

# **MOTORBIKE MEN**

**by  
Duncan James**

**Published by Duncan James**

**Smashwords edition**

**Copyright 2012 Duncan James**

\*\*\*

## **Smashwords Edition, License Notes**

This ebook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. This ebook may not be re-sold or given away to other people. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each recipient. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it, or it was not purchased for your use only, then please return to Smashwords.com and purchase your own copy. Thank you for respecting the hard work of this author.

\*\*\*

## PREFACE

CHAPTER ONE. - UNLIMITED POWER

CHAPTER TWO. - SECTION ELEVEN

CHAPTER THREE. - WHO KILLED UNCLE EDWARD?

CHAPTER FOUR. - YOU'RE FIRED!

CHAPTER FIVE. - OLD FRIENDS, NEW ENEMIES.

CHAPTER SIX. - MOVING TIMES

CHAPTER SEVEN. - THE RUSSIAN INTERVENTION

CHAPTER EIGHT. - A FUSION OF INTERESTS

CHAPTER NINE. - THE BRIDGE IN THE PARK

CHAPTER TEN. - A SHOT IN THE DARK

CHAPTER ELEVEN. - YOU'RE DEAD

CHAPTER TWELVE. - DEATH OF A KILLER

CHAPTER THIRTEEN. - DIPLOMATIC MOVES

CHAPTER FOURTEEN. - THE GOLDFISH BOWL

CHAPTER FIFTEEN. - NEW FRIENDS, OLD ENEMIES

CHAPTER SIXTEEN. - THE BEST MAN WINS

\*\*\*

## PREFACE

**JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE (JIC)**  
ITS STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP.

**CHAIRMAN** - Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service – Sir Robin Algar  
**MEMBERS**

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office.** - Permanent Secretary – Sir Wilfred Forsyth  
**Secret Intelligence Service (MI6).** - Director General ('C')  
**Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ)** - Director  
**Home Office.** - Permanent Secretary – James Burgess  
**Security Service (MI5)** –Director General('M')  
**Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre**  
**Ministry of Defence.** - Permanent Secretary – Sir Len Watkins  
**Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS).** - Chief – General Pearson-Jones (PJ)  
**Treasury.** - Permanent Secretary – Brian Hooper  
**Department for Trade and Industry.** - Permanent Secretary  
**Department for International Development.** - Permanent Secretary  
**Chief of the Assessments Staff.**  
**Other Departments.** - attend as necessary.

\*\*\*

**CHAPTER ONE** - UNLIMITED POWER

Jack Barclay had never been a very good-looking man, which was probably why marriage had passed him by. His lively personality wasn't enough for most women looking to the future, although he had enjoyed his share of girl friends in the past. But nothing approaching a lasting relationship had ever materialised.

Some women had felt sorry for him, probably because he appealed to their mothering instinct in some peculiar way. He had not been blessed with good looks at birth, and life had done nothing to improve things for the poor man. He had a horrendous scar across his forehead and through one eyebrow, the result of 'something-or-other in the Army' – nobody was quite sure, because he had never said. It was *actually* an accident at school, when he and his twin brother both fell off the same bicycle they were riding while going too fast down hill. His brother had collected a very similar scar, oddly enough. There wasn't a lot of Jack's nose left, either, thanks to many an opposition boot on the rugby field. Neither had his two front teeth ever really straightened out after his head-on smash on the ice with a fellow who could skate rather well, while Jack was still trying to stay upright. In time, though, he became an excellent skier.

And he was on the short side of being tall. Vertically deprived, he called it. For some, five foot seven would have been enough, but although he never actually complained about it, the fact was that most women, and almost all other men, made him feel as if he was standing in a hole.

So, as an up-shot of all this, he lived on his own, most recently in a second-floor flat in Battersea, which he had bought as a London bolt-hole when he felt he

really had to get away from the pressures of his research work in Oxfordshire, where he lived in digs. The Battersea flat did not have a bad outlook across the park, and he could see the bridge if he leant over his balcony. That, in turn, provided him with more than enough gardening, all of it in pots. He kept the apartment clean and tidy, and mostly cooked for himself when he was there. He enjoyed that, and didn't often eat out anywhere unless he was abroad on business or away from home for some other reason. He was no bother to his neighbours, so they said, but this was not altogether surprising as he was rarely there.

He had never got on with his brother. Even though they were identical twins, they were as different as chalk from cheese. Jack had done well at school, and his brother Roger hadn't. Roger appeared not to care about learning anything worthwhile, and never made the slightest effort. Which was why, quite early on at Grammar School, they had been separated into different classes. Brother Roger was not the least impressed by the efforts and achievements of his twin, although the school's teachers had thought that a bit of peer pressure, especially from a twin brother, might spur him into making something of an effort, if only for the sake of appearances. But that theory didn't work, and he hadn't even tried to do well – at anything. He had never shown the slightest interest in sport, although he was required, unless he really *was* ill, to play 'rough and muddy rugby' during the winter, and 'boring cricket' in the summer. Roger's scholarly brother, Jack, on the other hand, had represented the school at cricket, rugby and, later badminton, too. A fellow classmate had once managed to break Roger's nose during a particularly awful game of rugby, and an opposition batsman had square-cut a ball at cricket one Wednesday afternoon and loosened two of Roger's front teeth for him while he had been thinking of something else. All of which resulted in he and his brother continuing to look like two peas in a pod.

The plain fact of the matter was that Roger had simply idled his way through every aspect of school life, and couldn't leave soon enough – a view eventually shared by his headmaster. The brothers were certainly not identical twins, except in appearance. Had they been closer, they could have played havoc everywhere they went. But they chose to keep their distance from one another, and the older they got, the greater became the distance between them.

So, it was no great surprise to their parents, although an ongoing disappointment until the day they died, when Roger Barclay had joined the local bank as a junior clerk, without even waiting for his 'O' level results. In the event, they were as disappointing as everyone expected, and not worth waiting for anyway.

Brother Jack, meanwhile, had gone up to Oxford, done remarkably well, and continued to succeed in his chosen career as a mathematician and research scientist in particle physics. His reputation went before him, and his services were soon in demand. Oxford wanted him to stay on to tutor after he had achieved his doctorate, and the Americans were even now trying to entice him to work for them. But he had elected to stay in the UK, and to work for the Atomic Energy Authority, although he had rejected approaches to help develop new and ever more devastating weapons. He was convinced that the power of the atom should be put to the future good of

mankind, and harnessed to generate the energy that the world's fast-growing population would need in order to survive.

Which is how Professor Jack Barclay came to be a key figure in the development of nuclear energy as a replacement for fossil fuels. His research efforts were closely watched around the world – sometimes too closely for his own comfort. He preferred not to be in the limelight, but to work quietly with a few chosen colleagues at the purpose-built research laboratory at Culham, towards their ultimate goal of achieving sustainable nuclear fusion.

Fusion power offered an almost limitless source of energy for the future once the formidable scientific and engineering problems surrounding its development were overcome. Because of this potential, every major nation in the world pursued its own research programme to some extent, in a commercially competitive effort to achieve the Holy Grail of meeting the fast-growing universal demand for energy. But in spite of this, there was also a great deal of international co-operation, particularly among scientists, even if this was not shared between politicians. Harnessing nuclear fusion would answer the world's insatiable demand for energy without contributing to global warming, and without producing massive amounts of radioactive waste. What waste there was, quickly decayed. Hydrogen was its main fuel – the most commonly available natural gas in the universe.

To make this dream of endless power a commercial reality meant engineering the fusion together of such nuclei as hydrogen isotopes so as to release energy, rather than the easier technique of splitting atoms in nuclear fission, the process used for weapons. The fusion process is similar to that which takes place in the sun and other stars, and requires similar exceptionally high temperatures. Energy-producing fusions need gas from a combination of the hydrogen isotopes deuterium and tritium to be heated to some one hundred million degrees centigrade and to be confined for about a second. During this time, the plasma of electrons and hydrogen interact to fuse into helium, and some of their mass is destroyed, releasing huge amounts of energy in the form of heat, light and radiation. Such fusions had been carried out in laboratories for many years, but only of very short durations. Confinement for longer periods would result in a controllable, continuous reaction, which generated more energy than it used.

Professor Jack Barclay had set that as his goal.

Previous work had suggested that the use of magnetic confinement of the gas was the most promising in achieving a continuous 'burn', although, thanks largely to Barclay's work, research to achieve the same objective using lasers was now well advanced. Although he was one of a team, his incisive brain and sound theoretical approach gave him prominence among his peer group. Barclay reasoned that using lasers would provide the ability to maintain a steady flow of fusion blasts, taking research closer to the continuous system needed for commercial power generation. It was his work that led to the formation of the High Power Laser Programme at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory at Harwell, in which he now played a leading role. This aspect of his research was considered so important that very little of it was made public knowledge, even within the scientific communities of cooperating countries.

Although limited and lacking in detail, news of his new research work had somehow got out, and had caught the public imagination through the popular press, as well as exciting fellow researchers round the world. They constantly demanded the publication of learned papers and his presence at conferences to expand on his new theories, but he was a diminutive man, who, probably because of his stature, disliked the attention of others and certainly hated speaking in public, even at seminars about his chosen subject. But the media had more than once given him and his work unwanted and unwelcome publicity, so that he was now quite well known generally as well as in the very specialised world of nuclear physics. It was his most recent work in developing the theory of laser confinement of the hydrogen plasma that was exciting most interest, particularly in America, the Middle East and Russia. It soon became evident from the level of their interest that Barclay's work had put the UK well ahead of other countries in this most-promising aspect of the nuclear fusion race.

And that brought with it particular dangers. Not just for him, either. Neither of them knew it at the time, but Jack's success was to prove to be the death of his brother Roger.

\*\*\*

Like his brother, Roger Barclay had never been a very good-looking man either. They were, after all, identical twins. He had even collected a similar looking scar on his face when they crashed off their bike when kids at school, not to mention similar damage reluctantly gained on the sports field.

Roger Barclay led a quiet but contented life. Contented because it was uncomplicated. Like his brother Jack, he had never married, so only had himself to bother about. He cared little enough for his twin brother, who seemed to be forever rushing about all over the world like the mad scientist Roger believed him to be, and the two rarely met. Unlike his brother in almost every way, he couldn't wait to get away from school, with all the pressure that went with it, some of which he admitted was created by his brother's superior intellect and achievements. This was why he had left school early, and taken a behind-the-scenes clerical job in the local bank. He could handle the demands of that job, such as they were, with minimum effort, while earning sufficient for his modest needs. He did a bit of overtime now and then, usually at the end of the month when the bank was at its busiest, and was able to put a little aside for a rainy day. It enabled him to do a bit of travelling, too, which was about the only thing he really enjoyed and looked forward to. Not that he went far, ever. He had a small but very old car that he seldom used for fear it would let him down, so he mostly travelled by public transport. He enjoyed buses for short trips, because you could see more, but used the train when he was travelling any distance, and got the tickets from his local travel agent. He could pick up all the leaflets at the same time, and dream of visiting all those far away places if ever he could afford it – or be bothered. He could just about afford a small flat in a backwater of Blackheath, where he lived. His address sounded much grander than the flat warranted, because it wasn't in the most sought-after part of that once-smart London 'village'. But it suited him well. Out of the way as it was, he was able to keep himself to himself and come and go as he pleased, eating in when he chose, or grabbing a cheap takeaway meal

somewhere on his was home from the bank. He rarely saw or heard anything of his neighbours, and only knew a couple of them well enough by sight to nod a greeting on the rare occasions they passed on the stairs. It was rare, too, for him ever to meet or talk to his brother, although he knew quite a bit about his work because of the publicity he received from time to time in the press and on TV. The more he saw and heard, the gladder he was that he was so unlike his brilliant brother. Roger was a loner, let's be honest. He enjoyed his own company better than other people's and didn't want to be bothered by other people. No wife, no close friends, and no family apart from his almost-estranged brother. Their parents had died a year or so ago, killed in a coach crash while on holiday in the French Alps. In fact, that was about the last time he and Jack had met, at the funeral. They had been in touch a bit since – Christmas cards and so on – but hadn't actually met again since that cold, wet day at the crematorium. They had both decided that they should make an effort to keep in touch more often than they had in past and indeed had phoned one another a couple of times since then. But they had not been long chats. They had too little in common to find much to chat about.

This was why their last phone call had been so unusual.

\*\*\*

Work on the laser containment of plasma for the nuclear fusion process was gathering pace, and Professor Barclay found that he had less and less time to himself. Apart from frequent visits to the Atomic Energy Establishment at Harwell, and sometimes even Aldermaston, he also travelled abroad more and more often these days to work with European colleagues within Euratom, and those involved in the new International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor at Cadarache, in France. He and his small team of research scientists and mathematicians felt impelled to keep up the momentum of their work, fearing that any lengthy break would disrupt their train of thought and further delay the academic progress that they appeared to be making. Much of their time was spent at the blackboard, fretting over complex theoretical equations in an effort to fathom solutions to seemingly intractable problems. But slowly, solutions seemed to present themselves, at which point the team needed urgent consultations with their more practical colleagues in the engineering field to discuss the feasibility of putting their new-found propositions into some form of working framework. Barclay was beginning to believe that they might at last be on the right track, and that their research effort could soon point them towards the form and structure of an operational prototype.

Naturally, news of this activity spread throughout the world of science, creating considerable excitement and discussion. In some quarters, however, it was also a cause for some concern.

Not all the players in the energy field were anxious to see nuclear fusion developed to the point where it could become a commercially viable alternative source of power. At least, not yet. Although such an outcome was in any event at least some ten or perhaps even twenty years away, there were a few countries around the world, including some of those involved in joint research projects, that still had almost unlimited resources of fossil fuels at their disposal, and who could see the

value of their oil and gas reserves begin to decline. On the other hand, there were countries that were similarly striving to make the breakthrough in nuclear fusion before any other nation, so as to command the commercial benefits to be had.

The focus of these competing interests was Jack Barclay's small team at their secret laboratory at Culham, but particularly the Professor himself. They were all unaware of this unwelcome attention, but some of Britain's commercial attachés and elements of the intelligence fraternity had already begun to pick up the unhealthy interest that was being shown in some quarters in Barclay's work. Slowly, news of this focus of interest on Barclay filtered upwards through the diplomatic and intelligence networks until it reached the higher echelons of the establishment in Whitehall.

It was at a meeting of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) that the issue was first discussed, albeit briefly. In answer to his probing, Sir Robin Algar, the Cabinet Secretary and Chairman of JIC, discovered that none of his colleagues could recall hearing anything at all disturbing about the natural interest being shown around the world in Barclay's work.

"What have *you* heard, then?" asked Sir William Forsyth of the Foreign Office.

"Like you, nothing specific," replied Algar, "but some leading questions are being asked in some quarters which could indicate more than a natural curiosity in the work of Barclay and his team, and I wondered if anyone else was getting the same vibes."

"Since you mention it," said Forsyth, "recent telegrams have suggested that a couple of governments overseas are taking rather more than a scientific interest in the work being pioneered in this country. Russia and Saudi Arabia spring to mind, but I'd need to check."

"I also seem to recall that a few recent intelligence updates have suggested a whiff of unusual interest being shown," added the Home Office man, James Burgess. "But like you, William, I'd need to check to be sure."

"Then please do – all of you," commanded Algar. "I'd like to know at our next meeting if anything suggesting a threat is developing, so that we can react accordingly. Get the usual checks done by the Security Services, and I'd like your people, Len, to report anything they may have picked up." This was to both Sir Len Watkins at Defence and the Chief of Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS). "We will discuss it again when next we meet," he said, and adjourned the meeting.

\*\*\*

Like everyone else when they next met, each member of the JIC had been given a special brief prepared by the officials in their own Department. Similarly, the brief that had been prepared for the Chairman rehearsed the background to the work that had been going on for decades into the possibility of providing for future energy needs by harnessing nuclear fusion. They all knew that fusion reactions had been an almost daily event at Culham for some decades, but that a self-sustaining reaction was yet to be developed. This was the next big step – to develop a reactor that would emit more energy than it consumed and was able to generate the extreme temperatures

needed to maintain a self-sustaining reaction. The development of such a machine was an international effort. Indeed, the Joint European Torus, the largest fusion reactor then built, was housed at Culham, while the newer and more powerful International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor, had been built in France. In spite of this huge and expensive international effort, many countries were also pursuing their own development work. It soon became evident to the JIC that some countries believed that the results of the UK's research at Culham were not being fully shared with them.

"Up to a point, they're right," said Algar. "There are aspects of Barclay's work which we are keeping to ourselves for the time being. Not just Barclay's work, either. The research into new materials, such as niobium tin and niobium titanium, capable of withstanding the enormous temperatures developed in the reactors, is also something we are reluctant to share at the moment, although we know that others are following the same lines of development. But for various reasons, Barclay's work is attracting undue and unwelcome attention, and we need to discuss what to do about it."

"It seems," said Sir Wilfred Forsyth of the Foreign office, "that it is Barclay's work on using laser containment that is exciting the greatest interest at the moment."

"I agree," said the Defence man, Len Watkins. "There appears to be a generally held view that his work is far ahead of that being carried out elsewhere, and rivals are keen to catch up."

"Or slow his progress," suggested Forsyth.

"What is that supposed to mean?" asked Burgess of the Home Office.

"It means," said Algar, "that there are two factions at play here, if I understand the briefings correctly. One wants Barclay to share his research findings with them now rather than later, while the other wants to stop him making further progress while they catch up."

"How would they do that?" asked Hooper from the Treasury.

"By removing him from the scene, I guess," replied Watkins.

"Do you mean kidnapping the man?"

"Or worse."

"That is scandalous. Who are we talking about here?"

"There are two rival camps here, so I believe," said Forsyth. "My Int. people are indicating that there are those who are desperately head-hunting Professor Barclay, to get him to work for them rather than us, and there are others – or at least one other, I should say, but perhaps more – who simply want him removed from the scene. Perhaps permanently."

"I agree," said Algar. "I know for a fact that the Americans have offered Barclay very attractive terms indeed to work for them at the National Ignition Facility based at the Lawrence Livermore laboratory in California, where they are already studying the use of lasers in the nuclear fusion field. This is an approach made by academics to another academic rather than by the Government, although of course the laboratory is backed by the US Government, so the administration must know about the approach and approve of it."

"What about Barclay's reaction?" asked Burgess.



“Interested, I’m told, but so far has decided to stay put,” replied Algar. “There is another player, though, who has yet to show their hand, but who may eventually manage to turn him.”

“You mean Abu Dhabi?” asked Forsyth, rhetorically.

“Abu Dhabi?” asked Hooper disbelievingly.

“Exactly,” said Forsyth. “It sounds incredible, but the United Arab Emirates are actively considering entering the field themselves, even at this late stage. They have invested countless billions of their oil revenue into their infrastructure, - roads, hospitals, education, tourism and so on, - and now realise that when Abu Dhabi’s oil reserves run out, which they will eventually, they will have nothing with which to service this huge investment. Developing an alternative energy source, which they can sell to their neighbours when they, too, run out of oil, is being seriously studied.”

“So how does Barclay fit into this grand scheme?” asked Watkins.

“They are talking about approaching him to start up the project,” said Algar, “and to run it. They could afford to pay him whatever he asked, and provide him with the sort of research facilities that at present he can only dream of. They have yet to approach him, although we suspect he has heard of their interest through his academic connections.”

“That could explain why he has resisted the American so far.”

“Whatever happens, we need to keep him here if we possibly can, although there is no way we could compete financially,” said Hooper.

“In the end, it’s his choice anyway,” pointed out Burgess.

“What about this apparent threat to remove him from the scene?” asked Watkins.

“According to our information,” said the Head of SIS, “the Russians at least want him out of the way. There seem to be two reasons for this, but the main one is to slow down the development of an alternative energy source until their own vast reserves of oil and gas are nearing depletion, and then to capture the new market to themselves. In particular, they are keen that he doesn’t work for the Americans.”

“So are we,” agreed Algar, “but for different reasons. I also believe that, if he goes to Abu Dhabi, the Iranians and the Saudis may also then be tempted to put an end to his work.”

“So how do we assess the threat?” asked Watkins.

“Ignoring the threat to our own national interests for the moment, Barclay himself seems to face a real threat of either kidnap or assassination,” said Algar. “My view is that Section 11 should be tasked to keep a close eye on the man. We shall need to decide later whether Barclay should be briefed, or whether we just get on with it without his knowledge. I also think we should double-check the security clearances of all those who are working closely with Barclay, especially his small teams at Culham and Harwell. Perhaps you could set that in motion as soon as possible,” he said to the Home Office Permanent Secretary.

They all nodded their agreement.

“Good,” said Sir Robin Algar. “I suppose I’d also be well advised to tell the Prime Minister, about this.”

Again, they all nodded.

\*\*\*

## CHAPTER TWO – SECTION ELEVEN

Many people who were involved in the security and intelligence business had often thought that there were too many different organisations involved, in one way or another. For instance, one organisation looked after overseas threats, while another gathered intelligence about threats on the mainland, and yet a third was responsible for organised crime. These responsibilities frequently overlapped, which was why there were the ‘joint’ organisations. Bits and pieces of the other three, put together in an effort to avoid duplication and to ‘co-ordinate’. The Government appeared to think that the answer to every new threat was to add a bit more bureaucracy to the system. But inevitably, they all tended to trip over one another from time to time, while the constituent parts owed allegiance to their own parent body, so rivalry was never completely eliminated, and individuals were always looking over their shoulder to make sure that nothing was done to prejudice their future career prospects. Reporting chains became a nightmare, and budgets were a permanent source of conflict.

The tasks of these various bodies became increasingly complex as time went on. The Chinese clans for example, operated both abroad and in UK. At the same time, the clans were organised crime (Special Branch), a threat to mainland UK (MI5) and were often based overseas (MI6). There were others, too, like the Mafia, both the Italian and the Russian versions, and the drug barons of Columbia and Afghanistan. Add a dash of international terrorism, and management became virtually impossible, not least because the Military inevitably became involved on top of everyone else. Look at the al-Qa’Aeda situation, for instance, and the Taliban, with its international drugs trade. So other countries were added to the pot, to represent their national interests as a threat developed. The reporting chain upwards was complex, too. Some organisations reported to the Home Office, others to the Foreign Office, and yet more to the Ministry of Defence. A few, rather special agencies, reported direct to the Prime Minister’s office.

The United States played a trump card, or so it thought, in safeguarding its national interests, when it formed the new, huge and vastly expensive organisation that it called the Homeland Security Department. The outcome, in reality, was to slam the door on the outside world, friends and foes alike, making life difficult if not impossible for visitors to the US, whether they were business or pleasure travellers. But the Americans felt more secure because of it, so that was all right.

Then the UK Government created yet another ‘secret’ organisation, which immediately received widespread publicity, especially in the tabloids. It was grandly called The Fixated Threat Assessment Centre, run by a mixture of the police, doctors and health officials, whose remit it was to identify and target individuals whose obsessive behaviour could pose a threat to people in public life. Those individuals posing the threat could be ‘sectioned’ under mental health legislation, and locked up, without trial, on medical grounds. And it was a real enough threat. BBC personality Gill Dando had been murdered by a stalker, and so, overseas, had the Swedish

Foreign Minister, Anna Lindh. But the human rights lobby immediately saw this as a draconian measure for dealing with terror suspects without putting the accused before a judge and jury.

It was just as well they didn't know about Section 11.

Run jointly by MI5 and MI6, Section 11 (5+6) was a small, very top-secret unit, which had so far managed to remain top secret. It was one of those organisations that reported direct to Downing Street, through the Cabinet Secretary, who was also Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). S.11 had a worldwide remit to guard high value UK citizens when they were at maximum risk, and, if necessary, to 'eliminate' any serious threat to their safety. It wasn't concerned with royalty or senior ministers or foreign dignitaries – there was already a separate organisation to look after them, in the form of the Royalty and Diplomatic Protection Unit, run by the Metropolitan Police from Scotland Yard. Section 11 looked after other, less obvious but none the less high value targets, some of whom never realised they were the objects of special attention. But they were all individuals who, because of their exceptional value to the country, were naturally also of interest to the country's enemies.

Section 11 had managed to remain undetected by the media and others simply by virtue of the way it was organised and operated. It had a discrete budget provided by its parent organisations, which each made a contribution towards the cost of its operations. Although S.11 did not have its own budget voted by Parliament, it was understood that whatever it wanted, it got. Not for them, however, a smart Headquarters building in Whitehall, or fast cars, or odd-looking uniforms, or any of the trappings which the public, and the media, come to expect of Government Quangos of this sort. They went out of their way to remain – well, out of the way.

Their HQ was in a rather down-at-heel terrace of offices over an also rather down-at-heel row of commercial properties - shops, cafés, pizza bars, solicitor's offices, a laundrette, a travel agent, fish and chip shop, and so on. It was in Clerkenwell, not far from the Mount Pleasant Post Office sorting office and Saddlers Wells opera house. The street was so ordinary that nobody took any real notice of it, and certainly never went there unless they lived or worked nearby and wanted a newspaper, or a quick coffee, or a sandwich for lunch. The frontage of the terrace had been turned into a pedestrian precinct, which kept it quiet, but there was road access from the back, and the 19 and 38 busses stopped nearby on their way to Victoria and Battersea, from Hackney Marshes and Islington and other places out that way.

Being close to the Mount Pleasant sorting office had presented Section 11 with a unique advantage, since, until 2003, the Post Office used to run its own automatic underground railway to speed the mail across London. Mount Pleasant was in the middle of it, and part of the old station and tunnel now provided the Clerkenwell office with a cavernous garage beneath the building, with easy access from the street.

Easy, that is, apart from the security system.

One of the businesses on this Clerkenwell back street was a newsagent-cum-tobacconist, which had a gent's hairdressers at the back. That's how you got to S.11. Through the hairdressers, which was run by a certain Mr. Lawrence. Nobody knew

his first name. In fact, he didn't often do much hairdressing, either. He was 'by appointment only', and most casual customers soon got to learn how difficult it was to get an appointment. What he did best was to check and monitor everyone who went into the S.11 offices. At the back of his salon was an elaborate, gated security system. You needed a special pass, and the system had to recognise your thumbprint and iris pattern before it would even think of letting you go upstairs. Once you got upstairs, either from Mr. Lawrence's salon or from the underground garage, there were more checks – a second tier security system, with more biometric tests, TV monitors and coded keypads. Only then did you get through the chipped brown-painted door marked 'Ajax Recruitment – office staff and call centre operators always wanted.' Pinned to the door though, at a rakish angle, was a hand written sign saying 'No Vacancies.' There never were. You only ever got through that door if you worked there – or if you had been invited.

Nothing changed a great deal to the appearance of the place when you were inside, either, but you would never know that the old triple-glazed window frames had bullet-proof glass in them. They were dingy corridors with Magnolia emulsion on the grubby walls, and old brown painted Victorian doors leading to offices which all looked much the same. One or two had plaques on the door, meaningless acronyms to everyone except those to whom they meant something. Things like, 'SO to G3(M)'; 'OIC T.12a'; 'PA to S', and so on. As a matter of fact, the Personal Assistant to the Head of Section (PA to S) was quite an important lady. She wasn't just his Secretary. She actually did things on her own initiative if she thought it would save her boss a bit of time. She fixed meetings, made sure the notes, if there were any, were properly encrypted and stored securely, and, according to those who knew, made excellent coffee. She also made it her business to keep up to speed with everything that was going on, including a few things Head of Section didn't know about, because he didn't need to, yet. Like everyone else in S.11, she had been specially selected, and had a very high security clearance.

The people who worked in that rather gloomy Headquarters did all the things that get done in any other head office, as well as quite a few things that don't. But it was a small and tightly knit community, which had at its disposal all the most modern electronic, computing and communications equipment available. The people who planned the various operations going on at any one time also monitored their progress and kept in touch with the operatives in the field. They, in turn had been trained to be largely self supporting, so when they did get on to HQ, it was usually important enough for people to take notice and do something – in a hurry. There were always people there. At night and at weekends, there would be a duty officer, a couple of people looking after communications in what was jokingly called the 'wireless room', and probably one or two others monitoring the progress of their particular operation. Any one of them could summon help from on-call staff at home, who reacted immediately when called upon, whatever they were doing. The newsagent was always open, too, either waiting delivery of the first editions or catching a few of the late-night visitors to Saddlers Wells. The Pakistani family who ran it didn't mind the hours. Section 11 paid them well.

The sharp end of Section 11 was a flexible force of specially trained field officers, mostly drawn from military special forces and police special branch, but with a few from the security services. There was no telling how many might be needed at any one time, or where they might be deployed, so there was an 'on call' reserve pool available at 'no notice' if required. Reserves or not, they were very highly trained. Although when out in the field they normally worked in pairs, they were otherwise on their own with little or no immediate back up or support. They had received special training in how to blend in anonymously with the community in which they worked, wherever they were. Their first priority was to remain invisible, un-noticed. They wore casual civilian clothing, appropriate to their location, although they could dress the part of a busy stockbroker in the City if they had to. They used ordinary vehicles for getting about, although many of these had been specially modified in S.11's own garage, conveniently housed under the Clerkenwell offices. If they needed to use public transport, they, or head office, used High Street travel agents, bought rail tickets from the station booking office, and flew tourist class. Just like anyone else. But there the similarity ended. These were very special men and women. They were fluent in at least two languages other than their native tongue. They were parachute trained, survival specialists and sniper marksmen. And they were mostly armed. They were also experts in pursuit driving, a skill often put to the test either when following a high-speed car, or when trying to shake off one behind them. The Met. Police provided that training at their Hendon driving school.

S.11 had quite an extensive fleet of vehicles. Ordinary vehicles, not polished staff cars. Apart from a few old saloon cars, as well as more modern vehicles like the Vauxhall Vector and Honda Jazz, there were a few vans, even a milk float, bicycles and a range of motorbikes from 50cc Vespa scooters to BMW R1159s and Honda CBR 900s. Some of the old Post Office vans had been fitted out with extensive satellite communications equipment or surveillance gear, including listening devices and video monitors. Most of the vehicles had been modified in some way, and the mechanics that worked in the garage were particularly proud of an old Morris Minor, which sounded as if it needed a new exhaust, but which could actually do nearly a ton and had been known to get up to 60mph in just under ten seconds. But the motorbikes were the most popular. Easy to use in traffic, not normally out of place anywhere, and ideal for two people; the Section 11 agents who operated in the field usually worked in pairs. When they weren't out on ops., the field officers spent a good deal of their spare time training, or in the HQ at Clerkenwell. At the back of the underground garage was an armoury and a rifle range, run by a retired Royal Navy Petty Officer gunner, Phil Langdon, who had introduced himself on arrival as their new 'top gun'. Immediately, one of the comedians in the team had christened him 'bottom gun,' and from thenceforward he had been known as 'Bottom' for short. He hated that. But he knew about weapons, and was a crack shot.

There were other rather odd bits of Section 11, too, which you wouldn't expect to find in any normal organisation, even if it was, strictly speaking, a part of the civil service. 'Aunty' for instance, ran the clothing store. He was a rather precious retired actor – nobody could remember his real name – but he was able to provide

appropriate kit for you wherever in the world you were going. He had wigs and dark glasses and false moustaches too, if it was felt that you needed to change your appearance from time to time, rather than become too familiar and run the risk of being recognised.

The admin section was run by an elderly civil servant called Gladys Something-or-other, who smoked like a chimney in spite of the law about smoking at work. She maintained that there was so little work done in Clerkenwell that the law didn't apply, and she was too valuable to get rid of, so people put up with it. She had a form for you to fill in for your every need, and made sure you did it properly and got it counter-signed, and all that. It was a waste of time going to Bottom or Aunty for anything unless you'd been to Gladys first for the right bit of paper. She didn't have an acronym on her door – it simply said 'Admin', and that was that. Aunty had two – 'Stage Door' and 'Props', neither of which was official, and both of which were therefore frowned upon by Gladys. The rifle range and armoury, from which one drew weapons and ammunition if you had the necessary forms from Gladys, was labelled 'Arms.' on the armour-plated door. Underneath, in indelible ink, someone had scribbled 'Legs and Bottom'.

At the top of this rather shabby looking but extremely efficient organisation, was the Head of Section. He was known simply as 'S', in the same way that the Director General of the Secret Intelligence Service, or MI6 as most people called it, was known as 'C', and the head of MI5 was known as 'M'. 'S' had a deputy, and one or other of them was always available – and that meant 'always' – 24/7, as the idiom had it. The hierarchy was really quite small for an organisation that had a worldwide remit, and they were all widely experienced members of the intelligence community. Their job now was not so much to gather intelligence, or even interpret it, but rather to act upon it. The Head of Section 11 reported direct to the Cabinet Secretary, and thus to the JIC from whom the Section got most of its work. Any of the constituent members of the committee could put forward suitable targets for S.11 to look after, but the final tasking decision was always taken by the JIC or by its chairman.

Except, that is, in the recent unlikely case of the captain of the England football squad.

\*\*\*

It was at about the quarterfinal stage of the world cup when the Football Association first got wind of a possible plot to kidnap the team captain, and perhaps also his family, in some sort of effort to fix a few results. At the time, England were favourites to win the cup, much to annoyance of the Germans, whose supporters were reported to be developing the plot. This is not the sort of thing that the intelligence community would normally take much notice of, although the press were having a field day. Excellent footballer though the man was, he did not begin to take on the national importance of, say, some of the country's leading industrialists, and therefore nobody in Clerkenwell was taking the slightest professional interest in the story.

Until, that is, 'S' thought it might make quite a good training exercise for a few of the newer members of the operational field force, especially as life had been a bit on the quiet side recently.

“How many of our people speak German?” he asked at ‘prayers’ one morning. One of the Ops people thought about a dozen.

“Right,” said ‘S’. “Three teams of two will do,” he pronounced. “The most inexperienced you can find.”

“*IN*xperienced?”

“That’s right – this will be good training for them, and it won’t be a national disaster if they fail. Except for them, of course.”

The Head of Section at that time was Alan Jarvis, himself not a great football enthusiast, although he could understand that national pride would take a bit of a bashing if the England XI lost after all the build-up and high expectations.

“Are you looking for any other particular qualities, apart from lack of experience?” enquired one of his team sarcastically.

“Football supporters would help,” replied ‘S’, “and an ability to hold a few litres of lager without falling over might also be an advantage. Perhaps I’d better explain.”

When he had done so, the Section’s Head of Finance looked distinctly uneasy.

“How do you propose justifying the expenditure of taxpayers’ money to look after a footballer?” he asked.

“Training,” came the reply. “Put it down to ‘training’. Although if we are lucky, it won’t cost us a bean. I’ll talk to the Chairman of the Football Association, and see what he can offer.”

In the end, he offered quite a lot, including installing one of the S.11 team in the official party as a member of the press office. The others were out on their own. Aunty managed to find them, from somewhere in the theatrical underworld of wardrobe mistresses, official German football shirts, together with woolly hats and scarves which they would need, as Munich in the winter can be a bit cold.

They had three weeks to establish themselves in Germany. Two of them quickly managed to infiltrate the supporters’ club, and were soon involved, with the handful of yobs that thought it would be a good idea, in helping to plan the kidnap of the England Captain. Others were liaising closely with the Scotland Yard officers who had gone to Munich to work with the local Polizei to keep hooligans and lager louts under control. It was not a difficult exercise, in all honesty. They knew where the threat was coming from, so concentrated on them rather than on the target of the threat.

On the big day, the S.11 team had managed to persuade the local constabulary to provide them with a police van and driver, thanks largely to the Scotland Yard liaison officers. By the time the kidnapers set off to hijack the England team bus, they had all taken on board copious quantities of local lager, so offered no real resistance when four of their number turned out to be quite good English speakers. There was not much of a struggle to get them into the polizei van, which set off on its journey into the Bavarian Alps, where the miscreants were eventually left to find their own way home.

The Clerkenwell team had quite enjoyed their little training exercise, not least because one of their number produced half a dozen tickets for the game, which, he assured his chums, the Germans would no longer be needing.

Their biggest problem was remembering to cheer for the opposition, in German.

\*\*\*

In Downing Street, the Cabinet Secretary was coming to the end of a meeting with colleagues in the JIC. It was their job to review the strategic planning assumptions of the intelligence agencies, to set priorities for the collection and assessment of intelligence material, and generally to keep an eye on their programmes and expenditure.

In conclusion, Sir Robin Algar summed up the present operations being undertaken by Section 11, including Operation Cashback, which was nearing its end. (*read 'Cashback', by Duncan James*)

“Operation Cashback only worked because of the efforts of our Defence Attaché in Harare, Group Captain Bowman,” Forsyth reminded them.

Watkins nodded. “Good man, Bowman,” he said. “Held the whole thing together. Are all the Section 11 team back now, by the way?”

“The last two will be home any time,” replied Algar.

“Remind me how we ever got involved in that,” asked the Home Office man. “Not another hare set up by the Head of Section, Jarvis, I hope?”

“No, not at all,” replied Algar. “It was you who thought it would be a good idea, Wilfred,” he said, turning to the Foreign Office man, “although I must say that, from the start, this has been an unusual operation. At first, Section 11 wasn’t actually involved at all, as it had been rather more of a criminal investigation, except that nobody knew for sure that any crime had been committed or by whom,” he reminded them.

“The banking community picked up the first sign of anything being wrong. It was the London Office of a Dutch Bank, as a matter of fact. One of their customers, a wealthy but elderly lady, suddenly had two million pounds credited to her account, and the bank could not discover its source. It had appeared via the computer system which banks use to move money around, but nobody could discover where it came from, which was not just puzzling, but worrying. But what really stirred things up was when a million pounds of the original two million was withdrawn again very soon after it had been deposited. The bank was quite unable to find out who had withdrawn it or where it had gone. This sort of thing was just not supposed to happen – it should have been impossible.”

“Absolutely impossible,” agreed Hooper from the Treasury. “The international banking security system was reckoned to be totally foolproof, and certainly had been until this happened.”

“Apparently, other banks were having similar problems, although we didn’t know it at the time,” continued Algar. “Whoever was behind the Dutch bank’s difficulties was also playing ducks and drakes with cash deposited in banks in Switzerland, in the Cayman Islands, in Singapore, Bermuda, and the United States,



and so on. Naturally, the banks concerned were not about to broadcast the fact that they appeared to be having severe problems with their security systems, and that very large sums of money were appearing and disappearing as if by magic.”

“I could never understand why their customers didn’t kick up about it,” remarked Watkins. “I certainly would have.”

“Probably because in some, if not all cases, the cash they were now short of was ill gotten in the first place,” suggested Hooper.

“It was the corrupt regime in Zimbabwe that reacted first,” said Algar. “From the President downwards, they were all being milked dry. Equally mysteriously, white farmers who had been evicted from their land started receiving quite large sums of cash, apparently accompanied by the promise of a pension. It was as if someone had decided, rather late in the day, to pay them compensation. But it certainly wasn’t the Government.”

“And then that fool of a President raided Zimbabwe’s Central Bank to replace his lost personal funds. That’s what really started trouble in the country, and we saw the first signs of a possible coup or an uprising or some such event designed to get rid of the man,” said the Foreign Office man.

“It was about that time, too, that we got our first clue as to who was behind it,” said Burgess.

“Ah, yes. I remember now,” said the Home Office man. “And the PM was quite adamant that we should let him and his team run with whatever he was doing, rather than pull him in, just in case he and his fellow operatives became the catalyst which rid Zimbabwe of the President and his rotten regime.”

“And Section 11 was tasked to keep an eye on them,” concluded Algar. “The UK side of the operation was quite straightforward, really. We were looking after the interests of a brilliant young mathematician who had studied computer science at Oxford, and his partner. They travelled a bit – Switzerland and Kenya mostly, but we had plenty of notice through the phone-taps we were using. His two associates in Africa were a bit more difficult, though. They were Zimbabweans, one black, one white, and they dodged about all over the place – Nairobi, Harare, Bulawayo, Lusaka, even Livingstone, as well as their home village of Chasimu. Our teams out there had the devil’s own job keeping in contact with them, but the two of them were at the greatest risk as they were at the sharp end, so to speak. In the end, it was their plan to hijack illicit diamonds belonging to the President and his ministers that finally brought the Government down.”

“How did they ever think they could hijack a load of diamonds?” asked Hooper.

“The President had planned to move them by light aircraft to the Botswana border, and then by road to South Africa. The two Zimbabweans contacted our Defence Attaché in Harare, who was already monitoring things for us, to see if he could organise a team of SAS to do it for them.”

“And of course, we obliged, through Section 11,” said Watkins, proudly.

“So it was our chaps who actually carried out the hijack, was it?” queried Hooper.

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

