













they knew would fill a thimble. What they didn't know would fill a novel.

Two RAF jets flew up to and alongside each side of the Hawker. The pilots spotted the Bush decoy, radioed they had found the former president, and requested a convoy of military aircraft to help escort the Hawker to Glasgow.

Meanwhile, the Learjet carrying Bush flew close to the ground to avoid conventional radar. Aboard, the commandos removed the hood, gag, shackles, and handcuffs from Bush who immediately asked, "Who the hell are you guys?"

"You will know soon enough," the attending commando coldly responded. "You do not need to worry. You will not be harmed."

"You're British, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"What the fuck are you doing?" Bush erupted in anger. "You're supposed to be our ally."

The commando shot back, "No, Tony Blair is your ally. Most British people hated your war."

The Learjet landed at its appointed destination, the Rotterdam Airport, and taxied to a stop next to a waiting chopper, rotary blades spinning. United Nations police quickly and silently escorted Mr. Bush off the jet and into the chopper, which took off immediately.

Boxed in by four escort jets flying in close formation, the Hawker landed at Glasgow Airport and taxied to a stop. Police cars and vans quickly pulled up to create a 360-degree barricade. Two dozen Scottish police officers under the command of Chief Constable Angus Duff drew their weapons and aimed at the

plane. Government officials positioned themselves behind the police cars.

The Hawker door opened. The pilot descended the stairs, protesting, "What the hell is going on here?"

Over a megaphone from behind the barricade, Duff responded, "You know. Where is he?"

"Where is who?"

"Deliver him unharmed or you will be spending the rest of your life in a cold dark box from which you will never emerge."

The pilot dug in his heels. "Are you out of your mind? Your jets flew dangerously close to our aircraft in blatant violation of international flight regulations. And now you're falsely accusing us of having some mythical passenger onboard."

Without responding, Constable Duff signaled a dozen Scottish police wearing body armor and carrying machine guns to board and search the plane.

A peaceful silence at The Hague was broken by the sound of helicopter blades whirring as a chopper approached a makeshift landing pad between the International Criminal Court and the ICC Detention Center, situated two and a half kilometers apart. The chopper landed gently, its blades continuing to rotate as four security guards approached the door and politely but firmly escorted Bush off the chopper. No words were spoken. They swiftly led him through a back door into the detention center. The chopper sped away, mission accomplished.

The reception area of the detention center is small but functional, its walls bare except for a simple portrait of the UN secretary-general. The guards escorted Bush to a single chair in front of the desk where sat a Kenyan guard, Mobwana Mochellus. "Hello, Mr. Bush. Welcome to the Detention Center of the International Criminal Court."

Bush did not respond. Mochellus continued. “Consistent with ICC protocol, I will inform you of your living quarters for the foreseeable future. Each detainee is assigned a private cell that includes a single bed, desk, chair, bookshelves, toilet, hand basin, television, and computer. We provide three meals a day, but detainees also have access to a communal kitchen if they wish to cook for themselves.

“The ICC provides a variety of recreational opportunities at selected times, including walks in the courtyard, a basketball court, and an exercise gym. You can also elect to partake in manual activities such as gardening, painting—we hear you like to paint, so that might be of interest—woodcrafts, and other such activities. You will receive medical and dental care as and when needed. Detainees can have visitors at prearranged times, and certain phone calls are permitted. However, you should know that phone calls as well as computer usage will be monitored.”

With her speech successfully delivered, Mochellus reached into a closet and brought out a bundle of clothes. “Here are your ICC prison clothes and pajamas. We guessed your size. Let us know if you need anything else. It’s not required for detainees to wear prison clothes in court, so we procured a few dark suits we thought you might want to wear. Do you have any questions, Mr. Bush?”

“Yes,” he answered. “Is there a Bible in the room?”

“I’ll make sure there is.”

Orientation completed, the prison guards escorted an angry and tired former president George W. Bush, carrying his prison garb, out of the reception area.

The events of the day sent America’s top political, legal, and military authorities into a tailspin. Not since the September 11 attacks had so many high-powered meetings been so hastily assembled to

discuss such a daunting crisis of international importance. The day culminated in a late-night meeting at the Pentagon of the president's senior advisors, including Secretary of Defense John Cox and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Secretary Cox began, "Gentlemen, the president asked for recommendations within the hour on how the hell we can rescue George W. Bush from the ICC."

"If the bastards think they can just nab the president of the United States and get away with it," barked Army general Arthur Lexton, "they got another *think* coming."

"Former president," corrected Admiral Dick Dohring.

Marine commandant Stephen Wells interjected, "Same thing. If they can arbitrarily kidnap a former president, they can grab any of our top government officials. We need to let them know we're not going to stand for this horseshit."

General William Shackelford addressed Secretary Cox. "Sir, we have several scenarios in play that are ready to engage."

"Such as?"

"Option one is the insertion of SEALs from Task Force 64, Special Ops assigned to the Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples. They can fly over the Swiss Alps and be on the ground in The Hague by twenty-three hundred hours GMT. Minimal collateral damage expected.

"Option two is a standard amphibious assault. The ICC Detention Centre is situated on the banks of the North Sea, easily accessible by Marine forces. The Dutch would not contest a rescue attempt as their defenses in that area are light and they will not be expecting an amphibious invasion. We currently have assets returning from the Arctic that could carry out this mission ASAP. Again, minimal collateral damage expected.

"Option three is a stealth Delta Force chopper landing under cover of night. Special Ops forces would breach the detention center and extract the former president. This option utilizes forces and

air assets stationed in Germany. A larger degree of collateral damage is to be expected with this option.”

“Thank you, General,” Secretary Cox said, nodding. “Well conceived.”

“Sir, I understand this is an awful situation and sets a bad precedent,” General Robert Reynolds added, “but if we recommend to the president that we invade the Netherlands, we’re recommending military aggression that will violate its sovereignty and be in contradiction of the UN Charter.”

General Lexton scoffed. “Too damn bad. We didn’t care much about violating the UN Charter when we kicked Saddam’s ass out of Kuwait.”

“Let’s not forget, gentlemen,” Cox cautioned, “that the Dutch are our allies. They didn’t kidnap George Bush. It was a private security firm arranged by some of our British *friends*. The Dutch have fought alongside us since World War II. We’re both members of NATO and, according to Article 5 of the NATO treaty, if one of its members is attacked, the other members must regard it as an attack against all. Britain, France, Spain, Germany, even Canada, are all bound by the treaty to respond.”

Admiral Dohring countered, “So you’re saying if we send a stealth rescue squad to The Hague, it would be considered an attack on the Netherlands and trigger a violation of the NATO treaty?”

“Possibly, yes,” responded Shackelford. “Do we really want to risk a counterattack on our homeland by forces from Canada, for God’s sake? They would have every legal right to do so under the NATO treaty.”

Wells shook his head. “Shit, that’s crazy. Unthinkable.”

“The whole thing is crazy,” Cox added. “Thank you, gentlemen. There are a myriad of global issues in play here that the president needs to be aware of. I’m choppering over to the White House now to discuss our options. Keep your powder dry, gentlemen.”

In the ICC Detention Centre, George Bush, wearing prison pajamas, sat slumped on the edge of the bed in his cell, six meters long and three meters wide, reliving the events of the day, wondering what was going to happen tomorrow, and perhaps even mildly chastising himself for venturing over to Scotland to play golf and not bothering to pay more attention to the ICC.