

## Prologue

On 1 July 2010, Raoul Moat was released from Durham Prison. Within forty-eight hours he had shot his ex-partner Samantha Stobbart and brutally murdered her new boyfriend, Chris Brown.

In the early hours of 4 July, Police Constable David Rathband was gunned down while sitting in his patrol car in East Denton, just outside Newcastle upon Tyne.

PC Rathband was blinded for life and one of the biggest manhunts in police history began, culminating in Moat's death six days later in the small Northumberland town of Rothbury. For the first time, this is PC David Rathband's story in his own words...

## Part One – Seven Nights In Rothbury

### ONE WEEK LATER

‘It’s over. David, it’s over.’

Kath was asleep in that same chair she had been in all week when the two armed guards from Merseyside Police knocked on the door.

It was 1.30 a.m. and I had been drifting in an out of deep sleep all day because of the morphine. Occasionally the whirr of the helicopters in Rothbury isolated themselves from the Sky News soundtrack and dragged me back to consciousness.

‘It’s over. David, it’s over,’ the guards said.

Barely capable of moving and scarcely able to talk after a week of life-saving operations, this was the moment I had been waiting for. My whole world filled with relief as I knew that I wouldn’t have to face Moat with no eyesight at trial in the months ahead. And now there was no chance that he would get an early release, so Kath, Mia and Ash could walk safely down the street without running into him one day.

‘Has he shot himself or been shot?’ I asked, desperate for them to say he’d taken his own life.

And that was the answer.

All my birthdays had come at once. I wanted to know he had suffered and it was important for me that no Police Officer had pulled the trigger and would now be putting themselves and their family through months of investigation and rigmarole that would inevitably follow.

I was at ease for the first time since it happened.

The helicopters wouldn’t wake me again.

With the morphine now in full control and no longer any need to resist, I slipped into the deepest and most peaceful sleep that I’ve ever had.

Only when I woke in the morning would I begin to make sense of the previous week of my life.

Saturday 3 July 2010

The day my world changed forever.

I couldn’t wait to get to work but I shouldn’t have been there at all that late in the evening. I was meant to be on a 2 p.m. to midnight shift.

Yesterday I’d spent the day at Wansbeck Hospital in Northumberland representing the Washington family as a family liaison officer (FLO) at a child death review meeting after a double fatal collision out at Chollerford.

Consequently, my shifts had changed. It had been my plan to take today off. In the end I just decided to do a late shift.

I'd come home tired and emotional last night after the draining day, did nothing more than have a meal with Kath and went to bed. I hadn't seen the news at all.

Tonight was also my daughter Mia's birthday party. She'd turned twelve on the 1st but this evening was the big one. Did I want to be at home with a house full of giggling girls all night? No, thank you. Give me traffic patrol any day of the week.

I was up at 7 a.m. for an early round of golf – a little bit of me-time before the chaos began! My friend Peter Holleran and I were taking part in a competition day at Warkworth Golf Club and I'd bagged second place with a two below par score of seventy. Not quite the Ryder Cup but a good start to the day with £28 in prize money – not that I would see any of it!

Kath had ordered £100 worth of party goodies for Mia. The cash went in one pocket and out the other. By 1 p.m. she had me nailing screws into the ceiling and stuffing piñatas with sweets and surprises for the girls. God only knows what state I could expect to find the house in when I clocked off in the early hours of tomorrow morning. My mind was already thinking about how quickly I could fill the holes back in. Work couldn't come quick enough. Just after 3 p.m. I got chatting to my then-neighbour, Jim, as I was about to head out for a 4 p.m. start. I had been so wrapped up in the case yesterday and Mia's party today that I didn't have a clue what had gone on.

'Have you heard about the shooting?' asked Jim, assuming that a copper like me would know everything about it at this point.

He wasn't really asking me if I had heard about it. Of course I had. He was really saying "Tell me about the shooting".

Except, I had nothing to tell.

I hadn't heard.

Only now, thinking back, do I realise the significance of that conversation. It was just neighbourly chat. Jim would often ask me about work. We had had this type of conversation hundreds of times over the years. Little did I realise that I would never see Jim again. At the time, it just gave me an extra impetus to get to work and to find out what was going on. Nothing in my immediate behaviour changed – I kissed Kath at the door, told her I loved her and would see her later, tucked my cartoon sandwich box under my arm like a good, honest hard-working, hen-pecked husband, and drove off to my headquarters at Etal Lane in Westerhope. It could have been any Saturday.

I took great pride and satisfaction in sending bad people down, proud of the fact that in five years, I had one of the best records as a traffic cop in the entire Northumbria police force. I wasn't nasty or over-zealous. For as long as I can remember, I've had a profound sense of right and wrong and this was the job that I lived for.

At 3.40 p.m. I wandered into the Parade Room to check the force computers. In my mind, I thought that if a gunman were on the loose, a vehicle chase was highly probable. It could

come at a moment's notice and at any time of day or night. I had to be ready, although the screens were showing me nothing at this point. Within the hour I'd received a text from Jon Masterman, a shift colleague of mine who was currently on leave. 'Have you seen who they are looking for on that murder? It's Moat.' I couldn't believe it. A chill ran down my spine. We had previous.

I won't say that you never forget a face or a name as a serving police officer – that's not true – but you do carry around a portfolio in locked compartments of your brain, of certain individuals whom you never want to see again. Moat had a whole compartment all to himself in mine.

In March 2009, I was assigned to Operation Absolute. I know what you're thinking. 'Who came up with that shit?'

These things went in alphabetical order from a book. It could have been Annabel, Aromatherapy, or perhaps best-suited of the lot, Arsehole.

You've not heard of Operation Absolute, I assume. That's because it was top secret – need to know basis only. This was the top drawer stuff for which I had trained – classified material with a big stamp on it that only the chief of all chiefs could authorise.

In reality, that's not how it was at all, but given the significant role that Absolute plays in my personal story, I am now releasing this document as though the statute of limitations had just expired.

The fact is that you could only do the job you were assigned, and over occasional fortnightly periods in 2009, this was the gig. Reading it back now, it seems trivial, but you don't work like that as an officer. Someone else makes those decisions and you enact them.

In the North East a sudden "invisible industry" had cropped up. It was quietly gathering steam but probably didn't merit much attention in the grand scheme of things. Operation Absolute had been put together to detect and deter metal theft. It was the big thing of the time and I had arrested people for stealing cables from the Tyne and Wear Metro, street manholes, and even bus stops. Oh yes, I enjoyed that CCTV footage in court – a man casually leaving the scene of the crime with an X10 bus stop.

These people weren't mindless idiots though – far from it. They were calculating crooks and metal was the new currency. It was making people a lot of money.

There had already been a massive theft at Pelaw in Tyne and Wear. £50,000 worth of copper was fleeced from the Metro. We found length after length of it stored in two skips around six miles away at Walker, stripped, cut and clean in two-foot sections and already sold on for £4,000. The yard was closed down for the day, and we had to lock up half the staff.

We were stopping all types of vehicle, sometimes on gut feeling, sometimes on intelligence. And this was how I first met Raoul Moat.

I remember it as a pleasant sunny day – 2 March 2009 – around 3 p.m. Jon and I were coming to the end of our shift. We were just on the road into Blaydon, about a couple of miles from the Metro Centre, and hovering around EMR Limited, the local scrap metal place.

I'd seen Moat's pickup and was suspicious. There wasn't much scrap in it for the naked eye to see but my instinct as a trained plumber-turned-copper was that he was full of shit and his van full of stolen metal. When I pulled him over I saw the copper pipe and an old radiator hidden underneath a load of garden waste. I knew that copper goes dull quickly and I could see that this was fresh copper, so I wasn't buying it when he said that he'd removed the remnants of the central heating as part of a job.

He had been a doorman, I've since learned, but was claiming to be starting afresh as a tree surgeon. He told me without batting an eyelid, that he had been cleaning out a garden in Morpeth, just a few miles up the A1.

I didn't even need to ring the old lady in Morpeth where he claimed to have been. There was no point even trying since he was so vague on the detail – couldn't remember her name, couldn't remember the street.

We did him just outside the scrap yard under section 165 of the Road Traffic Act. This is how we nailed the uninsured and unlicensed – I'd seen the destruction that these people cause, clocking millions of pounds worth of damage. What would have happened for example, if he'd gone flying off up the road uninsured, and the boiler he was carrying had flown off the back and killed someone?

His insurer's certificate was with a company who I had dealt with time and time again in relation to metal theft. I knew they wouldn't insure you to carry scrap metal.

I was working quickly while Jon was working Moat. We'd done well to get him back onto the road rather than in the yard itself where he could have destroyed all the evidence.

Normally, we'd take it in turns to nail our target, but this time I felt I'd done enough for the day and Jon hadn't.

Moat was horrible, absolutely vile. He was that massive that he took up two seats in the car with his little round head, bulging eyes and steroid-induced body. He started off reasonable enough, telling us about working as a landscaper – to the point that Jon was going to let him off with a producer – but then Moat cottoned onto the fact that the longer this was going on, the more checks I was able to run on him.

I was on the phone to the Motor Insurance Bureau. They had told me straight that he wasn't covered to carry scrap metal. Jon was of the mind not to seize the vehicle but I rang my supervisor, Phil Patterson, to check.

I'd taken an instant dislike to Moat, but that was also copper's instinct. If you like, he failed the 'attitude test', but I felt uncomfortable with him in a way that I have only ever felt with one other member of the public previously, who just happened to be a psychotic schizophrenic. Moat was that bad and intimidating and his casual opening posture of a landscaper soon turned into a bitter diatribe against anybody and everybody in authority, from Social Services to probation officers.

I was clear in my mind and Phil backed me up: we had to take the vehicle off him. Jon doesn't like confrontation, whereas I rise to the challenge of it. I knew I couldn't beat Moat in

a fight but in law there was no contest. He was three times bigger than me but I could defeat him in other ways, by taking his car. I knew I was right.

Now I wish I had never set eyes on him but I'd take his car off him again tomorrow, because that's the kind of policeman I am.

In the end, I convinced Jon to take it off him. To this day it's Jon's name on the paperwork. Moat was Jekyll and Hyde, blowing hot and cold all the time in the car. Jon didn't want to book him but I couldn't stand Moat. He intimidated me.

I have had criminals in the back of my car hundreds of times but I felt then that he was going to come for me and he made it quite clear that he hated anyone in authority. All I had as a safety blanket was to attribute the decision to the supervisor. It was my decision but I didn't sell it to him like that.

We interviewed him under caution in the back of our car and called the recovery truck to seize his on our behalf and remove it to the pound. He had seven days to produce his documents. He was looking at a £150 release fee and around £12 per day storage. That would probably send him nuts too. He was also screaming that his missus would go mad if he lost the vehicle. I'm not sure if that was Sam Stobbart, the mother of his other kids, or someone else.

After about an hour, another big, steroid-looking bloke came to fetch him. Looking back it might have been Karl Ness, who was also to reappear in my life but I can't be sure. I just remember a huge, repulsive Moat wandering off in one of those naff gym tops with a picture of a weightlifter on it. That image is imprinted in my mind.

We drove off, safe in the knowledge that he could pump all the iron in the world but he wouldn't be lifting any more metal.

Something wasn't right though. Of course, on many occasions you clock off and your head is still buzzing. Being a policeman is so often all about 'unfinished business'. You often leave loose ends for the guys on the next shift to tidy up after you've gone home but this job lingered ominously in my mind. I couldn't shake Moat off. He'd got to me. I'd try and think about something else but he'd keep cropping up in my thoughts.

I drove home that night to my old house near Blyth, up the Northumberland coast. I couldn't get him out of my mind. He was irritating me big time. Of course, your last job of the night can sometimes do this to you. You can't legislate for being moments from clocking off and a big one coming in that sends you home late and pumped with adrenaline. Yet this was different. I was always proud to do my job and difficult members of the public and tasks overrunning were just part of it but he had got under my skin.

I couldn't get rid of his image, driving home in a preoccupied daze. He had frightened me but also really wound me up. It didn't matter what anybody said to me at home that night, I was only half listening. I just couldn't get that huge, bitter, issue-fuelled monster out of my head. The next day I awoke and he was still there, bugging me. This went on for a couple of days. This usually only happened if I'd locked somebody up and then they had got bailed so that I would have to go and get more evidence while they wriggled on a technicality. I'd get aggravated by the system then.

This time I was irritated by the man

At the back of my mind was just one common thought – he'll come again.

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Once I knew that Moat was back, I had to get up to speed and quick. I learned that he had been in Durham Prison, serving eighteen weeks for assault on a minor. He'd been released a few days earlier, on Mia's actual birthday. In the early hours of this morning, he'd gone to Birtley in County Durham to the house of his former girlfriend Samantha Stobbart, under the impression that her new partner Chris Brown was a policeman and that's where the vendetta began. Brown was in fact, a 29-year-old karate instructor.

Samantha Stobbart and Chris Brown had been out for the evening. They had then gone on to a friend's house where they continued to drink, unaware that Moat had been crouched under the open window of the living room for a good ninety minutes listening to a group of them mocking him. At around 2.40 a.m. Brown left the house, clutching an iron bar, with Sam Stobbart in tow.

They were his last steps.

Armed with a sawn-off shotgun, Moat shot Chris Brown from less than a metre away, straight through the right side of his chest. This was the first of the three shots that would prove fatal. While Stobbart's mother was dialling 999, Moat fired through the window. Sam Stobbart was hit in the arm and abdomen and was taken to hospital for emergency liver surgery and placed under armed guard.

How had I missed this?

It's my job to know everything and in this day and age, it sometimes seems like it's impossible not to, especially when you have a professional interest in something. Yet my neighbour Jim had known more than me.

After Jon's text I went straight to the computer at the station and banged in Moat's name. There wasn't much on there but what I found left me reeling.

He had come in to the station last year to remonstrate and Jon, who had taken over the investigation, had issued an NFA – no further action.

I couldn't believe it.

He had faced no summons for the insurance, though he had had to pay the release and storage fees which sent him ballistic. I hadn't been there and hadn't seen him since but I was devastated, always having been convinced that we had done him for being uninsured. He had got under my skin so much that I thought that I had that moral high ground over him but he had wriggled free. There had been something not right about him last year, which had frustrated me. I had spent an hour at the scrap yard, satisfied that I had enough to nail him. Technically you could look up anything on the police computers, though you weren't supposed to. I could get his address, of course, and see things like previous arrests. I could

also see that he'd been charged with murder – something to do with a knuckle duster which had then been confiscated in 2000 and, later, an incident with a samurai sword in 2005. In all he had been arrested fourteen times but had only done time recently. He had had so many scrapes, including relative nonsense like driving off without paying for fuel but he'd never been sent down until now. My instinct had been right all along.

Of course, I attach huge significance to this now. I'm proud that my sixth sense was correct but all I could think at the time was why had we let him squirm his way out.

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At around 4.50 p.m., my colleague, Chris Dodds, and I were given a job to head out to The Keelman pub near Newburn Leisure Centre. The caller was in a silver Vectra and had been drinking with Moat all day.

'This sounds like a bloody crock of shit this does. Why are we going down? We're bloody traffic cops and we're not armed,' I said to Chris.

But we agreed to go.

We couldn't even be sure who we were looking for. I could see Moat in my head, but the computer was pulling up no contemporary shot of him. He hadn't been photographed on his exit from Durham Prison.

I drove around the pub car park a couple of times, even following the nearby old farm track to speak to the farmer but there was nothing. He hadn't been here and wasn't here now. It had been a hoax call from a regular hoaxer – a guy with all sorts of baggage and rubbish against his name. His entry registered every type of police warning on the system from "no female officer to approach him" to "heavy drugs user" – and this wasn't even Moat. This was one of those other sick fame-hungry nutters who waste police time to have their fifteen minutes of fame.

So we were none the wiser. I parked up by the substation on Newburn Road, on the lookout for Moat.

Around 8 p.m. I went back to headquarters for some bait. You call it tea, we call it bait! I remember Chris finishing off my banana and yoghurt. My bait is your bait and if you don't eat it, someone else will. That's just the rules of the jungle.

I'd been texting Kath too to see how Mia's party was going.

'Be careful,' Kath had replied. 'I'm going to hide under the stairs in the shoe cupboard! The house is so noisy with the girls dancing and the music blaring, it's the best place for me!' 'Move over, I'll get in with you,' I had sent back.

We didn't hang around long on break though. Only last month I'd been sitting on the A69 scanning cars in the wake of the Cumbria shootings, when a nutter called Derrick Bird had killed twelve people.



I was back on the A1, off up the West Road, on to Stamfordham Road in West Denton, back down the A1 again. Nothing was happening. No sightings, nothing on the radio, no new intelligence.

I rang home at half nine. The shoe cupboard was clearly the place to be. Mia had fallen out with the girls! I wasn't surprised. It was always going to end that way. I told Kath to send them all home if they were misbehaving. We carried on texting after I'd put the phone down. My shift had done a group picture and we'd run it through the Fat My Face app.

'You should send that to Darren in Australia,' Kath texted.

'You read my mind,' I replied. I had just pressed send to my twin brother, completely oblivious to the fact I would next hear his voice in hospital.

I could never have known that texting such a stupid picture would be one of the last things I did before my life changed forever.

I popped back to the station briefly at 10.40 p.m. but nobody was there, so I went straight back out. I had put Moat out of my mind for a moment, when word came on the radio about a possible drunk driver being followed from Whitley Bay to Newcastle. I hit the A1 southbound and snuck in as the back marker police car just up the Westerhope slip road. It was nothing though. The driver was just drowsy and the moment passed.

By 11 p.m. I'd left the A1 at the West Road and parked up on the drop kerb at the edge of the pavement at the top of the slip road. If you think like a criminal, you've a good chance of catching them.

At the back of my mind were two major armed robberies that had happened on my watch with Northumbria Police, carried out by proper hardcore crooks linked into really evil networks of crime. On both occasions they had their getaway sorted. They took the A1 to the A69 junction, then fled down past Hexham about an hour down the road through country terrain to the M6 and then tore down the motorway back to Liverpool and Manchester. If you wanted to get out of the region by car this was the number one option for the relative discretion that you could get on the narrow roads on the high ground past Haydon Bridge. Heading the other way, straight down the A1 and onto the M62 left you much more exposed. Beyond Hexham, you'd be lucky to see a police car. That's the way I'd go anyway. That's why I made the crucial decision to park up here.

That was a key decision in what followed. This thought process changed everything – for me, for my family and in the hunt for Moat. Talk to my friends and colleagues, Paul Turner and Chris Dodds, and they know it could have been them. It could have been any of us. My pride tells me that I stopped one of my mates getting shot and who knows how many members of the public. He could have gone into the city centre, pretending to ask for directions and blown any cop's face off when they wound down the window. Or turned up at the police station and done the same. Imagine that happening to a female colleague of yours in her twenties and having to explain it to her parents or her young baby. I have to believe that I took one for my colleagues.

I know that what happened next forced him out and enabled the police to narrow down the focal point of the manhunt. We always say that if you have a field with a rabbit in it and

there's only one hole, then descend on that hole, the rabbit will pop up at some point. But that was still to come...

Sunday 4 July 2010

I remember every moment of what followed, and there's hardly an hour that goes by when I haven't replayed it my head since. The detail doesn't change – the sound is just as loud in memory as it was when it happened. The desperate moments of reaching for help are still just as exhausting. You can play it back in slow motion however many times you like but the outcome remains the same. It doesn't get easier over time. You just learn to live with it, as much as you can. There are bad days, and there are less bad days. Simple as that.

I decided to give it until quarter to one and then I'd go back to Etal Lane and call it a night. We'd see what tomorrow would bring. I had done all I could, without doing much at all. As Saturday nights in Newcastle go, it had been incident free, with just one suspected drunk-driver the main focus of attention.

It was pretty quiet out there. I'd had a sneaky fag inside the car, put my phone and cigarettes in the door card so as not to be distracted and waved to a passing paramedic as he passed. That was just something we did in the fraternity. I thought nothing of it at the time. I'd done it a million times on shift before, as everyone in the emergency services had.

And then, it happened. I felt a presence.

I couldn't be sure what it was but I knew I wasn't alone. However, I didn't register that it was him. Although I never froze, my brain didn't work quickly enough. I just sat there and watched.

Moat had driven off the A1 northbound at Denton and come round the corner onto the off-slip road. He got out of the car and crawled round the corner of the barrier. I'd backed my patrol vehicle against the concrete screen so there could be no way anybody could park behind me. I'd made sure of that.

He must've been doing everything possible to stop me seeing him, squeezing his big figure down the ground. It would have taken him just a few steps to get alongside my car. There was a metallic tink on the glass.

I didn't know what that sound was at this point. It was such an unusual sound but one that now stays with me forever. I'd never be able to replicate it exactly because of the connotations, but it was that hollow noise that drew me in. He had found me.

Drawn by the sound, I leant over the passenger seat and looked up.

'Oh fuck, it's him,' I remember thinking.

Jesus, I'd been sold a dud.

It didn't look anything like the steroid-driven, pasty-faced, orange monster, whose truck we'd taken sixteen months ago but I knew it was him from his profile and his stupid 1980s Mohican haircut. This was a meaner, leaner beast. Prison life had shed him a few pounds and

the pictures stored on the police system – that the whole of Northumbria Police were working from – bore no relation to the guy in front of me now.

I know now that we were also looking for the wrong car. We'd been told to look for a blue BMW but he was driving a black Lexus. Wrong profile, wrong vehicle and, for me, wrong set of senses tuned in. I had seen that black Lexus drive round the roundabout where I was stationary but not really clocked the fact that it had one of those dodgy exhausts which automatically draws attention to itself. On any other day, at this time of night, any copper would say "I'll have a look at that". Normally it might be some kids who had pinched a car and were just being kids, nothing sinister, but as a traffic cop, you don't usually miss stuff like that.

Moat had taken full advantage of the bad info out there. Once he had spotted me, he had his target. Before parking up himself, he'd gone down a junction southbound on the A1 – he travelled to the junction at Scotswood, turned around and returned Northbound towards my location, some moments later.

And that was when I came face to face with him, literally looking down the barrel. My instinct just hadn't kicked in.

I don't know what I was expecting – perhaps that a car would drive past me. I had been mentally preparing for a chase not a showdown. He had come for what he wanted and there was no stopping him. I was alone in the line of fire staring at the spike at the end of what I thought looked like a 4-10 shotgun – the kind a farmer would use.

In the seconds that followed, I looked into his eyes, a focus of ice cold white, from which any warmth had long since passed. This man was a father to three children but had long-since shunned regular society. He was alone, his eyes told me that story. He never blinked and he never quivered. There wasn't a moment of doubt in his actions, nor an ounce of emotion. In his warped mind, he mistakenly believed that Sam Stobbart was dating a copper and he had taken him out last night. I was next and the more trophies he could get, the better, with no thought of consequence or exit strategy. This was a calculating killer who was angry and determined to hand out his own justice before society got him again.

His face didn't move. He knew what he was doing.

There was a white flash of light from the barrel and that was the last thing I saw. My lights went out, I would never see true daylight again.

He'd got me right between the eyes. My cousin Stuart later told me that he'd seen five shotgun shootings in the army and none had survived. Number six just got lucky.

It is extraordinary to think that I remained conscious throughout the moments that followed. The pain of the noise rather than my injuries was the worst. The shot didn't bother me. The sound in my head had become isolated from everything else. It was all I could make out because it was so piercing. I was aware that blood was spraying everywhere but all I could concentrate on was the sound within my skull. It was as though I'd put my head in a big silver drum and someone was rasping my face from the forehead down to my throat with an angle grinder. The noise was relentless and it was that which, in my surprisingly rational thought process at the time, I believed was causing me the pain.

I knew he was still there lurking. The thunder in my head wouldn't let up but I knew I had to carry on fighting, and act quick. I was thinking as logically as possible against the metallic drumming bashing the inside of my head. Some miracle had kept me conscious, and in the few seconds that followed I knew I had to save my skin.

I thought that I could see the touchscreen of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition System (ANPR) which was recording in front of me. Of course I couldn't but I didn't yet realise this. I had a good sense of where everything was in the patrol car which could explain why I thought I was still seeing it. I'd been driving it for years after all. I was trying to hit the little red triangle on the ANPR, emergency button. My brain was telling me I could see it but my fingers couldn't locate it. I believed I was pushing to call for help. In reality I was probably completing the same motion over and over again like a drunk putting his key in the door and ultimately getting nowhere near. I was now in serious trouble and worse was to follow. As I was trying to push the screen, my lapel mic to the radio rolled off down my chest and hit my knee, nestling onto my right foot. I remember thinking "Fuck, it's gone," and with it my last chance of getting a message out. I could feel it near my foot but I was unable to reach for it, not paralysed in the literal sense of the word, but momentarily slumped motionless.

Nothing was slowing down. There were no movie cliché slow-motion sequences, stretching out time. It all happened at high speed in seconds, with the reverberations of the gun shot still splintering my head. The only sound I could hear other than that was my blood spraying out and splashing against the dash board; I could feel the warmth of the blood soaking through my clothing. I had no idea how much I was losing but that wasn't my priority.

I know I was still thinking straight and still fighting this noise.

'You've got to get the door open,' I told myself.

The car was locked and Moat couldn't get in making my next action seem pretty stupid but the voice in my head was making me do this. I had to take this risk given that I couldn't operate the radio. My only other hope was for someone to see me.

I quickly opened the door so that the interior light would come on and I put my right foot between it and the A-frame of the car, ramming it in there so that the door couldn't shut itself and Moat couldn't shut it either.

People have since said to me that this was my training kicking in but nobody teaches you how to deal with a madman carrying a gun, other than telling you to avoid him. The body is an amazing thing though. Half of my face was hanging out but I still understood that my overriding objective was to get a message out on the radio, or to get the interior light on. The force of the shot had forced me into the footwell.

'Fuck, I've just been shot in the face,' I said to myself over and over again.

I could feel the blood spraying out of my face again and I knew I had to sit up.

Then he came for me once more.

He had been waiting to see if I was dead.

I don't think he really expected me to sit up again, but he'd reloaded. For some reason, and I don't know why, as I was hitting the ANPR, something made me raise my left arm to cover my face. While some of my other actions were rational, I have no explanation for this but it was one that would save my life.

He fired a second time, aiming at my throat as soon as I sat up. The flesh underneath my left shoulder took all the blows. If I hadn't made that uncalculated movement to screen my face when consciously, I had been trying to press the red triangle, then that would have been it. The second shot, straight through the glass, meant that I was probably looking at minutes left rather than hours. Moat would have been convinced I was finished. I had slumped back into the same position he would have seen me in after the first shot. The patrol car door remained open with my right foot in it.

I've got to find the gear lever,' I told myself. How I was having clear thoughts, I do not know. Perhaps it was my training kicking in, it may have been human instinct, or maybe I was clinging to the last drops of good fortune. I needed to find the little red or yellow push to talk button velcroed on the side of the stalk. This would activate the radio. Other than being discovered, this was my last chance. I was playing dead; I knew that if he saw me move he would shoot again. That second shot left me in no doubt - he wanted me dead.

My left hand inched slowly towards the lever and pressed hopefully into the darkness. The sound of my blood pouring everywhere and the incessant pounding in my skull was interrupted only by the radio jumping into my life. My joy turned to agony instantly. I couldn't get on the damn thing.

'Why don't you just get off the radio 'cos I need to get on?' I despaired.

A late night Dog Cop was booking off and in no particular hurry to do so. This could not be happening. I couldn't go down because one of my colleagues was nonchalantly signing off his canine friend.

'Why don't you just shut the fuck up?' I said to myself over and over again.

By the time he'd finished I had little left to give. I went to press the mic again, waiting for the carrier signal which you get before you go live. The carrier signal picked my key mic up but I dropped off the radio because the dog guy came back on.

'Why don't you just shut your mouth?' I tried to shout.

I was furious. I knew I was dying and had summoned the maximum amount of effort with little left to give, just to even press the damn thing in the first place. Finally he wrapped up and I just had to go for it.

'Bollocks to it,' I thought.

I could feel myself slipping away but somehow found the strength to press the mic and keep my thumb on it. Eventually it went live but even then I was still in trouble because the mic in the Volvo is situated by the interior light in the roof of the car. I knew I had to turn my face to be heard, or I'd be talking to the foot well.

My left hand found the little push-to-talk button velcroed on the side of the gear lever, and pressed hopefully. The sound of my blood pouring everywhere and the incessant pounding in my skull was interrupted only by the radio jumping into my life. I had little strength left. I knew I was dying and had summoned all my strength just to press the damn thing.

‘Bollocks to it,’ I thought.

I could feel myself slipping away but somehow found the strength to press the button and keep my thumb on it. It went live but even then I was still in trouble because the mic in the Volvo is situated by the interior light in the roof of the car. I knew I had to turn my face to be heard, or I’d be talking to the footwell. I had to think systematically – do this, then do that – whilst all the time groggy with the pain and the noise and not sure if Moat was still there or not.

‘I’ve been shot. I need urgent assistance,’ I whispered.

There was nothing.

Exhausted, I let go of the button.

The radio fell deadly quiet. Everything up to now had passed in the blink of an eye. But this was the moment which never ended.

Still, there was nothing on the radio.

This was the lowest moment of my life. I had been shot twice but was still trying my best to think like a cop and follow any kind of procedure I might have been taught to deal with circumstances like this. I had given my all.

I lay there, lonely and alone.

No longer a cop, just me, abandoned and helpless. This was my darkest hour.

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‘Did he just say he’s been shot?’ one of my traffic colleagues broke the silence, which had felt eternal.

I didn’t recognise the voice and they didn’t recognise me. Given my position in relation to that of the microphone, my muffled voice hadn’t carried, despite the fact that I had tried my best to be heard.

I was broken.

Just making contact after waiting for the space on the radio, had taken every last drop of will from me. I couldn’t do it again. I knew I couldn’t do it twice.

‘Did he just say he’d been shot?’

The words made me angry replaying them in my battered head. I had made all this effort to get a message out and the disbelieving tone and slow reactions of my colleagues seemed to slam the door in my face. I couldn't come back from this.

'Please don't think I didn't say it because I can't do it again,' I said to myself. What happens next in these situations is either luck or genius and I needed either. I was out of options.

Nothing happened for about fifteen seconds.

Then the radio picked up again.

'LB, he's just said he's been shot. Find out where David is on his SatNav. Do a GPS on him,' I heard.

It was Andy Nicholson.

He'd recognised me through the distortion and faint speech. Not only did he know my voice, but every time you fire a message on the radio, each device transmits its own individual number. He will have associated my voice with my number if he'd had time to look at both. My loneliness lifted and I knew it was only a matter of time. If I could hang on, they would come and find me and capture Moat.

I was at a crossroads.

Moments before I had used my last shot of energy to hit the radio and the despair of rejection had sent me spiralling. I could have gone either way but silence had condemned me. Now hearing Andy reinvigorated me to find strength and fight. Where I had been slipping away moments ago, now I was rationalising again.

'Hang on,' I thought, 'don't do a GPS on me.'

There wasn't time to wait for them to do anything other than to get back on the radio and say "Yes, he's here, we've located him". I knew if they took much longer than that I would bleed to death.

Hearing Andy's voice gave me focus. I had to get back on the radio.

'I'm on the A1 roundabout at the junction of the A69, Stamfordham Road,' I managed. But I wasn't on the Stamford Road at all.

Despite having been a traffic cop for five years, I'd always got it confused with the West Road as they both looked the same.

I'd given out the wrong location.

It was to be the last thing I did. There was no going back on the radio a third time. The exhilaration of hearing Andy's voice, coupled with the short-term energy-burst it gave me to radio my position had exhausted me.

This time I faded, and there was no coming back.

My world turned to blackness.

I was gone.

But at least now they would know.

It was Tango 190.

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