

The Devil Can Be Kind to Some People - Unabridged

by

Michael John Littlefair ¹

(Маленький Товарищ)²

¹ Said to the Author by the Russian translator as they passed the Lubyanka and Kremlin May 2011 in a car.

² My surname in Russian translates as "Small Comrade." This amused the Russians. All the funnier considering the things my father and grandfather from Chopwell were involved in!

“There is no commonly used phrase in Russian that I am aware of which means; In the end evil always destroys itself. Our Devils must be more resilient.”

Anonymous



Ragna Lodbrok's war flag. The author's ancestors were Scandinavian Vikings.

Michael John Littlefair hails from a family whose roots are firmly planted in Chopwell, County Durham, England. He has made two professional trips to Russia: the first to Vostochny, a seaport located north of Vladivostok, and the second to Kemerovo in Siberia, as well as to Moscow. This novel originated from the author's endeavour to investigate his father's military service and subsequently his family lineage. In it, he narrates events recounted by relatives, those overheard during conversations between his father and his army comrades, or gleaned from family photographs. In instances where corroborating details were absent from official documentation, he has inferred what likely transpired. Additionally, when multiple family members engaged in similar activities, he has amalgamated these experiences into a single character for clarity. As presented, the narrative is, to the best of his knowledge, accurate.

The author employs an alter-ego named Eric for two primary reasons. Firstly, it serves as a representation of his Viking heritage; secondly, he has discovered that writing about his experiences in the third person allows for greater ease. Writing in the first person often leads to an overwhelming surge of emotions, making it challenging to maintain an objective perspective on personal events.

While visiting the Kemerovo Mining Museum and attentively listening to the guide, the author experienced a profound moment of clarity, as if he had seized hold of Satan's tail, bringing coherence to his life. However, this moment was abruptly interrupted by a metaphorical puff of smoke, and Satan vanished.

This book is dedicated to the people of Chopwell

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Chapter 1: First Trip to Russia

Like one that on a lonesome road

Doth walk in fear and dread

*And having once turned round
walks on*

And turns no more his head

*Because he knows a frightful
fiend*

Doth close behind him tread

Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”

“Attention all passengers traveling on Korean Airlines Flight KE122 to Seoul, please proceed to gate nine without delay for boarding,” the announcement echoed through the public address system at Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport. Eric gathered his hand luggage and made his way to the departure gate, clutching his boarding pass. Beside him stood Gleb Linnikov, the manager of YakutsEn, a Russian firm that supplies ammonium nitrate to Australia.

Eric was employed as an engineer at Dyno Nobel Explosives, located in Mt Thorley, New South Wales. He was en route to a seaport named Vostochny, situated northeast of Vladivostok, traveling through Seoul and Vladivostok. His journey was prompted by a last-minute assignment from a corporate manager named Robert Rounsley to inspect a shipment bound for Australia. The prospect of visiting Russia piqued Eric's interest, as he had harbored a nebulous sense of a personal link to the country since his early years, although the nature of this connection remained unclear to him.

Once on board the aircraft, however, Eric was overcome with a feeling of apprehension. A gut sensation came over him that somehow his life would be in danger on this trip. As he was making himself as comfortable as he could in his seat, he got a strange feeling in his stomach when he remembered a vivid dream, he had had thirty years before, when he was a student at Durham University. In the dream, he was in an airplane coming into land over dark and desolate rounded mountains covered with leafless

birch trees shrouded with snow. He got out safely on the first trip. On a second trip, the plane crashed.

Following the meal service by the flight attendants, Eric engaged in a series of perplexing discussions with Linnikov. The latter was adamant about sharing a tale concerning two unnamed individuals who had previously mishandled a potential contract. Linnikov detailed how these individuals were later located at a hotel, where a bomb was planted on their floor, resulting in the deaths of twelve people, although the intended targets were not present in their rooms at the time of the explosion. He mentioned that the assassins received a payment of fifty thousand pounds for their actions, placing particular emphasis on the term 'pounds.' "The British eliminate their dissidents discreetly," he remarked. This left Eric contemplating whether the narrative served as a veiled threat directed at him and the Dyno Nobel manager from Moscow, whom he was scheduled to meet in Vladivostok.

As Eric gradually succumbed to slumber, he recalled a second, more unsettling dream he had experienced during his time at Durham University, one so striking that it remained etched in his memory throughout his life. This particular dream unfolded at dawn, precisely at 6:00 a.m. on a frigid morning, 27 January 1975, within the confines of his college room. In this dream, he found himself in a Communist State, being transported in a vehicle along a concrete dual carriageway riddled with potholes. The colors in the dream appeared nearly desaturated, rendering the scene almost monochromatic, a stark contrast to Eric's usual colorful dreams. What made this dream particularly peculiar was Eric's awareness of dreaming; it felt as though he were fully awake, yet existing in an alternate reality.

In the dream, he was on the back seat on the left-hand side of the car³, looking towards the front. Sitting to his right behind the driver was another man. The "observer" in the dream seemed to be in the front passenger seat and looking towards the back at Eric, who only occasionally seemed to be looking through his own eyes. The car itself seemed to be driving on the right-hand side of the road because the driver was adjacent to the kerb. The embankments and footbridges spanning the road were constructed of concrete, and the surrounding tall buildings were also made of concrete. The entire environment was characterized by concrete.

The man said something to Eric, who was now looking at him from below, as if he were sitting on the car floor. He could see the underside of the man's chin and nose. The man had a scary face. Then he said something that caused a feeling of fear to come over him. *This man is a Soviet agent*, Eric thought. He looked out the car window to his left and saw all the shop fronts in a built-up area above the concrete embankment looked like the ones in Boosbeck, the village where he grew up in England. He was

³ In Italian, the Devil is associated with the left (sinsitra) side

awoken by the sound of the bells at Durham Cathedral chiming 6.00 a.m.

When Eric thought about the dream again after all these years, only now did he realize it had been a left-hand drive car. He couldn't understand it: a car designed for a left-hand road on a right-hand drive road system! The other thing Eric couldn't understand was how he could have been sitting on the back seat yet at the same time be sitting on the car floor.

On their arrival at Seoul Airport, the two travellers transferred onto a Korean Airlines flight to Vladivostok. The plane took an indirect route out over the western Pacific Ocean, presumably to avoid North Korean airspace. As it began its approach to Vladivostok Airport above the Russian Taiga, Eric found himself looking out of the aircraft window. Below him was exactly the same landscape he had seen in his first dream, thirty years before.

The sky was heavily overcast with clouds and snow as they landed. Due to the sub-zero temperature, the snow on the runway was granular, like blown sand. When the aircraft reached the parking bay, the passengers disembarked onto a bus, even though the plane was parked less than twenty meters from the terminal. This was apparently a security measure to ensure no one set foot on the runway. Once inside the terminal building, Eric reached the immigration area. The passport control officer was an extremely attractive Russian woman. She scrutinised Eric's passport, looked at some information on her computer screen and gave him a strange look as she handed it back: a sort of "we know all about you" look. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon in the middle of the Russian winter and beginning to get dark.

After clearing the customs area, Eric encountered Yuri Bulantsev, the manager of the Russian subsidiary of Dyno Nobel Explosives. Bulantsev requested a private conversation with Eric prior to their departure; however, their discussion was interrupted by Linnikov. Subsequently, they boarded a van that traversed the small town adjacent to the airport. Eric experienced an uncanny sensation of familiarity, as the buildings resembled those from a village of his past.

Although the group was initially scheduled to spend the night in Vladivostok, Linnikov opted to take them directly to Vostochny Port, despite Bulantsev's protests, which proved to be ineffective.

“Вы же согласились, что мы сегодня переночуем в гостинице во Владивостоке!”⁴

“Ничего не поделаешь, планы меняются,” Linnikov replied.⁵

Linnikov and Bulantsev then had an argument about how YakutsEn could sell their materials so cheaply to Dyno Nobel Explosives when the price

⁴ But you agreed that we will stay in a hotel in Vladivostok overnight!

⁵ Nothing can be done, plans change.

would not even cover the rail shipping costs from the plant in Siberia to Vostochny Port.

“Иногда сделка – это лишь часть гораздо большей тайной сделки,” said Linnikov.⁶

As the van headed towards Vostochny, it unexpectedly veered off the main highway and into Nahodka onto a road running by the side of the docks. There was a three-meter brick wall with closely spaced pine trees at the far side, and Eric could smell the sea.

“Can you see the building on the other side of the wall?” Linnikov asked him.

“Yes,” he said.

“It’s a Russian nuclear submarine repair station,” Linnnikov revealed.

All five strange men in the van looked Eric straight in the eye for several seconds, who looked back but said nothing. *Are they expecting me to ask for a guided tour?* he wondered.

After several hours of travelling, the van stopped at a roadside cafe which sold tea, sandwiches and pies. The unnamed men in their bearskin coats and hats paced around in the snow and cold air near the van drinking their brew when one said: “Это тот, о ком нам говорили?”⁷ The other replied: Мне сказали, что он родом из необычной семьи.”⁸

Eric felt uncomfortable since he couldn’t understand what they were talking about, and they were all giving him strange looks – the sort a dog gives a rabbit before it chases and kills it. After everyone had finished their refreshments, the group reboarded the van and travelled on through Vostochny town, where there was a railway station on a branch line of the Trans-Siberian railway, and finally into Vostochny Port. They entered the port gate past uniformed military guards armed with Kalashnikovs. It was dark and ice-cold when they stopped at the front of the Port Manager’s building after driving across the dock side. There was a dim light over the entrance door on the ground floor of the building. The structure was four stories high with, like most Russian administrative buildings, one-meter-thick stone walls to protect the inhabitants from the cold Russian winter air. Eric noticed the step into the building was made of bright yellow sandstone, but the left-hand end of it was a waxy, dark brown-red color. *I wonder why they didn’t use yellow sandstone for all of it,* he wondered.

The Port Manager turned out to be an ex-Soviet Army wrestling champion, was 2.21 meters tall and weighed 180 kg. He was also over a meter wide at the shoulders. The thing that immediately struck Eric was his hands. When Yuri Mikhailovich Pelov put his hand out to shake, Eric’s own hand looked

⁶ Sometimes a deal is only part of a much bigger secret deal!

⁷ Is this the one we were told about?

⁸ I was told he comes from an unusual family.

like that of a baby. Later in the evening, Eric was told by Yuri Mikhailovich's underlings that he had been unbeaten throughout his whole career in the Soviet Army, having fought forty-nine contests and won forty-eight of them. The other fight had been a draw.

"If you want to leave Vostochny Port alive, I would advise you not to mention the draw to Yuri Mikhailovich!" his minion advised Eric.

Apparently, at the end of his career, the Soviet Defense Minister would not allow him to retire until he had fought one last match, and had a wager with the Head of the Soviet Army that Yuri Mikhailovich could not wrestle a brown bear. However, as he had defeated the bear, the Head of the Soviet Army won the bet.

They went to have a meal in the recreation room in another building about twenty meters from Yuri Mikhailovich's office, where Eric was served raw salmon, caviar and vodka. At one point, Yuri Mikhailovich wanted to attract Linnikov's attention and shouted at him till the windows rattled. He sounded like a bear himself; Eric had never heard such a loud voice in his life. The depth and volume of its tone were remarkable, like being in a cathedral when the organist is playing the bottom note on the organ and you don't so much hear as feel it.

In the room where they ate was a framed photograph of a Russian they called "большой начальник"⁹ that looked like a small shrine. At one point the lights in the room were turned off, the "большой начальник's" photo was illuminated, and they all had to turn and face the image, which resembled Vladimir Putin. Words were said in Russian that seemed to be coming from the shrine that Eric didn't understand: "Хотя мы и не знаем, зачем они это делают, если у них все получится, это принесет вред России. Нельзя этого допустить."¹⁰

After dinner, the group enjoyed a 125°C *banya*, after which Eric immersed himself in an adjacent small swimming pool with a small layer of ice on its surface. He went from one to the other three or four times. None of the Russians did that, and it impressed them. One of them offered to throw him into the bay, which was covered with thick sea ice, while another told him he must have Russian blood in him.¹¹

"They give you a chemical that stains part of the brain green," Bulantsev told Eric a while later. "It can be removed by injecting just two milliliters of alcohol into the brain, and when the alcohol comes out it is green. If, in the future, you think you have been poisoned, drink lots of vodka to

⁹ Big boss

¹⁰ Although we do not know why they are doing this, if they succeed this will damage Russia. This must not be allowed to happen!

¹¹ When Eric later had a DNA test, that remark turned out to be an interesting comment.

remove it!” At the time, Bulantsev was looking at the signed picture of the Russian “большой начальник,” which was on the wall of the room they were standing in, but Eric had no clue what Bulantsev was talking about.

The next morning Eric phoned Linnikov from the hotel, who came and took Eric back to the docks. All the discussions between Bulantsev, Linnikov and Yuri Mikhailovich took place in Russian, so Eric had no idea what was going on. After that, everyone went into a small room behind Yuri Mikhailovich's office that one had to enter through an 'invisible door' in the wooden wall of his office. On the wall inside this long narrow room was a huge map of Australia about four meters high by five meters wide. Every village in Australia seemed to be on it. Everyone sat around a large wooden table drinking tea. Eric was asked lots of strange questions, none of which made any sense to him. The only one he remembered was: “Why is Dyno Nobel Explosives in Australia?”

“To supply explosives to the mining industry,” he suggested.

“No, what is the real reason?”

Ясно, что он совсем ничего не знает. Подлые трусы, как всегда, прислали невинного парня делать за них грязную работу,”¹² said Yuri Mikhailovich.

When they realized Eric did not know what they were talking about, however, they stopped asking questions.

“There is something going on around your trip that you don't know about, and it is safer for you if you continue not to know. So don't ask questions!” Yuri Bulantsev told him.

Eric asked no further questions. Instead, he asked to go to the toilet.

“Go out the office door, turn right, and it’s immediately on your left.”

When he got there, however, he was confused. There were two doors close together, neither of which had a sign on it. Eric looked into the first room, which was not the toilet but a long, narrow room with framed photographs on the walls. Eric glanced at one of them for a few seconds. The face looked somehow familiar. Underneath it was a name in Russian: РОДЖЕР. Roger. The last name ended in ЛЛИС. Llis. Eric thought about the face that night in the hotel. He had seen it before somewhere. He suddenly realized it was Sir Roger Hollis (РОДЖЕР ХОЛЛИС) when he must have been about 35 years old.

The following afternoon, Eric was sitting in Yuri Mikhailovich’s office in

¹² Clearly, he knows nothing at all. Mean cowards, as usual, they have sent an innocent guy to do their dirty work for them.

front of his desk. The ceiling was about six meters high. Behind the desk, about four meters up the wall, was a large framed photograph of a distinguished looking Russian. Eric asked Yuri Mikhailovich who the man was.

“He was the previous Port Manager.”

Eric naively asked what had happened to him, expecting to be told he had retired or been promoted. To Eric's astonishment, however, Yuri Mikhailovich replied with a different question.

“Did you notice the step at the entrance on the ground floor?”

Eric said he had and that it was made of yellow sandstone, except that one end was a waxy red-brown color.

Yuri Mikhailovich's voice took on a casual tone. “Previous Port Manager was going home one night. When he reached the ground floor, his two bodyguards exited through the door. One to the left; the other to the right. Neither of them were ever seen again. A man came up to him as he was on step. Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang! Three bullets in head, two in the heart. Now I am the Port Manager.”

Later, Eric went to examine the bags of ammonium nitrate on the dock side and took some samples. He asked if he could take photographs. The Russians looked at him as one.

“Do you have a camera on your person?” one asked.

“Yes,” replied Eric.

They all looked very worried, but did not say why.

Eric took the samples to be analyzed to a laboratory at a methanol plant on the southern side of the bay the next day. On the way there in the car, Yuri told Eric that he had worked at a particular Norwegian chemical manufacturer some years before.

Back in Yuri Mikhailovich's office, Linnikov was becoming increasingly obnoxious and was fighting in Russian with Bulantsev – about what Eric didn't know, but they kept shouting at each other regardless.

“Нас интересуют его семейные связи, и, если ты тронешь хоть один волос на его голове, мы сделаем с тобой такое, что тебе мало не покажется. Поосторожнее, ты не знаешь, с кем имеешь дело,”¹³ said Yuri Bulantsev.

¹³ We are interested in his family connections and if you touch a hair on his head, what we will do to you will terrify you. Watch out, you do not know who you are dealing with!

A frightened Linnikov then took Eric for a drive in a van to the end of the peninsula on the ocean side of the docks where there was a large hill, but they turned back because some soldiers wearing dark-green uniforms with sky-blue epaulettes told them to go away in an aggressive manner.

“Our problem is we don't know who Bulantsev is,” Linnikov told Eric as they drove, by which Eric thought he meant he did not know who Bulantsev’s connections were. Linnikov also told him the names of three corporate managers at Dyno Nobel Explosives who he said were taking bribes from his superiors. With hindsight, Eric later assumed Linnikov’s bosses must have been the Russian Mafia. Two of the managers subsequently left Dyno Nobel Explosives but took up influential jobs in major Australian mining companies, while one remained a Corporate Manager at Dyno Nobel Explosives.

On every visit to the docks except the first, they were stopped by the armed guards. It got progressively more difficult to get in each time. Eric noticed a sign at the gate entrance, which was black with white Cyrillic script.

Приказ:¹⁴
Охраняемая территория.
Фотосъемка запрещена.

Eric asked Linnikov what the sign said.

“That sign does not affect you. You do not need to worry about that sign. Do not be concerned about that sign,” he replied, robotically but with a slightly sinister tone.

Eric immediately became suspicious.

On the third day, everyone except Eric had to go to the guard’s office to sign in. Eric stayed in the car with the driver, who was someone he had not seen before. He deliberately dropped a ten ruble note on the seat in front of him.

“I’ve just dropped some money on the seat. Can you get it for me please?” Eric asked him.

“Sure, no problem,” the driver immediately replied.

“Ah! So, you *can* speak English then?”

“Yes,” said the driver.

¹⁴ Order: A guarded territory. Photography is prohibited.

“Nice day, but a bit cold. It’s minus 19 °C” said Eric.

“No, this is mild weather for the time of year.”

“What does that sign say on the wall next to the dock gates?” Eric asked after a short pause.

The driver thought for a while then smiled. “The sign says, Any foreigners caught on the docks will be ...” Trailing off, he raised his arm as though firing a rifle.

“Shot?”

“Yes! Anyone found with a camera in their possession will be shot.”

Eric wondered if the driver was joking. He was just about to ask to be taken back to the hotel because the camera was in his suitcase in the back of the car, when the others arrived and they went into the docks. He quickly noticed that every Russian who had anything to do with his visit could speak fluent English – except it was an English with every trace of foreignness removed, a more flawless English than the English speak themselves. It was as though they had all been taught English by the same teacher.

Over the next few days, the atmosphere in the meetings with Yuri Mikhailovich began to become strained. Bulantsev seemed to be increasingly concerned about what was happening but did not say why. As it turned out, Head Office in Sydney had told the Port Manager that they were going to cancel their purchase, which meant Yuri Mikhailovich had three thousand tons of product in one-ton bags sitting on the dockside for which he now had no customer. Linnikov was trying to force Eric to stay at the port until the problem was sorted out.

“Thanks for the offer, but I will be leaving with Yuri Bulantsev,” Eric declared.

Yuri Mikhailovich told Bulantsev to get the train to Nahodka when he left Vostochny Port.

“Why did he tell me to get the train to Nahodka? He must mean there is someone waiting at Nahodka station for us. We will definitely not be taking that train,” Bulantsev told Eric later.

Linnikov had put Bulantsev and Eric up in a hotel which was supposedly an old technical college, but judging by the number of women in it must really have been a brothel. As Eric and Bulantsev were waiting in the hotel foyer one morning for the car, a thick-set man with a shaved head emerged from an office on the ground floor and walked past them, giving Eric a momentary glance.

“That’s the head of the local mafia,” whispered Yuri. Later that night, over dinner, he asked Eric if he knew what they did to foreigners in Russia.

“No. What?”

“We insert white hot hypodermic needles into their testicles.”

“What?”

“But you’re not rich, are you?”

“No.”

“Then what is there to worry about?”

“Well, nothing, I suppose.”

As they were walking out of the restaurant, Yuri asked Eric something else.

“Money is the most important thing, yes?”

“No, money is not the most important thing at all,” Eric answered.

Bulantsev stopped in his tracks and looked at him. “Then what is the most important thing?”

“Education.”

Yuri Bulantsev’s attitude towards Eric now changed in a fraction of a second. From being his worst enemy, he tried to instantly become his best friend.

“In the Soviet Union, we had the best education system in the world. The Japanese Ministry of Education came to study our kindergarten system. Now the Japanese have the best kindergarten system in the world. What do we have in Russia? Nothing! Do you know about Russian politics?”

“No.”

“So, you haven't heard of Berezovsky?”

“No. Who is he?”

But Bulantsev did not answer.

On their last day in the hotel, they could not reach Yuri Mikhailovich by phone. Bulantsev looked very worried. He had said that if they were given Yuri Mikhailovich’s car to take them to Vladivostok, they would be safe.

The night before, he had been up most of the night drinking and making calls. That morning in the hotel lobby, he said that they would take the bus to Nahodka.

As Eric walked towards the exit door, he noticed a strange-looking framed painting on the wall. It was a painting of a huge cavern with skeletons on the walls, underneath which was a single Russian word: “Ад.”¹⁵ The next thing Eric knew he was getting into a taxi, having been escorted out of the hotel by a very beautiful girl – so beautiful in fact that she stopped Eric in his tracks, and all he could do was stare at her.

“Do not talk when we get in the car! If the taxi driver realizes that you are Australian, he will phone his boss and we are done for,” Bulantsev hissed.

What followed could only be described as the most well-organized escape plan, he had ever witnessed. Mr. Bulantsev was clearly a genius. Both Bulantsev and Eric were sat on the back seat of the taxi, which was white with a yellow stripe down the bonnet. As it left the hotel, it was followed by a second identical taxi, which Eric saw being commandeered by three rough-looking men in scruffy overcoats when their own car had failed to start, who grabbed the taxi driver by the scruff of the neck, pulled him out of his vehicle, got in and drove after them. Eric also noticed several pedestrians looking at his taxi as it passed, who immediately began making calls on their mobile phones.

On the road to Vladivostok, a Land Rover pulled out of a side road directly in front of them, causing the taxi driver to brake. The passenger of the Land Rover was brandishing a semi-automatic rifle. The taxi driver turned towards Bulantsev with a terrified look on his face.

Bulantsev gave him an icy stare. “Делай, что сказали, а то хуже будет. Поехали,”¹⁶ he shouted at him.

It suddenly began to snow, and the visibility became poor. As they approached a road junction, the Land Rover turned south onto the main highway to Vladivostok. Bulantsev ordered the taxi driver to turn off the car lights and drove straight across the junction to an old Soviet housing block. Their manoeuvre was unseen by the following taxi because of the conditions. The second taxi also turned south at the junction following the Land Rover. As it was heading along the main highway, a Russian in the second taxi phoned the driver of the Land Rover.

“Вы уже на месте? Они должны быть уже близко.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Hell

¹⁶ Do as you are told or it will be the worse for you. Let's go.

¹⁷ Have you arrived at the place? They must be close.

“Да, мы на месте.”¹⁸

“Хорошо, они будут в следующем такси,”¹⁹ the driver of the Land Rover replied.

“Вы знаете, что делать,”²⁰ said the man in the commandeered taxi.

What the Russian in the commandeered taxi didn't realize was that the next taxi to pass the Land Rover's location would be theirs. The Russians in the Land Rover set up their semi-automatic weapons to take out the oncoming taxi, thinking it was the one with Yuri and Eric in it. When they saw it approaching, the leader shouted, “Вот они. СТРЕЛЯЙ.”²¹ There were several bursts of gunfire, and the commandeered taxi skidded off the road into some trees, killing all the occupants before catching fire. The Land Rover sped off in the direction of Vostochny Port.

Meanwhile, Eric and Bulantsev were swapping cars near the dilapidated housing block. The weather had begun to clear. As Eric got out of his taxi, two very tall men with their hands inside their bearskin coats who looked like they were carrying guns came up to him. *This is it*, Eric thought, but contrary to popular myth his life did not flash before his eyes. He was too preoccupied with what the men were doing. After walking past him up to the taxi driver and forcing him to hand over his mobile phone, they took out the battery and threw it in the nearby bushes, before handing back the powerless device. From the way they were looking all around them, they were obviously there to guard Eric and Bulantsev.

Suddenly, the arctic silence was broken by the sound of distant semi-automatic fire. The snow clouds had cleared. A few moments later, a plume of black smoke rose out of the Taiga a few kilometers to the south.

“Get your bags out of the taxi and put them into the boot of this car. I'm not going to carry them for you,” Bulantsev shouted at Eric.

A dark-green car with its bonnet raised was parked close to the taxi. The car owner was checking the oil level in the engine. As Eric put his suitcase into the car boot, the owner closed the bonnet and got into the driver's seat. Just before Eric got into the car, the two men in bearskin coats walked past him. He held out his hand and shook the hand of one of them. As the new car set off towards the main road, Bulantsev turned to Eric.

¹⁸ Yes, we are at the place.

¹⁹ Good, they will be in the next taxi.

²⁰ You know what to do.

²¹ There they are. Shoot.

“Why did you shake the man's hand?” he asked.

“As a way of thanking him for not shooting me!” Eric replied.

Bulantsev, who was sat behind the driver on the back seat next to Eric, looked bemused.

Back on the highway, heading south, Eric was looking out of the passenger side window. A Land Rover passed them in the opposite direction with two men inside. The passenger was sending a text on his mobile phone. The driver turned pale when he saw Eric's face. Eric wondered if it was the same Land Rover he had seen earlier in the day.

“Юрий не отвечает. Я еще не видел его машину. Вот он удивится, когда узнает про такси,”²² he remarked to the driver, who wore a pallid expression.

“И может быть, не только он,”²³ the driver replied.

“КАК?”²⁴ screamed the passenger.

The car Eric was now in was an imported second-hand Toyota Camry from Japan. The Japanese replace their cars every three years. As a result, there are a lot of second-hand cars on the Japanese market, a large number of which are exported to the nearest Russian city, Vladivostok. Like the British and Australians, the Japanese drive on the left, while the Russians drive on the right. As a consequence, Eric was now sat in the back seat of a left-hand drive car on a right-hand drive road system –the only city in Russia, in fact, where this is the case!

A few kilometers down the road on the way back to Vladivostok, they passed a bullet-riddled taxi on the side of the road that was on fire. It looked like the one that had been following them earlier. The surrounding snow was tinged red. The new driver and Bulantsev looked at each other with evil expressions on their faces.

“Наш план сработал,”²⁵ said Bulantsev.

“Почему его защищают?”²⁶ asked the driver.

²² Yuri is not answering his mobile. I haven't seen his car yet. He'll get a surprise when he learns about the taxi

²³ He may not be the only one.

²⁴ WHAT!

²⁵ Our plan worked!

²⁶ Why is he protected?

“Он из интересной семьи, и мы убрали некоторых людей, которые мешали их хозяевам. Наша операция удалась вдвойне,”²⁷ Bulantsev replied.

Then both turned and gave Eric the same look, like a tiger gives its prey shortly before devouring it.

About one hundred kilometres further south, they stopped at a pub full of Russian sailors while the taxi driver waited outside. In the bay opposite were two semi-circular small islands that looked like they were made from the hulls of a submarine. *Perhaps they are channel markers for the submariners*, thought Eric. Eric then remembered that he had seen these islands in a video he had been shown at Leeds University, some 25 years before. A while later, as they approached Vladivostok, the car stopped at another restaurant and the taxi driver ate with them.

Bulantsev went out to the loo. Eric was reading the menu and found himself talking out loud.

“What is the Russian for chicken?”

“It is item four on the menu,” said the driver in perfect English, in front of whom Eric wasn’t supposed to speak English. In Vladivostok anything called chicken often turns out to be seafood.

“If Linnikov phones you, do not tell him which hotel you are in. If you do, we are both dead,” Bulantsev told Eric.

Eric asked him why.

“If you tell him, he will arrange a time to meet you. About two minutes before he is due, he will phone you and say he cannot come because his uncle is ill. ‘What can I do,’ he will say, ‘it is my uncle!’ Next thing you know there will be a bomb outside your room door and you will be dead.”

Eric followed Yuri’s instructions.

As the car continued on its journey towards Vladivostok, he told Eric a story about an unnamed person.

“He was treated disgracefully by his government, so badly they didn’t know what to do with him, so they paid fifty-thousand pounds to the Russian mafia to have him killed,” he related, emphasizing the word “pounds” to stress the British currency. “Six people have committed suicide because of the way he was treated. In the early 1990s, the Russian Interior Ministry began to notice something odd in their annual Health

²⁷ He comes from an interesting family and we removed some people who were in the way of the masters too. Our operation is doubly successful.

Department Services reports for all the Russian Oblasts: the suicide rate for people in their late fifties to early seventies had skyrocketed. The minister ordered an investigation. What he found was that the people who were committing suicide were those who in their youth had reported a friend or family member to the KGB who had subsequently died. In their old age and with the fall of communism, their consciences caught up with them!”

Quite why he was telling him all this was a puzzle, but Eric began to feel like a targeted political dissident because he thought that the unnamed man Yuri was talking about was Eric himself.

“But when you discover your enemies are planning something, you put a stop to it even if you don't know why they are doing it, because if they succeed you can guarantee it will be detrimental to Russia,” added Yuri.

It was now twilight on the 27 January 2005 and was overcast and snowing. There seemed to be no color in anything. The bright white of the snow coupled with the low light levels meant everything was visually washed out. The car was now travelling into the outskirts of Vladivostok on a dual carriageway made of concrete like many of the surrounding high-rise blocks of flats, and full of potholes. All the embankments and footbridges over the road were concrete. The car was violently bouncing about. Eric was sitting on the left-hand side of the car in the back seat, looking towards the front. On his right, directly behind the driver, was Yuri, who had a thin, typically Russian face like that of a wolf. They were travelling in a car designed for a left-hand drive road on a right-hand drive road system.

As they were driving into Vladivostok, the bouncing of the car caused one of Eric's shoelaces to come undone. As he leaned forward to tie it up, he looked up to his right with his head between his knees and could see the underside of Yuri's chin and nose.

“I was on the Soviet-Cuba desk in the early 1960s,” said Yuri.

Holy shit, this man is KGB, Eric thought. He sat up and looked out of the left window of the car towards the concrete embankment. All the shop fronts above the embankment looked like the ones in Boosbeck. He felt afraid as he remembered his second dream at Durham. What surprised him later was that he had no recollection of ever looking at the front passenger seat. Although he knew there was no one in it, there was just a blank in his memory. The other “coincidence” was that the dream at Durham occurred at 6.00 a.m. on 27 January 1975, while this incident happened at 3.00 p.m. on 27 January 2005 in Vladivostok. Vladivostok is nine hours ahead of the UK. In other words, the incident had happened exactly thirty years to the minute after the dream.

The way Eric's mind worked changed over that day during the “Escape from Vostochny Port.” Instead of drifting from the present to the future and

back to the past as we normally do, moving around in time in our minds (“Did I leave my keys at home?” “Will I be late for a meeting?”), his mind focused exclusively on the present moment.

Once he reached the Hotel Primore in Vladivostok, certain changes became blatant. First, even though it was a cold and overcast winter day, all the colors became intense and sharp. The images Eric could see became crystal clear, like when he was young. But most of all he became acutely aware of things around him that were potentially threatening. For example, if he saw someone walking on the street giving him a suspicious glance for a fraction of a second, he would perceive them as a potential threat. If a car went past him twice, it immediately caught his attention. In this way, Eric became acutely aware of his surroundings with a visual and auditory intensity he had not experienced since childhood. At one point, he felt like all his ancestors were there, helping him avoid danger. As he later discovered, maybe in a way they were.

Eric felt he was close to what the Buddhists call a state of “pure abiding,” where the mind is still in the sense that it is empty of thoughts, but you are acutely aware of the present moment, so your consciousness exists only in the current “now.” In other words, Eric lived more intensely in those moments than at any other time in his life. The other curious outcome of the trip was that for days previously he had been plagued with constant headaches, but these now disappeared.

The next day, Yuri wanted to visit some of the local tourist sites in Vladivostok, but Eric preferred to stay in his hotel room. Later, he said something to Eric when they were having dinner that surprised him.

“Did you get a strange feeling in your stomach before you came here?”

“As a matter of fact, I did.”

“That is God talking to you. That is how he speaks to you. Don't listen to your head or your heart, but follow your gut instinct. Next time, listen to God. Fortunately for you, you have an interesting family.”

It took Eric a while to get his head around the fact that an ex-KGB officer could be deeply religious.

When they were on their way to the airport in the taxi the following day, Yuri told him once again not to talk. When they got to the airport, he said to Eric that he was a brave man for standing there.

“Don't talk to anyone until you get on the plane, there are dangerous people around.” He looked Eric straight in the eye and asked him if he liked Russia.

“Yes, of course!”

“Good, because you will be back – except next time you will not have any problems.”

Eric began to wonder if he had just been put through a test of some kind or maybe a training exercise. When Yuri left to get the domestic flight to Moscow, he was left with a feeling of deep respect for Mr. Bulantsev.

A short stocky man came up and stood next to him as he was sat on a chair on the airport concourse. When the man coughed to attract Eric's attention, he noticed he was carrying a patent leather document case bearing the words “Tenaga Kimia Golf Club” in faded gold lettering, which he waved in Eric's face. Eric looked at him and realized it was a man from Canberra he had seen at Mulwala Explosives plant three years before.

Eric said nothing following Yuri's warning. On the plane, the man was seated near Eric all the way back to Sydney but disappeared just before the passport control when they arrived. Back in Australia, Eric felt like he was coming down from a drug. *Wow, I want some more of that!* he thought.

When he returned to Dyno Nobel Explosives, there was a panic. Mark Vale, one of the corporate managers who had been in charge of purchasing ammonium nitrate and had sent Eric to Russia, wrote him an email and asked him to phone him.

“If you don't say that Bulantsev was demanding bribes from YakutsEn to get the deal through, Linnikov will make a claim to the chairman that you were asking for prostitutes.”

“Let Linnikov say what he likes,” Eric told Vale. “It is not true. I never heard Bulantsev say anything of the kind. And anyway, all their conversations were in Russian, so I could not understand.”

Eric went to see a solicitor. Nothing further was said by Vale. But this was how “they” tried to break friendships: by betraying someone who had been a friend to you. That person would then hate you for your breach of trust. But they now controlled you and you needed them to protect you from the people you betrayed who now hate you. Your soul is under their power. But it didn't work with Eric.

On his return to Australia, he looked on Google Earth at the SAM missile sites on the hill he had visited near Vostochny Port. All the buildings he had been into were shaded a blotchy pink color.

He had been specifically asked by Nicola Mills, a manager at Dyno Nobel Explosives, to take a camera with him and photograph the docks. Back in Australia, Eric gave her a piece of his mind.

“Ah well, I suppose your family was happy to see you return safely,” she replied, ironically.

Eric was left with a lingering suspicion she had deliberately set him up, put his life at risk and was an untrustworthy person.

A few weeks later, Eric read in a newspaper that a Russian political dissident had been murdered in London with Polonium-210.

About three months after, he visited the Tenaga Kimia explosives plant in Malaysia and was having dinner with Mr. Oon, the manager of TK. Eric asked him where the golf club was.

“What golf club?”

“The Tenaga Kimia Golf club, of course.”

Mr. Oon looked at him as though he was crazy.

“There is no Tenaga Kimia Golf Club, nor ever has been.”

Eric was later sent to a mine site near Rockhampton in Queensland, where late one night he saw a most spectacular total lunar eclipse, which began with the moon turning pastel shades of red and green and then a dark blood-red, before the earth’s dark shadow blotted it out, and it turned as black as satin.

Chapter 2: The Americans Arrive

A friend is someone who has the same enemies as you do.

Abraham Lincoln

I: Meetings

Shortly after Eric’s trip to Vostochny Port, some Americans who worked for Dyno Nobel Explosives in St George in Utah came to visit Mount Thorley. The atmosphere in the meeting Eric had with them was icy. The Americans seemed to hate Eric for some reason. He commented in jest that he would write a story about his trip to Vostochny Port. They told him bluntly not to repeat what had happened in Vladivostok. The Americans then started making comments about ANZAC biscuits not being popular in Australia anymore. “The war in Iraq will go on,” said one of them forcibly.

Who gives a shit? thought Eric.

Immediately his thoughts were that he had been used as a pawn by the American security services and that was embarrassing for the company reputation. Eric became very distrustful of the Americans from then on.

The company human resources manager later came up from Sydney to Mount Thorley to see Eric. She described him as 'one of life's innocents' but would not elaborate any further. Eric's solicitor suggested there were two interpretations of that remark, either he was naive and got himself into trouble - did he ask to go there? or that he was the only person they could send since Eric was the only person not working for the security services in the whole company. Eric initially complained to his New South Wales State MP, John Mills about how he had been used by Dyno Nobel Explosives on the Russian trip. The MP took no responsibility and told Eric to take the matter up with his union. The union did nothing and neither did his Federal MP, Greg Combet.

But if you cannot get someone to work for you voluntarily, then a threat of imprisonment might just work.

Eric was later sent to a mine in the Dominican Republic. One American called Mike Riley asked him to take some crushed rock samples from the mine back to Australia with him, on a flight via the United States. Eric became suspicious when the guy from the mining company kept telling him these rocks at the mine contained bacteria that turn ground water acid, and if they ever contaminated the ground water in Miami it would cause an environmental disaster. Eric suspected that Riley was trying to set him up by taking environmentally dangerous samples into the United States that could result in a prison sentence.

On the morning of his departure, Eric left all the samples in his hotel room in the Dominican Republic. But when he arrived in Miami, he was subject to long delays through immigration, but after he collected his bags, an angry Mike Riley was waiting for him. "Where are those rock samples? Everyone here is getting pretty heated under the collar," he said.

"They didn't make it through customs unfortunately," said Eric, and walked away.

Riley looked angry. Eric knew then that he had been set up. And if he knew Eric did not have the samples after going through customs, he must have been working for one of the federal agencies.

On the return flight to Australia across America there were two air marshals on the flight, one sitting next to Eric and another about two seats away. How did Eric know that? The woman sitting next to him was wearing a dress that looked five sizes too big for her. Eric thought he could see a gun under her jacket but was not 100 per cent sure. The head air hostess came up to her shortly after takeoff and said,

"There must be a mistake with your seating." "Why?" asked the woman.

“Well, your name clearly isn't Mohammed and you're not a vegetarian.”

Eric guessed that was code for an air marshal and he looked at the woman. She gave him a threatening look in return. Eric then went to sleep for the rest of the flight. Dave Gribble (a Dyno Nobel Explosives manager), said later Eric was on a “watch list.”

Next Eric went to New Zealand with Alex Mandel, another manager at Dyno Nobel Explosives who took an interest in Eric's family history and then asked him to join ASIO, but Eric bluntly refused. He told Eric, “You won't be able to go back to Russia unless you join 'us.'” Eric said,

“You must be joking, the only reason I got out of there alive was because I was not working for any intelligence organizations and never have.”

The following week two friends of Eric's called David and Lynne Gay came to Eric's house for dinner. David had been telling stories about his time in the Australian Navy that did not add up. He then asked if Eric would join ASIO. “I will not be selling my soul to the devil thank you,” said Eric.

II: Psychopaths

If you cannot get someone to join either by coercion or threat, then get rid of them.

Dyno Nobel Explosives had a psychological appraisal report performed on Eric before he started working for the company as part of the standard human resource recruitment process. This report, which Robert Rounsley had unofficially given to him, put Eric in the 99th percentile of the population for problem-solving, numerical, verbal, critical and abstract reasoning. However, there were comments in the report about the things that motivated Eric, that could conceivably be used to ‘press his buttons’ in order to get him to leave.

Robert Rounsley was promoted shortly afterwards and a new manager took over named Jeff Gore. Eric's perception was that Gore had taken Eric's psychological report and was using it in a negative way to ‘push his buttons’ in order to get him to leave. The outcome of this illustrates the folly of placing a mentally ill, paranoid psychopath in a command position where he has unbridled power over his subordinates. Unless of course he was intended to be the ideal person for the corporate management to use to screw up someone's career. After all he had no conscience.

He immediately began treating Eric in the most appalling and unprofessional manner. For example, shortly before Gore was promoted, he threatened Eric with physical violence. Eric was working at his desk when Gore came up to him and said, in what Eric interpreted as a threatening way, “Let's sort out who becomes manager with our fists outside.” Given the fact that Eric had not applied for any management jobs and therefore was not in competition with him, indicated to him that Gore's behavior was very

strange. After Gore had stormed away, Eric reported Gore's behavior to Robert Rounsley in Sydney by phone. Robert Rounsley listened to what Eric had to say, but never responded any further to Eric's complaint. A week later it was announced by corporate management that Gore was the new manager.

And if threat of imprisonment did not work, then how about psychological warfare in the workplace to get rid of someone?

Gore then began playing mind games. For example, if he appointed Eric to supervise a project, he would supervise Eric's subordinates himself, bypassing him in the management structure altogether. But if Gore made a mistake, he would blame Eric. If Eric had to telephone or email other managers within the company who were dealing with other aspects of the same project, Gore would instruct Eric what to do, then send around an email to the other managers undermining Eric's actions. However, where a project Eric was responsible for was a success, he would take sole credit. His behavior implied all the decisions would be made by him and Eric's opinion counted for nothing.

He also ridiculed Eric in front of customers during official meetings. There were a number of occasions when Eric asked in good faith for information, had been given an answer by Gore, repeated that answer in front of an audience and then told by Gore it was incorrect. What the managers from other companies thought of this display of unprofessional behavior is anyone's guess. It would not have put Dyno Nobel Explosives in a good light, despite having an official company policy of 'openness, honesty and trust!' This kind of behavior did not create trust. Gore also asked Eric on several occasions to present information to customers that seemed to Eric to be in breach of company intellectual property rules and therefore put him in breach of his contractual obligations. Eric ignored these requests believing Gore must have made them in error.

Then Gore began excluding Eric from meetings that discussed projects Eric was supervising. Some of these, Eric only found out about some of these projects from other managers in the company who phoned him up later to ask why he had not been there.

During his annual management review Eric tried to be as honest with Gore as possible in terms of what he liked and did not like about the job. At every opportunity after this meeting, Gore began to deny Eric the opportunities he had requested and gave him only the kind of work Eric had said he was less keen on. Company policies of 'openness, honesty and trust' are fine on paper, but if they are not applied in practice, they are essentially worthless. But of course, when Dyno Nobel Explosives were challenged about their behaviors, they would always use these policies as a 'get out of jail free card,' as though having the written documents was proof the management were conforming to industry standards. It very quickly became clear to Eric that these 'regulatory conforming documents' were a legal confidence trick to cover up their unethical activities. Just like in *Orwell's 1984*, the

corporate management were doing the opposite to what their company slogans professed.

Where Eric wrote reports that were required by corporate management to meet his human resource management review goals, more often than not Gore would fail to pass them on to senior management.

A few weeks after Gore had assumed the role of manager, Eric was on a management course in Sydney with Alex Stathatos, the company human resources consultant and he mentioned Gore's threatening behavior to her. She said she would look into it but never sent an acknowledgement of Eric's complaint. However, the course presenters who were human behavior specialists overheard what Eric said and commented,

“Gore probably knew that he had got the job, that's why he threatened you.”

There were other examples of Gore's sociopathic behavior. For instance, on another occasion Eric went to a meeting with Gore at Newcastle University. The group were in the coffee shop with two professors when Gore suddenly turned to Eric and said,

“If people are arse holes you have to get rid of them. Don't work for companies that are arse holes, don't employ arse holes and if you have an arse hole working for you get rid of them.”

The two professors had an astonished look on their faces. In the car on the way back to Mount Thorley, Gore informed Eric that he was taking medication for a serious mental illness. Whether this was true or another of Gore's psychological games, Eric was not sure. At that point Eric reflected again on the Dyno Nobel Explosives human resources policy: ‘openness, honesty and trust.’ Eric's opinion of Gore was that he was in no doubt he could abuse people's industrial relations and human rights with total impunity. At that point Eric asked his union for their assistance. They advised him to use the company complaints procedure.

Eric approached the company human resources manager Jane McNie, who managed the complaints procedure process. Eric told her he simply wanted to be treated fairly. She said ‘alright’ and then started to discuss ways for Eric to deal with his issue. The Human Resources manager then said,

“The issue for you is: does Gore have any issues with you?” and she then put the phone down.

In another example, Eric was taken off a project and senior management began running it, but left Eric nominally responsible. Gore's response was:

“If you don't like what senior management has done, you can always resign.” Gore further remarked:

“It is important to feed people misinformation, or at least don't correct their ‘mistaken views,’ that way you stay on top.”

Gore asked Eric to write a report on company product production at overseas plants. When Eric presented to him precisely what he had asked for his response was "It's just a request for a holiday."

Around this time, Eric was sent to "Quins Investments" explosive plant in South Australia, near Gladstone. When Eric arrived, there was a Russian man there who had accompanied him to Vistochny the year before. The Russian looked shocked and very uncomfortable that Eric was there. Quinny mentioned that there was a second Russian who had disappeared the moment they found out Eric had arrived. From Quinny's description, the man sounded like the Port manager at Vistochny. The next day, the plant exploded and three people were killed. But the official Australian report said it was an accident. So, the presence of the Russian visitors must have been a pure coincidence.

Eric wrote again to Jane McNie the human resources manager, expressing his view that Gore was effectively preventing him from doing his job and that his position at the company was becoming untenable. Eric believed that what was happening to him constituted bullying and harassment. The effect of this blame and spoken and unspoken criticism was beginning to affect his health and as such he requested their urgent attention to this matter. He also informed her that his union would be able to attend any meetings if needed.

Shortly afterwards, Eric received a phone call from Jane McNie. She opened by asking Eric what he wanted the outcome of his grievance to be. She said,

"Do you want to continue working for Dyno Nobel Explosives?"

Eric said he did, but simply wanted to be treated fairly. He knocked on Gore's door about an hour later and asked for a meeting to discuss some issues he had. Gore looked up but did not appear surprised. He said, "What is it about?"

Eric said he would like to let him know that in the meeting itself. Gore then said,

"How about we meet in five minutes" and Eric agreed.

They began the meeting by Eric laying out the nature of his grievance by using examples. They went on to discuss a range of other incidents that dated back over the previous eighteen months or so. To Eric's 'surprise' Gore seemed to take all his questions and points in his stride and did not refute anything he mentioned. But what he did do was make out that Eric's 'view' of those issues was:

"On the black and negative side, and that words can be interpreted differently by different people."

He then went on to claim that people cannot rely on their feelings because they are colored by the individual's environment and basically date back to our primordial ancestors.

In other words, he could not deny the incidents Eric mentioned had taken place, but insisted that Eric's 'view' of them was 'wrong.' Effectively he tried to undermine Eric's confidence in his own feelings. Eric told him he did not accept that saying,

"My feelings are real."

Eric made a point on several occasions of saying he had raised a grievance about these issues. When Eric asked him if he liked him, he did not answer but changed the subject abruptly. When asked about his work Gore said,

"There are no issues at all in your management review."

However, Gore did say sorry for a number of incidents where Eric had raised an issue and Gore had failed to act on it. He then said they should work on an action plan to try to resolve the issues discussed. So, they talked about several things they could do such as, such as when Gore wanted to discuss some work with Eric's subordinates, he will make sure Eric was also called into the meeting.

Gore said he would try to keep Eric up-to-date on issues related to his work. Gore also asked if Eric felt he was getting enough pay and if there were any parts of the company business, he would like to get involved in. He suggested Eric put an action plan together about ways to develop his role in the company.

The next day, Jane McNie phoned again and asked Eric how he felt about working with Gore and Eric said that what is past is past and that he was prepared to put that behind him and move forward with a positive focus. She said,

"That all sounds like the meeting was successful."

She then began to say similar things to what Gore had said the previous day about how we can't believe our feelings because we don't know the overall picture. Again, Eric felt she began to down play the significance of the issues and events he had raised, in a similar way to Gore.

She then finished by asking:

"Are you happy you have got that off your chest? Did it make you feel better venting your frustration? Now you will be able to sleep easily at night; I haven't been," she snapped. She then slammed the phone down. Clearly when dealing with company human resource issues, she was not about resolving those problems. In her eyes, they were all about her own ego. Then, after she calmed down, she phoned back and said,

"What have you learned from this grievance?"

Eric said that he was not going to keep quiet in future if something happened that he did not like. She said "That was a key learning point."

Eric later reflected that perhaps the message Jane McNie was trying to convey was that all corporate managers were psychopaths and they will attack anyone, even someone within their own group, who does not respond to their assaults. You had to attack them, like they attacked you, to gain their 'respect,' but above all never get blamed! That is, they had the mentality of killers.

This reminded Eric of a phrase once attributed to Nikita Khrushchev, "If you live amongst wolves, you have to howl like a wolf." I believe the modern term for this is gaslighting.

Later in the day, Eric was called into a meeting with Gore who then announced that he did not agree with the way senior management had dealt with certain issues.

He then called the senior managers "psychos in suits," "snakes" and other unflattering epithets.

Jane McNie phoned him again later in the day and Eric said that he could put the past behind him and he did not bear grudges, so he would make the best of this new situation. She said she was not there to judge who was right or wrong, but the issues needed to be sorted out between himself and Gore and that she would not get in touch with Gore at all unless he was to phoned her.

Gore seemed particularly friendly for the rest of that day. Again, it could have been a coincidence.

After some further discussion they decided to hold another meeting in a fortnight from then to each talk about how they had each progressed with their agreed actions. That meeting which lasted about ninety minutes seemed to Eric to end amicably and he said that what had happened was in the past and that they should move on. But in future if similar issues arose, Eric said he would raise his concerns more assertively.

When Eric had time to digest and think about the meeting and phone calls, he noticed the similarity of the approaches taken by Jane McNie's and Gore. Eric suspected that she had been guiding both participants without acknowledging the fact to either. She had been playing a duplicitous role all along.

The company sent all the staff at Mount Thorley on a course that taught them that what they believed their feelings and understandings to be, were false. This was undertaken despite the fact that people's feeling and emotions were personal to themselves and in that sense absolutely real. In hindsight the course was designed to undermined people's self-belief and make them vulnerable to mental manipulation. This message was presented to all staff, not just to Eric.

The following Monday however, Eric attended a management review meeting for an hour with Gore.

During the meeting Gore remained very quiet, but his assistant was particularly aggressive and began blaming Eric for certain things that had not been done during a recent safety audit. Eric pointed out that company policy was to improve processes and not to blame individuals. Gore's assistant then asked if Eric had been "In discussions with anyone in human resources about her." Eric simply said that if he had been, that those discussions were private and personal. Eric had the feeling she knew that there were discussions going on with human resources. And if she had been told there were, who had informed her? Gore maybe? Eric also noted in the Dyno Nobel Explosives grievance procedure that,

'People cannot be penalized for raising a grievance.'

A number of Dyno Nobel Explosives corporate managers, including Gore, then attended a training course with a management consulting firm entitled, 'How to appear honest.' Or how to be an unscrupulous liar, but deceiving gullible people into thinking you are a decent person.

Eric continued to progress his actions in the form of a document laying out where he believed that he could further contribute to the company's business. However, other than Gore's guarded responses, he did not see any evidence of any change of behavior from Gore.

Eric's overall impressions were that Gore had ceased to make comments about senior management and just gave simple yes or no answers to his questions. But he seemed to be antagonistic in other ways and Eric got the impression that there are two sets of standards for behavior in the company and he was being held to account for adopting the higher standard.

The psychological report, which evaluated all employees before they were employed, was issued to the human resources manager, Gore and other managers. Eric received a copy from Robert Rounsley. It described Eric's behavior and the management could not say they were unaware of what Eric's response would be when confronted by these pressures. Also, given that his verbal reasoning was in the top one per cent of the population, Eric was pretty confident that anything said by Gore has been correctly understood by him. As mentioned earlier, Eric's reading of parts of the psychological report was that it could be used to manage people in their day-to-day job, but it contained implications that could be used to 'get under people's skin' to force them out of the company by 'pressing their buttons.' What was interesting was that the report described Eric as:

'Innately intelligent with verbal reasoning at the 99th percentile of the population.' Eric felt that the report was damning evidence against Gore and the Human Resource Manager's arguments who claimed that he did not know how to interpret words.

A few days later Eric received a phone call from Alex Stathatos, Jane McNie's assistant. She said,

“Dyno Nobel Explosives will insist that anyone leaving the company should sign a confidentiality agreement that is twenty pages long. Whilst they can refuse to sign such an agreement, they would not be allowed to leave the company *until* they had done so and the company could make their life ‘very difficult’ if they refused.”

“If you send me a copy, I will have my solicitor look at it,” said Eric.

She said,

“Because these are difficult legal issues I do not want to put this into an email, or have a solicitor examine it,” she said. So, Eric took the latter part of this conversation as a veiled threat.

Again, Eric felt that he was being pushed and bullied and that maybe the ‘confidentiality agreement’ was illegal or that Dyno Nobel Explosives were involved in criminal activities and they did not want Eric talking about it to a solicitor and have it coming out in court.

A scheduled follow-up meeting took place with Jeff Gore. Eric's actions prior to the meeting involved drafting a report with proposed actions for future work for him within Dyno Nobel Explosives. That report had been forwarded to Gore the previous morning. When Eric arrived for the meeting Gore's first comment was,

“I think you sent me an email, but I haven't bothered to read it.”

Eric then had to produce a hard copy of the report. Gore read through it as Eric was sitting there and basically Gore rubbished his ideas. At the end Eric wondered why he had spent the time writing it up. Gore asked Eric for more investigation into some of the ideas, but Gore's body language told Eric he could not care less. At the end of the meeting Gore simply handed the report back to Eric with a look of disdain on his face. A few days later, Eric asked Gore how he had progressed with the actions he had been required to do and all he said was,

“There hasn't been the opportunity to carry them out.”

One of the things Gore agreed to at the previous meeting was to call Eric into meetings when he was discussing work with Eric's staff. Eric knew Gore had a long discussion with one of his development chemists, without including him because Eric had spoken to her afterwards.

All Gore said when Eric raised this was,

“I didn't think it was important enough to ask you in.”

He then began to accuse Eric of not keeping him informed of what was going on in his section. He accused him of not copying him in on his emails. He said,

"I need to be copied in on your emails because if it is important I need to know."

"Do you want copying in on all my emails?" Eric asked.

"No, only the ones that are important or turn out to be important." Eric said,

"How will I know that?" Gore replied, "I leave that to your discretion."

In other words, there was an answer, but he was not going to tell Eric what it was. Eric said,

"That is what I have been doing, so if it later turns out that an email I thought was unimportant later becomes important, you cannot hold me responsible, if you are asking me to use my discretion in the first place."

Gore then changed the subject and Eric said,

"It seems to me that there have been several instances where information has not been passed on to me that I needed to do my work."

Eric quoted an example where he had not been provided with background information and was then asked to make a decision. Gore simply said,

"Well, you didn't really need that information anyway."

Then Gore accused Eric of sending emails that had upset the staff. Eric said the staff concerned had seemed fine to him when he had spoken to them earlier. He then said,

"Are you happy to keep working at Dyno Nobel Explosives?"

Eric replied that he simply wanted to be treated fairly. Gore then added, "Well what about your grievance complaint about me?"

Eric said, "My understanding was that we had agreed to put it behind us at the last meeting with human resources and move on."

Gore then tried to convince Eric that the senior managers had done the best job they could in the circumstances and that Eric had misinterpreted their intentions. It was like Gore was trying to convince Eric that the thing he had complained about had never happened in the first place. Gore then said the company finances were not in good shape and the chairman would be making an announcement to the stock exchange later that day. He told him that there might be some company restructures in the very near future.

Later Gore told Eric there had been a problem with the management database which contained everyone's goals and bonus key performance indicators. All the goals in Eric's file apparently were not correct. Eric had to go through and correct them, but when he did so, he noticed that the goals seemed to have changed from what they had been when he agreed to them earlier in the year. Eric asked Gore about it at the meeting but he denied that there had been any changes. According to company human resource policy

procedures, those files were not supposed to be changed without discussing them with the staff member concerned and getting their approval. If Eric's suspicions were correct, then they had been altered to make it appear that what Eric was complaining about and his grievance had never been the case. The other thing Eric noticed was that everyone should have two other managers nominated as supervisors apart from Gore. Robert Rounsley and Jane McNie were in the 'other supervisors' box when Eric had completed the management review with Gore earlier in the year, but now those names had now been removed. It was like the senior managers had removed any record of their involvement in this grievance. Eric was left with the impression that Gore and the other managers had tried to play down or possibly remove any damaging evidence that had threatened their careers. Where senior management had been involved in the issues concerned with the grievance, changes had certainly been made in the management record system to remove evidence of their involvement.

During one safety meeting chaired by Gore and attended by all the staff, a presentation was made by him on 'work related stresses.' One particular slide listed the kinds of things that create stress for employees. They included:

- Having no participation in decisions affecting your responsibilities
- Lack of communication
- Lack of job security
- Long hours
- Excessive time away from home and family
- Wages not commensurate with levels of responsibility

Gore's response to everyone in the meeting about this slide was:

"A manager who can do this to you has a lot of power. There are company policies, but they cannot stop the manager if this is the way he operates. Your only option in that case is to leave." Gore then said, "We are above the law and are not constrained by morality or ethics, the only limit to our power are the laws of nature."

Eric's interpretation of those remarks was that they were a thinly veiled threat to all those present. Eric also felt intimidated and humiliated. In a company actually practicing 'openness and honesty,' those remarks would be utterly inappropriate.

A lot of Gore's previous behavior returned after Jane McNie the human resource manager left the company. Eric surmised from this that when corporate managers 'screw up' big time, they are promoted to a higher position, often in another company to keep their professional reputation intact and their records are deleted. The employee however, is persecuted for highlighting the manager's incompetence.

What Eric and a number of other employees began to notice was that Gore seemed to concentrate his attention, or single out one person for this kind of behavior, which at this time was Eric. Gore would behave in what Eric felt was an aggressive manner one day and then behave on the next as though nothing had happened, which left Eric confused and beginning to doubt his own feelings. Eric's interpretation of Gore's escalating behavior was that it was all about the pursuit of power and authority for its own sake. Perhaps he was a sociopath? There were other types of behavior exhibited by Gore that seemed threatening. Given the fact that Eric went to a lot of trouble to try to resolve those issues over a period of several months and now found the same behavior reappearing, he was, to say the least, somewhat disappointed.

Eric had a further mediation session with Gore and the company human resource consultant, Alex Stathatos. This meeting came about as a result of Eric pursuing his issues through the external company employee counselling service. After a discussion with the counselling services, Eric decided to raise the issues again as a complaint to human resources. Clearly the councillor only had Eric's perception of events, but from the behavior patterns Eric was experiencing from Gore, the counsellor suggested that Gore's behavior was 'significant.' The meeting began with Alex Stathatos laying down a few ground rules about how the mediation session should progress. She then asked Eric to lay out the issues as he saw them.

These were:

There was a lack of guidance about boundaries to Eric's responsibilities.

A good example of this was about emails where Gore still kept asking Eric to copy him in on 'important emails.' To which Eric kept saying,

"Well, how do I know which emails I send out will be important to you?"

Gore constantly responded by saying: "I leave that decision to you."

Eric was left thinking there was an answer, but he was not going to tell him what it was.

"Do you want me to send you all my emails then?"

Gore said, "No."

But he gave a nebulous answer about what he wanted: copies of emails that might generate more work for his section of the company.

The human resource adjudicator agreed with Gore,

"Don't take comments personally," she said.

Gore then said to Eric, "These are all your perceptions and you are the one that went to the counselling service." He then said, "I just get the job done, that's all I care about."

Eric said that he was dealing with people and needed to consider their feelings when he was managing them. Then describing himself Gore said,

“Yes, I admit I am not an effective people manager.”

Then he asked Eric to explain why he had raised the issue as a complaint. Again, this was a breach of company human resource procedures that stated,

‘No employee who raises a complaint can be penalized for raising the complaint.’ Eric simply replied that the decision came out of discussions with the counselling service. Gore then said that he was,

“Offended and angry that Eric had raised the issue as a complaint and that he had not decided what he was going to do about it.”

And this with the Human Resource consultant present, who said nothing and with a company grievance policy that stated, ‘no one raising a grievance can be penalized for doing so.’

Alex Stathatos then said she would monitor the situation over the following month or so. She did not take any notes during in the meeting. Gore then said that he,

“Was concerned that this would affect his career.”

The human resource consultant then said that,

“None of this will appear in either Gore's or Eric's personnel file, but would instead be placed in a grievance file that is located in the North Sydney office.”

Gore looked relieved when she said that. Eric wondered if this was the company's way of covering up Gore's management incompetence. Alex Stathatos also stressed that the meeting and the complaint were confidential and that no one else in the company management had been informed by human resources. She then said it was a sackable offence to divulge this confidential information to others. Gore then said:

“It is only a sackable offence if the issue is an important one and I don't think this issue is important.”

Eric had the impression that Gore had discussed his complaint with others outside of human resources. Eric said,

“Well, I have said nothing to anyone except the human resource consultant, so if word of this has got around it certainly was not me.”

Alex Stathatos remained silent. Eric said that if this issue was to move forward, both of them had to put the past behind them and get on with doing the job.

Gore responded with, “I have to get the job done, so I suppose that I have to work with you.”

Gore then started to suggest it was a clash of personalities. Eric had seen it as victimization, which is why he had taken the steps he did to try and resolve the issue.

Gore's behavior patterns began to be more unpredictable from day to day. He continued the omission of Eric from information loops involving staff he supervised. Gore was clearly dealing directly with them himself. Gore made comments at safety meetings saying essentially that if people cannot get on with him, they should leave.

The fact that Gore was giving projects which Eric was responsible for to other people without discussing it with him first was ill-mannered to say the least. However, he did this with other staff too and some of them had indicated to Eric that they were uncomfortable with this type of behavior. Gore responded by asking Eric how he rated how happy he was in his job from one to ten. Eric simply said that, "If I wasn't happy with my performance I wouldn't be here now."

Gore then told Eric to ignore what people say and to ask if it maybe had more to do with their home lives?

Later on, the same day, a company safety department employee came on site to perform random drug tests. Gore's tests proved positive for marijuana and cocaine. The human resource consultant destroyed the paperwork and threatened the employee with the sack if she mentioned it to anyone.

"Those who cannot be blamed will not be blamed."

So, Eric had taken the matter all the way through the company grievance procedure and got nowhere. The human resource manager then told Eric a week or so later that the correct human resource procedures had not been followed by their own human resource department and Eric had to go back to the start of the process. That meant seeing a counsellor to discuss his issues all over again.

Eric went to see Welsh Dean at AusPsych Services in Newcastle, NSW. After an hour's discussion on the things Gore was doing to Eric, the counsellor paused, looked up at the ceiling and said,

"I cannot comment on Gore because I have never met him, but what I can tell you is the pattern of behavior you have experienced is characteristic of a psychopath and a dangerous one at that."

The psychologist mentioned that one of his other roles was debriefing ASIO agents when they leave that organization, to return them to 'reality.' One client was apparently so paranoid he would not come to the company offices. He would only meet the psychologist in a coffee shop on condition that he did not bring his mobile phone with him. It took him three attempts to just to get him just to turn up due to the fact he was so paranoid that he was being 'watched.' Immediately afterwards the psychologist said to Eric "Gore sounds a typical ASIO agent."

When Eric got back to work the next day, the human resource consultant, Alex Stathatos phoned him and asked how the counselling session had gone and what had been said. Eric told her what had happened, but got no response in reply from her. Looking through the company grievance procedure later, Eric noticed a section that said,

‘The Company provides an external counselling service, using independent consultancies. All counselling sessions however are private and the company is not informed of their outcome.’ So, Alex Stathatos had violated her own human resource procedures!

About four weeks or so later Eric was working offsite, when he got a phone call from the administration assistant at Mount Thorley, who asked him to come back to site immediately. That was about two o'clock in the afternoon. When he got back, Gore was waiting for him with the new human resource manager. They marched Eric into a room, told him he had been retrenched and within ten minutes Eric was literally thrown offsite. Eric phoned his union, but they did not do anything either in terms of contacting Dyno Nobel Explosives or giving him contacts that could help him with legal support.

Eric began to wonder if Gore was simply a psychopath, or whether he had been the victim of an act of psychological warfare.

So, Eric was retrenched by a manager who was a mentally ill, took drugs and whose behavior was that of a psychopath, and was a spy for ASIO. The means Gore used to get his way by harassment and bullying, but despite complaining to the company human resource department Eric got no support at all. Before Eric left, Gore said to him in his office,

“This is the point where we normally offer people money to keep quiet.”

Eric made no reply and Gore said no more. Eric was certainly not going to accept bribes from him or anyone else.

This is an issue that all organizations which employ psychopaths have to deal with. Psychopaths have no understanding of the effect of their behavior on other people. They have no empathy for people, they just demand that others obey. The result is that they are inept at dealing with human beings and their only mechanism of dealing with others is using bullying, harassing and intimidation. If that does not work, they feel they have lost control and resort to more and more desperate measures. In human terms their management style is pathetic, Eric thought to himself ironically,

“Isn't it a good thing for the company that all the managers attended a course on, ‘how to appear honest.’” Or perhaps the course should have been entitled ‘How to cover up your mistakes and incompetence by deleting incriminating documents and convincing people their perceptions of your criminal behavior was wrong and never happened.’ And of course, never send incriminating emails and always use the phone, because denial is easier that way. But above all never accept responsibility for your actions and

always manage situations so that you can blame others if it goes wrong and in the worst-case scenario delete all the incriminating documents, but get the glory if it is successful.

It did strike Eric that Gore had some sort of control over Robert Rounsley from the fact that Robert Rounsley never criticized or disagreed with Gore. Then one night in his office shortly before Eric was retrenched, Gore was in a strange mental state, as if he believed he had ‘god-like’ impunity for any of his actions. He said to Eric,

“Rounsley is under my control, he will never sack me.”

“So how do you work that out?” asked Eric?

Gore replied “Rounsley was sent to a mine site overseas to examine one of our manufacturing plants where there was some equipment that was overheating during production. He wrote an email to me, informing me that he was going to remove a seal from the piece of equipment that was overheating, to fix the problem. I emailed him back saying that if he removes the seal, product would leak out and the plant would explode. He ignored me. Two weeks later the plant exploded killing numerous people. But I kept the emails. They are on my computer at home and with a firm of solicitors overseas. If he tries to sack me, I will produce those emails.”

What Gore had clearly overlooked in his evil plan was that if his emails did ever come to light, the first person who would be arrested by the Federal Police for criminal conspiracy to conceal a murder would be Gore. He would spend the rest of his life in prison, which was the place he belonged.

‘Linked-in’ is a useful database for tracking your friends. It is even more useful in keeping a track of your enemies. Jane McNie was then head of human resources at a Hong Kong branch of a leading American international bank. Robert Rounsley was Vice President of an engineering company in Dallas, Texas. Alex Stathatos was then the human resources manager for an American global energy company. Jeff Gore however, was still a psychopath in charge of two tons of high explosives.

It gradually became clear to Eric that people who had screwed up big time in their early careers, were very easily manipulated to make the right decisions for the ‘higher authorities’ as they progress up the ladder, in case their ‘skeletons’ caught up with them. People who were corrupt and took bribes from the mafia got promoted; those who protest have their careers ruined. Not only that, it seems that there are people who work for the intelligence services who are committing criminal acts of treason, being well paid for it by enemies of the state and keeping their ill-gotten gains, all in the name of ‘national security.’

The devil’s modus operandum is pursuit of evil. But he has no interest in evil himself, and gets no pleasure from it. He lets his minions have their fun. The devil’s reason for existence, his highest aim is **control**.

Some years later, Eric was reading a news report on www.rt.com, the Russian internet news media. One report was an article on the American intelligence agencies. There was a photograph at the beginning of the article which purported to be operatives sitting at their desks at an American security organization's headquarters. One man with a particular hairstyle, looked like Jeff Gore's body double.

Chapter 3: Family History

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched

With a woeful agony,

Which forced me to begin my tale;

And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,

That agony returns;

And till my ghastly tale is told,

This heart within me burns.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Eric found himself unemployed and was struggling significantly to secure a new position. It appeared that Dyno Nobel Explosives, likely through intelligence agencies, had been surveilling Eric's job applications and obstructing his employment opportunities by asserting that he was "paranoid and a threat to security." This interference was conducted solely via phone calls to prospective employers, without any written communication such as emails or letters. As Eric's attorney advised him, "Should you ever manage to substantiate that the managers at Dyno Nobel Explosives engaged in such actions, you would have grounds to sue the company for at least \$10 million. Furthermore, if you can demonstrate that the Security Service exploited you as an unwitting pawn in Vladivostok, you could claim an additional \$10 million and pursue a case in the International Court of Human Rights."

Eric felt angry about the way he had been treated, but realized there was very little he could do about it short of a miracle occurring where he got written proof of Dyno Nobel Explosives actions. So, he decided to use his time researching his family history.

His first action was to simply to sit down and try to remember why he felt he had connections with Russia and what Yuri Bulantsev had meant by "Fortunately for you, you have an interesting family." He wanted to find out what had been going on.

Eric's first recollection was of a trip to Chopwell in County Durham back in his early youth to see one of his father's aunts:

After his mother died in July 1980, Eric's aunty Lorena and her husband Sid came up north from London to Boosbeck for the funeral. After the ceremony was over, the family stood talking on the grass beside the grave and Lorena mentioned that great aunty Edith had died recently, too. Edith had lived in Chopwell with her sister who was also called Lorena, which was shortened to Reene by her close family and friends.

It was a cold morning and it had started to rain and a chill debilitating dampness permeated the atmosphere. The priest who had conducted the ceremony, walked over to Eric's family to say goodbye. His hair was wet and clinging to his forehead, his cassock dripping with rainwater. The other mourners slowly drifted away into the mist.

"Fancy a cup of tea," asked Eric's father, Jack. "Yes, let's get into the warm and out of this cold damp weather," pleaded Lorena. "You know it's been quite a few years since we went back to Chopwell to see the relatives. Now might be a good time to go and see aunt Reene and catch up with the old folks. Why don't we go on Sunday," said Jack?

"Let me have a quick word with Sid," said Lorena and she walked over to where he was talking with some of Eric's mother's family. As Eric turned to watch Lorena chatting about ten meters away, he could see Sid nodding. He instantly knew they would be on their way next morning.

After returning home that evening, Jack and Lorena talked into the small hours of the night about their memories of Chopwell. Both Jack and Lorena had been born and grew up there. It was an old coal mining village in County Durham, but politically it had been and still was a center of militancy against the British establishment. Eric turned on the television and began to watch some programmes, but they just kept talking. He did not pay much attention to what they were saying, but subconsciously a lot of what they said did sink in, as he found out years later.

Eric remembered Jack saying he had sailed from London docks to Vancouver in Canada aboard the merchant ship the *SS Seagepool* as a galley boy when he was 17 years old. The cook aboard ship went berserk during a tropical thunderstorm in the Caribbean, killed two people with a bread knife and had to be shot dead by the ship's first officer. Jack remarked that he had learnt some hard lessons about life at a very early age.

They all went to bed very late, but everyone was up just after dawn the next morning, the car was loaded with drinks and sandwiches for the trip and at about eight o'clock they set off for Chopwell.

It was so long since Jack and Lorena had been there that they were unsure of the way, so they drove to Durham City, passed the science campus of Durham university and drove on through Witton Gilbert, Lanchester, Consett, Ebchester and finally arrived in Chopwell around ten o'clock. It

was a lovely warm sunny morning and as they drove down the main street, Lorena pointed out that the street to the right was Lenin Terrace and the street further down was Marx Terrace. Jack mentioned that Chopwell had been a renowned center of communist fervour since the 1920s.

They were looking for Mersey Street, but both Jack and Lorena had forgotten where it was precisely. So, they stopped the car as a pedestrian was walking past and asked him if he could tell them where Mersey Street was.

“Wey eye man, its doon there, three streets on’t left.” After a short pause he said, “You’s must be John and Lorena.”

Lorena nodded.

“Eye, I was chattin to Reene just now in t’ bread shop, she said you’s were all comin’ to see her today,” he said.

After the man had walked on, Jack laughed and said, “Bloody hell, you can’t even fart in Chopwell without someone knows about it, it hasn’t changed much in forty years.”

Finally, they arrived at 4 Mersey Street, a terraced house with a brick outhouse attached on the back of the property. There were also small allotment gardens, about fifty meters away further down the side of the hill where Reene had a small plot in which she grew her own vegetables. They all got out of the car and walked up to the front door of the terrace house.

The door was made of wood, but had a small pane of yellow frosted glass in the center. Jack walked up to the door. Knock, knock. Silence. Knock, knock. The light came on in the hallway and Eric could see someone walking towards the door through the frosted glass panel in front of him. A voice said, “Whees’s there?” They all paused for a moment, unsure of who should answer. “Who’s there?” repeated the voice.

“It’s John and Lorena,” said Lorena. The chain on the inside of the door began to rattle, the door handle slowly turned and quietly the door opened about a half meter. Then a head appeared and looked them all up and down. “Wey man, it’s been a while since I last saw you’s lot, come in,” said the head.

They went into a small but neatly furnished living room and when Reene said to Eric, “Sit down bonnie lad,” he flopped down into an armchair. The conversation was a bit forced at first; there was obviously some family history that had not been mentioned to Eric, perhaps even a feud that was clearly affecting the atmosphere. “Now hinny, how’s your mother, Anne?” asked Reene.

“Yes, she’s OK. She had an operation on her leg last week, so she’s still recuperating back home in Englefield Green,” said Lorena.

Grandma, Elisabeth Lytle Fears, was called Anne by the family. That was because her mother had also been called Elisabeth and they used the pseudonym to avoid confusion when she was a young child. Anne had been born in Craghead near Lanchester, but moved to Chopwell in her teens. The conversation then went in fits and starts for a while, until everyone seemed to relax and then they began talking about Chopwell in the 'old days' of their youth.

Eric started to get bored and began to drift off to sleep. He only heard bits of the conversation as he drifted back into consciousness, or someone rattled a tea cup and woke him up. "You know your uncle Robert went to Russia in the late 1920s; him and your uncle Eric and quite a few other miners from Chopwell. It's funny but they all returned around the same time in 1934 and most brought their Russian wives home with them," said Reese. "But keep that to yourselves, not many people here know now, and the authorities have warned us not to tell anyone," she added. Eric thought to himself that, 'quite a few' would mean about ten or a dozen.

"What authorities, England's a free country isn't it," Eric said. Everyone went silent and looked at Eric as though he had two heads. "No, we won't mention it to anyone," said Jack. "Ya aunty Lana and aunty Elena were Russian, didn't you know?" asked Reese. She pointed to several black and white photographs of a young woman on her sideboard. "That's your aunty Lana when she was 25, wasn't she beautiful," she said. It seemed strange to Eric afterwards that an old woman would keep lots of photographs of her sister-in-law but none of herself. He noticed that aunty Lana had a small mole on her left cheek.

"Whereabouts in Russia did the Chopwell miners go?" asked Jack. Reese replied, "Oh, it was a funny name beginning with a K. Ke., Ku., no, I can't remember exactly." "But what was odd was that none of the miners ever said why they had returned. There's a photo taken in Russia of your uncle Eric and aunty Lana." Reese reached out and took the photo frame off the wall of the living room. "Something had happened at the mine Robert and Eric worked at and the whole town came out to see." Eric looked at the photograph. There was a big crowd of people sitting on a hill overlooking a wide river. There appeared to be a metal cable with buckets of coal attached lying at the bottom of the hill and continuing into the river. On the other side of the river was what looked like a power station with huge chimneys. She touched the top left of the glass covering the photo with her finger and said, "That's your uncle Eric and aunty Lana."

Eric drifted off into semi-consciousness again and the next thing he heard was them talking about Anne Lytle Fears's uncle, Robert. "Your great uncle went to Russia in 1918. He died in Chopwell pit. He was a rope splicer although he had a funny job title 'engine plane man' or something. Anyway, he was splicing rope underground at Chopwell pit in - I think it were November 1921 - and he was supposed to be working alone and had secured the rope at either end; when it came under sudden tension, the knot

broke apart with tremendous force, severed his arm and he died within a few minutes. No one could explain afterwards why the rope came under tension; he was supposedly alone in that part of the pit. Tommy Davison his cousin found him barely alive. He said Robert muttered something about a ‘cowl’ as he died.”

Reene then began to talk about the Lytle Feara family history, how the earliest traceable ancestor called Christopher Lytle Feara was born in Gilesgate in Durham City in 1490, and how since that time most Lytle Feara’s had lived either in Durham City, Lanchester or Chopwell. There was also a Thomas Lytle Feara who was a student at Oxford University in 1585 and came from Gilesgate too. One Sheriff of Nottingham in the sixteenth century was a Lytle Feara. She made special mention of one ancestor called Ralph Lytle Feara who had ten children and lived in the aptly named Cockfield around 1750.

She also spoke at length about Tommy Davison’s family, Jack and Lorena’s father and Elisabeth Lytle Feara’s husband. He had an ancestor called Ralph Davison who married a woman thirty years younger than him and had seven children; the last when he was 69 years old in 1840. She mentioned that many of the Lytlefeara’s had been in the Durham Light Infantry, some of whom had fought in the Crimean war in the 1850s.

Eric was taken on a walk around the nearby streets by Uncle Sid, whilst Jack and Reene had a discussion about ‘personal matters.’ After the others had left, Jack hugged Reene. “Прошло много времени с тех пор, как мы последний раз виделись в Кемерово, сестра.”²⁸ he said. Да“, давно это было.”²⁹ replied Reene.

They returned home to Boosbeck later that night. At the time of the visit Eric had no suspicions that anything was out of the ordinary. To him it was just a family outing like any other. At the time he could never have imagined what the consequences of that visit to Chopwell would be on his life. Consequences that illustrate that the course of your life is determined by forces outside of your own control and that these forces have no morality, conscience or forgiveness and can never be held responsible for their criminal actions. What he was unaware of was how the people that run the “intelligence services” would view it. England is not a free country. Eric then thought to himself: Ignorance is most definitely not bliss. In fact, ignorance is positively dangerous.

Chapter 4: Second Trip to Russia

I: Kemerovo

²⁸ It’s been a long time since we last saw each other in Kemerovo, sister.

²⁹ Yes, much too long.

After having no success getting employment, Eric formed his own consultancy company. A short while afterwards he was informed that Defat, the Australian government department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was running a trade mission to Russia, so he went along to try and get work there. In hindsight he could not explain how he came to know the trip was imminent. He registered one day before the closing date. In Russia he met some interesting people who were all very friendly, but no work came out of the visit. However, the visit proved to be a life changing experience for Eric.

On the flight to Moscow, a Russian woman sat next to Eric. She asked him to take a photograph for her out of the aircraft window as the plane was crossing over the Himalayas. After he handed her the camera back, she put it in a sealable plastic bag and when he looked around a couple of minutes later, she had moved seats. The camera would have had his fingerprints and DNA on it.

Eric landed at Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow and then flew to Kemerovo in Siberia with the other delegates. They were given a police escort from the airport into town. Then they were taken as a group to one local open pit coal mine and also looked at some of the houses for the mine managers. He viewed the mine from the same spot that President Medvedev had stood two months earlier, except then it was minus 40° centigrade; when Eric was there it was about 5° centigrade. Turns out a Medved (МЕДВЕДЬ) is the Russian name for a bear, so Medvedev means literally ‘bear man.’ That may explain why Medvedev’s personal flag is a yellow flag with a brown bear on it.



Kemerovo, May 2011

The delegation was taken on a tour of the local mining museum. As the delegates entered the grounds of the museum, one tour guide mentioned that there were plaques listing the names of miners who worked in Kemerovo in the 1920s and each country they were from. Eric asked if there was a plaque

for English miners. The guide abruptly remarked he was not allowed to see the English miner's plaque. Eric thought nothing of that remark at the time.

The woman who ran the tour, gave a description of the history of the Kemerovo area. She mentioned that in the early 1920s to late 1926 a lot of miners from around the world came to Kemerovo to work the coal deposits for the Soviet state. She then said:

“Then in 1934 Stalin, under pressure from local officials sent all the miners back to where they came from and most miners took their Russian wives home with them.”

In fact, there were several state and local government reasons why the colony was brought under the centralized administration and numerous foreign staff were sent home. This included concerns that some European governments, particularly the British were attempting to intervene in the Soviet state. And in 1926, a change of policy by the Soviet state towards economic autonomy colonies meant the closure of the KAIC. The remaining foreign workers were integrated with Soviet staff in order to keep them under control.

Then the old memory of Eric's visit to Chopwell forty years before came back into his mind. He remembered what aunty Reene had said:

“You know your uncle Robert went to Russia in the late 1920s: him and your uncle Eric and quite a few other miners from Chopwell. It's funny but they all returned around the same time in 1934 and most brought their Russian wives' home with them.”

Eric said to the woman, “What did you just say?” The translator interpreted his words. Then through the translator she said exactly the same words again.

Eric was lost in thought for a few seconds and had a puzzled look on his face, which prompted the Museum guide to say to the translator

“Спросите его, что он имел ввиду.”³⁰

The translator then asked Eric curiously: “Why did you say that?” The other members of the delegation went quiet and held their breaths.

It was like Eric had a Pandora's Box inside his subconscious for the last forty years, and this woman had said something that had been a key that had just opened that box. He said, “Those words are almost exactly the same ones an aunty said to me when I was young.”

Eric then explained,

“My father's family came from a small coal mining town in County Durham in England called Chopwell. And to give you some idea what Chopwell was

³⁰ Ask him what he meant by that?

like, the main streets in Chopwell are called Lenin Terrace and Marx Terrace.” Eric then repeated what his aunty Reese had said.

He could see an Australian ‘General’ who was part of the same delegation becoming red under the collar. Eric concluded by saying,

“That must mean my family came here in the 1930s. I knew subconsciously that I had some connection with Russia even when I was young.” He was again lost in thought for several minutes.

The Russian tour guide then said to Eric,

“If you had said that ten years ago, you would have been in serious trouble. But now, no one cares.”

The guide then showed the delegates a large photograph of a group of miners and their wives sitting on a hill near the old ‘Central’ coal mine overlooking the Tom River.

“This is a very famous photograph,” she said.

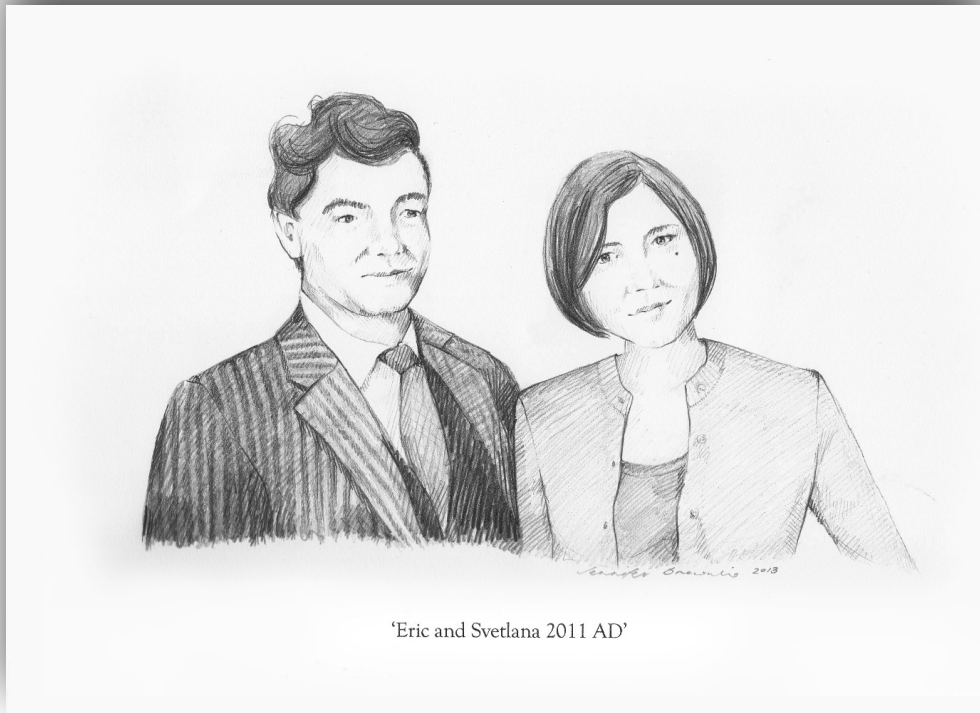
Laid in and across the river was a thick steel cable with coal buckets attached. The guide mentioned that in the early 1930s the metal cable carrying coal from the mine to the power station on the other side of the river had snapped. She said it took several days to fix and the locals all came to see the sight with their families.

This time Eric said nothing, but thought to himself, *Bloody hell, that's the same photograph great aunty Reese showed me in Chopwell! Hang on a second - Reese said the place uncle Robert and Eric went to, began with a Ke or Ku - and here I am in Kemerovo in Kuzbass! And she said, "But what was odd was that none of the miners ever said why they had returned." And Stalin himself had sent them all home. That would have been a bit embarrassing for the miners if they had told anyone! That might explain why the Chopwell miners never explained why they came back. This is a very strange coincidence!*

When Eric later drove past the Operetta Theatre in Kuzbass, he noticed a number of silk banners on long poles. The colors of the silk varied from blue, red and green, but each had a silver Viking Dragon on them. “We recently had a Viking festival,” remarked one of the hosts. A lot of people who settled this region in Soviet times came from the Novgorod and Leningradski region; they were descendants of Prince Rurik's Vikings. Although a lot of early settlers also came from Central Russia, Altay and Novosibirsk in particular.

Eric felt a curious connection with a Russian translator at the meeting in Kuzbass that had been provided to him by the local authorities, called Svetlana Romanova. He felt as though she was someone he had known in the past. She looked strangely familiar in some way. She had a small purplish mole on her left cheek, beautiful brown eyes and a neck rising from

square shoulders. After the meeting they talked together in one corner of a room whilst other delegates were having their lunch. Eric's first question to her was "Have we met somewhere in the past?"



"So have you been to Russia before?" asked Svetlana.

"Yes," said Eric. "I visited a seaport north of Vladivostok about six years ago. It turned out to be a very interesting experience! In fact, as a result of that trip I began to read Russian literature. I came across a Russian book, in English translation of course, that I have read eleven times. More than any other book I have ever read. It was a masterpiece. The author was called Mikael Bulgakov."

"Which one?" asked Svetlana curiously.

The Master and Margareta, replied Eric. As they talked, they discovered they had a common interest in this book. "They should make the book into a film," said Svetlana.

"No, the scene where she is naked in the fountain being drenched in blood would be too erotic for Western audiences," said Eric.

Svetlana laughed. Eric then said,

"In the introduction to the book, the translator wrote a short section on Bulgakov's life story. Apparently, he fell out with Stalin, who then prevented him from getting work. In frustration he wrote a letter of complaint to Stalin asking either to be given a job or allowed to go overseas to practice his profession as a playwright. A fortnight later the phone rang in his apartment. On the other end of the phone was Stalin. A week later he was given a job at a Moscow theatre."

“But can you just imagine picking up the phone after you have sent a letter of complaint to Stalin and Stalin is on the other end of the phone?”

Svetlana closed her eyes and shook her head as though she were shaking water out of her hair. “No, I could not even imagine what that must have been like.”

The next instant one of the Kuzbass Coal Mining Company's female managers came over. She looked intrigued. She directed her comments to Eric but said to Svetlana in Russian, “О чем вы тут говорите? Пусть ответит он.”³¹

Svetlana said to Eric “She’s asking what we were talking about.”

Eric said, “We were talking about Mikael Bulgakov's The Master and Margareta.” Later that evening at dinner, Eric had a long conversation with the female manager on the same topic.

Eric then started to think to himself: *When you are born, I think God puts an image of the perfect woman inside your mind. It is up to you to find that woman to be happy. But it is not simply looks; it is personality, body language, sense of humour, mannerisms and other things. I felt this afternoon that if I had been thirty years younger, Svetlana would be the perfect woman for me.* Eric realized later Svetlana looked identical to the photograph of aunty Lana he saw in great aunty Renee's house in Chopwell. Eric began to wonder if Svetlana and he were related in some way.

There was an Australian Brigadier, Kevin O'Brien on the same mission. When he was the worse for drink during the evening dinner in Kuzbass he claimed to have been a young officer in West Germany in the Cold War and fought at Monte Cassino in Italy in WWII. Eric thought that he was telling fibs. If he had been at Monte Cassino in the officer corps, he would have been at least 23 years old in 1944. Which meant he had to be ninety years old now? He looked in his mid-70s.

He then looked at Eric and said, “Your father was at Monte Cassino in the artillery.” Quite how this bloke who Eric did not know from a bar of soap knew about his family history was a bit of a mystery. After he had spoken about the Cold War confrontation which Eric felt was perhaps somewhat undiplomatic in the circumstances, Eric felt morally compelled to raise a toast to ‘harmony between nations’ with his Russian hosts.

The Russians seemed embarrassed that the Governor of Kuzbass was appointed ‘in the vernacular’ by Moscow. Some Australians at the dinner made comments about Russia not being a full democracy yet. Given the fact that all the Governors of Australia including the Governor General along with Army Generals are appointed by the Queen, the comments seemed somewhat hypocritical to Eric. In Russia the Governors are appointed in Moscow, in Australia they are appointed in London; where is the difference?

³¹ What are you talking about here? Let him answer.

Working out of the local government headquarters was a man called 'Yuri' who looked a bit like the actor Daniel Craig. He was constantly buzzing around everyone during the trip and even ordered the Chief of Police around. The group were told by an official: "It is best not to be seen to associate with 'Yuri.'" Eric suspected that he was FSB. 'Yuri' had an icy look on his face whenever he was dealing with the delegation as a whole.

When the delegation departed Kemerovo Airport for Moscow, 'Yuri' was there to see them all leave. Eric had been delayed in the check-in area because he had some vodka in his carry-on luggage and had to get rid of it because you are no longer allowed to take liquids on a plane. So, he was the last person in the group to enter the departure lounge through the security gate. What Eric noticed next puzzled him.

All the other delegates as they passed 'Yuri' were given an icy stare by him. When Eric got in front of him, 'Yuri's' expression changed to a broad smile, he took Eric's hand in both of his and shook it for several seconds, thanked him three times and wished him good luck. He began to wonder what the security official had thanked him for, so Eric walked over to one of the Australian Defat officials running the tour. "That guy has just thanked me three times for something, I don't know what for though?" The official acted shifty and began looking around the room. Then he looked Eric in the eye and said, "He's not thanking you for anything you have done." "What's that supposed to mean?" enquired Eric. After again looking around the room he said, "He might be thanking you for something your family did for them." "What?" asked Eric. The official turned and walked away.

Kevin O'Brien said he was a General, the delegation officials said he was a Brigadier. Kevin also kept telling Eric that he "always gets on well with left wingers." Eric felt he seemed to be directing his remarks at him. *What's that got to do with me?* thought Eric.

One afternoon after arriving in Moscow, Eric and Kevin were sat in the lobby of the Arbat Hotel when Eric said to him, "Did you ever think in your wildest dreams when you were in West Germany ready to blow the world to smithereens that you would one day be sitting in a hotel in Moscow?"

"No," said Kevin.

"So all that confrontation in the 1970s and '80s was a bit daft then don't you think. Peace is better don't you agree?" To Kevin that was no doubt a 'left wing' comment.

Then the Queen appeared on Russian television that was in the lounge area. She was placing a wreath on a memorial to the IRA. Kevin looked very uncomfortable and Eric said,

"I never thought I would see that in my lifetime."

Kevin said,

“Both sides hate each other so much it is impossible for them to agree.”

“Well, what the Queen has just done has pulled the rug from under Paisley’s Protestants,” said Eric. He did not disagree.

The next day, Eric had to travel with Kevin from the Arbat Hotel to a mining company in downtown Moscow. The taxi was late and it was raining, so Kevin went and orally abused the reception staff at the hotel because they did not have an umbrella to loan him. He was in a very unpleasant mood, but Eric and he then had to walk to the Moscow Metro and get off at Novokuznetskaya station, where a car was to meet them. Well, the car didn’t turn up and he went into a mad panic. As it was raining heavily, Eric walked under an awning and stayed out of his way. Eric's assessment of Kevin was that when things didn't go his way he panicked and look out if you are anywhere nearby! How he coped under battle conditions Eric shuddered to think. Eric had no desire to be anywhere near him when things were not going well. He expended a lot of energy in running around, shouting and blaming anyone in sight, but it was totally wasted energy in the sense that it was not directed to solving the problem.

The next day Eric visited a mining company next to the Russian Army Training Academy. When he entered the building, he found himself in a small room with an airport security scanner at one end. There was hardly room to swing a cat. Sat behind the desk was a young man in his late 20s. He had a featureless expression on his face. He took Eric's passport, ran it through several machines and put it in a drawer in his desk. He then handed Eric an electronic pass. Then with an icy stare he said to Eric, “Do not lose this pass. If you do, you will never get out of the building again.” Eric immediately realized he was not joking.

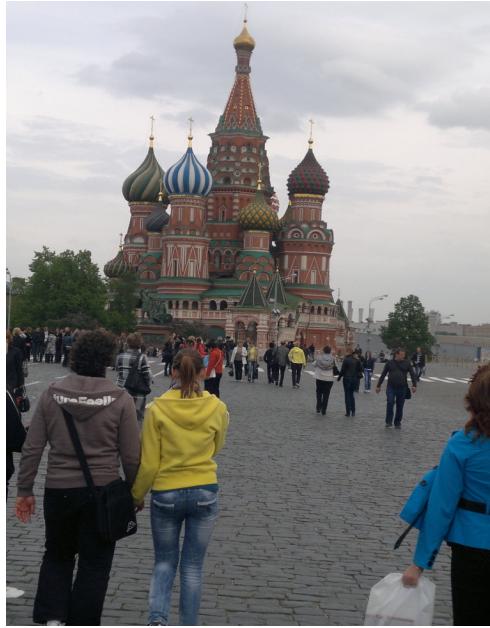
Eric met a Chairman of a Russian company the next day who told him he had worked for a particular Scandinavian chemical manufacturer years before. Eric said, “Do you know someone called Yuri Bulantsev?”

“Yes, I worked with Yuri in the Ministry of Agriculture. Do you know what Yuri is doing now?” he asked. Eric said, “I think he has his own consultancy.” Then he said, “If you see him, give him my regards.”

The Chairman then turned to the female translator sat next to Eric and said, “Я говорю поанглийски, ваша помощь больше не нужна. Подождите за дверью, я вас позову.”³² The translator got up out of her chair and left the room.

The Chairman then sat upright in his chair, leaned forward on his desk and looked at Eric with a blank expression on his face. He asked “Are you the same Eric Lytlefeara that was with Yuri in the ‘escape from Vostochny?’” Eric hesitantly replied “yes.” The Chairman then stood up and walked around the side of his desk to where Eric was sitting.

³² I speak good English; your help is not needed anymore. Wait behind the door, I will invite you back.



Red Square, May 2011

Eric thought the Chairman was going to thump him with his fist, so he stood up and put his arms across his chest so he could use a karate blocking move if the Russian tried to hit him. Instead, the Chairman held out his hand and shook Eric's hand firmly for a long time. His facial expression turned into a broad smile and he said, "That trip has gone down in legend."

Eric visited Red Square that evening for literally fifteen minutes before going to a sponsored dinner. It was mentioned at the dinner that:

"There are a lot of people in the Russian establishment who now think the move away from Communism was a mistake."

A pair of obnoxious American women turned up uninvited to the dinner. Both tried to engage Eric in conversation but they were really peculiar. One opened up her I-pod Tablet, pointed it towards Eric and then asked him to speak. He assumed they were American security agents and were recording his face and voice so he left immediately.

On the last morning Eric was intending to go around Moscow to view the sights. One Russian official in the delegation ran up to him while he was having breakfast and said, "There is someone who wants to meet you. Get ready to go in ten minutes."

"Who?" Eric asked. "A car will pick you up in ten minutes, be at the front door of the hotel then." As the car was driving through the back streets of Moscow, the translator asked Eric. "Have you got a mobile phone on you?"

"Yes."

“Take out the battery, I will give it back to you when you get back to your hotel.” As they drove past the Lubyanka she said, “The Devil can be kind to some people,” and had a strange look in her eye. The driver turned around to look at Eric and had the same expression on his face. “That was once regarded as the tallest building in Moscow,” he said with a smirk.

Eric was taken to Moscow University and met with the Professor of Explosive Sciences and Head of the Russian Academy of Explosive Sciences. Eric felt that this was an immense privilege since no one in Dyno Nobel Explosives or Orica Ltd had been allowed to meet him.

He was the same man that a cheque for two million dollars had been offered to anyone who had met him, at a conference in America some years before that Eric attended. He was a very charming man, who told Eric he had built the office he was working in at Moscow University with his own hands when he was a student. They conversed through a translator for about an hour and a half, until he finally got very close to Eric in his chair and asked in English: “Why do you want to work in Russia?”

Eric said, “Because I want to experience a Russian winter, work with Russian people and make some money.” “I think we can arrange that!” he said.

As Eric left Moscow Sheremetyevo Airport bound for Australia, he stretched out in his seat, covered himself in a woollen blanket and as he began falling to sleep, he wondered exactly what his family had done in Russia and what his connections were.

Chapter 5: Vikings

The further back in time you can look, the clearer the present will become

Anonymous

I: Lund

In AD 865 in the village of Lund in what is now southern Sweden, a young man was preparing to take part in a raiding expedition to England. His name was Eric Lytle Feara, and his surname meant ‘small comrade.’ He was proud of his Viking ancestry and keen to take part in his first raid on the English coast. His two cousins, Halfdan and his brother Ivar the Boneless, both sons of the famous Ragnar Lodbrok were leading the expedition. Another leader called Bagsecg was to meet up with them when they landed in East Anglia.

Lytle Feara had been told by other villagers of the immense amount of gold and silver that was kept in the monasteries in England and he was dreaming about how he would use his share of the plunder to live a more prosperous life. Jarrow monastery for instance was a legendary source of gold and

riches and had been plundered several times, although the last raid had been a bit of a disaster and eyebrows were raised whenever it was mentioned.

When he returned with his newly acquired wealth, he intended to marry his love Svetlana who was his cousin. She lived in the nearby town of Dalby. Her parents were fur and precious metal traders and they lived a more sedentary life compared to Lytle Feara's parents who were fishermen and plunderers. All of them loved the sea.

They first met at a family gathering one mid-winter festival in Dalby when Lytle Feara was 17 and Svetlana was 14 years old. The first thing that attracted Lytle Feara to Svetlana was a small purplish mole on her left cheek. He just looked at her transfixed for minutes at a time. She was slim with a beautiful neck rising from square shoulders and had auburn hair, bright brown eyes and a prominent strong nose. In the flickering light of the mid-winter bonfire, she saw him looking at her, felt embarrassed and looked away. As she got up to walk past him, she tripped and fell. She felt embarrassed.

But over the next few days she couldn't get Lytle Feara out of her mind. They both felt sexually attracted to each other. They began wandering away from the gatherings to a nearby barn. Soon they began to kiss and hold each other. Svetlana felt a nervous but excited flush, whenever Lytle Feara was nearby. They began to meet on holidays, in secret at first, then openly with the knowledge of both families. They soon developed closeness and began to share their thoughts and feelings. They began to rely on and trust each other. Svetlana felt supported, understood and cared for when she had problems and Lytle Feara felt the same.

After a short time, they became committed to each other and stood by one another when either was having difficulties. They began to talk about marriage.

Unknown at that time to both Lytle Feara and Svetlana was that while Lytle Feara was planning his plundering trip to the West, Svetlana's family were planning to move to the eastern Baltic around the Lake Lagoda area as part of an expedition with their cousins and business partners from Dalby to make money from the fur trade.



'Eric and Svetlana 865 AD'

They were following in the footsteps of their second cousin who had settled in the Lake Lagoda area in AD 862 as part of Prince Rurik's expedition. The ultimate aim of the expedition was to try to exploit an existing overland route to Byzantium and the Middle East where their merchandise would fetch much higher prices than in Gotland and to protect the fledgling Viking colony. There was great risk and few profits to be made travelling the conventional sea lanes through the North Sea, Bay of Biscay and Mediterranean to Byzantium, especially in winter. This overland route along the Volga offered the prospect of much wealth.

They did not find out about Svetlana's family's intentions until two days before Eric was due to leave for England. There was a family schism, voices were raised and threats were made in both families. Eventually, the tribal elders were asked to decide. They decided in favour of the parents. Svetlana was to go to Lake Lagoda with her family.

They swore an oath that they would find each other and marry in the next life, even if it took several lifetimes before finally meeting again. They had an unshakeable belief that their 'souls' would transmogrify to a new life; that people did not live just one life but had many. They kissed for a long time and then Lytle Feara gave Svetlana a beautifully crafted Viking Dragon's head silver brooch to remember him by. The next high tide she watched him board the ship for the trip to England.

Svetlana watched from the stone jetty as the wooden dragon headed ship with Lytle Feara on board set sail on the afternoon tide and sailed into the evening sunset. She watched transfixed as the tip of the mast disappeared over the western horizon. The two lovers parted, never to see each other again.

II: Durham

After Eric Lytle Feara's plundering party numbering several thousand Vikings, invaded East Anglia and wintered there in AD 865, they raided areas in Durham and Northumbria in AD 866. The following year the raiding party called colloquially 'The Great Heathen Army' by the Anglo Saxons, moved south to plunder areas of Mercia, killing the Anglo-Saxon King Aella when they attacked Jorvik, then in AD 868, returning to Northumbria before finally wintering in East Anglia again in AD 869. After each victory the Vikings 'made peace' with each of the states they plundered, which meant that Eric Lytle Feara obtained his share of the booty taken from the defeated Anglo Saxons.

Although most of the Viking raiders returned to Scandinavia as part of these 'peace treaties', Eric Lytle Feara eventually settled in the Lanchester area of Durham, an old Roman settlement, married and had several children with a Viking woman from Roskilde in Sjaelland called Ingigerd. She came to settle in the Durham area with her family in AD 871. The two of them worked a small farm northwest of Lanchester on a fertile hill overlooking the River Derwent.

Ingigerd constantly complained to Eric Lytle Feara that it was too much effort for her to carry water to the farm from the Derwent River in times of drought. Eventually, Eric Lytle Feara agreed to have a well dug close to their farmhouse. One of Eric Lytle Feara's old Viking comrades from the battle of Jorvik in AD 868 had a hobby as a well digger. His name was Ceapa, or as Eric Lytle Feara called him 'Chopper Blood-axe.' The well soon became a center for local commerce. It wasn't too long before the locals named it Ceapa's well. Some called it Chopper's well. Over the intervening years the name changed to Chopwell.

But Eric Lytle Feara always secretly longed for Svetlana even until the day he died, and he meant to keep his oath to marry her in the next life.

III. Novgorod

Svetlana and her family settled in a new town in western Russia built by earlier Viking settlers called 'Settlement' or Urochishsche, (today called Riurikovo Gorodishche) on the River Volkhov, close to Lake Ilmen. They settled there because the main trading town of Lagoda was still recovering from the effects of a major fire in AD 860. Here the local Slavic population called Svetlana's people 'Ruotsi' which was the Finno-Uric name for what is now Sweden. Over a number of years this name transformed into Rus and the people then called themselves Russians.

She married her cousin from Dalby who was the son of a fur trader. Svetlana and her husband became very prosperous exploiting the locals and their long-established trade relations with the southern Russian Principalities. As

their prosperity increased, they moved from Urochishsche to Novgorod, the regional capital and main trading center.

This area around Lake Lagoda that the Vikings called Gardarijki did not suit some Vikings as there were no monasteries or towns to plunder. It was also difficult for them to raid Novgorod and the surrounding towns because of the rapids in the Volkhov River downstream of the towns. But it suited Svetlana's family and friends who could make a profit from the natural wealth of this vast region. Their wares were mostly sold back in Scandinavia, although in later years they made greater profits taking their wares to Atil, the Khazar capital at the mouth of the Volga where they received silver and gold coinage in exchange for their goods.

On one occasion they travelled from Atil across the Caspian Sea and from there by camel train to Bagdad. This marked the beginnings of trade routes that led from Scandinavia, across the Baltic via the Lake Lagoda region to the lower Volga and via the Dnieper to Byzantium. Soon Svetlana began trading gold, tools, weapons, timber, jewellery and glass. But the jewel she treasured most was bronze colored amber, which she wore as necklaces and earrings.

During the winter months, she and her husband made an annual trip through the surrounding Novgorod area to Slavic trading centers to collect wares to sell during the summer months in Byzantium and Iran. Often, they would stop over in Gnezdovo on the Dnieper, which was a meeting center for other merchants travelling to the Black Sea.

In her later years after her husband died, her daughter Elena would often find Svetlana crying in her room at night. Invariably she was holding an old tarnished silver brooch in her hand. But she would never explain to her daughter why she was crying. "I'm just a silly old woman," she would say. "But you must pin this brooch on my tunic when I am dead, so *he* will recognize me in the next life."

"Who, you mean Dad?" said Elena. Svetlana did not respond.

When she died in Novgorod in AD 921 aged 70, she was buried in a barrow grave alongside her husband. She had left precise instructions for her children about how her burial was to take place. In particular, she wanted an old tarnished silver brooch pinned on her tunic.

"Elena, what's the significance of this old brooch, it looks worthless to me?" said Ingvar to his sister as they were preparing for the funeral.

"I don't know it's a mystery to me. But mother insisted so we must respect her wishes," said Elena.

Buried with Svetlana were her most treasured possessions, her bronze-colored amber necklaces and earrings and pinned on her tunic above her heart was a small Viking Dragon's Head silver brooch.

IV: Later Lytlefeara's

The name Lytle Feara first appears in English written documents from the eleventh century onwards, although the spelling in church records depended to a large extent on the literacy skills of the priests who kept the records. Thus, Lytle Forth, Lytle Fear, Lytle Phere, Lytle Feer, Lytle Phare and Lytil Fayr (and others) are variations in the Durham Cathedral Priory Court roles. The family moved to the village of Wolviston in Billingham Parish in the thirteenth century.

From about 1480 onwards the family was living in the Durham City suburb of Gilesgate. One Thomas Lytle Feara was a Kings Scholar at Durham Cathedral and later attended Queens College, Oxford University. He matriculated on 18 June 1585. His father, William Lytle Feara was born around 1540 in Gilesgate. Between 1603 and 1604 a William Lytle Feara (or Lytle Feere) was Sheriff of Nottingham. His son, William Lytle Feara junior was Sheriff in 1624. Another George Lytle Feara was a sea captain for the Royal Navy and was involved in an action against the Dutch Navy near the island of Chios in the Mediterranean around 1684. Several Lytle Feara's were in the Durham Light Infantry, some of whom won medals for bravery.

A number of Davison's and Lytle Fearas were soldiers in the 68 Durham Light Infantry in the middle of the nineteenth century. The regiment was stationed in Malta in 1854. They were sent to fight in the Black Sea region during the Crimean war. During that campaign they fought at the battle of Alma in 1854 and at the siege of Sebastopol in 1855. Some Geordies were seconded to regiments that fought in Asia Minor (Kars in Eastern Turkey) and the Russian Caucasus and other areas around the Black Sea. A number of them fell in love with the local Crimean Russian women, married and returned to County Durham with their Russian wives in 1857.

One William Lytle Feara from Gilesgate was father to Thomas, who was christened in 1593. He had a son Thomas christened in 1621. Over the intervening years the family seems to have survived mainly in the Cockfield area. John christened in 1759, had a son also called John who was christened in 1798. He had a son Ralph who was christened in 1833, whose son John Thomas was christened in 1877 and married Elizabeth Shepherd from Spennymoor in 1899. She gave birth to Elizabeth Ann in 1900. John Thomas worked in Chopwell Pit and the family including Elizabeth Ann moved to Chopwell in early 1917.

Several generations of Lytle Feara's were loyal supporters of the British regime. Why did circumstances change?

Chapter 6: The War Crime In Chopwell Wood

The Truth that makes Men Free is for the most part the Truth which Men prefer not to Hear.

Sebastian Agar

It was a frosty spring morning in early April 1917 and the birds were singing their mating calls, particularly one song thrush that could be heard all over Chopwell Wood. It was heard by the miners' wives and daughters as they prepared food to take to the men hiding in the wood. It was something they had to do early in the morning when the local constabulary were not around, so their destination could not be detected. The men had been living in the wood for about four months. The young men could hear the song thrush too. They were waiting for their women folk to bring them their food for the day and they were looking forward to the meeting with anticipation.

There was a chilly wind blowing that morning, although directly in the sun it was warm. And a smell of newly blossoming flowers mixed with pine trees filled the air. A faint smell of fried bacon drifted across the street to where Elizabeth 'Anne' Lytle Fears was standing and she could hear the cheerful voices of people talking in the near distance. Anne Lytle Fears and several other women in the village had a feeling of fear and foreboding that morning that none could put directly into words, but all expressed a feeling of dread; a feeling of unwelcome and unpleasant changes that would not only affect her but the rest of the village as well.

In Century House in London, a meeting of a different kind was taking place. In a dark room on the first floor, next to 'C's' office was an assembly of high-ranking army and naval officers. Sat next to 'C' was a man wearing a golden crown. The meeting had been called mainly at the request of the army recruitment section, to discuss the increasing incidence of conscripts failing to appear at their local barracks when their call up papers were delivered. "The widespread awareness of the horrors of the western front in the minds of the British public and the growing opposition of the general public to the war were clearly to blame," remarked Brigadier General Beresford. "An example must be made of these draft dodgers' to put a stop to this problem," he further remarked.

"Since you feel so strongly about the issue," said the man in the golden crown, "Why don't you form a detachment of trusted officers and men and make a statement that the whole nation will understand."

"The main issue that we need to consider before taking action is the legality of anything we do. After all we don't want to do something that the Germans will be able to use as negative propaganda against us, which since we intend it to be in the public eye, we will not subsequently be able to deny," said General Beresford. Following a brief discussion in which all parties contributed their views, a decision was taken that would mean later in the

day the women in Chopwell preparing meals for their loved ones would become widows and fatherless.

Beresford was still concerned. "We cannot kill unarmed civilians according to the Geneva Convention, without it being called a war crime and it is illegal under British law to execute any civilian without first giving them a fair trial. So, I want to be clear what our explanation will be that will prevent us being saddled with blame. We need an excuse that will leave the army legally watertight and remove the possibility of any of us being held to account by an anti-war government in the Courts after this conflict is over."

"Yes, I see your point," the man in the golden crown responded, "but there is one way around your legal concerns. That is to use a justification that is above the law and which if the worst comes to the worst means that, 'those who cannot be blamed will not be blamed.'"

"Ah, I see," said Beresford.

"We use the Royal Prerogative, which no King's Councillor or Judge would dare to argue with, but which does not actually exist under British law. So, if it was questioned, we would argue that it doesn't exist."

"Correct," said the man in the golden crown.

"And what's more," said Beresford, "if it looks like some politician is going to hold us responsible, we will accuse him of being a German spy. Then we can shut him up using the Official Secrets Act."

"Exactly," said the man in the golden crown.

"But the Chopwell villagers will certainly hate both the army and the monarchy and they have strong political representation in the Labor Party and the Durham Miners' Association. They could stir up a lot of trouble, which may be politically embarrassing and as we argued earlier could be used as propaganda against us by the Germans," remarked the army legal counsel seated next to Beresford.

"In that case we need to blacken the persona of the Chopwell miners and turn the rest of the population against them," said a voice on the far side of the table.

Beresford thought for a while and then said, "There are a number of miners from Chopwell who have spoken to Lenin. Our agents in Chopwell regard them as having fallen under the spell of this new political theory called communism," said, 'C.'

"Communism, what's that?" asked the man in the golden crown.

"It's a political system where the workers run the country and where Monarchy has been abolished," said, 'C.'

The meeting descended into roars of satanic laughter. "Sounds very dangerous to me," said the man in the golden crown. "Clearly then, if we have trouble from the villagers in Chopwell after Beresford's operation, it will be because they are all communists who are working as agents for the Germans," he said.

"Make sure everyone involved in the operation and in tying up loose ends afterwards is very clear about this." The man in the golden crown looked each committee member sternly in the eye. Everyone was clear about their part in the process and more importantly where the blame was to be laid. "Those who cannot be blamed will not be blamed."

General Beresford got the early morning train from King's Cross to Durham City. There he was met by his second in command and they then went straight to the barracks of the Durham Light Infantry. However, since the operation could cause some 'local animosity,' a group of 'miscreant soldiers' had already been brought to the barracks from the trenches in France. These were men who if they had not 'volunteered' for this assignment would have been shot by firing squad for breaches of military discipline. By early afternoon, they were loaded onto trucks and were heading for Chopwell Wood, along with two bloodhound handlers from the local Durham Constabulary.

At around 2.30 that afternoon there were loud knocks on the door at 2a Humber Street. Elizabeth Lytle Fears answered the door. Anne, as she was called, was 17 years old and pregnant to one of the boys in the town called Tommy Davison. As she opened the door, she was knocked backwards into the house by two soldiers who demanded she give them an article of her clothing. Terrified, she handed them her headscarf which the soldiers gave to two bloodhounds to sniff.

They then left and headed for the wood. The dogs followed her scent through the wood until they came to a clearing, where there were some man-made caves in a disused stone quarry. There was evidence of human occupation judging from the amount of burnt wood and discarded food in the surrounding bushes. On the far side of the old quarry was a dilapidated wooden hut. Voices could be heard by the soldiers who were following closely behind the dogs. One man wandered out of the hut and was confronted by twenty soldiers carrying Lee Enfield rifles. "Hands up," shouted Captain Harry Davies. The man put his hands in the air. Several men followed the first man out of the hut and stood silent in front of the soldiers. Over a period of half an hour, a total of twenty men came from several points in the disused quarry, including some from the caves, amongst whom was Peter Lee, Anne's cousin. Captain Davies then ordered the soldiers to tie the men's hands behind their backs and stand them against the lower wall of the quarry. In a voice filled with hate, he told them a truck would be arriving shortly to take them to a local government center for processing, although he omitted to tell them precisely which processing center it was to be. Soon the noise of trucks was audible a short distance

away. The men were told to face the quarry wall before the trucks arrived, with their backs to the soldiers.

Back in the village, Anne, along with all the village folk, was frantic about what was happening to the men in Chopwell Wood. At around three o'clock, half an hour after the army had entered the wood, a series of gunshots in rapid succession were heard. Then silence. Not even a bird was making a sound. The villagers panicked and ran towards the wood, where they were met by a contingent of soldiers who used brute force to prevent them going any further. "We want to see our sons and husbands," said one woman.

"You won't be seeing them again," sneered the officer commanding the detachment. They were forced to return to their homes.

A young boy on a bicycle came riding into Chopwell from a road that skirted the southern side of the wood, alongside the Derwent River. He was distraught and in tears. "They were loading dead bodies into a truck and one of them was my father. They drove off in the direction of Catterick army camp," cried the boy.

What Captain Harry Davies had failed to tell the men in the wood was that the government processing center they were being taken to was the morgue. In typical British fashion he had lied by omission. The women of Chopwell never saw the bodies of their loved ones again.

Word spread like wildfire in Chopwell and the surrounding towns about what the army had done. Soon counter rumors spread by the intelligence services began to appear in the area. "The army had shot some German spies caught in the wood and local miners that had been helping them," was one rumor.

"No one had been shot; it was a party of landowners on a grouse shoot."

"There weren't any shots; it was a thunder storm."

When all these proved ineffective, the ace was pulled from the pack - they were all communist spies working for the Germans. Anyone who supported the villagers in Chopwell would be accused of being a communist. Soon people were too terrified to speak out and remained silent. But in their hearts, they all knew.

Soon the word was that no killings had ever taken place. But no one who was sent their call up papers from then on failed to turn up at the assembly centers. Brigadier General Beresford's tactics had been a success and he was awarded a knighthood in the New Year's Honors List for services to his country above and beyond the call of duty. The award was presented by the man in the golden crown.

Back in Chopwell what had begun as fear and panic, soon became depression and sorrow. Over the following months this changed slowly but surely into anger and then finally and permanently for many villagers into

hate. Hate for the army who had done this to their husbands and sons and hatred for the Monarchy that allowed this to happen. Little did they know that it was the man in the golden crown that had been the instigator!

The soldiers returning from the front in France at first refused to believe that such a thing could happen. Only when they spoke to the families concerned and saw that their loved ones were no longer there did they believe. And when they believed they became angry. But it soon became clear that if they raised this issue in the trenches with their comrades, they would find themselves on a suicide mission from which they never returned. So, they suffered in silence, but because opposition was dangerous and useless, they took a different approach. They saw communism as a way to remove the ruling class that they now despised.

As the war in Western Europe progressed, Russia ended the war in the East. Contacts between the Durham Miners' Association and the new government in Russia began to flourish. Soon delegations from all the branches of the miners' union were attending conferences in Moscow. None was more enthusiastic than the Chopwell Lodge of the Durham Miners' Union. In fact, when the Russian civil war began in 1918, over thirty miners from Chopwell went to join the Red Army to fight on the side of the communists.

How did Eric find out? When he asked grandma Lytlefeara how she knew all these things she said, "Simple hinney. When soldiers in the trenches thought they were going to die, they often confessed their sins to their fellow soldiers as a final act of contrition. The soldiers who took part in the Chopwell massacre returned to the trenches in France. A couple of these confided in their fellow soldiers, some of whom were from Chopwell. Earnest Davidson discovered the truth of what happened and told us."

Chapter 7: Bolsheviks

If you live amongst wolves you have to howl like a wolf

Nikita Khrushchev

In February 1918, the Russian government representative in London, Maxim Litvinoff, made contact with the British Labour Party, asking for assistance to defeat the anti-Bolshevik forces in Russia. The message was passed to the various miner's lodges and Chopwell Lodge responded to the call to arms. By mid-February 1918, a letter of invitation had been sent by Trotsky to the Chopwell Lodge and a number of miners had agreed to go to Russia to support the Bolshevik cause. They were asked to assist the Bolsheviks for one year.

One of those miners was Robert Lytle Feara, Anne's uncle. After some prevarication by the British passport office, the group made the rail journey to Newcastle-on-Tyne. There they boarded a merchant vessel leased by the Russian government and sailed the dangerous sea route to Murmansk. Even in 1918 there was constant danger of German submarine attacks. At

Murmansk they were met by a representative of Trotsky who provided them with a letter of safe transit to Moscow. The letter read as follows:

SOVIET OF THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS

Petrograd

5 March 1918

No. 606

I request all Organizations, Soviets and Commissars of Railway Stations to give every assistance to the members of the English mission from Chopwell, Messrs. RT Lytle Fears, R. Davison, T. Smith, D. Brown, G. Green, T. Smyth, G. Minter, etc.

Commissar for Foreign Affairs,

I. Trotsky

(Countersigned by) Secretary, Sergeieff

P.S. personal stores of provisions not to be confiscated.

I. Trotsky

At Murmansk they boarded the train to Moscow. In Moscow they were met by a delegate sent by Trotsky who took them to their lodgings in a two-storey house on Pogodinskaya Ulitsa, close to Novodevichy cemetery. The next morning, they were all interviewed by a man named Alexandrovitch who was vice president of the CHEKA. He was satisfied with all the Chopwell men, except for Dan Brown who was questioned for some time. Dan was the only member of the party who was not a miner. He worked in the office at Chopwell pit as an assistant to the mine manager, who was a distant relative of General Beresford. "Это шпион Бересфорд,"³³ Alexandrovitch remarked to one of his lieutenants.

Later that afternoon all the men were drafted into a Bolshevik militia group and instructed to help deal with anarchist groups that were terrorizing Moscow. Dan Brown was seconded to a separate group run by the CHEKA. That was the last they saw of Dan. When Robert enquired about him a few days later, he was told Dan's group had been ambushed by a group of anarchists on the corner of Nikolsky Pereulok and Ulitsa Arbat, and that Dan had not survived.

The anarchists had moved into some of the finest houses in Moscow, particularly on the Povarskaya where a lot of rich merchants had lived. At three o'clock one morning in early April 1918, there were simultaneous raids on twenty-six anarchist houses across Moscow. The Chopwell men were part of a detachment that surrounded one house on the Povarskaya, where a 'feast' was in progress. The detachment opened fire from the front and side

³³ This is Beresford's spy.

of the house and in a few minutes all fell silent. As they entered the building the filth was appalling. Broken bottles were all over the floor, wine stains and excrement was on the carpets and the once magnificent ceilings and walls were riddled with bullet holes and priceless paintings had been destroyed. The dead lying around included ex-officials, criminals and students.

A long table in the drawing room was overturned and was surrounded by broken plates, glasses, vodka bottles and cutlery. These items were immersed in pools of blood and red wine. A naked woman lay face down on the floor. One of the Bolsheviks turned her over. She had a bullet hole through the neck where the blood had congealed. 'Prostitutka,' said the Bolshevik. "It's for best, Da?" In the raids over 500 anarchists were arrested and over 100 were killed. All of their machine guns, rifles, ammunition and loot were captured.

"Well, this is a hell of a way to establish discipline," said Tom Smith.

Around this time, the Bolsheviks were close to reaching an agreement with the allies on military intervention because the Russians were afraid of further German aggression in Eastern Europe and knew they did not have the means to stop them. This was an agreement whereby Allied officers would help train the Red Army that Trotsky was in the process of organizing. However, it seems the whole idea came to nothing as a result of interference by the French ambassador.

One of the Bolshevik officers who spoke fluent English explained to the Chopwell men what had happened.

"A French military mission returning from Romania arrived in Moscow. It was headed by General Berthelot. Acting on a suggestion by the British embassy, Trotsky proposed to the general that Allied officers should train the Red Army. The French and British set up a committee composed of General Romei, General Lavergne, Major Riggs and Captain Garstin. Trotsky on behalf of the Red Army made a formal invitation for help. General Lavergne accepted and an agreement was reached whereby General Berthelot's mission should remain in Moscow."

"Two days later the French Ambassador M. Noulens intervened. He read the riot act to General Lavergne for exceeding his powers and General Berthelot's mission was returned immediately to France. Trotsky was furious. The next day the *Izvestia* newspaper on Trotsky's instigation carried a leading article saying that, 'Only America had known how to treat the Bolsheviks decently and it was the Allies themselves who, by disregarding the wishes of the Russian people, were preventing the creation of a pro-ally policy.'"

"Doesn't surprise me," said Robert.

There were regular scares of German takeovers, probably instigated by German intelligence agents in Moscow. The Bolsheviks told the Chopwell

men that the Allied governments believed the most outrageous tales. One in particular that was doing the rounds was that Siberia was literally teeming with German regiments formed from prisoners of war. These had allegedly been armed by the Bolsheviks. Trotsky even told the British ambassador:

“It's no use me denying it, you wouldn't believe me. Go to Siberia and see for yourself.”

He arranged travel permits for a British and an American officer and instructed the local Soviets to give them all the assistance they needed. They returned six weeks later but had found no trace of any German prisoners. What they did discover was that a Cossack General called Semenoff was running a war against the Bolsheviks in the Amur region and Trans-Baykal, using China as a safe haven.

One morning the Chopwell men were asked to form an armed guard outside the Commissariat for War in the square behind the Cathedral of the Saviour in the Andronikov Monastery. A large crowd of armed sailors came into the square demanding their back pay. The Chopwell men watched as Trotsky came running down into the square to meet the sailors. He berated them with his tongue.

“You are dogs unworthy to be part of the fleet, which has played such a glorious part in the revolution. I will look into your complaints. If they are correct, they will be rectified. If not, you will be branded as traitors to the revolution. Go back to your barracks or I will disarm you myself and remove your privileges.”

The sailors went away with their tails between their legs like beaten dogs.

On another occasion the Chopwell men were invited to listen to a meeting of the Central Executive Committee (The Bolshevik Collective Presidents) which on that occasion held its meeting in what used to be the restaurant of the National Hotel. It had been renamed ‘The First House of Soviets.’ Trotsky gave a speech from a small dais where the conductor of an orchestra would previously have stood. Even though they understood little Russian, the Chopwell men could clearly see the effect of Trotsky's oratorical skills on his audience.

Lenin came into the meeting on several occasions, but did not take part in the discussions. Robert could see several other leading Bolsheviks across the room, including Lunacharsky, Bukharin, Pokrovsky, Krylenko and Chicherin. They said it was due to Lunacharsky that the Bolshoi Ballet, Moscow Opera and many Moscow museums had been preserved. One of the Bolsheviks pointed out a man sitting at the next table called Dzerzhinsky.

“He is head of the CHEKA,” he said.

They also met a strongly built Georgian man with brown hair and moustache with a pallid complexion. They shook hands but he said nothing,

so they paid little attention to him. His name was Joseph Dzhugashvili. He later became Lenin's successor and was known by the nickname 'Stalin.'

Meanwhile, in London the Foreign Office was in two minds about military intervention in Russia. The doves realized that logistical difficulties as well as the sheer cost of conducting a military campaign against the Germans in such a remote part of the world would be astronomical. The hawks led by General Beresford wanted intervention to destroy Bolshevism because his own guilt drove him to do so. Consequently, the British missions across Russia were following different courses. There was no common policy and no one was in overall authority in the British Embassy in Moscow. Thus, the various British missions were intriguing against each other because neither knew what the other was doing. In summary, the British Foreign Office had no policy on Russia, unless one could say that not having a policy was a policy.

Looking at the issue from the point of view of the British government, the Prime Minister, Lloyd George was not in a position to send a large army into Russia. If the British supported the 'White Russians' in Southern Russia it risked driving the Bolsheviks into an alliance with the Germans. If the British supported the Bolsheviks, it risked a German advance on Moscow.

Because the situation in Moscow was changing so quickly, the British Government could not see any sign of order in the chaos. The main cause of such disorder was that Tsarism had repressed every political outlet of the people. So, when it collapsed, the bureaucracy collapsed with it. The British government believed that the situation would change back to the old regime eventually. They had not realized that an upheaval had occurred that had changed Russia forever.

The Bolsheviks informed the Chopwell volunteers that there was a Czech army under the control of French officers in Russia. The Czechs wanted to return home, but the British wanted them evacuated out of Arkhangelsk, where General Poole had a force of British soldiers. In the end it was agreed that the Czech army should go to France via Murmansk and fight the Germans. The issue had become a bone of contention between the British and Russian Governments. For various reasons in the ensuing chaos, the Czech army remained in Russia.

Then in May 1918 the British, with the help of a social revolutionary called Fabrikantoff, had helped smuggle the Russian Prime Minister, Kerensky out of Moscow to Murmansk disguised as a Serbian soldier. This did not help British-Russian relations.

The order came for the Chopwell Brigade to move from Moscow to Novgorod in the middle of May 1918. There they were encamped in a building in the Kremlin that overlooked the Volkhov River. The first few days were relaxing for the County Durham boys and they went for several strolls around the city. They saw the 300-ton statue erected in 1862 commemorating the Varagian Prince Rurik's arrival there in AD 862. Also

shown on this statue was Vladimir of Kyiv, Peter the Great, Ivan III, Dmitry Donskoy, Catherine the Great and Alexander Nevsky.

Geoff Green said something that night in the barracks that struck a chord with everyone.

“Has anyone else noticed something about all the women here?” he asked.

“Aye, they are all beautiful,” said Robert.

“No, it’s not just that. What else have you noticed; has anyone else spotted something?” asked Geoff.

“Well, one of them looked like our Edith,” said Tom.

“Exactly, they look like our girls at home. I’ve seen faces that you can see in Chopwell. Slightly prettier perhaps,” said Geoff.

“The blokes don’t look anything like us though,” said Tom.

“So how do you explain that then?” asked Robert.

“I can’t. But there must be a reason, it canny be coincidence,” said Tom.

’Well, that statue we saw today was dedicated to a Viking Prince that settled here in 862 AD. Maybe he settled here and his brothers settled in Chopwell,” said Robert.

They all laughed. Aye, maybe they are all our relatives,” said Tom.

“So you mean if we get off with any of the local girls, it will be like shagging wor cousin,” asked Geoff.

“I’ve never shagged any of my cousins before,” laughed Robert.

“No, but I’m willing to give it a try. Sounds like a good idea to me,” said Tom. They all laughed, but at the same time they all knew something was odd. Well, not odd. Perhaps strange, like meeting some long-lost family members.

The next day a regiment of Bolshevik troops was marching out of Novgorod, some of whom were women. Robert glanced across at the marching column, and his eye was attracted to a woman with a purple mole on her left cheek. She caught him in her line of sight, and smiled. That’s the woman for me he thought, but before he could shout to her, the regiment had marched on.

Next day news arrived at Novgorod that the Czech Army had attacked the Bolsheviks in Siberia when the Russians had tried to disarm them. In Moscow the Czech Diplomatic Council had all been arrested. Numerous people had been rounded up. In Novgorod there was a rumor that General Poole was due to arrive shortly in Murmansk with a British Army. The Bolsheviks also knew that General Poole’s second in command, Colonel

Thornhill who was in Murmansk was an extreme interventionist. The Russians blamed the French who were the officer corps for the Czechs.

Trotsky and Lenin convinced the Central Executive Committee that the Allies were clearly on the side of the anti-Bolshevik forces and that the Czechs were likely to be the vanguard of any military intervention. Therefore, a decree was issued to the Allies that the Bolshevik government would oppose Allied military intervention in the same way they would oppose German intervention.

The anti-Bolshevik forces in the south became encouraged by these events and in June they assassinated Volodarsky, the Bolshevik Commissar for Press Affairs in Petrograd. The head of the Petrograd CHEKA responded with a speech in which he accused England of organizing the attack. The next day the commander of the Russian Baltic Fleet who had been a prisoner in the Kremlin in Moscow and was a 'White Russian' called Admiral Schastny was condemned to death and shot. The purges had now begun. Trotsky wanted to declare war on the Allies, but Lenin prevented him from doing so. The British Government believed that if the Allies landed in force in Arkhangelsk and Murmansk the Bolsheviks would be unable to stop them.

In July, the Left Social Revolutionaries who had formed a coalition with the Bolsheviks decided to try to restart the war with Germany. They planned to arrest all the Bolshevik leaders in a coup at a meeting of the Central Executive Committee in the Moscow Opera House. When they surrounded the opera house at six o'clock in the afternoon with troops from the Pokrovsky barracks there were no Bolsheviks there. The coup was headed by Sabin, a military commander and Alexandrovitch the vice president of the CHEKA, who had planned the attack. Their half-hearted attempt quickly came to nothing. Trotsky called in two Latvian regiments from the Moscow suburbs and when confronted by these troops, the Left Social Revolutionaries laid down their arms. Sabin escaped, but Alexandrovitch was caught at Kursk railway station, put on trial and executed. All the Left Social Revolutionaries in the opera house were arrested.

However, at the same time the Left Social Revolutionaries had planned to assassinate the German Ambassador in Moscow, Count Mirbach. At 2:45 pm on Saturday 6 July 1918 two men in a car drove up to the German embassy in Denezhny Pereulok. Even though the building was guarded by Bolshevik troops the two men had no problems entering the building because they had a special pass signed by Alexandrovitch, the vice president of the CHEKA. The assassin was called Blumkin and was also an employee of the CHEKA.

Once inside he told Riezler, the councillor of the German embassy that he must see Mirbach personally. The CHEKA had discovered an Allied plot to assassinate Ambassador Mirbach. Riezler took him in to see Mirbach immediately. The count leaned back in his chair behind his desk with his hands behind his head and said to Blumkin,

“And how do the assassins propose to act?”

“Like this,” Blumkin said and pulled a revolver from his pocket and fired two bullets into the ambassador. Then as he leapt out of the window, he threw a hand grenade back into the room and escaped. He was not captured then, but was arrested in 1929 and executed for his connections to Trotsky.

There was also a minor revolt by the commander-in-chief of the Bolshevik forces on the Volga called Muravieff a few days later, but it ended fairly quickly and when arrested he shot himself in front of the Simbirsk Soviet Committee.

A day later in Moscow, Radek, one of the Bolshevik Central Executive Committee members went to the British embassy and with a broad grin on his face offered to place a Bolshevik guard at the British ambassador's disposal. The British ambassador told him where he could stick it and both men laughed.

The French had been encouraging a Bolshevik turncoat called Savinkoff with intimations of Allied help and he had captured Yaroslavl. Around the same time the Czech army was approaching Yekaterinburg. Frightened by the approaching Czech troops who were now at war with the Bolsheviks, the local Soviet had panicked and shot the tsar and his family. However, there was a view that Sverdlov and Lenin had sanctioned the idea.

At the end of July in Novgorod, the Bolshevik officers were becoming suspicious of the British Government. “You know what the British have just done,” said Commissar Ivanov to Tom.

“What?” Tom asked.

“They have sent a trade mission to Moscow to discuss trade relations with the Soviet government and at the same time are supporting the Czech army who are at this moment advancing west towards Kazan on the Volga. They took Ulyanovsk only two days ago. This is Machiavellian deceit by the English,” said Ivanov.

“No, I think you misunderstand the British,” said Robert. “We have worked for the British establishment at Chopwell Pit all our lives. We know how they think. No, it sounds to me like the British War Office and the British Foreign Office aren’t communicating with each other because they have different policies and so neither knows what the other is doing. Machiavellian deceit requires intelligence, but this sounds to me more like incompetence,” said Robert.

Around the end of July 1918, General Eichhorn, the German commander-in-chief in Russia was assassinated in Kiev by a student from Moscow called Donskoi, a member of the Social Revolutionary Party.

In early August 1918 the Bolsheviks in Novgorod were extremely concerned because an Allied army under General Poole had landed at

Arkhangelsk. Rumors put the size of the force at 100,000 men. The lowest estimate was two divisions. The Bolsheviks in Novgorod (which is situated between Arkhangelsk and Moscow) began to think about destroying their archives because they did not want them to fall into British hands.

However, the Bolsheviks had retaken Yaroslavl from Savinkov's Russians with the help of the Chopwell brigade. Two of the Chopwell men were killed -Tim Smyth and Graham Minter. Then two days later the Bolsheviks received a telegram from the People's Commissar for Foreign Policy, Trotsky. The British army under General Poole that had landed at Arkhangelsk had only 1,200 men. They were elated and had a drinking party until late into the night.

The Bolsheviks said to Robert that they knew the British army was headed to Obozersky. Sure, enough two days later, Poole's army was reported in Obozersky.

"How can they know this?" asked Tom Smith.

"Well, a lot of Bolsheviks were intellectuals before the revolution, professors of mathematics, chemistry and so on," said Robert. "I expect they have used their intellect to crack the British military ciphers."

Brigadier General Beresford was a close friend of General Poole. The reason for British involvement had come about, partly as a result of a need to restart the war in the east to take pressure off the armies in France and partly through Beresford's personal guilt, guilt for having murdered the innocent civilians in Chopwell. An action in Russia against the communists would further ease Beresford's conscience by painting the communists as traitors to the West. It was mainly the lobbying of Beresford that had made the operation a reality.

General Poole was appointed by the Foreign Office in early 1918 and was informed by the minister that in order to conduct an operation in Russia he would need at least 100,000 troops. As a result of differing policies between the War Office and the Foreign Office a compromise of 1,200 men had been reached. It was an ill-judged half measure that satisfied nobody. As a result of this small force which could not effectively support extensive action in Russia, the counter-revolutionary groups in Russia began quarrelling with each other and the Bolsheviks picked them off, one by one.

However, on the evening of 30 August 1918, a young Jewish woman who was a social revolutionary, called Fanny Kaplan fired three bullets into Lenin at point blank range as he was leaving a Michelson's factory in Moscow after giving a speech to the workers. One bullet penetrated the lung above his heart, the other entered the neck close to the carotid artery. Lenin was detained in hospital for several weeks but survived.

As a result, the remaining British government representatives in Moscow were arrested by the CHEKA and imprisoned in the Lubyanka, because the Bolsheviks believed they had instigated the plot. Kaplan herself was taken

to the Lubyanka, interrogated and then shot. The atmosphere in Moscow and other Russian cities turned to fear. Various people, including everyone from bandits to the British representative were rounded up and taken to the Lubyanka for questioning. Many were shot. They included ex-ministers of the old Tsarist regime including Sheglovitov, Khvostov, Bieletsky and a priest called Vostorgov. These were all shot as a reprisal for the attempted assassination of Lenin.

Some of these people had been kept in apartments in the Kremlin before their fate overtook them. In early September 1918, the British representative in Moscow was sent from the Lubyanka to the Kremlin. His guards told him he had a 2:1 chance of survival because the other two people who had been kept in that room prior to him had been shot. He was lucky, and was eventually exchanged for Litvinov, the Russian representative in London. When Lenin regained consciousness around the end of September 1918, he ordered that the terror must be stopped.

Later in September 1918 the Bolsheviks re-took Kazan from the Czechs. Of course, the intervention by General Poole at Arkhangelsk meant that the Bolsheviks were at war with Britain and France.

By early 1919 the Chopwell brigade was part of Tukhachevsk's Red Fifth Army. They crossed the Belaya River north of Ufa at the beginning of June 1919 and marched towards the city.

As the Chopwell Brigade was travelling east towards Ufa in a rainstorm, they passed convoys of horse drawn carts loaded with refugees. The villages close to Ufa were filled with refugees and they found it difficult to find accommodation. Eventually they all slept in a barn under horse blankets or empty hessian sacks on top of straw. The straw was soft and warm and once they lit a campfire on the earth floor, they began to feel relaxed and comfortable. They took their wet clothes off and hung them high above the campfire on ropes overnight. This was an old trick that Robert had learned from a Laplander he had met in Novgorod.

“There's nothing worse than having to fight in wet clothes. You feel infinitely better and healthier when your clothes are dry,” said Robert.

Tom who was coming down with the flu, said in a nasally voice,

“Give us some baccy for a fag someone, I need a smoke.”

Geoff took a tin out of his kit bag and handed it to Tom.

“That pays you back for the felt boots you got me the other day.”

Tom opened the tin, took out a Ritzier paper, put some tobacco on it and rolled his own cigarette. He took one breath and said,

“Oh, that's good.”

They got the best night's rest they had had for three weeks. By morning their clothes were dry. They had a healthy breakfast of bread and eggs which they 'requisitioned' from a nearby house. After breakfast they dressed and organized themselves into some sort of order.

By seven in the morning, they were ready to move on. As they marched through the village, they noticed looting taking place by White Russian supporters as they fled east. They shot several looters as they were running out of nearby houses. They also captured several deserters from the White Army, mostly Czechs. A number of these were shot when they refused to hand over their arms. As they got closer to Ufa, they began to hear the sounds of gunshots and cannon fire in the distance. They passed bodies of Czech troops at the side of the road, along with abandoned two-wheel carts and dead horses. As they were entering the outskirts of Ufa, at a place where the White Army had made a stand, they found several artillery cannons with shattered axles and smashed barrels, surrounded by dead Czechs. As they marched further into the town, they came to Bogdanovitsch's Park. They could tell from the copious amounts of dried blood in the grass that a number of Czechs had been bayoneted by Red Army soldiers. Their bodies were contorted in such a way, it was clear they had all died in agony.

Further down the road they came across a detachment of Czech troops. They all dived into the nearest hole and began firing. There was a brief engagement and two Czech soldiers were killed. In the ongoing confusion, the Czechs retreated further into Ufa.

The Red Army consisting of about 30,000 men now had Ufa surrounded on three sides. The only escape route for the White Army was further to the East. The Red Army Artillery began shelling the commercial center in the town, particularly concentrating their fire around the Aksakov's People's House where the Czech troops had dug themselves trenches. The resulting carnage was horrendous.

One Red Brigade to the left of the Chopwell lads opened up with machine guns. They advanced into Ufa when the shelling stopped, but found that the White Army was retreating further east. A squadron of the Red Army third cavalry regiment charged past the Chopwell lads and began sabering the retreating White Army troops. The screams and moans of the butchered troops was blood curdling. The poorly trained White Army troops began running away in confusion in all directions. Within an hour Ufa was firmly in the hands of the Reds.

The Red Army then pushed on further east. They broke through the White Army in the central Ural's a few days later and took Zlatoust in mid-July and Chelyabinsk in late-July 1919. The White Army pulled back from the Urals to a defensive line in western Siberia east of the Tobol River. The White Army had then lost its only industrial base and source of finance.

The Red Fifth Army had advanced 550 kilometers in ten weeks when in mid-August they reached the Tobol River. They advanced a further 160

kilometers. After a counterattack by the White Army, they were pushed back to the Tobol, but by early November the Reds had captured two rail crossings over the River Ishim. Part of the Red Fifth Army which included the Chopwell brigade, raced the last 100 kilometers to the Irtysh River in one day, and by 14 November took Omsk without a significant fight.

The Omsk garrison was composed of untrained conscripts. The White Army's senior officer was arrested by Red Army Forces when he was driving to his office in Omsk on 14 November and he stopped his car to demand to know why the soldiers he had just passed did not salute him. He was promptly arrested and shot. The White Army was then all but defeated and Admiral Kolchak had fled to Irkutsk by late December 1919 where he was arrested by Bolshevik supporters and shot.

Now that the civil war was won by the Bolsheviks, the Chopwell men decided it was time to return home. The Bolshevik officer, Commissar Ivanov said to the Chopwell men,

“Why are you going back to England. You have placed yourself in a compromising position. Your government will never forgive you or your families. If they are anything like the Tsars, your families will be persecuted for at least the next three generations. Stay here and we will give you a role in the new regime.”

“Thanks but we will take our chances and return to our families,” said Robert. “We will spread the benefits of communism to all the workers when we get back to England.”

“You must organize a revolution like we have done here in Russia,” said Commissar Ivanov.

“No, we prefer to change things by democratic means. We want the people to vote the monarchy out of existence,” said Robert.

“You will never remove the British monarchy by democratic means,” said Commissar Ivanov. “If you get close to success they will conspire against you, or if they are really threatened, brand you a traitor and have you quietly murdered. Armed revolution is the only way to remove the monarchy.”

Once these miners returned to England between late 1919 and 1921, it was not long before they began to spread the benefits of communism to the local communities and the Durham Miners’ Union became a hotbed of political activity and reform. They began to work for changes to the rights of the English working man, particularly the miners. They did this democratically through the trade’s union movement. The British Establishment began to see them as threats to the stability of the British political system.

“They fought against our allies, the Czech Army,” repeated General Beresford at every available opportunity.

Robert Lytle Feara, Anne's uncle, returned to his job at Chopwell pit as a rope splicer, although his official title was 'engine plane man.' He was a constant thorn in the side of the mine management.

One day in late November 1921, Brigadier General Beresford visited the local area. He had travelled north following another meeting with the man in the golden crown. In the evening at the local Freemasons' lodge, Beresford met with some local like-minded miners who invariably sided with the mine owners during any dispute. Beresford had a friend with him at the Freemasons' lodge that night. Although the man's name was never mentioned to the miners, he met that night and they did not see him either as he wore a long grey cloak with a cowl that covered his head, the miners did agree to take him underground with them the next day on 21 November.

Beresford saw to it that the mine owners had no objections, even though they declined to acknowledge this man's presence when he arrived at the mine the next day. These miners smuggled the man with the long grey cloak into the mine as agreed with Beresford, although Beresford had omitted to tell them the reason for this strange man's visit, and no one had asked why. The main thing that interested the man in the cowl was how someone spliced rope together. The miners explained. Towards the end of the afternoon shift that day, Robert Lytle Feara was splicing the ends of two ropes together underground. Following the mine safety rules, he had checked that neither rope was under tension and that safety pins were in place to prevent any movement of the machinery at either end of the ropes. As he was splicing the rope together, he thought he noticed near one end of the rope a man in a grey cowl, but the man quickly disappeared. The next moment, the two ropes came under tension, the splicing came apart with enormous force and instantly severed Robert Lytle Feara's arm. He bled to death before help could reach him. His cousin Tommy Davison found him barely alive. He muttered something about a cowl as he died.

An enquiry was later held into the accident, but the officer conducting the public enquiry could not explain how the rope had suddenly come under tension, particularly as all the miners were accounted for and no one was in the working area where the rope splicing was taking place. The mine management publicly offered their condolences to the Lytle Feara family, but due to administrative red tape and legal issues did not pay the Lytle Feara family any compensation. 'Those who cannot be blamed will not be blamed.'

In return for their effort and sacrifices, Stalin, in 1924 gave the Chopwell miners' lodge a gift of money that they used to build a town hall. It was not long before the British establishment had named the new town hall 'The Kremlin' and rechristened Chopwell as 'Little Moscow.'

Brigadier General Beresford lectured against the 'evils' of Communism for several years, and was a close supporter of Winston Churchill. With the rise of the Soviet Union, which was becoming the largest economy in Europe, British foreign policy was under extreme stress. As Churchill later wrote in

his *'History of the Second World War,'* British foreign policy in Europe is to side with the second strongest power in Europe in an alliance against the strongest power. In that way the British ruling class felt that the balance of power in Europe would always be in their hands. Alliances would need to be re-assessed.

Beresford was chatting to his fellow masons in his local lodge in London when one young member asked him what would Britain do if a Labour Party leader was elected who was a communist and who would try to change the system. To which Beresford replied:

“The Prime Minister does not choose his staff at No.10 Downing Street. They are chosen by the head of the civil service, who answers directly to the person in the golden crown. So, if a prime minister is headed in a direction that does not, please the man in the golden crown, or he is trying to implement policies he does not like, his staff will make his role at No.10 untenable. He will be forced to resign. Britain is not a free country.”

As a result of a Freemasonry criminal act that has been covered up by lies compounding lies, British Foreign policy was set on a course that the establishment had actually lost control of and Britain suffered as a result, simply to protect one Freemasonry liar. Communism was used as a way to blacken the people of Chopwell in the eyes of the rest of Britain to cover up Beresford's evil work. The British government could hardly then embrace the new Soviet government like the Finns did (Finland was the first country to recognize the Soviet State). So, they were trapped on a course that ultimately led to the Cold War and the near annihilation of the human race. This was all to cover up a Freemasonry lie. Once they made the original lie, from then on, they were shackled by that first decision and had lost the ability to control their own destiny.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s the economic depression had affected the British economy in general and Chopwell pit in particular. During 1926, the Chopwell miners went out on strike over pay and conditions for eighteen months, when the rest of the coal mining unions only lasted for twelve months. Unemployment was high and working conditions in the Chopwell mine were poor. A number of miners and their families were banned from ever working at Chopwell Pit again. Some were arrested for subversion under the 'Emergency Powers Act.' The mine owners had these people's names listed in a secret document called 'Chopwell Blacklist A.' The miners looked for alternative employment...

Chapter 8: Kemerovo In Kuzbass, Siberia

There are two seasons in Kuzbass: winter and green winter.

Local proverb

The Russians first gained control of Central Siberia, named after Sibir, a Turkic Khanate, around the 1570s thanks to the military campaigns of a Cossack called Yermak Timofeevich. After military conquest of the area, the Cossacks set up fortresses or 'Ostrogs' at key river crossings and used these as trading centers to send furs to Moscow. At times of repression in Western Russia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a large number of peasant and religious exiles fled east and settled in this region of Siberia. The construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway in the nineteenth century transformed this part of Russia and many new cities were founded along its route.

In 1721 a mineral prospector called Mikhail Volkhov discovered coal on the sides of the Tom River close to where Kemerovo stands today. Extensive mining of coal began in Kemerovo after the construction of the Trans-Siberian railway.

In the early 1920s, a number of foreign businessmen formed an alliance to develop the coal deposits around the town of Kemerovo. It became known as the Kuzbass Autonomous Industrial Colony. It was mainly the idea of three socialists: Herbert S. Calvert of California, William D. Haywood of Utah and Sebald Rutgers of Holland. They wanted the colony to showcase the industrial benefits of socialism. Lenin himself gave them his assistance to turn the idea into reality since a number of Soviet Government ministers were lukewarm towards the idea. Even though it was an autonomous colony, the people living there still received the same entitlements as other Soviet citizens.

The first workers to form the nucleus of this colony were from the USA and Canada. Over five hundred and sixty immigrants arrived in the Soviet Union from 1921 to 1925. Most came via ship from New York to Petrograd on the Baltic and thence by train to Kemerovo. There were a small number of other immigrant workers in Kemerovo from Holland, Belgium, Germany and Finland.

Many of the immigrants went to school or evening classes to read and write Russian. Most were given terraced houses with small allotments where they grew their own vegetables and fruits. A group of Americans set up a large farm to grow fruit and vegetables and breed livestock. Setting up this enterprise also helped to bring the Americans and the local Russians closer together. Some lived in large communal houses that held up to one hundred and fifty people. These had huge dining rooms and communal meals.

These dwellings had electricity and running water. All this housing was designed by the Dutchman Rutgers. He also designed most of the industrial plant. This included two electrical generating stations, two saw mills, five mines, a chemical plant, two machine shops, a carpenter's shop, a tailor, shoemaker and a bakery. Rutgers also designed two communal bathhouses, a school and two theatres.

During summer when the temperatures can reach 35° centigrade, immigrants who had an interest in outdoor activities could go swimming, fishing and boating on the River Tom, or hunting in the surrounding Taiga. In winter when the temperature could drop to minus 40° centigrade, there were bathhouses, skating and skiing. As they say in Kemerovo, there are two seasons here: winter and green winter!

The two communities engaged in many activities together from the very beginning. Families from all communities relaxed together on both Soviet and American public holidays. At the beginning of the project, the immigrants and the local people held public meetings to discuss issues that affected the whole colony. Some of the early meetings became quite heated, so the colony's director Sebald Rutgers decided to make those decisions himself and said that these had to be followed without question. His decisions proved beneficial to the whole workforce. He had to return to Holland in 1925 due to ill health.

A Russian engineer called Korobkin then took over and began reorganizing the whole operation, often contrary to the wishes of the colony members. He also was involved in embezzlement. By mid-1927 most of the American colonists had left in protest to his policies. Most returned to the USA and Canada but some worked on other Soviet projects at Kuznetsk, Nizhny Novgorod and Kharkov. Later that year the colony was merged into the 'Supreme Council of the National Economy.' Korobkin was the subject of a Soviet investigation as a result of complaints about his modus operandi. He was removed from his post, expelled from the Communist party and imprisoned for embezzlement.

Consequently, in the late 1920s, the Soviet government touted miners from around the world to go to Kemerovo in Kuzbass and help develop the coal deposits there for the benefit of the Soviet State. Miners from around the world descended on Kuzbass; from Australia and New Zealand, Germany and the United Kingdom. The Durham Miners' Union was invited by Stalin to recruit miners from the Durham coalfields to work at Kemerovo.

About ten miners from Chopwell answered the call and travelled to south central Siberia by train. Many arrived at the start of the harsh Siberian winter in 1929. Two of those who answered the call were Eric Lytle Fears and his cousin Robert Lytle Fears.

The mines were now run by the NKVD. Stalin's orders were to socialize all industry across Russia in order to meet the policies of the Soviet Central Committee. The rule of the NKVD became a part of everyday life in Kemerovo. A number of the managers at Kemerovo Mines had attended the new Stalin Industrial Academy in Moscow and were zealots in the methods of the new socialist society.

Around this time the effects of the collectivization of agriculture were beginning to become apparent. The program wiped out large numbers of Kulaks across Russia, but the greatest number of deaths occurred during the

great famine of 1932-1933. Even in the Kuzbass, an area that produced its own food, produce was severely limited. The boys from Chopwell saw the numbers of Kulaks who were deported to Siberia. The hardships of this collectivization affected the resolve of many party members, especially Nikolai Bukharin. The State referred to these people who opposed Stalin's policies as 'Bukharinists.'

The Head of the NKVD in the early 1930s was Genrikh Yagoda and he was responsible for ensuring that the Bukharinist right 'opposition agents' across Russia were purged from the system. By the time the purge subsided in 1939, countless victims from members of the upper reaches of the party were exterminated for crimes that many never committed. A Moscow party chief called Nikita Khrushchev referred to the NKVD as a 'meat grinder.' Both Stalin and Khrushchev later admitted that a lot of innocent people had been exterminated. 'A lot of healthy trees had been chopped down with the rotten ones,' was their euphemism.

Stalin's five-year plans for iron and steel were being put in place and the coal production in Kemerovo was an integral part of this. Even so wages in real terms dropped by fifty per cent over three years in Kemerovo. They had to work longer hours for less pay.

Thus, the NKVD ensured that any dissent in Kemerovo was swiftly rooted out. All workers attended 'social education' instructions at work. They were monitored for their conformance to 'social standards' and all those who failed to meet the NKVD's exacting standards had extra training. The more recalcitrant ones were exiled.

It was a hard life under the Siberian climate, but like all young men life became more pleasant once they had found love with the local women. These local women and their families, who were western Russian by descent, had been transported to Kemerovo in the mid-1920s. Most of them came from Central Siberia (Altay and Novosibirsk) but some came from the area near Leningrad, Novgorod and Pskov. Many had been exiled to Kemerovo as criminals under the purges. As Eric Lytle Feara wrote to his mother back in Chopwell, he had never in his life seen such beautiful women as these Russian women.



'Eric and Svetlana 1932 AD'

As time went on, both Eric and Robert fell in love with two sisters, Svetlana and Elena Romanova whose family originally came from Novgorod. When Eric met Svetlana in Kemerovo in 1930, he was immediately attracted by the purple mole on her left cheek. They got on together like a house on fire, and when they were getting serious, Eric said, “Ya know it's funny, but I feel like I've known you all my life.”

“Yes, I too,” said Svetlana. “Perhaps we were lovers in a previous life?” said Svetlana half joking.

Eric thought for a few minutes and then said seriously, “Perhaps we were.”

When they went to communal meetings on public holidays, Svetlana dressed in traditional Western Russian dress. She liked bronze-colored amber semi-precious stones, but her favorite item of dress jewellery was a silver dragon head brooch she had bought from a local Chinese craftsman when she was in her teens. “There's something about dragons that makes me feel happy,” Svetlana remarked on several occasions to Eric.

Both couples were married in a joint ceremony in the little Russian Orthodox Church called Nikolskaya in the old part of Kemerovo on the eastern bank of the River Tom. They all lived happily for the next few years.

In 1932 a man called Noskov became director of the Tsentralnaya mine in Kemerovo where Eric and Robert worked. Rumors of sabotage began to circulate around the city after several explosions at the Kemerovo Power Station. The miners believed that the explosions were due to the wrong grade of coal being supplied to the power station by the mine. In the atmosphere of the early ‘five-year plans’ where output was demanded by the Local Soviet to meet targets set by Moscow, safety of the workers and

quality of coal products suffered. The result was an increase in injuries to workers and poor quality of output. There were also gas explosions underground due to lax safety procedures.

In 1934 due to the downturn in the Soviet economy, new laws were introduced banning the free movement of Labour which introduced severe penalties. Consequently, it was not long before Stalin, under pressure from local officials, had all the miners from foreign countries working in Kemerovo in Kuzbass sent back to their countries of origin. Both Robert and Elena and Eric and Svetlana returned to Chopwell in late 1934, along with other Chopwell miners and their Russian wives.

After they returned to Chopwell, the Russian girls communicated with their relatives and friends in Kemerovo by letter. Often the letters took several months to arrive. They learned that in late September 1936 there was a massive gas explosion at Tsentralnaya mine. Noskov was arrested along with his superior called Norkin who was the head of the Kemerovo Combined Works Construction Trust where several other explosions had also occurred.

At their trial, the NKVD accused the two of being part of a 'Trotskyite Nest.' The charges were brought by Shestov, the NKVD representative in Kemerovo. The trial took place in Novosibirsk at the Military Collegium Court presided by judge Ulrikh in mid-November 1936. The defendants were Noskov, Norkin and seven others including a German engineer called Stickling. The charges ranged from sabotage to attempted assassination of comrade Molotov. Several engineers presented reports warning that the working conditions were bound to lead to accidents. These, the court ignored. Under interrogation by the NKVD all defendants signed confessions of guilt. They were all found guilty and sentenced to death.

In a letter from her cousin in 1937, Svetlana discovered that the NKVD had opened a Labour camp close to Kemerovo. The Kemerovo works used these people as slave Labour. The conditions in the camp were poor. The inmates were reduced to making their own shoes from tractor tyres. Svetlana was later informed there had been a 'mutiny' at the Kemerovo camp in 1938 because of the rotten food the inmates were expected to eat. Fourteen prisoners were shot in front of the rest of the inmates and then the survivors had to dig their graves.

Svetlana's cousin remarked that they felt the purges would soon be over as it was only a 'minority in the Central Committee in Moscow who were behind it.'

Shortly afterwards the NKVD under Yezhov, who had replaced Yagoda, began purging its own ranks. Any Russian with unorthodox ideas was likely to end up in the camps. But it was not ideas specifically that attracted the attention of the NKVD; it was more that the people they arrested had a relationship with a discredited member of the communist party, government or army.

Even Svetlana's cousin was interrogated on one occasion by the NKVD. She said she had not been told why she had been arrested, but her interrogator let her frame her own confession. The interview started with the question: "Why do you think you have been arrested?" It was clearly her job to make a case against herself. This was apparently based on techniques used during the Spanish Inquisition. The other main purpose of the interrogation she felt was for her to implicate other 'accomplices' for the NKVD to process through the 'meat grinder.'

In 1939 however, the tables were turned on the NKVD when various officers were arrested and imprisoned. They were, apparently, extremely stubborn when interviewed because they knew the fate that awaited them.

During World War II, the British government used these close contacts with Russia to foster British-Russian co-operation for the war effort. Eric and Robert were used by the British Army on several secret missions to Russia. They were awarded medals for their service to the Allied cause in 1946 and were regarded as heroes by their commanding officer.

However, when the Cold War began, the British establishment decided they had outlived their usefulness and were potentially an embarrassment. In early 1952 a security meeting took place in London chaired by the 'person in the golden crown.' This was followed by one at the Chopwell Freemasons' Lodge at which some participants of the London meeting were present. Two days later both Robert and Eric were killed in a fall of rock underground in Chopwell Pit.

As the years rolled on however, particularly during the Cold War, the British establishment became increasingly uneasy about the presence of Russian women in Chopwell. Due to pressure from the intelligence services these women anglicized their first names and only used their English surnames. When they all passed away many years later in the early to mid-1980s their gravestones made no mention of their Russian origins. In fact, even their grandchildren were unaware of their origins.

In order to further hide the presence of Russian women in Chopwell, the intelligence services began to spread rumors of 'Soviet spy rings' creating an atmosphere of suspicion and intrigue that meant only close friends and relatives were aware of the true history of Chopwell. The 'Soviet spy ring' was simply these Russian women writing home to their families in Kemerovo in Kuzbass. To the rest of the world, it would be an expatriate writing home to their loved ones. The reality was that there were many contacts between the miners' lodge in Chopwell and the Soviet state, but all contacts were political and cultural and there were never any spies in Chopwell, except British ones.

But what about his father, where did he fit into this family history and what was it that Eric didn't know about him? Some odd things had happened to Eric which seemed to revolve around his father that had resulted in him emigrating to Australia from England...

Chapter 9: Jack Lytlefeara

You should learn to desire that which you cannot avoid

Lucan

I: Military

Annie Lytle Feara gave birth to a son, John Robert Edward in 1917. The father was Tommy Davison, one of her distant cousins who was 5 years older than her. Because they were not married, she lived with Tommy and his parents in Humber Street, Chopwell. JRE (Jack) took her surname. The social mores were more relaxed in Chopwell compared to the rest of British society, so having an illegitimate child was less of a problem.

When she and Tommy went searching for work outside of Chopwell in the late 1920s, Annie left Jack with her parents. Thus, Jack's early years were spent in a household filled with family and friends, endless visitors and above all political discussion about Communism and how to change British society for the greater good of all, not just the privileged few. There were a number of visitors who were referred to as 'comrades from overseas.' These were influential Bolsheviks from Moscow.

Because of the level of poverty in post-World War I County Durham, most people had very little, but what they had they shared. It was a hard life for many and communism appealed to them, because it described the system that they were actually living.

Jack sailed from London Docks to Vancouver in Canada aboard the merchant ship SS Seagepool as a galley boy when he was 17 years old in 1934. He had an adventurous spirit like his ancestors before him. The cook aboard ship went berserk during a tropical thunderstorm in the Caribbean and killed two people with a bread knife. The cook had Jack cornered in the galley and Jack was shouting for help. The ship's first officer ran in with a hand gun. After several attempts to get the cook to put down the knife he was shot dead by the officer. Jack learnt some hard lessons about life at a very early age. He joined the communist party in the early 1930s and took part in demonstrations in London later in the 1930s against Mosley's Black Shirts and against Fascist involvement in the Spanish Civil War.

He was drafted into the British Army in 1940 and after initial training at Aldershot, he was posted to the 8th Army in North Africa in a Light Anti-Aircraft (LAA) regiment. He took part in the war in the north African desert where in one incident his LAA regiment was virtually totally destroyed in a Luftwaffe raid in 1942. Most of the regiment was killed in the surprise attack except for himself and somebody called Danny Smythers. The remainder of the regiment went to Italy in 1943, where Jack took part in the landings in Sicily and Salerno. He fought at the first battle of Monte

Cassino. There he was seconded to a Polish infantry regiment and fought in several engagements in attacks on the monastery from 'Hangman's Hill.' Several of his comrades were killed in these attacks.

From Monte Cassino he was drafted into the landing force that on 22 January 1944 took Anzio. In Latin times the town was known as Antium and was the birth place of the two most notorious emperors in Roman history - Caligula and Nero. In fact, there is credible evidence to suggest that Nero was Caligula's incestuous son. It was here in the theatre at Antium on 19 July AD 64 that Nero played his lyre while Rome burned. There is a statue of both Nero and Caligula in Campo de Anzio to this day.

During late 1943 Churchill was pushing the British and American military leaders for a 'cats' claw' invasion behind the Gustav Line which ran from the Garigliana River on the west coast of Italy, through Monte Cassino to Ortona on the east coast. His plan was to break the deadlock of the battle around Monte Cassino. The operation had been shelved several times in late 1943, mainly because the Americans were lukewarm about the whole idea. When the American General, John P. Lucas was told he would be commander of the operation, he was reported to have remarked to General Mark Clark:

"This is going to be another Gallipoli," a reference to one of Churchill's earlier military disasters.

Due to logistical problems with availability of landing craft, when the invasion came about, it was a compromise operation. Instead of an initial landing with four divisions, it was reduced to two. Like the compromise at Arkhangelsk twenty-six years earlier, it did not lead to an expected swift victory.

The beachhead soon developed into a stalemate due partly to prevarication on the part of General Lucas. If there had been an early advance to Campolene in the first two days, the allies may have succeeded in breaking the line at Cassino by making the Germans retreat north of Rome. As a result of the delays, the Germans were able to regroup and the fighting conditions at Anzio rapidly deteriorated into trench warfare similar to the Somme in World War I.

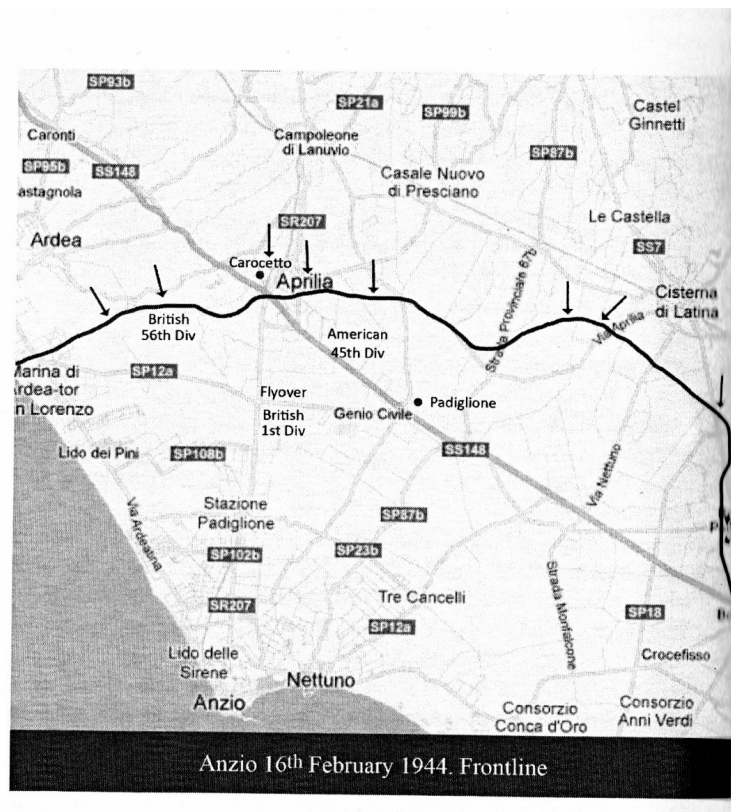
The biggest test for the Allies came around 16 -18 February 1944; when, on orders from Hitler himself, the Germans made a determined push to eradicate the beachhead. On the evening of 15 February, the German Commander, Field Marshal Kesselring, surveying his position from the Alban Hills, felt that victory was in his grasp, despite Allied air power and the naval guns in Anzio Harbour.

There was bitter and ferocious fighting, particularly around the small village of Carroceto on the 16 February. Close to Carroceto was a small fascist model village called Aprilia, which the Allies called 'The Factory.' This was where the British First Division made a determined stand to repulse the

German advance and where Jack fought. The German attack came down the Anzio-Albano Road, even though they tried to deceive the Allies by assembling their armoured reserves behind the town of Cisterna. General Von Mackensen, Kesselring's deputy, was convinced that the 'Factory' was the perfect strong point for concentrating his armoured divisions and the entry point to a network of tracks that his Tiger tanks could use. From Carroceto, the Anzio Road led directly to the sea and an advance down the road would split the Allied positions in two. Only a couple of kilometers further down the road, the Germans would have the Padiglione woodlands in range, where the Allies had their artillery supporting the Carroceto front. If the Germans could reach the wood, nothing would stop them and the beachhead would have been lost.

Jack Lytle Fears, like most of the British First Division was exhausted. They had been fighting almost non-stop for ten days. Jack was an anti-aircraft gunner, but had been seconded into the infantry. In the retreat from the 'Factory' Jack had been trapped behind a wall on the southern side of the village. Open ground was between him and the British lines about one 150 metres to the south. Overlooking him and that part of the 'Factory' was the Middlesex Machine Gun Regiment. So, Jack made a run for it. From behind the walls of the 'Factory' came five heavily armed Germans carrying Spandau automatic weapons. They took aim at Jack, but he dived into a shell hole the ground. Two of the Germans nonchalantly walked up to him, took aim and then there was a burst of Bren gunfire from the British lines.

The Middlesex Machine Gunners killed all five Germans. The two standing over Jack fell to the ground. One had blood spurting from his chest like a fountain, while the other had half his head blown off and was screaming in agony. In five minutes, Jack made his way back to the British lines dodging and falling like a drunk at the Mad Hatter's tea party. He was ordered straight back to his regiment in the line and did not have time to thank the Bren gunner for saving his life.



On the morning of 16 February, Jack and the rest of the First Division had withdrawn to an overpass on the Anzio Road called the 'flyover' to act as reserves. What surprised even Jack was that the cooks had been brought up into the line to fight. "This is it, if the cooks are here, we must be desperate," thought Jack. Unknown to Jack and his commanders that morning, Von Mackensen had six divisions lined up against them. At 6.30 a.m. in the morning, the Fourth Parachute Regiment and the 65th Infantry Division advanced to the west of the Anzio Road.

The Third Panzer Grenadier, 114th Light Infantry, Herman Goering Panzer Division and the 715th Infantry Divisions advanced across the flat fields to the east of the Anzio Road. In reserve were Von Mackensen's armoured divisions: the 26th Panzers, the 29th Panzer Grenadiers and two battalions of Tiger and Panther tanks. His plan was that they were to fan out after the infantry broke through the Allied lines.

There was a massive German artillery barrage beginning at 6.00 a.m. that morning which lasted for half an hour and then the German troops advanced. They took heavy losses, but their sheer numbers overwhelmed the American 45th Division. Later in the day the Americans recovered their positions. German tanks broke through the British 56th Division, but they were repelled by British tanks advancing along the Padiglione Road. Just before midnight, the German 715th Infantry Division broke through the American lines. The German column began to advance towards Anzio. By 9.00 a.m. the next morning, 17 February, the Germans had knocked out one American battalion and were getting close to the 'flyover' where the British First Division were dug in.

American bombers from Foggia airbase pounded the German lines that morning, but the explosives had little effect on the German advance.

As the Germans approached the flyover, the fighting became intense. Jack was in a small trench overlooking the Anzio Road. The German attack began with a concentrated rifle grenade attack on the evening of 17 February. Metal fragments were flying everywhere, so everyone kept their heads down. One soldier close to Jack got a piece of metal in his chin. Then mortar rounds began falling quite close to Jack's trench. Earth and wood fragments fell over a wide area. Then tracer bullets began to fly everywhere.

The Germans began their advance. Allied mortars began to fall just in front of the British trenches, some too close for comfort. Then the British artillery opened up. The noise of the shells landing in front of Jack was tremendous. Earth and rocks were flying all over the place. The flyover rocked and shook with the ground vibrations. Vast flames lit up the night sky. Sparks and shrapnel flew all around. Jack was choked by the cordite fumes drifting over from the German lines while the shells fell all around.

The shelling continued for some time and then it suddenly stopped. There was absolute quiet. Then the moans and groans of injured German soldiers could be heard. About 50 metres in front of Jack a German was screaming in pain, his leg having been blown off at the hip. He was in agony. Jack tossed a grenade at him. It exploded right next to the German and put him out of his misery. Then the Germans opened up with tracer machine gun rounds from their Spandaus. Streaks of light like shooting stars filled the air. The Germans were now about twenty meters away. The British opened fire. There was no time to aim, just to point guns and fire in their direction.

One German came within ten meters of Jack, who took a grenade out of his tunic, pulled the pin and threw it. His head hit the dirt and the explosion was deafening. A body fell on Jack and he thought he was dead for sure. It turned out to be a dead German. The grenade had blown his intestines clean out of his torso. He pushed the body off him, but used it for cover. He then began firing at the approaching Germans. More British artillery rounds fell just in front of his position and the Germans began to retreat back to their starting line, halting their advance.

The heat from the exploding shells had set the entire bush around him on fire. The no man's land ahead of Jack was illuminated by the bonfires. It made a surprise attack by the German troops less likely. Jack managed to grab an hour's sleep. But he had had no food for two days now. Suddenly a German shell came crashing down about ten meters from his position. There was an almighty shudder and large amounts of earth came falling down on him. He had to crawl out from under the clay. Next, he heard German voices which sounded close. He heard the rattle of the bolt of a rifle being cocked. Then a shout 'feuer' and a couple of Spandaus opened up. Red rods started flying past him. The bullets sounded like angry bees. He instinctively pointed his rifle and fired. A Bren gun opened up to his right. In a fraction of a second three Germans lay dead in front of him.

Silence descended over the area. Within five minutes the local frogs began croaking. The British soldiers liked the frogs because if anyone moved near them, they went quiet. So, they were a warning sign of a German assault. As long as the frogs croaked, they felt safe.

After half an hour the frogs suddenly fell silent. Jack put his bayonet on his rifle. Suddenly a German loomed out of the darkness. Jack did not have time to shoot, he just lifted his rifle and jabbed the German in the guts. The German lashed out and cut Jack's right wrist with his bayonet and severed an artery. The German crumpled down dead. By the time the medic got to him, Jack had lost a lot of blood. The medic bandaged the wound.

“You're going to need stitches to fix that. It will be some time before we can get you out of the line. Drink lots of water.”

Water, where's the water? thought Jack. Then a mortar round exploded close to Jack's position peppering his left arm with metal fragments. All he saw was a bright green flash and then his arm felt wet and warm. As dawn began to break, he lost consciousness. His mates got him to the casualty clearing station at 9.00 a.m. on the 18 February and he was barely alive.

The Herman Goering Regiment broke through the American lines during the day of 18 February and with their heavy armor got to within 500 metres of the beach at Nettuno. The Allied command panicked and boarded ships in Anzio harbour and set off out to sea, leaving the soldiers to their fate. However, an American officer rounded up 1000 American troops from a range of regiments in the casualty clearing station in Nettuno. He gave them rifles and sent them out against the Herman Goering Regiment. They stopped the advance and along with the allied artillery firing their guns from Padiglione woods horizontally at the German armor, broke the German advance. The Germans retreated to the north of the flyover and the gap in the Allied lines was closed. All 1000 American troops that halted the German advance were killed. The German attempt to destroy the Anzio beachhead had failed.

Brigadier General W.R.C. Penney, Jack's commanding officer, was rumoured to have been injured on the morning of 18 February and was absent for four days. This was a 'cover story.' In fact, late on the night of the 17 February, after receiving a top-secret telegram from Winston Churchill, he was flown to Foggia Airbase in utmost secrecy and from there to Moscow via Cyprus. In Moscow he met with several Soviet Army generals including Georgy Zhukov and the head of FB section of Soviet military intelligence, the GRU, Ivan Ilichev.

General Penney had been deputy head of British military intelligence in the early years of World War II, but that role was widely recognized as a purely administrative position. Penney and Ilichev however, were old 'friends.' They met each other in Shanghai, China when they both were stationed there the early 1930s. They were introduced at a party given by a reporter working for the *Shanghai Post* called Roger Hollis.

Ilichev forcefully reminded General Penney about Stalin's comment to Churchill when he had visited the Kremlin in August 1942. Churchill had told Stalin that there would be no second front that year and because of heavy losses at sea, the Arctic convoys to Murmansk had been suspended. Churchill was then told in no uncertain terms that Stalin would not consider further cooperation as long as General Beresford was still alive. Churchill remarked after the meeting that Stalin looked 'very glum.'

At one point Stalin walked into the discussions with Ivan Ilichev. Penney was heard to say:

"What if 'he' arrives back in England and his wife and family realize he is an imposter."

"Then we must pick someone who comes from a reliable family that would not say anything; a family who are communists," said Ilichev.

"I think I know just the man," said Penney.

"Yes, we have a man from Kemerovo. His sister married an English miner in the 1930s. She now lives in Chopwell, County Durham" said Ilichev.

The Russian commanders looked at each other and Ilichev muttered in a low voice,

"Думаете, он догадывается о наших планах? Он понимает, что мы привезем больше людей из НКВД, чем говорили, тем же путем?"³⁴ All three looked at Penney with suspicion.

"Не думаю. Он не знает о наших намерениях. Мне удалось провести даже Черчилля."³⁵ said Stalin. They all grinned at each other.

Penney, who did not understand a word of Russian, asked the translator assigned to him by Zhukov,

"What are they discussing? Is there a problem? They seem to be giving me strange looks?"

The three Russians gave the translator a disapproving look. She replied to Penney,

"They were discussing some minor issues around the logistics of getting their agents into Italy."

"What issues exactly" asked Penney.

The translator, who looked very uncomfortable replied,

³⁴ Do you think he has guessed what our plans are? Does he understand we will bring more NKVD people than we said, but in the same way?

³⁵ I do not think so. He does not know our intentions. I managed to mislead even Churchill.

“They are minor details. Don't give it a second thought.” Penney gave everyone the impression he had accepted the translator’s explanation.

“Скажите ему, что сегодня мы сводим его на балет в Большой театр, а завтра покажем ему наши военные учебные заведения и заводы,”³⁶ said Zhukov.

The translator informed Penney that Zhukov had arranged some visits to defense facilities over the next few days.

“Do not be concerned, you will be well looked after.”

When General Penney returned from Moscow, his aircraft landed in Anzio late on 22 February. A man disembarked from the plane with him dressed in the uniform of a British First Division anti-aircraft gunner. The man had a pronounced Russian accent.

General Penney ordered the head of the British casualty clearing station to see him early on the morning of 23 February. He explained to him what he wanted the mortician at the hospital to do. The head of the hospital then passed the instructions on to the mortician. This was to bury the body of a British soldier killed in action on 18 February whose identity was known, in a grave marked ‘unknown soldier.’

Unfortunately for both the hospital and General Penney, the mortician was a Catholic who was uncomfortable with what General Penney had asked. He went to see the local priest, Father Berlusconi, in the small church of San Antonio in Piazza Pia. He explained to him during the confessional what his problems were. The priest suggested he followed God's will.

“You will know in your own heart what that is,” he said. The mortician buried an unknown soldier in the Cimitero Inglese that day who was a genuine unidentified corpse. The other body he secretly buried in the same cemetery but in an isolated spot next to the northern wall under his real name.

The grave digger who buried the body had his 8-year-old son Giorgio with him. Giorgio was a quiet, shy boy who was teased by his friends because of a ‘port wine’ birthmark he had on his forehead.

“Giorgio, you must never tell anyone what we have done here today, it must remain a secret between you and God,” said Giorgio's father.

Jack's friends were only allowed to go to see him in the casualty clearing station for the first time on 24 February. He looked surprisingly well for someone with the injuries he had suffered. He also talked slightly differently; he was rolling his Rs, something he had not done before. The chief medical officer said to Jack's mates that it was as a result of the injuries he had suffered.

³⁶ Tell him today we will take him to the Bolshoi theatre for a ballet and tomorrow we will show him our military schools and factories.

“Psychological effects resulting from injuries in battle can often cause these kinds of changes in people. It is important to treat him as you did before, even if he does odd things; his recovery will be quicker that way.”

Two weeks after General Penney’s visit to Moscow, General Beresford was found dead in his apartment in London. Following a very brief autopsy, the coroner concluded it was death by natural causes. Everyone, no matter how important, at some point will become expendable.

Jack took a liking to a small nurse called Mary Brown who had been kind to him during his stay. She was known in the clearing station as a kind-hearted person who would not hurt a fly.

Jack returned to the front line on 1 March 1944. There had been some trouble with the Geneva Convention Delegation encamped in Anzio for the previous few days. The Germans had been accusing the British of using ambulances intended only to remove the dead and injured, as a cover to move ammunition up to the front lines during truces. The British were denying it, although they did admit to ensuring the safety of their front-line troops.

That morning as Jack sat in a trench, an ambulance arrived in his sector. It had Mary Brown in the back dispensing medical equipment to the orderlies. Jack walked over to say hello and gave her a hug. Then the ambulance set off towards the next platoon. Suddenly a German fighter plane swooped overhead and everyone hit the ground. It came back around and emptied about 100 cannon shells into the ambulance that was clearly marked with a red cross. Jack and his mates ran over to the ambulance and opened the back door. There were only bits of Mary Brown splattered over the inside of the ambulance: a finger here, a fragment of bone and gore there. They grabbed their guns and kept firing at the plane until it went over the horizon. Then they all cried.

During the breakout from the Anzio beachhead in May 1944, Jack’s regiment was pinned down on the way to Valmontone by German artillery shelling the road. The lieutenant in charge of his regiment wanted them to cross the road between the shells, but the men refused. Jack was their spokesman. He was charged with disobeying an order by the lieutenant, but the lieutenant’s superiors realized that Jack was right. So, he was compulsory transferred from the First Leicester Regiment to the King’s Own Rifles.

After the breakout from the Anzio beachhead in late May 1944, Jack was sent on a sniper training course and trained to infiltrate behind enemy lines.



Jack. Rome 6 June 1944.

His communist connections made him an ideal candidate to fight with the Italian resistance groups in central and northern Italy. He underwent an intensive training course in weapons, sabotage, signals and parachuting.

This course was run near Sheffield in England by Barnes-Wallis and when he returned to Italy, he was seconded to an American military intelligence Unit based at Anzio, the only Allied intelligence unit in that part of Italy. One American lieutenant vital to the US intelligence operation out of Anzio was a man called Philip Corso.

Corso was tasked with eliminating Nazi intelligence agents left behind the retreating Germans in Rome and combating Russian NKVD units which had secreted themselves with the Italian partisans in the Rome area. Corso could not understand how the NKVD came to be there. He feared there were informers in his own unit because many of his operations against the NKVD came to nothing, which led him to the conclusion that the NKVD had got wind of his plans. His suspicions were aroused when many NKVD units moved on, literally minutes before Corso's men turned up. But Corso had detailed intelligence reports on all the men in his unit and all had passed with flying colors. Even the British contingent had excellent reports, all of which were supplied by General Penney. At one point Corso had suspicions about Jack due to the fact he rolled his 'Rs' like a Russian and continually used the phrase 'of course' rather than 'yes.' But Jack's file went into some detail about his wife's family who were all farmers of Irish decent and his own family, the Lytlefeara's who were coal miners. There was nothing there

that was suspicious. However, unknown to Corso and censored out of the reports by General Penney was the fact that Jack was illegitimate, so he had taken his mother's family name. There was no mention of his father's family, the Davison's!

General Penney spoke to Jack in Rome before he left for Foligno in Umbria.

“Now we are putting your communist past to good use. Do as much damage to the Germans as you can and report back regularly. Good luck.”

In Foligno Jack met a woman called Maria Carra who had a PhD from Rome University. She had studied the life of the Roman Emperor Caracalla for her thesis. Maria worked for the Italian resistance, and Jack spent some time fighting with the Italian Partisans who were mostly communists.

On one occasion they fought together near a little town called Spoleto in the Apennine Mountains and were trapped in a cave in a steeply sided gully straddled by an old Roman viaduct. German snipers had them pinned down and they thought they were going to die. They were finally rescued by Italian Partisans.

They became lovers and decided to have their relationship blessed by a priest in a Catholic church in Perugia, even though Jack was already married back in England. He took a photo of Maria sitting on the fountain in the main Piazza in Perugia after the priest had blessed them, with Maria wearing a wedding ring.

A few weeks later when the German forces had retreated further north, they were both drinking wine on the balcony of Maria's sister's house just outside Ancona. Her beautiful cousin also called Maria who was there had her back to the hills, leaning against the balcony drinking a glass of wine when a shot rang out. Blood suddenly poured out of her chest and she was dead, shot by a German sniper.

The next day Jack was ordered back into his regiment: ‘The King's Own’ regiment for an attack on the Gothic Line which ran from Pesaro on the east coast of Italy to north of Firenze.

His group was pinned down by a German machine gun nest near the town of Gemmano. Jack outflanked the machine gun nest and then ran across open ground firing his ‘Tommy gun’ and killed all the Germans there. His regimental officer Captain Harding, saw him perform this action, and praised him as a hero, who should be recommended for a VC. The captain orally mentioned Jack's action to the regimental commanding officer, but later that night before he had written an eyewitness report, captain Harding was killed by a mortar shell. Because no other officers saw the action and the only surviving witnesses were rank and file, the commanding officer decided to refuse captain Harding's verbal request.

In January 1945, Jack and Maria fought with Partisan Groups in Northern Italy. They were based around the town of Pontremoli and were working in conjunction with a British officer called Bob Walker-Brown.

Throughout January and into early February 1945 they mined arterial roads and attacked German road convoys with some success. On 6 January 1945 they attacked a German staff car, killing the occupants and discovered it contained 125 million lira and ten, one-kilogram gold bars. Five days later in Borghetto de Vara they attacked another German convoy. Twenty-five Germans were killed and all the vehicles, including a ten-ton truck were destroyed with incendiaries.

Around that time, they learned through the Partisans that an American operation called Operation Mongoose had gone awry. Mongoose was intended to create an intelligence line running from the American 5th Army to the CLNAI Partisan headquarters in Milan and was intended to get an accurate picture of German troop movements in Northern Italy.

The operation was run by an American officer called major William Holohan who was operating in the Lake Maggiore - Lake Orta area. He had linked up with a highly efficient Partisan network called Servizio Informazioni Patrioti (SIP) run by a man called 'Georgio' whose real name was Aminta Migliari. His group was forced to go underground as the Germans were operating a massive series of 'ratrellamenti' or 'waldlaufer' where villages that harboured Partisans were raised to the ground and all the inhabitants killed. These 'ratrellamenti' were centered on the Undine area of north-eastern Italy. However, Holohan had two Italian-American subordinates working for him called Aldo Icardi and Carlo Lo Dolce. Icardi believed he was more important than Holohan and should be the leader of the group. The upshot was that the two Italian-Americans put poison in Holohan's soup one night. When this failed to kill him, they shot him in the head and dumped his body in a nearby lake. The mission then inevitably became a disaster. Their commanding officer was general Edwin Walker.³⁷

In early February Jack and Maria joined a Partisan leader called Daniele Bucchione who had 150 men under his command in the Val di Brigate. These forces operated in the Calice area. They attacked a German convoy on the 7 February 1945 on the Genoa-Spezia Road destroying two trucks. The Germans then burnt down a number of houses at Statano and Manzilo as a reprisal.

Some weeks later, when Jack and Maria were travelling together north of Lake Como, they met a group of fellow Partisans sitting at the side of the road who were elated and drinking heavily. When Maria asked why, they said,

³⁷ It has been suggested recently on one www.youtube channel, that Icardi and Lo Dolce were the two gunmen who assassinated President Kennedy in Dealey Plaza in November 1963. Both men were supposedly seen at general Walker's house two days before the assassination. Walker was a member of the John Birch Society, and was ultra-right wing. He proposed an unprovoked surprise nuclear attack on the Soviet Union to president Kennedy in 1962, who rejected it out of hand.

“We have just captured Mussolini and his mistress; the leaders are deciding what to do with them. I hope they are to be shot.”

“So does the rest of Italy,” said Maria.

The Partisans said,

“Mussolini was spotted yesterday heading towards Switzerland by an Italian customs guard at Dongo, near Lake Como. He was driving a car in a column of other German cars wearing a German greatcoat over his uniform. We managed to capture him and other members of his party in neighbouring villages.”

When Jack and Maria reached Piazzale Loreto in late April 1945, the corpses of Mussolini, his mistress Claretta Petacci and twelve other Fascists were on display. They had all been shot multiple times. Their bodies were laid out in the open square next to the same fence where one year before fifteen Partisans had been shot by Mussolini’s men. One woman came out of the crowd and fired five shots into Mussolini’s corpse, one for each of her sons he had killed. Some of the more vicious Partisans then walked over to the bodies and began mutilating them. One began cutting the breasts off Claretta Petacci. Maria got upset and said to Jack,

“We must stop them, now. We must do something.” Jack grabbed her by the arm and said,

“Their blood is up; if you try to stop them they will turn on you. There’s nothing we can do. She’s dead anyway.”

The Partisans then took the bodies to Milan. Maria read in the paper the next day that the mutilated bodies of Mussolini and his mistress had been hung upside down outside the forecourt of a Milan garage. On the following day Mussolini was buried in the family tomb in the village of Predappio.

Jack was drafted back into his regiment in mid-1945 and moved north to Austria.

II: Austria

Death solves all problems - no man, no problem.

Joseph Stalin

When in Austria, part of Jack’s regiment, The King's Own Rifles, was camped in an old SS base near Lienz, on the Drava River which the Germans had abandoned so suddenly that they had left all their uniforms behind. Even this late in the war, the SS had the highest quality uniforms at a time when the German foot soldiers were dressed in rags. On 1 June 1945, a day after the British troops arrived, a group of captured Cossack riflemen was brought into the camp.

These Cossacks had fought on the German side against Stalin during the war. They still had their rifles with them. So, a ruse was devised whereby

the British troops asked the Cossacks to form their rifles into racks, and then go for delousing in the showers. While in the showers their rifles were removed. The Cossacks were then told that they were to be put aboard a train bound for Italy, where they would be resettled. A railway line ran out of the camp which bifurcated just beyond the camp exit. The left-hand track went to Yugoslavia, which was occupied by Russian forces, the right to Italy.

As the train departed and as the British soldiers watched, it turned left instead of right. It passed behind a group of trees, when the sound of the train's brakes could be heard. Then came the sound of the Cossacks shouting and rifle fire echoed around the camp. There was then an eerie silence. It took several minutes, but the British troops finally realized that the Cossacks had been sent back to Stalin's forces who had summarily shot them all as traitors. The British troops were outraged that unarmed men had been shot in cold blood.

Another group of Cossacks arrived and the same procedure was followed by the British officers, the British troops mutinied. They were marched out and a different British regiment who had no idea what had happened was marched in. When they saw what happened they mutinied too. Jack put the whole incident down to cowardly weakness on the part of Anthony Eden the Foreign Secretary, who had given in to Stalin's demands to have the Cossacks returned to him. As Mikael Bulgakov wrote in *The White Guard*: 'Cowardice is the greatest sin.'

It was around this time that Jack was invited to join the 'Antedeluvian Order of Buffalos.' It is reputed to be a secret society for actors.

He then moved up into Austria and his regiment was billeted in Vienna. There he came into contact with the Soviet Army as part of the day-to-day administration of a divided city.

In early 1945 he was sent on a secret mission to Switzerland by General Penney with an American called Willis George. The object was to break into one of the Swiss banks in Lucerne and steal the bank account numbers of leading Nazis, to get hold of their stolen wealth. George was an expert in safe-blowing. On the way to reconnoiter the bank, Jack walked into a shop that sold wristwatches and bought the most expensive one he could find. As they approached the bank later that night, it was surrounded by armed guards and their operation was blown. Both returned back to Austria the next day.

Jack was then embedded in the American 5th Army and went into Germany as far as the Harz Mountains.

III. Return to England

After Jack returned to England after the end of the war, General Penney summoned him to his offices at 64 Baker Street, London, shortly before

Jack was de-mobbed. The plaque on the door read 'Inter Services Research Bureau.' "*Wasn't Sherlock Holmes's address in Baker Street?*" thought Jack as he entered the door on the ground floor?

Jack was invited into General Penney's office; he stood to attention and saluted.

"At ease, sit down Jack," said General Penney. After a short pause, Penney said,

"We have a role for you." "I'm out of the army now, I would prefer to go back to civilian life, sir," said Jack.

Penney leaned back in his chair. "You don't have any choice in the matter. The army has decided that it needs to get all communists and other opponents of the British monarchy under their control. We don't just want to control our friends; we want to control our enemies too. England is no longer the free country that it once was."

"Why?" asked Jack.

"It won't be too long before Stalin finds out what Hess said to us before the Germans invaded Russia. There may be a war," said Penney.

General Penney paused and then remarked, "If the Russians invade England and seize control, people like you will be used by them in positions of authority. Therefore, we need to control you so that we keep the British nature of the country intact. Look at East Germany; even though the Russians control the state, the communists still defer to the German military so that their Germanness is not lost. On the other hand, if the Americans were to take over England in a war with Russia, you would form the nucleus of an underground army of resistance to the Americans, again to ensure we keep our Britishness."

"My family must never find out about this," said Jack.

"I want any children I have to be kept out of this mess too,"

General Penney agreed.

"What we want you to do is top secret. Tell your family nothing and we will make sure that if they ever try to discover what you did, they will never find out. If they try to investigate, every avenue of enquiry will disappear in a puff of smoke. That way they will be safe."

A few months later Jack was sitting in the British Legion in Englefield Green, when one of his old army mates came in. It was Tommy Smith who worked for British military intelligence and had fought with Jack in northern Italy. They began talking about old times and then the conversation turned to Rudolph Hess.

"So what exactly happened with Hess?" asked Jack. Tommy began:

“Well Rudolf Hess was second in the Nazi hierarchy to Hitler. He was parachuted into Scotland on 10 May 1941, a few months before the invasion of Russia by the Germans. He landed near the village of Eaglesham on Fenwick Moor and asked to be taken to the Duke of Hamilton. Strangely, no anti-aircraft fire seems to have been directed at the plane as it crossed into Scotland.”

“Churchill maintained subsequently that he never met or spoke to Hess. The Russians believed that Hess had told Churchill about the German plans to invade Russia. The British maintained that he did not. If Hess had informed Churchill about Operation Barbarossa, it would have put the British in a very awkward position both politically and militarily. If Churchill had known, done nothing and Hitler had won, then what would there have been to stop Hitler invading and destroying Britain? Nothing, Britain would have been a sitting duck. On the other hand, if the Russians had been victorious and they had found out, it would have soured relations between allies and made peace talks very acrimonious, maybe even lead to another war,” said Tommy.

“It was a massive gamble on Hitler’s part since Hess was the deputy German leader and would have known all their war plans, industrial and military secrets. Either that or Hitler had Churchill’s measure when it came to who he hated most, Hitler or communism.”

“After the war, Hess was taken to the Nuremberg war crime trials in Germany from custody in Britain. He can be seen talking to Goering and several other Nazi leaders in the courtroom in news footage. So there seems to be no doubt that he was the real Hess. After the Nuremberg war crime trials were underway, Hess was imprisoned in Spandau prison. The joint powers decided to alternate the guards in the prison. So, one month the British guarded the prisoners and the next month the Russians and so on.”

“After the Russians had finished their first guard duty, a seconded British army doctor was asked to examine ‘Hess’ in Nuremberg prison, because the regular army doctor was ill. When he examined the medical notes, he realized that the man sitting in front of him even though he looked like Hess was not him. For instance, Hess had a scar caused by a bullet through his lung in World War I. There was no sign of a scar on his X-rays. It has been kept top secret for a long time.”

“So you mean the Russians swapped him for a body double?” asked Jack.

“Yes, we think so,” said Tommy.

Tommy then remarked, “Does it not strike you as odd that Herman Goering asked at the Nuremberg war crimes trial:

“Is the Hess you are referring to ‘our’ Hess or ‘your’ Hess.” There was a rumor circulating at Nuremberg, that there were two Hesses at the trial. It is interesting to note that Goering was the only Nazi leader who raised this issue. What’s also interesting is that the night Goering ‘committed suicide’

he was being guarded by the Russians. The inference is that the next day the Russians swapped Hesses and there was no one to question it.”

“In that case the Russians would have interrogated Hess,” said Jack.

“Rumor has it that on several occasions the Duke of Kent and King George VI tried to use Hess as a conduit to arrange a peace treaty with Hitler and British Intelligence were organizing the whole thing, seemingly unbeknown to Churchill,” said Tommy.

“So what did Hess tell the British?” asked Jack.

“It's a closely guarded secret, but we suspect he told Churchill the German war plans and asked the British to join the invasion of Russia. It does not take a genius to work out what Stalin's reaction to that would have been. We fear there may have been a war,” said Tommy.

A few months later the opening salvos of the Cold War began, followed by the Berlin Airlift and then Churchill’s provocative speech at Fulton University in the USA.

Chapter 10: Foligno, Umbria, Italy

Eric became aware of his father’s activities in Italy after he married an Italian woman who he met in Italy in 1944. After Eric's mother had died in 1980, Jack married an Italian woman called Maria Carra in 1981 at Englefield Green Catholic Church and then moved to Foligno in Italy. Eric visited them numerous times. The ‘mafia’ came up in one conversation. Maria looked Eric straight in the eye and said with an icy look, “There is no such thing as the Mafia, understand?”



Jack and Maria's Wedding, Englefield Green, 1981

Eric gathered from numerous conversations between her and Jack that Maria had worked for the Italian partisans and Jack must have spent some time fighting with the communist resistance groups in the later stages of World War II, in northern Italy.

On one occasion Jack and Maria were talking about having fought together near a little town called Spoleto in the Apennine mountains and were trapped in a cave in a steeply sided gully straddled by an old Roman viaduct. German snipers had them pinned down and they thought they were going to die. They were finally rescued by Italian Partisans. Eric was taken to the very spot a day later.³⁸

They also told Eric that a few weeks later when the German forces had retreated further north, they were both drinking wine on the balcony of Maria's sister's house just outside Ancona. Her beautiful cousin also called Maria who was there had her back to the hills, leaning against the balcony drinking a glass of wine when a shot rang out. Blood suddenly poured out of her chest and she was dead. A German sniper had shot her.

Jack and Maria were talking about the war one evening when she got very upset and said,

³⁸ Described in more detail in the book "Luigina."

“When the Partisans caught Mussolini and his mistress they shot them and then cut off his mistress's breasts. We should have stopped them doing that but we didn't. They then hung the bodies upside down in a garage in Milan.”

Both Jack and Maria were regular attendees at the annual reunion meetings of the local Partisan groups. After one of these meetings, they both came home arguing, because Jack had caused a fracas at the reunion. Apparently when everyone had had too much wine, one of the Italians had said to Jack, “The British Army did nothing in Italy during the war, they simply filled the void behind the retreating Germans that the Partisans had driven out.” Jack replied, “We Partisans did a good job of harassing the Germans, like a wasp stinging a bear, but it was the British Army that actually drove them out, not the Partisans.” This argument then quickly degenerated into a fist fight and Maria had to intervene to make the peace!

Maria also mentioned that she had bought a vineyard in Foligno at the end of the war from money and gold they had captured from a German convoy. Maria and her cousin Luigina managed the vineyard together.

Luigina lived on the upper floors of a Palace in the main square in Foligno. The ground floor was rented by the Carabinieri. Luigina took Eric on a tour of the Palace. In one room were paintings of her and Maria's ancestors. It was a dark room so each portrait had a small light above it to illuminate the painting. There was one portrait that was not illuminated and Luigina just walked past without commenting on it. She had taken some time to explain who all the others were. Eric said, “Who is that in the painting with no light?” He looked evil. With a look of disgust on her face she said, “He was the Governor of Assisi during the Inquisition.” Eric asked no more questions.

Eric remembered Jack seeing an Italian woman at a railway station in London when he was a child in the 1960s. She was begging Jack to go to Italy with her. She gave Eric some Italian coins. When he showed them to his mother, Jack and she had a huge fight. Eric gave those coins to Maria when he first visited Foligno. She took them back and thanked him. So, it had been her at the train station all those years before. Jack and Maria had obviously been having an affair for years. Eric remembered a woman reading the Roman classics to him at a very early age, saying, “We must drum the classics into him as soon as he can understand.” Eric then wondered if that had been Maria too.

In 1943, Maria had published her PhD at Rome University on the life of the Roman Emperor Caracalla. She spent long hours telling Eric about this Roman Emperor, particularly his undignified death. Caracalla was stabbed by an assassin while he was crouched by the side of the road relieving his bowels!

Luigina's husband, Abramo, died in 1982 and Eric returned to Foligno a few weeks afterwards. Luigina took Eric up onto a mountain nearby where Abramo was buried in the family mausoleum. From that point there was a magnificent view down the valley. They got out of the car and then she

looked at Eric for a long time as though there was something she wanted to tell him. In the end she lowered her head and got back into the car in silence.

Eric felt like a long-lost member of the family. The Italians were much warmer than his English relatives. In 1983 Maria died of cancer and father returned to Boosbeck.³⁹

Chapter 11: Father

I: Funeral

Eric was now beginning to get the idea that his father had worked for military intelligence during World War II. The only issue was whose military intelligence had he been working for?

Eric remembered an incident that happened when he was working at Leeds University in central England shortly before he emigrated to Australia. During the summer holidays a tourist company hired Sadler Hall, one of the university student halls of residence where Eric worked as the manager. They had brought a party of French school children for a visit to the Central Yorkshire area. Two of the assistants working for the tour company were an old Englishman and his wife. One night Eric went around to the gatehouse where they were staying and had a few drinks with them.

Part way through the evening, the old man got up and said,

“I have to go and work on my book for an hour,” and he went into the bedroom.

His wife explained in a condescending tone,

“He is writing up his old war diaries from World War II. It keeps him occupied and I try to encourage him to keep up the work.” She had an expression on her face that said she felt it was a total waste of time.

When he returned, Eric asked him where he had been in World War II. He said he had kept a diary, even though it was against orders and if he had been captured by the Germans it would have contained incriminating evidence against him. If he had been caught by his superiors he would have been in serious trouble. Nevertheless, being a headstrong young man, he continued to keep the diary. He said that he had fought in Italy at Salerno, Monte Cassino and Anzio. Eric said,

“That’s a coincidence, my father fought in those battles too.”

He looked at Eric for a few seconds and then said,

“What is your surname?” Eric said, “Lytle Feara.” He thought for a while and then from the look on his face, a thought flashed across his mind.

³⁹ I have discussed this episode in another book called “Luigina.” www.lytlefeara.org

“Your father isn't Jack Lytle Fears is he?”

He turned out to be Jack's old regimental officer from World War II. He asked Eric,

“Is your father still alive?”

“Yes,” said Eric.

“Ask him what regiment he was in when you see him next. And tell him we could have got across that road.”

Eric returned home to see his father a day or two later and Jack replied,

“Tell him I was in the 4th Army, First Division. Remember NOT 1st Army, 4th Division, the 4 Army, First Division.” He then said angrily,

“We could not have got across the road, the Germans were shelling it and we would all have been killed.”

When Eric returned to Sadler Hall a few days later this old Englishman was filled with excitement. Eric remarked,

“Jack said he was in the 4 Army, 1 Division.”

The man suddenly went quiet and never said any more about Jack. Why would he need to ask anyway, after all he was in the same regiment himself? In hindsight, Eric felt it must have been a code to tell him to shut up.

But he took Eric to one side a few days later and said,

“England is NOT a free country, you should leave the country.”

He seemed genuinely concerned for Eric. It materialized from further conversations they had, that this man was a Colonel in British military intelligence and had worked in Northern Ireland. He told Eric about a meeting with a firm of Protestant industrialists. The company was not performing very well and there may even have been a strike. The Protestant chairman began to blame the ‘fucking Catholics’ and went purple in the face. This officer, who was in British uniform at the time said to Eric,

“I didn't think it was the right time to mention to him that I am a Catholic!”

About eight years later when Eric, who was by then living in Australia, heard that Jack was seriously ill and he returned to England to see him in hospital. They made their peace and Jack died two days later.

In a curious twist of fate, Jack had a wristwatch that he had bought in Switzerland after the end of the war. He kept it all his life. On the day he died in hospital on Teesside, the watch disappeared during the night.

Eric attended his father's funeral service which took place at St Aidan's Church in Boosbeck. It was followed by Jack's burial in the nearby churchyard. The pallbearers - all dressed in good quality suits - were men

Eric had never seen before. The priest performed a brief service at the graveside. Eric was then intentionally led a short distance away by a man who said he was one of his father's comrades in Italy during the war.

He told Eric he was going to Newcastle in Australia on holiday in a month. Since Eric lived in Newcastle, NSW he asked for Eric's address and phone number and said he would call and see him and tell Eric all the things his father did in the war. Then he stood in an upright posture, like a soldier at attention and said,

"Your father was a hero, and he should have been awarded a VC but the officer who witnessed the action died before he could write a report. As all the surviving witnesses were rank and file, the military authorities would not make an award."

As he was saying all this Eric could not help but notice that there were a group of men in suits leaning over his father's grave. One threw something into the grave that must have landed on top of the coffin. It may have been a gold coin or a medal. By the time he went over to look, the grave diggers had filled the grave with soil.

When Eric returned to Australia the man never turned up. It's now been thirty years since they met and Eric is still waiting for him to arrive! However, this event was a portent of what would happen to Eric for the next twenty years as he tried to investigate his father's past history.

Eric was intrigued by what the man said, even though the war was something that was not mentioned much at home while his father was alive. He decided he would investigate his father's past as best he could. It was an epic task that has taken him thirty years and he is certain that he still knows very little. The best way to describe Eric's Herculean task is that it was like being given a 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle that has no picture of the finished item on the box and when you open the box you find five pieces in there. You then have to work out what the picture is from those five pieces.

Eric began by writing to the British Army Historical Records Office in Glasgow, Scotland. He received a reply which consisted of a list of the regiments Jack was in, but very little information about where the regiment was at any particular time or anything else. It was accompanied by a letter which said:

"Please do not write back asking for any more information; this is all that we can give you."

Eric was intrigued by the wording of the letter; was there no more information to give, or was there more but he could not have access to it?

So based on the regiments his father was in, Eric conducted some research at Newcastle university library which had a section on the conflict in Italy in World War II. The first thing Eric noticed was that a name kept cropping up

in the books that he had heard when he was a young boy: General Penney. There were several other familiar names too.

So, Eric did an internet search on General Penney and came across a web page headed 'Allied Intelligence, Italy.' General Penney was listed as the Head of Allied Intelligence in Italy in World War II. Eric saved the link as a favorite, but when he went to open it again the web page had disappeared.

Jack must have had some close professional relationship with Penney, because Eric remembered a man who had turned up at Jack's house in the 1960s who presented Jack with a book entitled "*Anzio*" by Winford Vaughan Thomas. The man was a muscle-bound stocky person wearing a very tightly-fitting suit. That is to say, he was wearing a good quality off-the-shelf suit that was the right arm and leg length, but he had so many muscles it was too tight. He looked like a gorilla in a suit. He had a back as straight as a ruler and he asked Jack to read the book and said he would be back in a fortnight to get his views. The man had a curious attitude towards Jack; a confident arrogance that suggested he controlled Jack's life. When Jack read the book, he was furious.

When the man returned about a fortnight later and asked him about the book, Jack said,

"There is nothing mentioned about the most important event at Anzio - the evacuation."

"Yes, there are some things too embarrassing for the military establishment to be printed," the man replied.

It appeared that the Germans almost captured Anzio during mid-February 1944 and the senior officers of the British and American armies evacuated on naval vessels, leaving the troops to face the consequences. One thousand American soldiers rapidly organized from a range of regiments finally stopped the Germans about half a kilometer from the beach at Nettuno and broke the attack. All 1000 soldiers were killed. Jack said the only mention of this action was in a cartoon by Bill Maudlin published in the *Stars and Stripes* in April 1944.

The man then said,

"General Penney has died and it was his final wish that you be one of his pall bearers."

Jack immediately said he had thrown his uniform away and did not want to meet "all those bastards again."

The man quickly retorted,

"That's not a problem; we will get you a new one."

Jack left the following weekend and did not return home for over a month. *That suggests to me that as he was dying General Penney's last thought was of my father, and what was the significance of that?* thought Eric.

What relationship was there between my father and the man who headed Allied Intelligence in Italy? thought Eric.

Eric remembered being with his father on a visit to the Englefield Green British Legion when he witnessed an emotional reunion meeting. Jack met a man who had been in the Middlesex Machine Gunners regiment at Anzio on the day Jack had been trapped by the Germans in the 'Factory.' Apparently, it was the Middlesex Machine Gunners behind Jack who had killed the Germans who were assaulting the buildings.

When Jack walked into the British Legion that particular night his mates came running over and said excitedly,

"There's someone we want you to meet Jack."

The man was sat at a table in one corner of the room and looked relaxed and cool about the whole thing. But Eric noticed his eyes were like those of a crazy person. That is, outwardly he looked relaxed, but inwardly he was very apprehensive because he did not know how Jack would react. He said,

"I was in the Middlesex Machine Gun Regiment at Anzio in February 1944 and I killed five Germans who came running towards our lines out of the 'Factory.' I think they were chasing a British soldier."

That was the only time in his life that Eric ever saw his father cry. Jack hugged the other guy, and said,

"If it wasn't for you guys I would be dead, I thought I was going to die that day."

Eric then wanted to find more information about one particular regiment Jack was listed in. The regiment, if indeed it was a regiment, was listed in his army record obtained from the Army Historical Records Office in Glasgow. It looked like a car registration number and began with an 'X.' Something like X1234ED. The name of the 'regiment' wasn't mentioned in any of the fifty books on the war in Italy he had studied in the university library. So, Eric phoned a researcher at the Australian War Memorial Museum in Canberra. He explained that his father fought in Italy in World War II in the British Army, gave her the name of the regiment and asked if she could help him get information.

She replied, "That's not a problem; the Australian Army was in Italy in World War II and we have all the *official* British war records here. My research specialty is the Australian Army in Italy in World War II. I will get back to you in a couple of days."

Two days went by, then a week, then three weeks. Eric gave her another phone call and explained who he was. Her reply was:

“Oh, it's you. Yes, I have looked through every official British war record we have - and we have them all - and there is no record of any regiment of that name.”

Eric began to suspect something was really odd. Jack was in a regiment that apparently did not officially exist, he had some sort of close relationship with the Head of Allied Intelligence in Italy and there was no further information that the British Army Records Office could give him. Added to that was the fact that there was apparently no British 4th Army in Italy.

A few weeks later a friend of Eric's had a visit from his father who was a dentist in Brisbane. He was also a captain in the Australian Reserve Army. They were chatting at a barbecue and they got talking about Eric's father. He asked Eric to come for a walk with him, along with their friends' dog. As they got some distance from the house, he turned to Eric and said,

“Only spies try to investigate these kind of things.”

Eric said, “It's my father's history I'm investigating.”

Eric had a feeling that someone was putting pressure on him to stop his enquiries and began to wonder: What the hell did my father do in the war?

Eric remembered other things that his father had told him. Years before, Eric was watching a war film on the television about the Germans torturing British agents in France. They put a wet towel on someone's face to get them to talk. Eric remembered saying,

“This is a joke isn't it, a towel would not hurt.”

Jack became indignant and said,

“It's one of the best methods, you feel like you are drowning. Only strapping someone to a board and ducking them in water until they pass out is more effective.”

From that moment on every lead Eric found through the library documents and followed up seemed to disappear in a puff of smoke. He was getting nowhere. He did a search on an ancestry site in the UK and found Jack's sign on papers for the *SS Seagepool*. It confirmed his place of birth was listed as Chopwell, County Durham.

However, Eric had at least partially succeeded in piecing together some seemingly incongruous facts about his father. First, he had come from a family of communists and had joined the Communist Party himself in the 1930s. Secondly, he had worked with American military intelligence at Anzio in Italy and was involved with the Americans' attempts to remove Russian NKVD agents from the Partisan groups around Rome.

“This sounds so crazy, it doesn't make any sense” thought Eric.

There were also a number of contradictory facts about Jack's father; Eric's grandfather, Tommy Davison. He was on the 1926 'Chopwell Blacklist A' of workers banned from ever working in Chopwell pit again because they had been charged under the Emergency Powers Act with subversion and accused of being communists. Yet between 1938 and 1965 he had been the security man at Royal Holloway College, London. How did a communist charged with subversion become a security man looking after (amongst other things) a priceless collection of William Turner paintings at Royal Holloway College?

What's that old saying recalled Eric; "*An enigma surrounded by a puzzle, wrapped up in a mystery.*"

Chapter 12: The End of a Career

Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.

Abraham Lincoln

After trying relentlessly to get a job for three years, Eric was offered work at Orica Ltd. There had been a long delay between applying for and being offered a job and the job he was finally given was not the one he had applied for.

After Eric got the job, his manager kept asking him to give him the name of the contact in Kemerovo in Russia who had been working on a new way of initiating explosives. After Eric discussed this with his solicitor, he basically advised Eric not to provide the information to the company. The manager then began to insist he told him, which Eric would not do. This man, was a grossly overweight pathological liar, who also asked Eric, while they were waiting for a taxi together outside a University in Melbourne to write an email to the professor in Russia using Eric's Orica Ltd email address.

Again, the solicitors told Eric that if he wrote to Russia in his capacity as an Orica Ltd employee then the rights to those contacts would belong to Orica Ltd. Once again, a similar pattern emerged with the job at Orica Ltd as had happened at Dyno Nobel Explosives.

Eric was given huge amounts of information on a project that had been going nowhere in the previous three years. The project had been previously managed by his new manager, who had been told apparently that his career would go no further until this project was complete. He was obviously being held responsible for its failure. Eric collated all the disparate information together and liaised with other managers at Orica Ltd to get the project through to production in Mexico.

Then Eric began to be criticized and ridiculed for errors in the original documents which had been written long before he arrived. The managers who wrote the reports insisted that their reports were acceptable.

Then Eric's manager started to claim he was not doing his job properly and all the paperwork in the reports was wrong or of 'poor quality' and his job was on the line. However, all the reports Eric attached to his final handover documents were written by managers who had authorized their own reports as being acceptable and had all previously been approved by Eric's manager. What Eric did notice was that documents written by the corporate managers which were being criticized at the time began to disappear off the electronic documentation system. Computer-based documentation systems do provide an efficient means of accessing company documents, but for someone with administrative access, they are a paradise in which you can make embarrassing documents 'disappear' with consummate ease.

Another manager called Johans, who was from Germany even insultingly ridiculed and derided Eric's consultancy business. Eric later discovered that this manager's great grandfather had been a commandant at Drancy Camp for Jews in France during World War II. He had been tried in an Austrian court in Vienna for deporting Jews to the death camps for extermination. He was sentenced to death and hanged on the 24 May 1946. Eric found that somewhat ironic.

Eric's solicitor then wrote to him:

"They are maybe looking for a scapegoat to cover their mismanagement and so that may well be you. Quite frankly, if that is the way matters/people have been handled then you may do well to be out of there, as the support and assistance does not seem to be there. To try and continue on, hoping things would get better would be total fantasy. If what you have experienced so far is any indication, then it will not improve with time. So, it could be an issue of jump now or get pushed."⁴⁰

Eric wrote a letter to Orica Ltd human resources politely telling them where to stick their job, but human resources never replied. The corrupt, incompetent manager was then given a promotion to a corporate position.

Eric then asked for assistance from his local NSW State MP, Sonia Honery. In a letter he wrote to her and handed in at her local office in person on 28 October 2011, he described the events that had happened to him over the last thirty years, including those at Dyno Nobel Explosives and Orica. He also told her that he had informed the Federal MP, Greg Combet and he had done very little. But he mentioned the help he had received from the CFMEU Union leader in Newcastle.

The concluding part of his letter described what he considered to be his unfair treatment at Orica Ltd. Attached to the letter were all the emails and other supporting documentation. Eric ended the letter with the same request as he had asked of the Federal MP:

⁴⁰ This is discussed in more detail in volume 2 A Journey of self-discovery.

“If I am not going to be allowed to get a position in my chosen career in Australia, please allow me to go to another country that will allow me to have a career.” The MP never acknowledged Eric's letter.

Eric felt that Australian MPs did not behave in a way that they should in a free and democratic country. They did not protect the rights of the individual or give Eric the names of organizations that could provide him with legal assistance. They acted more like an enemy placed in their position would have behaved.

After another year of trying, Eric was given a job at Chemring in Scotland. The manager there questioned him for months about his father, Jack's actions in Italy in World War II. He did not ask any questions about Eric's trips to Russia, simply commenting

“We know everything about your trips to Russia and we are not concerned.”

The reasons for the manager's detailed questions about Jack were unclear at first to Eric. Then he discovered that his father's army record kept at the Army Historical Records Office in Glasgow had been completely shredded.

In the final analysis, Eric came down to two possibilities about why he had been rigorously questioned; either the authorities knew nothing and wanted to know all that Eric knew about what his father had done in Italy in World War II, or they knew everything, but wanted to find out exactly what Eric did know. The manager did admit at one point to Eric that Jack had worked for British military intelligence, confirming what Eric had suspected. But the manager also asked a politically loaded question, asking,

“How did you *know* General Penney went to Moscow?”

The implication in the question was that General Penney had gone to Moscow in February 1944.

“How did you know?” he repeated three times.

If it had been untrue, he would more likely have said,

“What makes you think General Penney went to Moscow?”

Eric explained that his father Jack and his comrades had discussed the ‘General Penney’ cover story in the British Legion club when he was a boy and he had heard all that was said. Another manager shortly afterwards told Eric he would never, ever get a security clearance and should leave immediately, although why they would not have done a security clearance before offering Eric the position at Chemring was a bit of a mystery.

A number of other things happened to his family records after leaving Chemring and returning to Australia. First his father's army record, birth certificate and registration had been removed from official records. Secondly, the death of his great uncle in Chopwell pit on the 21 November 1921 had been removed from the Durham Miners Union database. Finally,

on *www.ancestry.com*, his mother's death which happened on the 17 July 1980 was now recorded as taking place in September 1980, and the document from the Army Historical Records Office, listing his father's army regiments had also mysteriously disappeared from his filing cabinet at his home in Newcastle, NSW. Eric has never had a job since, as his career has been ruined both in mining explosives and military explosives too. Ignorance is not bliss.

Chapter 13: The Dawning

There are more things in heaven and earth than were ever dreamt of in your philosophy

Shakespeare.

All these facts and recollections began to seem too much of a coincidence to Eric, especially the things said in the industrial museum in Kemerovo. So, when he returned to Australia after the visit to Kemerovo, he contacted the Durham County Records Office by email and asked for the files of the Chopwell branch of the Durham Miners' Union (DMU). The periods he asked for were 1918 -1921 and 1929 -1934 when his family must have gone to Russia.

As Eric reasoned, an open-minded person who wanted to find the truth would only need to consult the Chopwell Miners' Lodge minutes over those years, or consult the Chopwell parish magazines for evidence. But as the Durham County Records Office remarked to Eric in their reply:

“We have all the miners lodge records for every pit in County Durham *except* Chopwell. There are no surviving Chopwell Miners' Lodge records in the Durham Miners' Association held in the DCRO or in any of our other collections. There are also no surviving parish magazines amongst the Chopwell parish records either.”

Eric then emailed the BBC Tyne and Wear radio station for any information they had, and received the following response:

“We have nothing in our archives about miners from Chopwell going to Russia, but you may find the following link interesting!”

They sent him a link to a web page from the BBC archives from 2007 where the ex-head of MI5, Stella Rimmington talked about a “Soviet Spy Ring” in Chopwell in a show called “*Watching the Russians.*”

As part of the show this ex-MI5 director general visited Chopwell to present the British intelligence view of events that happened in Chopwell during the Cold War. Her views and those of local community members were aired on the show. The locals denied the presence of Soviet spies, whereas she insisted there were such people in Chopwell.

In other words, presumably MI5 had destroyed all records where the truth about the events in Chopwell might have been found. In traditional British fashion, they have lied by omission. But the omissions are now untraceable. The lies of Brigadier General Beresford live on. Those who cannot be blamed will not be blamed.

Had MI5 really destroyed all the records? Eric began to think they had. He wrote back to the Durham County Records Office asking that very question. He never received a reply. So, the question about whether or not any Lytle Fears or Davison's went to Kemerovo in the 1930s cannot be officially answered. But Eric was convinced that they did. In fact, he finally wrote an email to the mining museum in Kemerovo asking specifically if any Lytlefear's, Davidson's or miners from Chopwell had gone to Kemerovo in the 1930s. They replied by saying ten miners from England visited Kemerovo in the 1930s, but refused to answer his specific questions. Eric further pondered Aunty Reene's comment during his visit to Chopwell:

“Quite a few” in Pitmatic parlance probably meant between ten and a dozen!

Eric also realized that his great uncle went to Russia in 1918, but what he did there he had no idea.

In another curious twist of fate, Eric was at Sydney airport waiting for a flight and was browsing some magazines in the newsagents. One magazine contained an article on a former director general of MI5 called Sir Roger Hollis.

Eric was flabbergasted and had to sit down as he read the article. This was the face that Eric had seen in the photograph on the wall in the room at Vostochny Port. He read the article. Roger Hollis worked in Shanghai in China in the early to mid-1930s, first as a reporter for the *Shanghai Post* and later for a British tobacco company. He contracted tuberculosis and his doctor recommended he go to Switzerland for treatment. To get there he travelled on the Trans-Siberian railway but would presumably have travelled on the branch line that passed through Vostochny Port, which connected with the north shore of Lake Baikal. This would also explain why he was five days late arriving in Moscow. The article claimed that Hollis was rumoured to have been a Soviet spy.

Eric then thought about the epaulettes on the shoulders of the guards at the entrance to Vostochny port. He researched Russian army uniforms on the internet. The guards were GRU (Russian Military Intelligence). He then pondered the fact that a huge map of Australia was on the wall of the Port Manager's office.

Eric then did some further research about ASIO and discovered that ASIO was founded in 1952 by no less a person than Sir Roger Hollis. Suddenly he realized there were wheels within wheels.

So, Eric's family had been communists who had gone to Russia in 1918 and in the 1930s. His great aunts were Russians and his father had some mysterious relationship with the head of allied intelligence in Italy in World War II.

He was greeted in a friendly fashion by the head of the FSB in Kemerovo and had been unwittingly sent to what must have been GRU headquarters looking after Australia in Vostochny Port. Roger Hollis presumably had stopped there in the 1930s.

Eric 'escaped' from Vostochny Port with the help of a man who had been in the KGB in Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis. And he met an official in Moscow that no one from the West had been allowed to meet.

His life had been saved by Russians who happened to be close by in a boat when he was in Antarctica. He had been sent to Indian Heads Naval Surface Warfare Centre (NSWC) near Baltimore in the USA. Had all these things been a coincidence?⁴¹

A sinister question then appeared in Eric's mind - What the hell was going on? One thing he began to strongly suspect was that, even though he was largely unaware of his family history stretching back at least 100 years, it was weighing on him like the albatross around the neck of the Ancient Mariner.

Chapter 14: Epilogue

Russia is an enigma surrounded by a puzzle, wrapped up in a mystery.

Winston Churchill

Now that Eric felt he had got as close to the truth as he could, he decided to go to Anzio to put the family ghosts to rest. He arrived by aircraft in Rome in early November 2012. There he met an eighty-four-year-old American in the lift at the airport hotel at Fumicino. They started chatting and the American asked Eric why he was there.

Eric told him: My father fought at Anzio, but he refused to return there when I was in Italy with him in the 1980s even though he went back to Naples, Salerno and Monte Cassino.

'I'm not going back there, I'm not going back,' he said as we passed through Campolene station on the way to Naples."

"He almost turned violent. I couldn't understand it."

"No," said the old American, "You probably can't. I can though." He said,

⁴¹ This is discussed in volume 2, A Journey of Self-Discovery.

“He would have had bad memories, memories that scar your mind and if he went back, all those memories would resurface and he couldn't cope with it. I was in Korea and when you see death and destruction you are left with memories that scar your mind. I'm eighty-four and I'm still having problems with my memories,” he said.

“Really?”

“Oh, yes, Oooh, yes,” he said.

Next morning Eric travelled by train to Anzio. Anzio is a quiet little seaport on the Lazio coast southwest of Rome. He bought a cappuccino at a cafe on the waterfront near where fishermen were landing their catches from small boats. Laid on a tarpaulin covering boxes of fish was a cat stretched out asleep in the sun with a huge grin on its face that said, ‘life is good.’ In his mind, Eric asked the cat, “*What the hell did my father do in the army?*” The cat then rolled towards him and gave him a grin which said, “*I know everything.*” Eric laughed to himself.

Eric then went for a short stroll and looked at the ruins of Nero's villa. Then he visited the Beachhead Museum in the Villa Adele Dello Sbarco. Angelo was in charge, but he did not speak English. He showed Eric a British film, with no commentary, of troops landing at Anzio on the day of the invasion and an American film with commentary that covered the entire fighting there. He was very kind to Eric.

Then Eric walked to the Anzio British War Cemetery, Cimitero Inglese just off the S 207 about one kilometer north of Anzio. An old grounds man came up to him as he was looking at the graves. He asked Eric in a friendly tone why he was there. Eric said, “My father fought at Anzio and I was looking at the graves as a mark of respect for what the British soldiers did here. Plus, I am trying to finally put the family ghosts to rest.” He showed Eric a list of names in a box at the cemetery gates. None of them sounded familiar to Eric. They were not names he remembered his father mentioning. Eric then signed the visitors' book.

Finally, the grounds man said to Eric, “My name is Giorgio.”

Eric noticed that Giorgio has a faded but distinct port wine birthmark on his forehead.

Eric said, “Mine is Eric Lytle Fears.”

“Lytle Fears?” said Giorgio. “Yes,” Eric said.

Giorgio was lost in thought for a few seconds and then his face turned pale. He looked at Eric with fear in his eyes.

“It is better you go now,” he said.

“What? Why?” asked Eric. “No, no, go now.”

Eric grabbed him by the shoulder. "Why?"

He looked shaken. "I must go now," said Giorgio as he pulled away. Giorgio then began walking briskly towards the Cimitero Comunale.

After he had walked a few meters he stopped, turned his head back towards Eric and in a low voice said,

"Look under the North wall of the cemetery." He crossed himself and quickly walked away.

Somewhat puzzled, Eric slowly walked over to where he had directed him. It then began to rain heavily and Eric's shoes became very wet. He had no raincoat either. So, he began walking back to Anzio town. He wondered afterwards, if he had gone to where the grounds man had directed him, whether he would have found a grave marked:

JRE Lytle Fears 1 Leicester Regiment died 18 February 1944 aged 27.