adjusted my body; I only had plain white sheets to keep me warm in this cold prison cell. Paul the policeman who was watching me that morning asked –

“Do you want breakfast?”

“Yes.” I replied with a tired smile. I got out of the steel bed, put my arm across to my make shift chair and pushed my chair out of the holding area. Then down the corridor, which overlooked Brighton seafront. There were then two metallic chairs and a table where Paul was sitting. He was relaxing in one of the seats. It was quarter past nine now, there was a big silver clock in the far corner of the sitting room. I could hear the clock ticking from my cell down the corridor.

“What else happened on this supposed vacation of yours?” Paul asked.

“I told you about going to France and Austria.” I replied.

“Yes, then what happened?”

“We flew to Salzburg where we saw Mario from C.H.I.S. Mario I later discovered was working with Harry Howler as an assassin; he had been double crossing us. Anyway this Harry Howler shot the driver in his Hummer limo with a helium bullet.”

“Then what happened?”

“The driver kind of exploded!”

“Dear, dear me.” the policeman exclaimed “So I’ll have to get our department do a check on this Harry H guy and you’ll only have to spend four more nights here, fortunately.”

My breakfast arrived, at least they had got that right! I had coco pops, which pleased me. The police officer then pushed me back to the interview room. Later when I was sitting at the desk I had an idea, by using my phone I fired my grappling hook, which was disguised as my phone aerial, up at the roof. I then swung myself up onto the window ledge where I released the aerial from its hold in the roof by tapping hash eight into my mobile. Then I attached it to the window handle, then opened the window, and started to abseil down the side of the building. I was worried about where I was going to land, as it was only four in the afternoon, and the shops were just closing. People were coming out by the dozen, but I pushed off the 300 foot tower which was the 6th floor of the building and continued down. Finally I pushed off for the last time hoping that the harness would hold me, I glided on to the pavement as smoothly as landing on a billiard table. I got some pretty strange looks from people that had just done their evening shopping.

I was attracting a lot of attention by passers-by I thought it was only a matter of time before they alerted the authorities. Luckily I quickly found an air vent to crawl down. I crawled along the vent for about ten feet and then there was an unexpected dip in the pipe, I fell down at such a speed it took me a few minutes to gather my thoughts. Once I had recovered I carried on along the pipe until I came to an office, it was quite small about 10x10 foot. I then got out of the cramped vent, back onto my knees; suddenly I saw a set of arms trying to find the light switch. I saw a load of boxes and crates which I quickly darted behind, just before the pair of hands reached the light switch to turn it on. “Who would of thought sun cream could be so harmful and no one is any the wiser Harry” the voice said.

Luckily I had my flip phone to hand and I managed to operate the voice record setting on it to capture the voice, but after every 10 seconds it cut out so I had to keep on pushing 6 on the keypad. I was getting more and more uncomfortable as the minutes went by. I had decided what to do next - I typed in to my flip phone 11909 which was a silent feature which would send out a message to alert Keith, who I had met at the Folders lane base, of my whereabouts to tell him I was in trouble.

20

The Rescue

As Keith knew which building I was in, but didn't know I was in the basement I thought it a good idea to give him a clue as to where I was. I leant the back of my phone up against the ventilation system and dialled 0569, which was the flamethrower option. I was somewhat betting that he wouldn't miss my small flame up against the huge tower, and that he would work out that I had used it as a sign for him that I was in the basement. The next thing I heard was some machinery up above. It sounded like someone was trying to get the cover off the entrance to the ventilation shaft. After about ten minutes, the cover suddenly broke away and there in front of the hole was a JCB digger driven by Keith. Keith was a man of about five foot tall, he had thinning brown hair but he had a heart of gold. I was surprised to see him so quickly after I had shot the flame up and out of the vent. It wasn't long before Keith's clammy hands quickly scooped me up and I was put on the back of the JCB. Keith then drove the JCB to what I knew as the Fisherman's Museum but Keith and his team had changed it into their own lab. "As you can see Chris we've made a few minor adjustments and I'd like you to meet some of our team. This is Jonathan he is in charge of testing *gismos* like your mobile telephone. Here's the recruitment agent Phil and I'm sure you'll meet all of the others later. Jonathon was about the same height as Keith, but he had longer hair and he seemed to be more up to date with everything that was going on, also he seemed very creative. Here's our mono rail!" Keith explained.

I was surprised I hadn't spotted this place before.

"What is it that you actually do here?" I asked.

“We’re like MI5. If and when they need any back up we’re called upon. Now, about that sun cream you managed to get hold of. Jonathon is going to do some tests on it”

“So what will you do about Harry Howler and co?” I asked.

“We’d have to find out more about the sun lotion first. Where it is made and if we do find that out, we can put a stop to the distribution of the product getting to more countries.”

“I’d like to help.” I said.

“I’m sorry you’re too young but I’ll tell you what you could do. We’ve just created a combat simulator so if you like you can have a go on it and see how hard it is to become an agent.”

Keith gave me a virtual helmet, a chest pad and some sort of virtual gun, then he lead me to a boat which was on the wall. He then typed some sort of password into a keypad then the boat hull split in half to reveal what appeared to be a normal office, then Keith gestured for me to go in alone. I pushed my chair into the office. I noticed the floor was rubber rather than concrete. I heard one explosion then another one getting nearer and nearer each time. Two scary men with divers’ masks on suddenly appeared. They grabbed me up to standing and then one of them dragged me across the floor into a plain white room, which had a glass table in with two up right steel chairs. For one thing I wasn’t expecting to be hurled into a chair and I didn’t know that these computer animated beings were so dense, strong and lifelike, which made me unsure of a lot of people, whether they are real or not.

There was a Japanese canvas on the far wall. I thought they were being quite kind to me seeing as though they were meant to kill me! Then some more men burst through the doors at the other end of the room, one holding a gun the other holding two knives looking like he was in a circus act. The first one to act was the man carrying the gun. I crawled through a garage sized room trying not to make any noise. I hunted for some sort of tool or weapon that I could use to escape these people. I searched high and low, finally I found a thin crow bar on the floor, which I thought would come in handy. I saw some shadows made by the light coming under the door. I didn't think I would be able to bring myself to open the door; I was too frightened of what I might find. I opened the door with shaking hands, then one of the artificial intelligence guys made eye contact with me, I quickly got out the crowbar taking it in one hand with one fell sliding swoop I knocked one of the animated people over. The other one had got me in a headlock. I looked around for something to hit him over the head with, I picked up a fire extinguisher with my free left arm and without a thought I hit the computer animated guy in the chest area, or whatever I hit I got him down.

Keith came in through one of the other doors and surprisingly said –

“Well done, let me buy you a drink or something.”

“What for?” I asked completely stunned.

“That was incredible!”

“What!” I said. I still didn’t have a clue what Keith was going on about, I just nodded.

We went to the Aqua Bar in Brighton Marina. He pushed me in my chair over to a table and then he sat down himself, he congratulated me once more –

“What would you like Chris?”

“A lemon drink please.”

“Yes of course, now Chris you do know why I had to run all those tests on you?

I wanted to see how you reacted to different situations and I’ve got to say you did remarkably well!”

“So what am I going to do now?”

“You could either go back to school, or you could join us, but that would mean you would have to make a few sacrifices.”

“Like what?”

“Well for instance you wouldn’t get to see your friends as much as you do now.”

“What type of things would I do if I chose to accept your proposition?”

“Anything from spying on the enemy to plain administration, so it’s your choice.”

I didn’t really know what to say.

“Let me sleep on it I’ll tell you in the morning” I finally said to give me a chance to digest what Keith had said.

The room I was shown to was a simple room with two bunk beds; the walls were a damp brown colour and there was a thin white quilt on the bed and a pillow. I couldn’t sleep; I played *Snow Jam* on my flip phone for ten minutes as I was trying to get the battery as low as possible, before charging it up again. Finally I managed to get to sleep.

21

The Sewer

Keith opened my door with a bang which woke me up, but he wasn't alone, he was with three other people.

“Chris I want you to meet our head of special operations, Jill who you will bump into quite a lot I’m sure, this is Johnny who designs all our specially adapted weapons and vehicles, and this is Peter who helps Johnny. I expect you can’t wait to see Johnny’s ideas for you to try out.”

Johnny’s office had opened out like the simulator doors had done, as I was pushed into Johnny’s room I heard the doors electronically close behind me, I saw on both sides of me racks of scuba gear and dead ahead of me was a powered chair. Johnny asked me – “Do you have one of these? Well if not you should.”

“Why?” I asked.

“Because of all the added advantages it has.” Johnny replied.

“Like what?”

“Like the removable armrests which double up as Jets, if you want we could slow the jets down, this is what both Peter and I are both particularly proud of. Keith jumped in – “We have filled up the chair up with the latest technology and a few gadgets like for example a GPS in the battery pack compartment”

“I’d need that? “ I questioned.

“Yes we’d need some way of staying in touch.” Keith replied.

“I don’t know what for? What would I have to do?”

Well the GPS does exactly what it says on the tin. It’s a global positioning system. We can either contact you or you can contact us by using the built in phone in the right control panel which is just like the left panel - you just lift up the arm cushion. Please call us if you see or hear anything suspicious because remember you’re one of us now, stay safe.”

I was feeling tired, a little moody and I was confused, because I had met another set of people and I didn't know who to trust apart from Ben and Keith. However I couldn't change the past, I just rolled with them.

“Alright, you couldn't tell me where to get out without being seen could you?”

“Yes just through that door there is a monorail, you just get in the vehicle and type in the destination. However you must get in the vehicle and type the destination within a minute. The monorail travels quite fast so it's best if you put on your seat belt.”

I followed the directions that Johnny had given me. The door I went through led me into a long room and waiting for me was a small metallic blue egg like train. I put on the belt that was provided and then I started typing where I wanted to go into the keypad. I got as far as “Bur” for Burgess Hill when the doors and windows shut spontaneously sealing me in. Then I heard a hissing sound and some sort of gas was coming out from behind my head. Thinking to myself was this a ploy and were they really who they say they are.

The next moment the train started to power up and all I could see was the dark silver of the cabin. This gave me a sense of nervousness and suspicion.

I was then awoken by the noise of the monorail slowing down. I had arrived; the sleeping gas had worked its way out my system. I pushed myself up once my vision had returned. I found the vehicle release lock for the door and I pushed the capsule door up with my feet, then I hauled my way out of the vehicle and I crawled a further couple of feet only to find that I was at the back of Burgess Hill train station. I saw the opening to

some sort of shaft; I crawled into it as I was interested to see where it went. I crawled towards another mucky looking shaft; I didn't have a torch so I had to improvise. I used my telephone's torch system. I saw a light ahead of me, I blinked to make sure I wasn't seeing things, however the light faded. I guessed I was in some kind of sewer. I kept on moving towards where I thought I had seen the light. Now the ground underneath me changed from damp, soggy mud to metal. I thought the shaft might lead to some kind of factory. I carried along the steel tube until I reached the end; at that point I wondered whether to continue. I looked through the vent in front of me, there was a choice of ways, I thought of resting where I was for a while but my torch on my phone was down to a slight glimmer so I decided to carry on as far as I could.

Then I heard a loud alarm go off which somehow I must have set off.

“Warning, warning there has been a code 5 in cell 9!”

I wondered if I was in some kind of prison rather than being in a factory, but why would they make it so easy to explore if it was an entrance to a prison cell? Suddenly a person rushed in wearing a gas mask holding a gun in his left hand. He shouted some sort of profanity and then he moved towards the air duct where he announced –

“I'm the Vice Chairman of the Burgess Hill MI5, how the heck did you get in here, who the devil are you?

and how old are you?” he asked.

My original thoughts were dead wrong about what this place was.

I just ignored him. I didn't know what to do, I crawled further towards the edge of the vent, as soon as he saw what I had in mind he rushed over and helped me down from the ventilation system. He then brought a stool which had been close by and sat me down.

"We won't do anything to you tonight, now answer the questions young man?"

"my name is Chris Manson and

I'm 12." I replied.

"Just Chris will be fine, my name is Bill." he said. Bill was about seven foot with a bald head and looked like he could knock someone out with one punch.

I spent the night in a vibrant green room and there was a table opposite the bed with a jug of water on. I wasn't thirsty until the morning so I was grateful for the water then and I drank about a quarter of the jug. Bill came in with Keith swiftly following behind him. Keith sat on my right and Bill was standing in front of the table in front of my bed.

"Right Chris we've found something for you to do for us. We would like you to spy on your friend Alex C because we believe someone in his family is planning with Harry Howler a national disaster. Something to do with banks and a bomb?"

"Alright, but what's in it for me?"

"Well you may meet the Queen and you might get paid."

"Alright then arrange a date." I replied.

22

The Farm

I went to Alex C's farm in Horsham and the first thing I noticed was Alex C riding his motorbike across the fields. My mum and I drove slowly over the long and muddy puddle filled drive caused by tractors driving up and down it all the time. I saw a huge blue sphere on the other side of the farmyard. When we pulled up at the house, Sarah, Alex C's mum greeted us. While I waited for my mum to get the wheelchair out of the boot of the car Alex C came up to the car and greeted us with a beaming smile.

"Hi Alex, how are you?" I said cheerily.

He looked tired and mud stricken. We then spent a nice afternoon playing on Alex's trampoline and on his PlayStation. Throughout the day I was keeping my eye open on the farm for anything suspicious and I kept asking Alex leading questions about the recent terrorist attacks, but found nothing. When it was time to go Alex said -

“How's about we have a sleep over next month some time. When are you free?”

“Well I'm free every day next month apart from the 12th and the 19th when I have got gym appointments, so you name a time!” I replied.

“Ok the 2nd then, I'll give you a call nearer the time.”

My Mum was waiting outside; we drove back across the tractor tracks up to the end of the drive. When we got on the main road we hit heavy traffic going towards Bolney and it took between 40 minutes to an hour to get home.

The next day I went back to C.H.I.S for a solid week of swimming, cards with Sheila and physiotherapy with Pat. I don't know what happened to Eleanor or Jayne as I didn't see them all week. However I did have speech and language therapy. I hadn't heard anything of Mario. As I was day dreaming looking out of the window I saw a big Mercedes Benz Sprinter pull up outside. A man got out of the van,

He had jet black long hair and he had a massive frown on his face. He then took out a camera and started taking pictures of drains. I guessed he was a plumber and then the man took off his jacket, I recognised him now, it was Harry H. When he had finished taking pictures he came up to the door of C.H.I.S and rang the bell. When one of the nurses opened the door he said that he had something for “Chris Manson”. Of course he

was then welcomed with open arms. I heard his massive boots hitting and squeaking on the lino floor.

“So how are you Harry and how’s the wife?” I asked.

Immediately his face changed from a twisted face to a mental face.

“You and I need to have words!” Harry replied angrily.

“Ok I’m listening” I replied.

“Are you here tomorrow morning Chris, because I’d like a word with you in my van if that’s not too much to ask?”

The following morning I woke up fearing the day ahead of me. At breakfast I carried on as normal having my usual bowl of cereal. I had noticed the Mercedes Benz van while I was finishing my breakfast. Angie walked into the dining area and said to me –

“How are you today Mr Manson?”

“Fine thank you Angie.” I replied “I’d like to go and clean my teeth now if that’s alright?”

” Yes that’s fine but have you any idea why that man is sitting there in his van? It’s an ambulance bay!”

“I don’t know but if he’s still there after I’ve cleaned my teeth I’ll go and ask him why he’s still there, if it puts your mind at rest.”

Once I had cleaned my teeth and given my face a wipe down with OXY cleansing wipes, I went along to the family room; it was also Dr B’s therapy room. I thought of a way of getting out incognito down onto the ground level, but I wasn’t sure of how I would land.

I'd seen Jackie Chan do almost the same stunt in movies countless times before; I thought why couldn't I do the same manoeuvre? I waited until the nurses were busy getting Patrick ready for the day and then I pulled the red call button in Emma's room (she was a new arrival at C.H.I.S) to create another distraction. I then got hold of the blind cords, wrenched open the window of Dr B's room and abseiled down the side of the building to the wet concrete ground. I opened the gate as quietly as possible, as I didn't want to alert any of the nurses. I crawled past the office and then I heard the strange clicking sound of a *NHS* van. I hid behind one of Pats old plinths and turned it on its side to give me the maximum amount of cover possible. I was getting a bit cold because I was only wearing a thin t-shirt and shorts. After a while I came out from behind the plinth, on my hands and knees. I quickened my pace to get to the van where I found that the front doors were locked, so I tried around the back of the van, fortunately they were unlocked. Harry Howler was sitting in the back of the van in front of a massive computer he was on a kind of throne totally engrossed in the huge screen in front of him. I coughed; he automatically turned around and said –

“Hi Chris, what kept you? How are you my old chum?”

“Well thank you, but why are you here?”

“I'm here to stage a terror threat and I hear you ask yourself – why here of all places?

And I say - hold it right there, because I want the government to think that the National Health Service blew up the nation!”

“With whom and how are you going to escape?” I asked.

“With your friend Alex. Look out the door Chris. I'm not scared of you or any of the rest of your motley crew.”

I was surprised to see that we had gone up about hundred feet into the air, the van was able to hover. I suddenly had an idea of how to get rid of Harry Howler for the time being.

“Harry come and have a look at my house before you blow England up?” I asked

“Yeah, ok.” Harry replied.

Harry came over to the door I then got out my fully charged mobile phone and I typed in 899 behind my back which activated the prongs to come out the side of the phone. By pushing “one on my flip phone key pad it set the prongs to stun mode which I then used on Harry. I then pushed Harry H out the back of the van. I decided to try to get control of this flying van so I needed- somehow to get into the driver’s cab. I crawled over to the side door and wrenched it open, with one last effort I managed to break the window of the driver’s cab with a lead pipe. I then reached in and opened the door and somehow managed to crawl into the cab. I then tried countless times and methods to gain control of the flying van, but after about twenty seconds I decided to abandon the idea as it was nearly out of fuel! I found two high visibility jackets in the electrician’s box, which I stuck together with a tube of metal glue I found lying on the floor of the van. I held the two jackets up above my head, (this I had learnt from an old Chinese friend of mine) and I leapt out the back of the Mercedes van and was in free fall for about one or two seconds, the current of the air caught my improvised parachute, I glided for about a minute, all I had to do now was to find a field or property which had a big garden to land in. Unfortunately for me instead of a nice wide open space I landed on a mountain of smelly, grungy

rubbish. The Sprinter plummeted down about five seconds later with a bang, shortly after that it exploded with wild orange and yellow flames shooting out in every direction with smoke billowing out. The spectacle looked like one that you get when a racing car crashes in Formula 1 Grand Prix's.

When I had collected my thoughts I dialled Keith's number into my mobile. He answered it almost immediately.

"Hi Chris how are you, where are you?" He asked.

"Fine - but you're going to have to come to Burgess Hill tip - no time to explain!" I replied.

About 10 minutes later Keith arrived in his green van; the first thing he did was to put the fire out.

"After that performance you're definitely going out on the field with some of our agents. Well done! by the way - that's something to put on your curriculum vitae. What did you get on Alex C?" Keith asked.

"Too tired - tell you tomorrow." I replied.

I woke up in the morning trying to make sense of all my thoughts. I didn't move for about twenty minutes, I was trying to figure out if it had all been a dream or not. Once I got up out of my bed and into my chair, I switched on the TV manually and pressed one on my remote for BBC One.

“This is the BBC News and the time is 8 o’clock. Breaking news this morning a twelve year old boy threatens the Government that he is going to blow up whole of England - will he or won’t he...?” The news reader announced.

I’d heard enough. I pushed myself across the floor to the door. My Mum was waiting for me, she watched me get to the bottom of the staircase safely before coming down herself. I had my usual Coco Pops for breakfast and both a glass of milk and a glass of water to drink. Then I set off for what my Mum thought was Wintons Fishing Lake. Once my Mum had gone I wheeled myself over to “Burgess Hill’s Secret Agency”. At the entrance I turned the lever in the cave three times. I noticed the handle lighting up a concealed dark brown doorway, which now began to open making an almost silent noise. I could hear this due to my acute sense of hearing which I now had since my accident. I got a warm welcome by Keith.

“Hi Chris how are you? Now, we’ve got some new leads that Alex C is planning a mass disaster. As you were his friend I’m afraid we’re going to have to get you working to try and uncover what he has actually got planned. We need much more information this time - we’ve only scratched the surface up to now. We’ve arranged for you to go up to Alex’s place for the day. We’ll have to ask you to wear this, it’s so that we can listen in to what’s being said.” Keith informed me.

It looked like an ordinary black leather jacket to me.

“This jacket is fireproof and waterproof and it has two inside pockets the one on the left inflates the jacket so it can support up to 20 stone in weight in water. The second pocket which we’re proud of is a high velocity bomb which is detonated when you pull the

toggles twice and it will blow up anything in a 50 feet radius. I almost forgot your new powered chair with removable arms. I believe Johnny has told you about them.” Keith explained.

“Yes he did.” I replied.

“Well that and your jacket should come in useful then if needed.”

“Where do I need to be this week?” I asked.

“We’ll arrange a time for you to meet Alex and let you know. We’ll deliver the jacket and the information in a parcel in person.” Keith replied.

“Ok then I’ll wait and see what comes.”

Keith dropped me off round the corner from my house. I self-propelled myself to my house, then up my ramp and knocked on my side door. Luck was on my side my older brother answered the door.

“What have you been up to?” Ian asked.

“I’ve been up at Wintons today, you know the fishing pond over on Folders Lane, I caught a trout.”

He didn’t seem to know what I was on about so he just nodded.

My parcel arrived a week after Keith had said. I was sitting at the table having breakfast with the rest of my family. I had no choice but to open the parcel there and then in front of everybody. I opened my parcel with great care to find another box, which had protective strips on it. When I opened that box it had a clear plastic bubble layer around

it. When I had broken through this protective layering I lied about its contents and said to my audience around the breakfast table.

“I have been waiting for this for months and for Amazon to find one just like this.” I announced to everyone.”

I managed not to reveal what this actually was. I went up to my room with my Mum walking up behind me. She was frightened that I would fall and have another head injury. I tried the jacket on and it fitted, then I saw Keith’s promised information sheet stuck on the inside of the box. It read –“You will go to Horsham and meet Alex outside the “Underground” pub in a fortnight’s time at ten in the morning.”

Two weeks later I went to Horsham and as requested I wore the jacket. My Mum dropped me outside the pub and then went to park the car and waited there for me to finish with Alex. Alex C was 10 minutes late. As soon as I saw him I turned on the microphone in my right hand pocket.

“How are you, Alex my friend?” I greeted him.

“I’m well, what’s new?” He replied.

“Nothing really, and yourself anything new?”

You didn’t happen to see that big dome thing on one side of our drive as you were driving to Horsham?” Alex asked.

“Yes what is it?” I replied.

“Satellite dish for our TV.”

“But why do you need such a big one?”

“I guess because the trees interrupt the frequency.”

“I want to see this satellite dish.”

“Ok then, we could go now if you want?”

So Alex pushed me to the car park where Mum was waiting and she took us to Alex’s house to see the satellite dish. It was about 10 metres high and 10 metres wide. By then it was getting on for twelve o’clock so Mum drove me back home for some very nice bacon sarnies. After lunch I went out as soon as I could; I went to Wintons supposedly to do some fishing but actually I had never been there. I looked over my shoulder to make sure I hadn’t been followed. I carried on a bit further and then I got out of my chair and crawled along the grass avoiding all the cow pats, when I got into the cave I twisted the lever to let myself in. Jonathon B was there in the waiting area and he greeted me.

“Have you been called down here to the conference?” He asked.

“I have come here to give Keith some information about my friend Alex and his farm.” I replied.

Just then Keith walked in and welcomed us.

“Hi Johnny, hi Chris how are you?”

“Tired, I’ve been up to Alex’s farm today and there’s something which may interest you Keith. There is a huge sphere like satellite in his field.”

“How big?” Jonathon asked.

“About ten metres by ten, why?” I asked.

“Did he tell you any information as to why it had to be so big?” Jonathan asked.

“Yes he said that it was because of his TV, he couldn’t get any reception because of the trees that surrounded his farmhouse.” I replied.

Jonathon didn't look happy.

"No that's not right, how far would you say his house is away from the trees?"

"At least 50-70 feet, why?"

"someone's got to stop him and I suggest you are that someone. We'll load up a live terrorist simulation on our computer program tomorrow at two in the afternoon, does that fit in with what you're doing tomorrow?" Keith said.

"Yes why." I replied, slightly confused.

23

Apparatus Man

I arrived at the Burgess Hill secret agency on the dot of two o'clock in the afternoon. I was greeted by Jonathan and then before I knew it he was gone. The next thing that happened was a load of sparks came flying out of the walls, and then the floor set on fire

followed by a loud buzzing sound in my left ear. Something was firing a round of bullets at me. I got out of my powered chair onto the floor so that I could take the cushion off the seat. I then got back into my wheelchair and held the cushion in front of me shielding me. I then pushed through the flames protected by the cushion. I saw a corridor stretched out in front of me which had Greek carvings on the walls. I took the armrests off my powered chair and then I crawled slowly up the slope. Suddenly a computer controlled character appeared in front of me, it pointed a gun at me and started firing - I tried to avoid most of its shots but one of its artificial bullets clipped me on my right hip - it was extremely painful. I started firing my gun at the computer controlled character and within seconds of firing at it blew up. I let out a sigh of relief. I saw a blink of light, everything stood still.

“Well done Chris you passed with flying colours!” Jonathan exclaimed “You’ll need to come to more of our sessions.”

As I was still in shock I didn’t know what to say apart from to ask –

“When do you want me in?”

“Any time but a weekday would be best you need to allow about two hour’s.” Jonathan replied.

“I have gym on Monday and two days at Crawley College next week on Thursday and Friday. So, Monday and Tuesday I can more or less do as I please apart from gym so I will make it on Tuesday then.”

On Monday, Mark my personal trainer was really cruel to me at the gym and he made me do 20 minutes on the treadmill, another 15 on the cross-trainer, 10 minutes on the rowing

machine, and the arm curl for 5 minutes and the bench press for what seemed like 20 minutes. They had moved back into the Olympos at Haywards Heath from the Triangle now that all of the rebuilding had been completed. I was really tired after that incredible workout at the gym.

The next day I told Keith about our arrangements, he seemed fine with it. Jonathon Bore came through a door to Keith's office somewhere behind or to the side of me as I couldn't see him.

"We had better move quickly, if we don't want to be blown to smithereens because Alex wasn't joking! What I mean is that with the bombs that he has, he could blow up at least a good proportion of England and certainly he could do some damage to the channel tunnel." Jonathan announced.

Keith looked even more disturbed than usual.

"We've got to go to Alex's house and take a look at this so called sphere." Jonathan went on.

"Yes we should really." Keith replied.

"If you do go I want to be there." I said.

"Absolutely." Jonathon replied.

"I don't know, you're still awfully young." argued Keith.

"But Alex is the same age as me." I said insistently back to Keith.

"Alright then you may as well come, but don't say I didn't warn you." Keith said.

"You had better be off to C.H.I.S now, or they will send out a search party."

So Keith dropped me back at C.H.I.S, the time was approaching four a clock in the afternoon. I told the nurses that Keith was my stepfather but didn't give any more details.

The next three days were filled with Pat the physio, Val the speech and language therapist and Mario working on my computer abilities. Then at the weekend I was back home so on Saturday I played on my PS2 for half an hour, then I went to see Julie and Diane who were friends of mine and my Mums. I woke up on Sunday morning, pushed three on my TV remote, turned the volume down to a mere churning to listen to the news.

“This is South East today with Tim and Lauren. Breaking News! Boy could blow up England if he's not stopped.”

I had woken my Dad up with my shenanigans which in turn woke my Mum up. I quickly turned my TV off and snoozed till my alarm went off at 8:30. I had my usual Coco Pops for breakfast and I had done my English homework by half past nine. I was out the house at exactly half ten. My mum dropped me off at Wintons fishing lake. I wheeled myself over to the cave, looked at my watch there was a quarter of an hour remaining till Keith was due. I decided to see what I was missing out on at Wintons when two men stepped out of a massive truck, it was Keith and Jonathon but I hardly recognised them with their heavy duty body armour on and their gas masks and packs on.

“We're going to ask Alex a few questions but we don't know where he lives.”

“Do you want me to show you where to go?” I offered.

“Couldn't you just tell us?” Keith asked.

“Not really.” I answered

“Alright then you may as well come.” Keith gave in.

Twenty minutes later we had arrived at Alex's farm. Keith waited 15 minutes to see if there was any sign of life, then Keith nodded for me and Jonathon to proceed. We got to the sphere and saw that there was no obvious way of getting into this object. Jonathan got out what looked like a normal tube of toothpaste, he squirted some onto a tile on the sphere and then he covered his ears - I copied him and covered my ears too. Suddenly there was an explosion and I could see that the tile was disintegrating in front of my eyes. Through the hole that had appeared we could see a smaller sphere with four large robust looking radio devices on top.

"Let's go back to the truck now we know that Alex wasn't bluffing." Jonathan instructed. We got back in the truck.

"You two weren't long, how did you get on?" Keith asked.

So we're going to have to put a stop to this Alex business." Jonathan reported.

I was awoken by the twittering of the birds and the cries of the squirrels at seven the next morning and I had a splitting headache. I decided to get up. I walked along my cabin bed by holding on to the side of it, collapsed into the chair and pushed 2 on my remote control for my TV. I made sure that my Dad couldn't hear the TV by turning down the volume so that my Mum and Dad wouldn't hear anything through the listening device that they had in their room. I had my breakfast at 8:15; my breakfast consisted of a bowl of cereal and a glass of cold milk. Then my Mum and Dad had their breakfast, I was the first to finish, closely followed by my Mum and then slowly my Dad finished about ten minutes later.

"What do you want to do today Chris?" Mum asked.

‘I’ll only go down Wintons fishing lake again. I’ve met this really nice set of people down there.’ I replied innocently.

Mum dropped me off at Wintons lake about half an hour later. I waited until my Mum was out of sight before I made my detour to the cave. I could see Keith practice shooting with his Wolfa-P19. I waited for what seemed like forever for him to finish so that I could speak to him.

‘Well what are we going to do about Alex C now we know that he’s not bluffing?’ I asked Keith.

‘What the bomb thing?’ Keith replied.

I gave a small nod.

‘We’d have to get permission from MI5 before we do anything heavy.’ He answered.

That was all that was said on the matter. I then had a couple of combat scenarios in the simulator with Keith.

I woke up the next morning, didn’t brush my teeth, and didn’t have breakfast. I opened the back door as quietly as possible and I wheeled myself onto the flat bit of the ramp. I then put my brakes on a quarter of the way and then I pushed down on the floor to give me a bit of leverage and very slowly edged my way down the ramp. I then wheeled myself down to the green at the end of my road to meet Keith. I greeted him and got into his green plumbing van and he drove down to the station. He slammed the brakes on which forced me to go forward in my seat. He then got out of the van to get my chair out of the back. Luckily Keith had parked round the back of the station; he pushed me on to the platform where a man was standing carrying a ramp for me to use to get on this

supposed train which was overdue now. We waited a further 10 minutes for the train.

The man with the ramp came over to where we were sitting when a train came flying past from Brighton at high speed. 5 minutes later our train came in at 10 mph slowing down to 5mph and then it finally stopped. Four people got off the train two of the people were in suits and were carrying briefcases. They looked as though they could be bankers or they were very good at acting like it anyway. The other two were ladies one of them with a pushchair. Once on the train I passed the time looking around at the passengers in the carriage - Haywards Heath, Three Bridges and Gatwick Airport had all flown past so quickly I hadn't even noticed. Keith nudged me when we got to Clapham Junction.

"It's our stop now - we're going to see Kaowen Jacque he's the inventor of the monorail tunnel, which runs from Burgess Hill to Brighton and also many of your gismos."

Keith stepped out of the train and asked one of the station staff for a ramp so I could get off the train. As if by magic a heavily built man who looked to be in his 50s appeared with a ramp and proceeded to put it up against the train door. Keith then pushed me in my wheelchair down the ramp and onto the platform. The man with the ramp said - "Have a good day or are you on holiday?"

I thought he was having a laugh but Keith just thanked the man. We went into the subway which went under all of the platforms. Once we were out of the station we headed towards a big old, decrepit factory which I could see about 100 yards in front of us. We went into the factory through a side door, once inside I was surprised to see that the interior was decorated but it stunk of cabbage. Keith pushed me into the lift that looked a bit out of place in the factory. We went up to the first floor and went into a room which reminded me of my dentist's old waiting room. I was half expecting to see my a

massive room. My mouth dropped open as I was wondering what on earth this room could be used for.

“Hi Kaowen, its’ so good to see you I’d like you to meet Chris, he’s planning on becoming a field agent, he’s got a question for you.” Keith announced.

“I was wondering if I could get your permission to plant a couple of bombs on a massive sphere which are set up to trigger off a massive string of explosive devices that if successful could blow up the whole of England? ”Yes alright, we’ll have the usual paper work for you to sign.” Kaowen replied to Keith.

24

July the 3rd

As we had the go ahead by Kaowen we had to plan which day we were going to blow the satellite up and exactly how we were going to do it. I woke up and knew then what I had to do. I got out of my bed as quiet as a mouse, and then I slid open three drawers of my wall unit and got dressed. I watched the BBC news for half an hour while my mum got up. When I had woken up I'd had a headache but now it seemed to have gone. My brother popped his head round the door to say "Morning." I finally got down our stairs, put my Mum's porridge on and walked the distance from our kitchen to the dining room with my Mum closely following behind. I finished my breakfast first as per usual and watched Diggitt on ITV with Des and Fern until 10:30.

"What do you want to do today?" Mum asked.

"How about I go up to Wintons fishing lake again." I replied.

"I think you're spending too much time up there." Mum replied.

"Come on, if I catch a fish today they're letting you take your fish home for free." I quickly said, worried that I wouldn't be allowed to go there after all.

My dad was getting a bit suspicious of me supposedly going fishing, this time he didn't just drop me off, he hung around for a bit until I had gone around the corner. I then drove myself behind a bush until I was sure he had gone and then I made the detour around the bushes and into the cave.

Keith opened the door as soon as I got there.

“Saw you coming.” he said “Was there someone you wanted to get rid of before you got into the cave? You were a bit cautious coming in today?”

“Nobody, just my Dad, what are we doing today?” I asked.

“We could go to the Brighton camp to arrange and plan the satellite plot at Alex’s.” Keith suggested.

“Alright.” I agreed.

Keith had the site plan already laid out on the table.

“We have already notified the Ministry of Defence of our plans, so we’re ready to plan for July 3rd which is exactly three weeks away. I am assuming you can make the 3rd?”

Keith asked.

“I’ll have to check my diary, just a minute I’ll see.” I reached into my back pocket, brought out this very thin purple diary, opened it to July, and then found the 3rd.

“I haven’t got anything written in there yet, so I could do that date but you’ll have to help me think up a good excuse for me to use to get out for the day as my parents are getting a bit suspicious of me coming up to Wintons all of the time.” I explained.

Keith looked puzzled; this was obviously his *thinking look*.

“How’s about a fishing tournament?” He finally suggested.

“That’s fine with me.” I replied.

I was counting down the days; I was excited but also afraid of July 3rd.

I was woken at 6am the next morning by the birds twittering in our huge oak tree. I turned over and tried to get back to sleep, it would be good if I could sleep until 7.30!

However at 7:15 the choir started again, so I gave up any hope of getting any more sleep. I drew my orange curtains back, opened my top window and lay in my bed for 15 minutes. Then I got out of bed slowly getting my feet down to the second step of the ladder, then the first, then my foot hit my thin carpet and took a couple of steps whilst holding onto my bed, then I got in my black chair. I felt the cold air coming in through the window, blowing onto my neck. I decided to watch the rest of Stuart Little 2 on my DVD, as I hadn't had enough time to finish it the previous night. Keith rang me up on my mobile phone, the Italian Job theme tune played twice before I could answer my phone. "Hi Keith!" I said.

"Hello Chris, Jonathon and I are going to do some training for our mission for July 3rd. We were wondering if you wanted to come." Keith asked me.

"I can't do today I've got Nikki my Physio later, maybe tomorrow." I replied.

"Ok see you then, hang on a minute what time tomorrow?" He asked.

"Does 11.30 suit you?" I asked.

"Yeah - so see you then."

I was tired after my physio session with Nikki, it was an hour of hard work. We got back home at ten minutes to six in the evening, for dinner I had buttered brown toast and my Mum had Spaghetti Bolognese as did the rest of my family. Something caught my eye above our mantle shelf, I eventually focused on what had caught my attention, and it was the painting of the *Belfast*. As I looked at the massive beast of aluminium, I heard our

home phone ring and soon my Dad got to it. He then quickly passed it on to me. The voice on the other end said urgently –

“We need you down here pronto” and then the line went dead.

“I need to collect my fishing stuff from Wintons Fishing Lake.” I announced.

My Dad gave me a lift in his car and dropped me off at the lake. I waited for my Dad to go and then another couple minutes before entering the cave. I opened the concealed door; Keith was waiting for me and pushed my chair along the long waiting room and into the operations room. The room was dark grey with black chairs and a long table stretching almost to the door. In the room there was Jonathon, Keith and also three other people I hadn't met before: Jackie Jab, Craig Crêpe and Ian Lewis. I was paired up with Jackie Jab, she had blue eyes and dyed hair which was jet black.

“I won't keep you here that long.” Keith began.” I've split you up into pairs because your partner has been in similar roles to yourselves. This is Jonathon whom I'm sure you've all met.”

“Hi, I'm Jonathon, I am here today to show you all how to operate these machines.”

I hadn't noticed the machines before; I guess that Keith had brought them in at some point. One looked as though it was something out of a sci-fi movie: It was silver and stood about seventeen feet off the ground supported by two legs.

“What's that?” I asked.

“A M162000.” Jonathan answered.

“What does it do?” Jackie asked.

“I'm glad you asked.” Jonathan replied “It has a multitude of weapons including a fork and a grabber, but it's main purpose is to carry Chris and Jackie around; also it's an

armoured vehicle which will come in very useful I'm sure. It can be painted in camouflage colours so that it blends into the surroundings.”

I was very interested to see how it was going to work!

25

The Raid

I was woken up by a car retrieval van reversing into the layby outside. It was the morning of July the 3rd. I had ticked off the day on my calendar. I had been dreading this day! It was a cloudy, wet day and at 5am the dawn chorus started, even the wood pigeon joined in. I managed to roll over and doze until 7.30. I sat up in my bed, and then I crawled up to my TV, switched it on to “stand by” pushing in the button on the side of the television, then I got my TV remote turned the volume to mute and then I pushed three to get “DiggIt”, where Des and Fern C were presenting the show for quarter of an

hour, then there were cartoons for a further quarter of an hour, like school cartoons just to remind me what I'm missing. When they had finished I turned my TV off. I then got in my chair. I pushed my feet down on my carpeted floor to manoeuvre myself towards the cupboard where I got my "All Weather Jacket" out. I reached down to the drawers at the bottom of my wardrobe and got out my fishing box because I thought it would come in useful at the raid today. I then checked the time on my neon clock. I made my way down the stairs and I crawled to my chair in the dining room. I had my breakfast and then I waited another quarter of an hour for either my Mum or Dad to get up, to take me to Winton's to meet Jackie Jab and Keith. When Mum had dropped me off at Wintons I waited my usual five minutes for my Mum to go round the corner making my detour in the direction of the cave undetected. It was another five minutes before Jackie and Keith arrived at Wintons. I waited a couple of minutes for them to open up the cave, which I eventually went in.

Since I had last been here it had changed from being a waiting area into a hangar, with a lorry parked in the middle. Or was it that I hadn't been to this part of the building before? Keith looked tired, as did Jackie; they were now underneath the lorry doing the final checks.

"Lucky you're here Chris because I'll have time to show you how to use this monstrosity of a thing and how all the gadgets and gismos work." Keith greeted me.

Ten minutes later Jackie was in the monstrosity, but then I felt a jolt as Keith had got a crane to lift me up to the cockpit. I got out of my wheelchair and fastened my seat belt in the machine. As the lorry started reversing the hangar doors started to open. We waited then for about thirty seconds for the doors to be fully open, and then the growl of the

lorry's engine started. A green light came up on the side of the main hangar door; a corresponding smaller light came up on our control panel in our "Apache" style cockpit. As we took the left at Ansty and made our way up the long road towards Mannings Heath and under the bridge, I developed these feelings of mixed emotions, some were guilt for what we were about to commit and others were the what ifs. The next thing I was aware of was the lorry shuddering over the bumpy terrain which was Alex's driveway. We then came to a sudden stop as something seemed to be holding us up. I turned round to Jackie and said –"How was the trip?" Her reply was a disgruntled -

"You don't half snore!" I took that to mean that I had dropped off during our journey!" There wasn't anyone out in the farmyard yet. I heard a shotgun go off. Jackie and I both turned around in our seats and looked at the sphere. We then waited about another five minutes for Keith to give the all clear to go, we knew what to do. I was surprised to see that Alex had put some sandbags, a shallow moat round his sphere satellite. Then all of a sudden there were bullets flying at us from every direction, luckily our vehicle was bullet proof, but the machine gun fire still marked the glass quite badly. The explosions increased as we got closer to the sphere. The next thing that happened took me completely by surprise as we suddenly plummeted down what seemed to be twenty feet before finally hitting the concrete floor.

I was shell-shocked for about ten seconds and then I checked to see if Jackie Jab was alright. In front of us Alex C was sitting on a silver metallic seat. Alex, his voice amplified shouted -

"Don't move!"

Ignoring him I carefully leaned forward to get to my back pocket. I was trying to get at my flip phone. When I had my phone in my hand I dialled 0668 to alert Keith. Next I dialled Alex's mobile phone number to create the distraction Keith needed to get into position.

"What are you doing Chris?" Jackie whispered.

"Well someone has to get us out before Alex does something he'll regret." I replied.

Keith had managed to locate us somehow. He was driving one of Alex's tractors and had stopped right on the edge of the crevasse. He threw a grenade down to where he thought Alex was, creating a huge explosion. Keith told us later that his hearing went for about ten minutes after the blast.

What looked like Keith came to the edge of the crevasse, in my dazed state. it was Harry Howler, one of Alex's accomplices that I was worried about as I hadn't seen him yet. My mind was wondering what next when he came down a concealed ladder into the shrubs. Then a voice came bursting out of the tannoy which I recognised instantly as Mario's.

"Everyone –evacuate. Evacuate onto the main apron - bombing is beginning in five minutes." "Jackie I want you to wait here." I said.

"Why?" She asked.

"Because we've got something to do" I replied.

I snuck out of the capsule while Harry was doing up his shoes which went almost up to his knee. That gave me enough time to get out of the capsule. Then I managed to creep past him . I looked around for something to attack him with and when I turned around I picked up a fire extinguisher and managed to take out Harry's legs with it. Whilst this

was going on Jackie had got out of the apache style cockpit and up the ladder. I then went further up the ladder to get out of the sphere to where Jackie was standing. Jackie then walked me over to the field which Mario was talking about, by then I had got mud and mushy grass all over my hands and legs. I heard some really loud engines coming up behind me. It must have been their escape plane. I saw Keith having an argument with one of the guards; I turned my head thinking that Keith would be able to sort it. I heard shotgun fire and turned back round to see that Keith had been shot.

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The Argosy plane I had to figure out a way of grounding it. Jackie and I had found the airstrip and I noticed the Argosy was doing some low passes (flying close to the ground) I took myself off towards where the low passing was happening in the adjacent field. When the plane made its next pass I threw a metal shard up about twenty feet, by doing this I

hoped to slow the revolutions of them down. With a low groaning sound of the engines I knew the metal shard had been successful. The Argosy had to make a crash landing. Meanwhile I could see Mario as he picked up a can of petrol. I could also see that the closer he got to the sphere, his crooked smile became wider. He poured the container of fuel over the remains of the sphere and threw a match in. Alex came over and congratulated him, he shook his hand and then pushed Mario into the pit of the sphere. Now I only had Alex to stop. Jackie signalled to me in sign language that she'd found the detonation switch and had blown it up with her special toothpaste. I signalled back to her "ok". and we almost ran to the plane. We got to the side of the plane.

"Can you get the pilots attention?" I asked Jackie.

Jackie threw a rock at the side of the plane; almost immediately the pilot or it could have been his co-pilot came down to see what was going on.

"Can I see the cockpit please?" I asked him.

"Of course you can?" He replied.

I went up to the cockpit and immediately spotted a hiding position under the stairs.

"I might have an idea." I said to Jackie. "Maybe by smashing the windows using my leisure bombs in my fishing box , it could cause a rapid decompression."

"Right, sounds good to me, I don't have any better ideas." Jackie replied.

I threw out my line from my fishing rod and I just had enough reel for the thirteen windows at the back.

Meanwhile, Alex came out of his house with twelve more people all dressed identically in black jump suits with yellow arrows on. They were a mixed age group from about

thirty to sixty years old. They went over to the sphere where Mario had meant to kill us. Once Alex had seen we weren't in the capsule and burnt alive he went berserk with his shotgun, firing five shots off in random directions. The oldest of his twelve companions tried to calm him down. It worked for about five minutes or so until the pilot who was now standing next to him said

“You don't expect me or anyone to take off in that do you?”

Alex then pointed a gun at his head and then they walked towards the aeroplane. I saw my chance while the field was clear, I crawled along the Argosy grabbing Jackie's leg to indicate to her that now was the time to go. We found a small door at the tail end and squeezed in. The compartment we were now in was a bit tight to fit both of us in. As I still had my mobile phone in my left pocket I reached down and got it. Turned it on so that I could see what we were doing. The pilot had started the engine and had taxied the plane to the end of the runway and was now speeding up as it was approaching take off. Both Jackie and I were frightened of what Alex had planned, by now we had taken off. I could see Jackie was scared. I tried to calm her down but it didn't work. As we listened to the roar of the four Rolls Royce engines. I came up with a plan.

“Right Jackie I'm going to try something quite drastic to lower the plane.” I said.

Meanwhile Alex had come down to use the downstairs lavatory. I waited and made my move when he had finished. He swung the door open; I pushed with all my might and got him to the floor of the lavatory, then sat on his feet.

“Jackie can you get me my mobile?”

“Sorry to have to do this to you Alex.”

I set my mobile to *self-destruct*, then I tied Alex's hands to the toilet piping. Meanwhile I had to go and check upstairs. Just as I crawled up the staircase I could hear the eruption of the air, the doors caving in from my leisure bombs I had thrown at the windows earlier. A massive decompression followed. I had to hang on to the staircase for dear life. It seemed like a gale force wind was running through the plane lifting and throwing any loose objects all over the place. Meanwhile the plane nose-dived as the pilot made a rapid emergency descent to a safe altitude and then levelled out. Once the plane was level I got to Jackie and led her to the back of the plane where we put on our parachutes and jumped off the back ramp of the aeroplane. We managed to land on a corrugated iron roof just as the Argosy hit the chimney of a factory, Instantly the chimney crumbled like someone crushing a bag of biscuits.

- Since my accident I had learnt to get my life back on track with the help of therapists and others at C.H.I.S., but little did I know that I would be dealing with a mass terrorist organisation and that my inquisitive nature would lead to such an exciting adventure. I patiently waited for my next saga.....