

Harry Stevenson

1.

We see them come walking along the beach from Båstad. Two couples, hand in hand, one pair a few steps ahead of the other.

It is the summer of 2006 at four a.m. and daylight is already here. The sea is completely still. The only thing that disturbs the silence is the occasional greeting from a seagull that quietly circles above. The two couples are silent, barefoot. They walk carefully across the sand to avoid the stones and the reeds that can cut.

We are standing at the old and abandoned bunker below Malen. There are still a few left along the beaches of the Laholm bay where they once were a defense against the real or imagined threat of a German invasion. We see the two couples slowly come towards us. They are young, beautiful. We guess they are on their way home. They have probably spent the night at Pepes Bodega, the hip nightspot right by the Båstad harbor, in the old bathhouse. Have they rented a hut in the forest of Malen, are they on their way to the timbered cottages under the pine trees at Riviera, or as far away as in Skummeslöv?

The first couple is now clearly visible. He is tall and fine-looking. A blond Swedish Viking dressed in white linen trousers and a red shirt with the small crocodile on the left pocket. Bought from a street vendor in Bangkok for pennies, or a shop on Biblioteksgatan in Stockholm for half a fortune. No one can see the difference anyway, nobody except he knows. His hair is quite long, swept backwards in a full wave. He is suntanned, healthy and well toned. His upper arms are beautifully formed, the face bland. His eyebrows are pale, the nose straight and the jaw square and wide. His lips are narrow, he is smiling. She says something quietly. His smile turns into a barely audible laugh. She is dark, reaches him to the shoulder. Her background might be Indian, Jewish or she might be from the south of Europe. She is beautiful, the black hair cut short. Her mouth is full, the dark red lips surrounding white teeth, the black eyebrows two question-marks, her eyes big and black. She is wearing a black dress. Or? Can you really call that small piece of cloth a dress? It is so short that it hardly covers her bottom and the start of it is so low cut that it only covers a small portion of her full breasts.

We can now also see the second couple clearly. He is black as a tropical night, almost two meters tall and slender. His skin glows in the faint light of dawn. His head is proportionally small, the eyes almost invisible and the nose tiny. But his mouth is huge. He is serious, seems to be concentrated. He is dressed in tight black calf-long pants and a colorful Hawaii shirt that is unbuttoned. His chest is completely smooth, completely black, shining. Holding his hand walks a girl almost as tall as he is. She is blond. Her hair is light and thin, hangs down over her shoulders, down her back and often falls down over her face. With unconscious gestures with her piano fingers she brushes it away over and over again. She is dressed in a simple summer dress of thin white Indian cotton with buttons down the front.

We have to name them to keep track of them. Let us pretend that the Swedish boys name is Per and that his southern belle is Marcella. We will call the other couple Arashi and Lisa. This is probably wrong. The black boy might be Per while the blond one is Aaron. The southern girl could be Anette while the blond girl would be Linka.

Our prejudices have been part of naming of them, but that is the way it is. Per and Marcella, Arashi and Lisa.

It is beautiful. The sea is calm. A few cries of the seagulls. The quiet. The two couples, hand in hand, slowly coming closer. It is romantic, an image of love. And the warmth. Yes, the summer of 2006 is a warm one, unusually warm. Right now, at four in the morning, it is twenty five degrees. Later in the day many will be bothered by the heat. Not the families with small kids that make their way right to this part of the beach because it is shelving. It is the warmest summer ever in the south of Sweden according to statistics. Speculation about Global Warming are growing, perhaps rightly so.

The couple that we have named Per and Marcella have stopped a couple of meters away from us. We are standing leaning against the bunker but it seems that they do not see us. I don't know if we are invisible or if they just don't care that we are here.

They turn towards each other. She lets go of his hand, puts her arms around his neck, stands on her toes and presses her mouth against his, her body against his. It starts out as a light kiss with closed lips but soon develops into a hungry kiss with playing tongues and teeth. Soon the whole lower parts of their faces glisten with saliva. His arms come up and press her closer to him. She pulls down his head even further and fondles his neck with long, red nails. His hands wander over her back. One hand glides down and caresses her buttocks.

The other pair pass by before they stop and turn around to watch. Per's and Marcella's kiss continues without pause, without shyness. Sure, they are busy with each other, but they must be aware of the onlookers. There is an expression that you shouldn't trust anybody who kisses with open eyes. The question is; how are you going to find out? Anyway. Maybe the couples know each other well. Arashi and Lisa show no signs of being bashful or ashamed of standing just a few meters away staring at the hot kiss.

Lisa sounds a small, very small laugh, drops Arashi's hand and dances a couple of steps away from him. She is now standing with her bare feet spread and burrowed into the sand and spreads out her arms towards him in an inviting gesture. She has noticed that the light of dawn is reflected on the smooth surface of the sea and makes the sand much darker than the water towards which her back is turned. She is clearly very conscious that she just as well could be standing there naked as the thin cotton is completely penetrated by the reflected light.

Arashi is heard laughing in a deep, dark tone. He doesn't move forward but instead stands still staring at the blond radiating beauty as seconds and minutes pass by. Finally he moves. Finally something is happening. But it is not a movement forward. Instead he slowly unbuttons the last button of his shirt and pulls it off. It falls to the sand. He goes down on his knees. With his bare torso he stands on his knees in the sand waiting for Lisa. She glides up to him, it is as if she is walking on water rather than on the sand. She doesn't stop until she is right up close to him. Arashi looks up and their eyes meet. None of them say anything, they don't smile or laugh any more. He looks down again. He unbuttons the lowest button of her dress. The second, third, fourth button. He unbuttons the fifth button, the one in front of her crotch. His hands now grabs her behind under the dress and he presses his mouth to her naked sex. She spreads her legs. His nose rests against her lower stomach; his tongue leaves traces of a snail on her inner thighs. He then finds his way to her centre. Lips, teeth and tongue work at her labia, her clitoris. Fingers dig into her. She gasps, turns her

head to the sky, sees the seagulls, places her hands on his head and squeezes his head closer to her.

Per and Marcella have taken a break from their kiss. She takes a step away from him. With her index finger she slowly and enticingly pushes the shoulder strap outwards so that it finally falls and rests over her upper arm. Her left breast is revealed. She does the same thing, but this time even slower, with the other side. With a small shake the dress falls to the sand and lies around her feet like a black pedestal. Per answers by pulling of his shirt in one fluent movement. The upper part of his body is well trained with proportional groups of muscles. He has a tattoo above the right nipple the size of a dollar coin. It is the Chinese character for courage. The white linen pants glide down his legs. His cock stands straight out from the blond pubis hair.

What happens now is surprising, unexpected. We give each other a questioning glance.

It would have been natural if Per and Marcella, now naked, would close in on each other. Or maybe they laughing would run out into the water, or sink down in the sand in a hot embrace and make love to each other. But they don't. Instead they walk towards Lisa, who is still standing with Arashi's head pressed against her sex. Per is standing behind Lisa, unbuttons the last buttons on her dress, pulls it of her and presses his cock against her behind, at the same time caressing her breasts. Marcella positions herself beside Arashi, holds Lisa's head between her hands and kisses her hotly, demanding and intensely. We soon understand that Lisa is having her orgasm and she sinks down to her knees in the sand. Arashi stands up and struggles to pull off his tight black leather pants. Marcella goes down on her knees and tries to help him. At last he is out of his pants. His cock is magnificent. Huge. Long. He doesn't have any pubic hair. He is clean-shaven. The two girls on their knees give him oral sex. Per wants to join in. He pressed down Marcella so that she stands on her knees and hands and pushes into her like a dog. The orgy goes on and on. Vaginal sex, anal sex. Everyone with everyone.

2.

The scene disturbs us. There is something wrong. This is not the way things are. We look around and realize that what we are seeing is not what we first thought, but something else.

Four cameramen are busy registering the scene on the sand. Two of the cameras are on stands, one of them so low in the sand that the cameraman is crouching. One of the cameras is attached to a device on the cameraman so that it can be moved without jumping. The last cameraman holds his camera in his hands, lying on his stomach in the sand so close to the scene that he can stretch out a hand and touch the lovers. All four of them carry headsets and can apparently receive whispered instructions. A male sound-technician holds the sound boom on straight arms above his head. The cable from the microphone leads to a digital recorder that is handled by a female technician with a headset. The director is seated on a folding chair a short distance away. He is also wearing a headset. In front of him is a bench with four monitors. Sitting beside him in the sand are several people, mostly women, that we assume are assistants, make-up and continuity. The older man with grey hair combed over his baldness and bushy sideburns, standing behind the director and watching with hungry eyes, is probably the producer.

What we are seeing is apparently not two couples on a romantic walk home from the nightclub along the beach in Båstad 2006. A walk that escalated into hot lovemaking and even orgies. No, it is the shooting of a film. It is not an everyday Swedish film being made. Scenes like this are not included in Swedish films these days; prudishness has taken over completely. No, this has to be the making of a pornographic film. Probably a porn film produced abroad, as almost no dirty movies are made in Sweden any longer. It appears the scene is coming to a close. Orgasm has been reached. The last ejaculation. Everybody relaxes. The director calls out:

“Thank you.”

The compulsory applause is weak and doesn't disturb the seagulls, or the quiet of the dawn. Nobody has noticed us. Nobody has seen us. We are invisible although we are standing here, leaning against the bunkers massive and slanted walls. Maybe we do not exist. We seem to be invisible observers, onlookers, watchers.

3.

Two figures suddenly appear from behind the bunker we are leaning against. They are less than a meter from us, but do not see us. They are both dressed in loose fitting military camouflage overalls. Over their heads they are wearing black woolen caps with small holes for their eyes. On their feet they carry heavy marching boots and their hands are covered by gloves. Two more come around the bunker on the other side. All four carry machine-guns in a strap across their shoulders. We are only observers, onlookers and can't intervene even though we want to.

The sound is deafening. We hold our hands over our ears, but our eyes are wide open as we witness a bloodbath. It seems to go on for ever, but is over in a minute. Seconds have stretched out into images that we never shall be able to make ourselves free from.

Arashi manages to take a few steps away before the bullets ground him. The producer raises his arms and opens his mouth for a shout that for always dies in his throat when the bullets hit him in the chest. One of the figures stands with feet apart a few meters from Lisa, who is holding up her white cotton dress in front of her to hide her body. The bullets tear round holes with burned edges in the Indian cotton and pass right through her thin body. The cameramen fall over their cameras. The couple we have called Per and Marcella, who have just stood up sandy and sweaty, grab each other but fall unsparingly to the sand in a pile of arms, legs, torsos and heads. The sand relentlessly soaks up the streams of blood. The last to die is the director. In some unexplainable last gesture he is trying to protect his monitors from the bullets with his body. He dies spread out over the bench with more bullets in him than anyone else.

A hand jerks. The last tremble of death, and then all is still. It is quiet, completely quiet. Even the seagulls are quiet, scared away.

The four figures dig out small white pieces of paper that they throw up in the air. They jog away toward the parking space above the bunker. We hear a car start and quickly drive away. We pick up a piece of paper and read:

**This is only the beginning
Commando Militant Feminists**

It is completely still, the pieces of paper slowly float down and settle on the sand and over the lifeless bodies.

4.

The four girls are lucky. The ferry in Helsingborg is just about to leave as they board. The stolen Volvo has been left in a no parking zone and will soon be found. It doesn't matter, there are no traces, no DNA left behind. There is sand. They pulled off their overalls, boots, and caps in the car. The gloves weren't removed until they had left the car. Everything is stuffed into a big canvas bag. All four of them have their heads virtually shaved so they won't be leaving any hair behind.

Fifty-four minutes after they ran around the bunker and up to the parking space below the pool of Malen they are sitting on the deck of the ferry. The sun is coming up. All four are probably in shock. They are composed, but avoid eye-contact with each other. They are all isolated with their own pictures burnt into their memory. They don't want to talk. They don't need to talk. In Helsingør they disembark. Their movements are controlled and focused. They take turns carrying the bag two and two. They find seats on the train and wait for ten minutes before it departs. They already have tickets. Nobody notices the four quiet, young and shaved girls among all the others commuting to Copenhagen.

The echoes of the shoots have silenced. Nobody has reacted. It is only when a man on his way to his regular morning dip in the sea comes down to the beach that the deed is discovered. The seagulls have of-course found a treat and gathered, eagerly finding food in the hollows of the eyes. The old gentleman throws up before he dizzily makes his way back home, takes a glass of water and finally gets his wits together enough to dial 112.

It takes some time for the operator to realize that the call is not a prank. The police chase isn't started until three hours after the massacre. The secret police and Interpol are immediately notified. The police in all the Nordic countries are alerted. Sirens sound, police cars drive aimlessly back and forth with blinking lights. Road blocks are set up with serious and heavily armed police officers in flak vests and helmets. Ports, airports and boarder crossings are heavily guarded. What are they looking for? Nobody knows. It is all futile. There are no clues. Everything is ransacked. Cartridges and bullets are found, made in the Czech Republic, but that doesn't help anyone. The tracks of the boots in the sand are all from Dockers, size 38. There are no witnesses. Nobody has heard anything.

As soon as the train arrives at the central station in Copenhagen, the four girls in jeans and sweaters quickly walk down the dark staircase on the back side of the building, come out on Reventlovsgade where they make a left turn and then a right turn on Halmtorvet. They once again take turns two and two to carry the heavy bag with the weapons and the military overalls they used for the deed. On one of the side streets that lead to Istergade they disappear through an open archway. This is a street of crumbling houses in an area of disrepair. Renovations have still not reached these streets. Here are the small Arabic shops and cafés. Here the junkies can still move around and live, scared away from the renovated Istergade. On the ground floor of this building, in the space that once held a bakery, two tired prostitutes receive their clients.

The four girls are now in a small, worn-down two-room apartment on the third floor without hot water. We see them from a birds-eye view, as if we were looking down

from the apartment above and can follow them going from one room to the other. The entrance door is barred with a bolt and locked with two locks. An emergency exit through the kitchen window is carefully prepared and rehearsed. On the sill outside the window in the big room facing the street is a mirror so that they can see people passing through the archway leading in to the building.

For one of the girls the tension is somewhat relieved. She is vomiting over the dirty toilet. She is Swedish. Karin. Anna is from Skåne, the southern tip of Sweden. The two other girls, Anne-Grete and Clara are both from Copenhagen. All their names are of-course taken, not their real names. But they cannot hide their roots. Anne-Grete is impatient. She has to be at work shortly. She hurries into the small room and pulls off her sneakers, the jeans, the boxer-shorts, the sports-bra, the panties, the sweater and socks. She stuffs it all into a plastic bag which she ties together and walks out, naked, into the big room where she stuffs the plastic bag into the bag. Clara, who is sitting at the window keeping an eye on the street, looks up with surprise.

“You can’t do that now!”

“It is necessary. I have to be at work in half an hour.”

Anna comes in from the kitchen with a glass of water.

“If she comes, you will have to hide in the small room. Maybe you can make it out from here before the meeting. We three ...”

She looks a bit doubtfully towards the open door to the bathroom where Karin’s retching can be heard.

“... can handle the meeting. It’s okay. It is more important that you make it to work in time than that you are here for the debriefing. It all went down according to plan.”

Anne-Grete nods thankfully and hurries back to the small room facing the rear of the apartment. She sits down at the wobbly table, on which a shred of mirror is leaned against the wall. She quickly applies make-up. Eye-liner, eye shadow, rouge, lipstick. When she also puts on the blond and well-made wig, her transformation is complete. Satisfied she gets up and pulls on a pair of minimal black lace panties. She pulls a red dress over her head. It is extremely short, low cut and leaving her back exposed. She picks up the small handbag from the floor and put her feet in a pair of red high-heeled shoes. A last check in the mirror. Anne-Grete nods to the other girls in the big room. Karin has recovered enough to sit in the worn-down sofa breathing heavily. Anna follows Anne-Grete to the front door and unlocks it. When the door is open and Anne-Grete is on her way out to the dirty stairwell, she stops. She looks Anna in her eyes, stretches forward and places a small kiss on her lips that leaves the taste of lipstick.

“Good luck.”

Anna doesn’t answer, just nods. Anne-Grete can hear the door being locked behind her and the bolt slide into place. She doesn’t go down the stairs. Instead she goes upwards, over the attic and down into the neighboring house that faces another side-street, where she comes out. She is now just another Copenhagenener on her way to work with her handbag hung over her naked shoulder and a sweater in her hand. Not a murderer. Sure, an unusually sexy and blond Copenhagenener that several men study with appreciation, but still, just one among many beautiful girls in Copenhagen. The following year Anne-Grete will go to her work daily as a guide at the Museum

Erotica on Købmagergade. She will never again meet the other girls and will never know anything about their fate. She will not do anything that could attract attention, instead trying to live a normal and calm life as possible. She will anxiously be following the daily news, but we already know that she will never be connected to the awful scene on the beach of Malen. She will never be free of her nightmares. Many years later, when she has married, changed her job and moved to a luxurious and modern house in Hellerup with three children, her husband will every now and then be awakened by her desperate and painful shouts in her sleep.

5.

We see the other three girls seated in the flat, waiting. They are silent. Two of them are sitting in the sofa; Anna has taken over the window look-out. It is about five minutes after Anne-Grete having left when Anna says:

“They are here.”

Anna walks calmly over to the door and unlocks it. Climbing the stairs is a traditionally dressed Muslim woman. She is dressed in black, covered down to her feet and wearing a headdress. Only a small part of her face is visible. Behind her is a man. She walks straight into the apartment; he waits outside. Anna leaves the door ajar and follows her into the big room. The woman asks in English.

“Okay?”

“Okay.”

Anna gives the answer. The woman nods.

“Time to go.”

Nothing more is needed for Clara and Karin to also get up. Hurriedly they undress down to their underwear. Anna collects the clothes, puts them in a plastic bag that has been lying on the sofa waiting, ties it shut and pushes it into the now well filled bag. She closes the zipper. The woman calls out softly.

“Hadim.”

The man enters. He doesn't look at the partially dressed girls. He crosses the room, looks out through the window before he grabs the heavy bag, slings it over his shoulder and walks out. The woman follows.

“Good luck.”

Anna silently follows, locks and bolts the door. She returns to the big room. Clara is at the window to watch the archway. Without looking at Anna she says:

“You two first, while I keep watch.”

Karin and Anna go into the small room, take turns in front of the mirror and dress. Just as with Anne-Grete, the wigs and clothes change their appearance completely. When Clara also is dressed they gather in the cramped hallway, give each other a quick hug and walk out through the door. Clara is the first one out. She follows Anne-Grete's steps, while Karin walks down the stairs. Anna returns into the apartment,

locks the door and continues quickly into the kitchen, where she slips out through the window and leaves the apartment forever.

Anne-Grete, Clara, Karin and Anna will never meet again. Two years of training, friendship, comradeship, but also a terrible and jointly carried out mission, are over. It was two years ago they meet for the first time, in Poland, in June of 2004. Outwards, it was a summer camp for theater enthusiasts and they actually had a few theater workshops. Mostly so that the twenty or so participants should have something to recount. What they really were training for could not be talked about. Nobody knew what the other groups were training for. Anna was appointed group leader, they were given their tasks and then trained for fourteen days. In the summer of 2005 they meet again, this time in Denmark. The training was intense and demanding. The girls grew into an efficient and effective team with Anna as the natural leader. Anna had an impressive background already then. She was an animal activist specialized on freeing minks. Active in the Attack-movement and Reclaim the City. Arrested several times. The most spectacular and attention-attracting action, especially for the tabloid press, was when Anna together with two other girls placed themselves naked outside a store selling fur coats with cans of red paint that they splashed over the shop windows, over the pavement, over themselves, but also over a lady, who happened to be passing by in a fur coat and who happened to be the prime ministers wife, before the police dragged them away. But since 2004 she has refrained from all actions, all political speeches and moved to another city where she studied art science at the university.

6.

We leave the apartment and the bird's eye view we have had. Instead we hurry out on the streets of Copenhagen. It is late morning, it is sunny and warm and a lot of people are moving about. We follow, without being noticed, the Muslim woman and Hadim. They stop on Vesterbros Torv and exchange a few words that, even if we had heard them, we wouldn't understand. They part. Hadim will see to it that the bag disappears for ever. It will probably be get a casting of cement before it is submerged somewhere outside Dragør where it will be indistinguishable from all the other cement blocks left over from the building of the bridge to Sweden. The woman calmly continues by foot straight across Vesterbrogade and on to a side street towards Gammel Kongevej where she makes a right turn. We pass the Scandic Copenhagen and arrive at Vesterport, where she walks into a shop selling vegetables.

When we come in to the shop, the woman has disappeared. While we carefully pick among ripe pears, avocados and other fruits we look around. A young Arabic boy stands half hidden behind the register smiling at us. We pay and leave. While this is going on, the meeting in the back room behind the shop has started. On a shelf mounted on the wall is a television set. The sound is turned down, but there is no doubt that the reporting from Malen has started. We recognize the parking space that now is filled with squad cars. The whole area seems to be roped of. A covered stretcher is just being carried up to an ambulance. A reporter is standing in the foreground interviewing some expert. Nobody in the room is watching. Two women and five men are in the room as well as the woman that we have followed. She gives a short and clear report on where Hadim is and that all has gone according to plan. Her next words are decisive. They settle the fate of the four girls. To let live or kill. Translated, she says:

"They are in shock. That is to be expected. One of them, Karin I think, maybe Clara, had thrown up. That is natural. Anne-Grete walked off to her work. Hadim saw her

take the back exit before we went in. They have been trained well. They will not forget, but it is unreal to them and it will soon be repressed if they aren't reminded. It is safer to let them be, but we should keep an eye on them."

The man that probably is the leader of this cell nods.

"Good. Then we will do as you say. Next."

The meeting of the terrorist cell continues. There are other actions against the capitalist, corrupt and unfaithful western society to deal with. Other cells have other missions. All who are in this room have fled from their countries, afraid to die. Now they are not afraid to die in their fight against the society that once so inhumanly and contemptuously received them. The Danish or Swedish welcome – were just as bad.

This was the cells first own action. For the past three years they have been working on a series of actions, for which were trained at the camp in Poland. The largest of the Polish operations will be realized Monday the fourteenth of August in Stockholm. Bombs are going to detonate on Sergels Torg, Gustav Adolfs Torg and inside Jackobs church with ten minute intervals. The inauguration of the Stockholm Culture Festival will indeed be given attention. They are counting on more dead than in New York, Madrid or London. An anonymous call will say that the Commando Militant Feminists also are responsible for these bombs. All to create havoc. There are also other operations underway in different stages of preparation that have to be reported, discussed and planed. The group is active, giving their mission total concentration under the disguise of being vegetable wholesalers, which works as a perfect front, giving them possibility to travel around and find their foot soldiers, pass on supplies, money and set up plans.

7.

A few hours later the meeting is over and the group splits up. We have been waiting outside the grocery on Vesterport. The leader in his full black beard exits. He gets into a worn-out truck that has been filled with boxes of vegetables and drives off. It is a green Peugeot and it is easy to follow from the air as it drives out from the center of the city towards Amager and the airport. He parks the truck outside one of the big outlets close by the airport. When he gets out of the truck he has changed into a dark suit. The beard has disappeared. In his right hand he carries a briefcase. He takes to local buss to the airport and we catch up with him just as he checks in for the afternoon SAS flight to Brussels. Business Class is full of politicians, businessmen and civil servants. Nobody talks to anybody else. He is one of them.

Arriving in Brussels, he grabs a cab and demands in halting French to be driven to the Scandic Grand Palace Brussels, which is located on Rue d'Arenbes 19, right in the center of the city. He spends only a few minutes in his room before he is on his way again. He walks a couple of blocks, walks around the Saint Michel Cathedral and takes a cab. This time his French is fluent. Three taxi rides in different directions, two walks and an hour later he is satisfied that he is not being followed and hurries into the Grand Central Station, where he gets on a commuter train. Twenty minutes later he has arrived at one of Brussels many new industrial suburbs, where a modern but completely anonymous new building in glass and steel is his goal. At the reception he utters three words and is shown to the locked elevator that brings him to the twelfth and top floor. This time he is meet by a male receptionist, big and muscular in a too tight black suit, who shows him directly to a modern and bare conference room. One of the walls is of glass with a view over Brussels. There is not

much to see, it is late afternoon, the rain has begun to fall and only a few lights are visible in the haze. On the opposite wall is a big flat screen TV. CNN's well known logo is visible in the lower left corner of the image. A reporter is standing in front of the police lines in Malen talking. The sound is turned of.

Around the glass table are seated five serious men in business suits. They are all somewhere between fifty and sixty years old and are from different European countries. At the head of the table sits the only one that stands out. He is a short and round Belgian with small round eyes and a beard. He is the only one to get up and his whole face shines up in a big smile.

"Welcome, welcome. Nice to have you here. No problems with the trip?"

His voice is thin, his manners jovial. He points at the only empty chair at the other end of the table. The reporting is mostly a matter of form. It takes five minutes. That the attack was successful is evident from all the news channels. It has already been decided that there will be no new missions for this group. Mr. Pirelli is wondering.

"Your group will continue without you, no?"

The Muslim man from Copenhagen doesn't understand the question.

"Yes?"

Mr. Pirelli laughs at his confusion.

"You don't sound sure?"

Oh, yes, the cell is of course prepared for anything that might occur. Everybody is expendable, replaceable. Harim will take command of the group if he were to disappear. Silently, the receptionist enters the room.

"Good. Since you have seen us you must die. I am so sorry."

The shot in the back of his head with the silenced Glock is barely noticeable. With an expression of surprise Harim crumbles. It happens so slowly that the receptionist catches the body before it reaches the floor and drags it out through the door that silently closes. Mr. Pirelli stands up again with a joyful laugh.

"And we forgot to give him time to pray turned to Mecca! Did you notice the surprised look on his face? I believe he would have been even more surprised if he knew our true dedication!"

The four men laugh politely. The meeting continues for a short period. Yet another plan has to be discussed. The next morning at the Scandic Grand Palace Brussels the house-maid discovers that one of her rooms hasn't been used, but she does not react. In the afternoon the reception finds that room 307 has not checked out. A bellboy is sent up and returns with an empty carry-on. The receptionist shrugs. The room has been paid for; an empty suitcase has been forgotten. Nothing to waste time over.

"Yes, Sir, room 307 is ready for you."

8.

Mr. Pirelli concludes the meeting.

“Well. I think we really have been very successful during the last few months. We have created so many different, how should I put it ... disturbances ... and have so many planned for the near future that of course will be blamed on the Muslim world. It will definitely strengthen our church. Fellow members of L’Ordre du Templar. It is time for dinner and festivities! Let us go to the dining room.

When the dinner is completed, Mr. Pirelli brings his guests into the next room. A discrete door leads from the dining room into a dark and windowless room. Here are comfortable recliners in leather, a table set with coffeepots and a long row of bottles with exclusive labels, glasses for brandy, grappa and whisky. A wine cooler is loaded with three bottles of champagne. Of course there are also boxes of the most expensive Belgian chocolates. This is a totally soundproof room. Unfortunately the various machines are not for bodybuilding. This is not where muscles are built and trained. Rather the opposite. The gentlemen fill their cups and glasses helped by the jovial Mr. Pirelli before they settle down in the recliners. Mr. Pirelli pours himself a glass of champagne before he talks into a telephone.

“Bring them up.”

Apparently the guards have been ready, because it doesn’t take more than ten minutes before a door that has been hidden behind a mirror opens. Two guards of the same build as the receptionist enter. They are holding a long chain between them. Along the chain there are eight pairs of handcuffs. The eight prisoners are dressed in the uniforms of a British school. They are all around twelve, thirteen, six girls and two boys. They walk silently with hanging heads. They don’t have any resistance left and have been drugged. Of these eight children, two are from Belarus, one from Ukraine, one from Romania, two from Afghanistan and two from Iraq. Sometimes they are from other countries – Nepal, Indonesia, Thailand, the West Bank, Brazil – for anyone with enough cash it’s only a matter of choice and contacts with the right traffickers.

Mr. Pirelli has the cash. He has lots of cash. And he has the power. Lots of power.

The guards calmly strap their prisoners against the wall with leather bands that force them to stand upright with their legs and arms spread. When the guards are done they leave the room. The school uniforms are sewn to measurement for each child. Shoes and socks have been left out. A very short skirt on the girls, small and tight shorts on the boys, short white blouses that leave the midriff revealed and a short tie. That is all. Every time this event takes place, new clothing is demanded. New combinations of children are asked for. Sometimes they are a bit older, sometimes even younger. In the cellar the resources needed are available. Cells, infirmary, doctors on the payroll, seamstress, guards, kitchen. Fully equipped. From here “goods” is delivered not only up to the twelfth floor and Mr. Pirelli, but also to other addresses in the country, and sometimes to France and Holland. The station in the cellar of this Brussels’ office building is part of a network.

We leave together with the guards; we do not want to watch the proceedings in this room. It has happened before and it will happen again. These men hold a meeting every other month, so every other month children are made victims of their orgies. Those that are lucky die during the night, others die the next day. The few that survive a month in the cellar may be sent away. No one will ever return home. Their

physical and psychological damage will never heal. They will never be able to talk about what they have been through. They will never be witnesses, because their memories have been obliterated by injections.

9.

The next morning Mr. Pirelli is driven to his house by his driver. The villa is empty, his wife is out playing golf, the children are grown up and the French maid is having her day off. He takes a shower, irritated over the scratches he has received during the night. But he forgets them fast and takes a nap. When his wife returns he is dressed and rested. He welcomes her with a kiss and an opened bottle of champagne. They eat a couple of oysters while the fish the maid has prepared is cooking in the oven.

The next day Mr. Pirelli is seated in first class on the Delta flight to Kennedy Airport and drinking champagne. Mr. Pirelli never drinks anything but champagne. The limo driver is waiting at the airport with his sign. One hour and two glasses of champagne later, Mr. Pirelli is welcomed at Roosevelt Hotel on Madison Avenue, only a five minute walk from the Grand Central Station. The hotel that was built in 1924 has recently been renovated and is considered to have one of the city's most beautiful hotel lobbies. He switches SIM-card in his cell phone and makes four brief calls. The first one confirms the meeting tomorrow at nine a.m. The second is a table reservation. The third goes to an exclusive escort agency and the fourth to a Korean brothel. Mr. Pirelli is well known. His orders are received with no questions asked. The SIM-card is cut to pieces that will be discarded at different locations.

Two hours later he is rested and walks down the ramp at Grand Central to the Oyster Bar.

We have been seated here at the bar for a while when he arrives. Invisible to him, but not to others. We see and when we don't see, we know what is going on. This time we have even been able to identify who he is going to meet here at the famous Grand Central Oyster Bar.

She is standing at the bar with a glass of Perrier waiting, dressed in a gown from Donna Karen. The red shimmering material reaches her ankles and the neckline is deeply scooped and ends in a shiny band. She is not wearing any jewelry, instead trusting her blond beauty and the eight thousand dollar dress to make an impression. And making an impression she is. He gives her a kiss on her hand. The maître d' shows them to their table. Mr. Pirelli orders for them both without asking Nicole. Twenty-four Snow Creek oysters from Washington State served with estragon vinegar, horseradish sauce and lemon to be followed by six Maryland Crab Cakes. Today is not a Wednesday but the kitchen will arrange it anyway the maître d' promises with a bow. For the main course he orders something that is not on the menu, but that he still always wants. A Sole Walewska. Nicole will have to make do with something from the menu: Sauteed New Bedford Lemon Sole File Grenobloise with grilled jumbo asparagus. Nicole will have the famous Mocha Chocolate Mousse Cake for dessert, while he detailed specifies his Trio of Cheeses. He wants a mature Brie, a Gorgonzola and a tasty goat cheese. Two cups of espresso. The maître d' is also told to bring two bottles of Cuvée William Deutz from 1975. He bows again to get the orders going and serves the champagne himself. Mr. Pirelli is in a good mood. He tells stories and jokes that are often racist and that he laughs at. He eats with pleasure and pours the champagne down his throat. Nicole smiles, nods and responds when needed, but she is of course completely uninterested in Mr. Pirelli.

The only thing that interests her this evening are the ten thousand dollars in cash that he will be giving her and the pleasure he will not give, but arrange for her.

One and a half hour later he pays using his American Express Centurion. Outside the Grand Central, on the corner of 42nd Street and Vanderbilt Avenue, there is no problem for Nicole to wave down a cab that takes them to the address on 51st Street between First and Second Avenue. It is a good location for this kind of exclusive club, only three blocks away from the United Nations. They are shown in to a private lounge.

We discretely enter the lounge just in time to see Mr. Pirelli order another bottle of champagne. Here he will have to make to do with Veuve Clicquot. He orders two magnum bottles. They settle down in a much too soft sofa and await the presentation silently. A waiter pours the champagne and puts a few bowls of snacks on the low table in front of the sofa. The room is decorated in dark red and white, with a lot of decorative elements, all in some kind of an oriental style. To the left of the sofa is an enormous round bed and to the right a Jacuzzi for at least four is steaming. In front of the moon shaped entrance hang heavy dark red drapes.

The presentation can begin. The waiter holds the drapes aside. Fifteen young Asian girls, all dressed in white kimonos, enter and stand silently on a row in front of the sofa. They all stand positioned as models, completely still with their bodies in a semi profile. The girl who was last to enter and is at the left end of the row begins. She tells them her working name, curtsies and does a complete turn around. She unties the knot of her belt, lets it fall to the floor and does the same complete turn around but slower this time. She goes down on her knees with legs spread and her arms hanging at her sides. She looks up at them and smiles. She takes hold of her ankles and stretches up her body towards them and holds it. She then gets up, turns her back to them and with her legs spread bends down and rests her hands on the floor in front of her feet. She then once again says her name as she resumes the model pose. All fifteen girls present themselves in the same way.

Mr. Pirelli sips his champagne and watches. Afterwards he stands up, walks along the line of girls. He pats one on the cheek, weighs a breast in his hand, strokes a bum, lets his hand wander over a sex. He looks bored and blasé. He looks just like a slave trader in the 19th century. He is a man that uses the slave trade of our time. Girl number three is chosen. She is notified by a hard slap on her face and a shove towards the sofa.

“Over there. On the floor.”

She sits down on the floor in front of the sofa without a sound.

On the way back to the sofa he pulls down his zipper. He sits down and point down at his groin. Obediently she crawls up to him and starts to work.

“Your turn. Whatever you want.”

Nicole says the names of the four girls she has decided on and points at the bed. The rejected girls gather all the kimonos and leave the room. Nicole gets up from the sofa and walks across to the bed, on the way discarding her gown.

We leave the room together with the rejected girls. We know how the night will evolve. There will be no more violence, Mr. Pirelli doesn't dare do indulge in his biggest passion here in New York. The police here accept a lot of things, but there

are limits. At home in Belgium he is protected by strong forces, here he is only a rich businessman. Nicole will enjoy herself with the four chosen girls. He will sit in the sofa watching while his cock is being caressed. Later on he will maybe fuck one of the girls, maybe not. He might want to play with them in the Jacuzzi. He may want to fuck Nicole, which she will accept. She knows that the wad of money will be even thicker then. This is not the first time; this is not even the first time with Mr. Pirelli. Actually she has heard several of his racist jokes so many times that she knows them by heart. But he pays well, Mr. Pirelli. She will be able to retire soon. What will happen to the Korean girls is more uncertain.

10.

The meeting starts at exactly nine a.m. We have already been here a couple of minutes. We are sitting on extra chairs along the wall, invisible as usual. We are in yet another of all those anonymous conference rooms at a hotel in central Manhattan. We will not mention the name of the hotel. They are seated at the table; Mr. Pirelli, Mr. Jones, Mr. Rumseal and Harry Stevenson. Harry starts.

“Welcome to New York, Mr. Pirelli. A pleasure to see you again.”

“Likewise.”

“I have understood that the operation three days ago was successful. No clues, no traces so far.”

“There will never be any traces. It has all been taken care of.”

“Nothing leads to L’Ordre Nouveau du Templar?”

“Nothing.”

“Good. Gentlemen?”

Harry turns to the other three men. Mr. Rumseal takes a folded sheet of paper from the inner pocket of his jacket.

“Here is a list of what has to be accomplished well before the election.”

Mr. Rumseal is an older man belonging to the ultra-right wing of the Republicans. He is known from Fox where he sometimes is asked to comment on political issues. He unfolds the sheet of paper and puts it in front of Mr. Pirelli, who bends down to read without touching the paper. Finally he straightens, looks them all in the eye with a serious expression and starts a headshake.

“This is...”

He is silent. He looks around the room again. To their big consternation he suddenly laughs. Loudly.

“... wonderful. These are exactly the kind of things we love to work with. All in the service of the Lord, of course. I can assure you that these ... ahem ... projects will be completed before the presidential race starts getting serious. I am sure ... the right man will win.”

The room relaxes. At the same time the Americans are shaking their heads. Not visibly of course, to show their feeling is not something these men do. At least not at work. But they feel that they will never understand the Europeans' strange brand of humor. Mr. Pirelli studies the three bullets on the paper once again. The first is about the Catholic Church. The Pope should even stronger loudly condemn the use of condoms. More must be done to stop the Aid Agencies from distributing condoms, especially in Africa. And the church must put more effort in the struggle in Spain to regain power and to work against the Prime Minister Zappatero. This is the most difficult of the three points, but on the other hand, not a lot is needed to satisfy the Americans. Bullet number two is just a continuation of what already has been begun: to destabilize Europe. The group wants to scare the English – and the world – to the threat of terrorists. More arrests, more planned bombings, more police attacks against the Muslims in England. Mr. Pirelli is smiling. Such plans are already in motion. One of the planned events is to use modern bras that enhance the size of the bust. It is an easy task to fill them with explosives and to hide the detonator in the support. They will never have to be used. No people have to be expended. It is not necessary. A tip to Scotland Yard, have them find a few bras, and panic has yet once again been created. Bush will gain support, the oil price will go up and stocks will go down. The third bullet is by far the simplest one. To create a greater turmoil in Ukraine and to stop oil and gas from Russia. The orange revolution has already been stopped efficiently. The plans to get a civil war started are soon ready to be set in motion.

Harry takes the piece of paper, sets his lighter to it and holds it burning between his fingers until nothing is left. Mr. Pirelli nods before he continues.

“But can you afford it?”

Now it is Mr. Jones turn to smile. As soon as he opens his mouth there is no question of it; he is from Texas.

“But of course. The suitcase over there is yours. Have a look, here's the key.”

He throws Mr. Pirelli a small key. Mr. Jones represents the oil company that finances Harry Stevenson's operations around the world. The Samsonite suitcase is big, big enough to carry several million dollars in cash. Mr. Pirelli glances at the suitcase and pockets the key.

“I am sure you will be satisfied, gentlemen. I suggest we meet on the 22nd of December.”

“Very good. Same time. I will send you a message the usual way telling you where we meet.”

In a few months Mr. Pirelli will be receiving a mass mail from a travel agent in New York with a discount offer for a certain hotel on Manhattan. Mr. Pirelli nods, gets up, takes the suitcase and disappears through the door. The meeting has lasted no more than twenty minutes.

11.

Mr. Pirelli is able to catch the evening flight back to Brussels. He once again flies First Class. Harry has made the necessary call to Homeland Security. The suitcase is discreetly marked so that it will not be transported on the ordinary belt drive to the plane, instead being carried aboard by an armed security officer. Harry is sure that

Mr. Pirelli has seen to the arrangements in Brussels. That is not Harry's problem anyway and Mr. Pirelli is surely careful with the millions of dollars that now belong to the L'Ordre Nouveau de Templar.

The next months Mr. Pirelli can focus on his company that sells holy water and other religious trivia all over the world, but most successfully to Latin America. He is looking forward to a trip to Brazil, Venezuela and Chile next week. There he has the right contacts to guarantee him his pleasures. The secret camp in the south of Chile that still is run by an old, old man with German roots, is one of Mr. Pirelli's favorite pleasures.

Unfortunately Mr. Pirelli will never face a court for his many and brutal crimes. But three years later he will be tortured and killed, actually in Chile, by a group who wants revenge after having been freed from the camp by the Chilean authorities.

12.

We stay at the meeting that goes on all day. Every hour new representatives of secret groups, factions and commandos arrive. The meetings often don't last more than a couple of minutes, but it is important that the different guests do not meet. Many Samsonite suitcases leave the room, some are big, others smaller.

Finally Mr. Jones hurries off. He grabs a cab on the street and is driven to La Guardia, where he catches a flight to Austin. R. Rumseal takes a walk to Penn Station to catch his train back home to Washington D.C. He hasn't flown since 9/11. Harry Stevenson puts on a pair of gloves and inspects the room thoroughly to make sure nothing is left behind. In a paper bag he collects paper cups, water bottles and other things that might have been touched. He wipes all surfaces, the door knobs and chairs. It is probably completely unnecessary, but all precautions should be taken. Finally he leaves the hotel with a big Samsonite suitcase in one hand and the paper bag in the other. He ensures that he is not being followed and then dumps the paper bag in a trash can a couple of blocks away. He waves down a cab and goes downtown to his newly acquired loft in the meat district on the west side. There his girlfriend is waiting with drinks and dinner. Yet another successful and enriching work day is over. As a lobbyist there are big variations to his days.

Our watch is over. We go our separate ways. I don't know if there is anything we can do about what we have seen, but I hope so. There was no possibility to intervene while watching, but we were given the chance to see one of the chains of events that are plaguing our world every single day. How are we to break these chains apart? How are we going to stop not only a group of naïve and misled girls on the beach of Malen, but also a cell in Copenhagen, a secret Catholic Order in Brussels, as well as the Mr. Pirellis, Mr. Rumseals and Harry Stevensons of our world?