

Cry Wolf

Author's Note: The incident in the first part of this story actually happened. Ryan Davy and his actions are purely a work of fiction, but the event itself is not. I was there amongst the chaos...

*London Heathrow Airport
Sunday March 13th 1994
Terminal Four*

Ryan Davy watched from his corner seat as the terminal slowly came to life like a dormant dragon awakening from slumber. It was early morning, and most of the kiosks and shops were still closed. Even the information desks were meagerly staffed. Here and there a cleaner or airline worker ambled through, along with the odd early-riser waiting for a flight.

Davy found the whole scene amusing – but not as amusing as the innocent briefcase sitting by itself on a row of red plastic seats. He grinned at it, unable to take his gaze from the faux leather luggage.

A mother and her two teenage kids walked from the outer doors and stopped and looked at the arrivals board. Ryan watched them as they took in the information and then made their way to the empty red seats.

His seats, with his briefcase.

The woman lit a cigarette and glanced around, making some comment about the place being dead at this hour. She seemed surprised. The girl next to her appeared to be about thirteen and was, he hoped, nosier than her mother.

Ryan got his wish.

After about five minutes, the girl finally noticed the case and tugged at her mother's sleeve. She looked scared. Had she seen the news from earlier in the week?

Now let's just hope in the wake of the two recent I.R.A. attacks that mommy dearest does something about it... Davy was on the edge of his seat, watching, urging the inevitable to happen. This was what he was here for. This was what he *lived* for.

The mother dutifully obeyed his mental wishes and headed for the nearest security desk to report the unattended briefcase.

Words were exchanged that Davy couldn't quite hear, but from the mother's annoyed reaction, he guessed the woman behind the counter wasn't taking the case to be any threat to the airport.

In fact, as he continued to watch, the young woman stepped from behind her counter, collected the case and set it down in an area he assumed was earmarked for lost

property. If he could have broken into uncontrolled laughter without being seen or heard, Davy would have.

How could the Brits call this security? And after the Queen had been here just this week too?

Of course, the case was just a tester, a decoy of sorts, and the real fun was yet to come.

Ryan waited patiently, knowing it wouldn't be long.

Within minutes, the arrival and departure boards began to change. One by one, every flight was re-listed as "delayed." The Irishman snickered. The planes were delayed alright, but not by the weather, or anything else that could be deemed natural.

This was the beginning of his plan and he couldn't wait to see the pandemonium it caused. He almost ached to get up from his seat and mingle with the now panicking crowds as people gathered below the boards, unsure what was happening, but guessing the worst.

Seconds later, armed police with Heckler and Koch weapons slung over their shoulders ran into the terminal. They wore body armor, and not the usual standard British police uniform, either. These were specially trained weapons officers.

The lead cop was speaking on a radio clipped to his shoulder, and he repeated the word "landslide" over and over to some unseen cohort. It was obviously a code word, and Davy couldn't resist snickering yet again.

The armed police blocked off the exits, and one began speaking to the panicking public, telling them that no one was allowed to leave. The I.R.A. was apparently in the process of another mortar attack on Heathrow.

To their credit, the crowds didn't panic, although Davy relished the sheer terror on their faces. He rubbed his hands together and sat back on his seat like a man who had just enjoyed a hearty meal. *I wonder how Patrick is doing?* He mused, thinking of his younger, half-brother busy in the airport perimeter with his homemade launcher.

In answer to his question, one of the armed police began nervous radio chatter with someone outside. Apparently several mortar bombs had landed in the car park, but hadn't gone off - as a precaution, the terminal was to be completely evacuated via the tube.

Ah now, if only I'd thought to put a bomb down there too...

Davy continued to watch as people followed the police like sheep down to the underground. The crowd nervously chatted, but didn't stampede, but they were shocked, scared, and afraid of their futures – and that after all was what he'd been after.

No one had died here today for him to cause mass disruption and advertising for his cause. Next time, maybe the British public and their pathetic government's attempt at security, wouldn't be so lucky...

Royal Academy of Archaeological Science
London
Two Months Later

MacGyver sat with his eyes glued to the man on stage as he boomed out his lecture to a bunch of school kids. Prof. Atticus could be the most annoying man on the planet at times, but he was also a friend and a genius in his field.

Next to Mac, Kelly Carson appeared to be equally in awe of the man tutoring the children. But then, archaeology ran in her family. She broke her gaze from the stage for a second to glance at MacGyver, but he didn't notice the look of affection. As the professor continued his diatribe, Mac was busy thinking back over the adventure they'd just shared.

Returning to war-torn Bosnia after the escapade with Paul Watkins had been madness, but return he had, with Atticus in tow, searching for a historic ark. As if that hadn't been enough, Atticus had then dragged Mac and Kelly on a rampage around the innards of an active volcano at the ruins of Thera.

The whole quest had been sheer mayhem from start to finish, but then, that was what life was like around Atticus.

The professor's speech rambled on, Atticus blissfully unaware of MacGyver's thoughts.

"Thousands of years ago, before time itself was measured as we know it...there was... Atlantis!" Atticus was so enthusiastic; it looked like he would burst. His eyes flashed with excitement as he began asking the crowd of kids several questions, which they seemed to enjoy answering.

The professor beamed at their intelligence. "You're all my brightest students!" He paused, looked at MacGyver and winked. This was something he was fond of telling Mac, not once, but usually once every other sentence.

Mac couldn't resist a small smile back. His trip to the U.K. hadn't been so bad after all, and now the venture was over, maybe he could find some time to relax. He turned to face Kelly, intent on asking her to dinner when someone tapped him on the shoulder.

MacGyver whirled back to find a woman he recognized as part of the academy staff peering down at him over her wide-rimmed glasses. "Excuse me, Mr. MacGyver? There's a telephone call for you over at the information desk."

Mac had to take a moment to think. Who could want him here in England? His mind went into overdrive as he excused himself from Kelly and hurried over to the phone.

Could there be something wrong at Phoenix? His stomach did a back flip. He never had discovered what Roger Mariotte had been up to on the CCTV footage in Alameda...

Mac picked up the phone with a sudden sense of dread, and then relaxed again when he heard Sam's voice the other end. "Dad, how's the trip going?"

"It's been...*interesting*," Mac grimaced as he thought about some of the stuff he *wouldn't* be telling Sam. No need to worry the kid with things that had already happened, like being locked up by Serbs or trapped in a fiery volcano vault that was crumbling.

"Maybe I don't want to know," Sam laughed. "Anyway, I kinda have a surprise of my own for you..."

MacGyver sucked down a breath. "Please tell me you're not taking that job covering a war zone?" It had been a topic of conversation before Mac had left L.A. and one that he hoped Sam had changed his mind about. They'd had words over it, and eventually Mac had been forced to give in, given his own dangerous profession.

Sam appeared to find the question amusing and laughed again before putting Mac out of his misery. "No, but it *is* about a job. The Channel Tunnel was just officially opened recently by the Queen and the French President, hear anything about it over there?"

MacGyver shook his head to no one in particular. "No, but then Atticus kinda kept me outta the loop..."

"Well, the tunnel won't take paying passengers for awhile yet, but the press have been invited on a journey through to promote it, and my editor has offered me the job!" Sam sounded genuinely excited, while Mac let out a sigh of relief. A train trip sounded much safer than a South American jungle full of rebels.

"That's great! When do you arrive?"

"Ah well, that's kinda why I rang," Sam admitted. "I'm at Heathrow's terminal four right now, and wondered if I could hitch a ride? The press trip is in two days so I traveled in kinda a hurry. The good news is I got you a press pass too, though, so you can travel on the Euro Tunnel with me, and we can spend some time together."

It was Mac's turn to chuckle. Any time spent with Sam was good time. "That sounds good...but I think you're forgetting I don't exactly have the Jeep here with me?"

The line went quiet for a second, and then Sam was back sounding as cheery as ever. "No worries, I'll take a cab back to your hotel. I've already arranged a room there." Before MacGyver could ask how he knew which hotel, Sam was gone.

Great...let's just hope this isn't a brief assignment before he decides to still go off on that other job... Mac hung up wondering just how much Sam was like he was at the same age, and the answer wasn't a consoling one.

Waterloo International Station
Two Days Later

Mac and Sam waited patiently on the platform while their train – Eurostar 373, was prepared and security did one last sweep of the carriages. Around them, throngs of other reporters and photographers did much the same. It was a big event, after all and the world was watching.

So far, MacGyver had spotted at least two people here that he actually knew from past encounters. Angela Markham from the *New York Times* was as cocky as ever, flashing her blue eyes and blonde hair whenever possible when she thought it might get her a scoop. Then there was Jurgen Bergmann, from *Die Welt* – their paths had crossed the night the Berlin Wall had finally fallen and Mac had been using it as cover to get some very important microfilm into the right hands.

While Markham could be called a possible liability, Bergmann was a good man to have around, and Mac fully intended having a chat with him once they were on board. It had been too long since they'd spoken.

Sam watched his dad taking in the scene and the people. "I can't believe you know more people here than I do!" He slung his camera around on its shoulder strap and took several shots of the train, and the other gathering journalists. "Is there anybody you *don't* know?"

"I'm betting he doesn't know me?" A small gent in a plaid suit that looked straight out of the fifties offered up his hand. He'd been standing next to them for the past ten minutes, but until now hadn't said a word. His accent was tinged with something, but Mac couldn't quite place it. "My name's David McDonald. I'm here from *The Scotsman*," the man explained helpfully. "This is my first big story, so I doubt we've met?" He smiled affably.

Mac took the proffered hand and shook it, but something felt off. He was a good judge of people, and this McDonald character was putting on an act, of that he was sure. Why was another matter, and one Mac didn't really care to ponder. He was here to spend time with Sam after all, not make friends. "I've definitely not had the pleasure," he answered politely.

McDonald nodded and was about to say more when a woman in a dark blue suit began ushering people onboard. The movement caught the Scot's eye, and he instantly jogged away without even a goodbye.

"Well he sure was a strange one," Sam pondered as he headed for the train. "He's not exactly a stereotypical reporter is he? Are all Scots like him?"

MacGyver moved into place at the back of the queue, warily watching McDonald push his way onto the Eurostar. It had finally hit him why the man seemed "off," and it wasn't just his attitude or his strange behavior. His accent was phony, of that Mac

was sure, and yet there *was* a Gaelic sounding twang to it. “I wouldn’t know,” Mac eventually answered. “Because I don’t think he *is* Scottish...”

Sam scowled, but as it was their time to climb onto the train he didn’t push it further.

* * * *

Inside the carriage they had been allocated was a light beige color with each seat having a large leatherette headrest and a fold down silver table between them. Sam took the seat near the window and took a look around.

“Your friend Jurgen is in our carriage, and the crazy blonde from New York.” Sam nodded to the rear of the compartment where the two were sitting side by side.

Mac grimaced. He’d hoped for Jurgen, but not Markham. Worse still, McDonald appeared to be on their carriage as well. The “fake” Scot was warily glancing around at each of his colleagues, his beady eyes scanning the interior of the carriage like he was in the market to purchase it. Eventually, he settled down to read an article about Gerard Carter, a multi-million dollar stock embezzler who was being extradited back to the U.S. It seemed a strange subject for a Brit to be interested in, but then again, if he was really a reporter, anything that big was news.

“You don’t like him, do you?” Sam appeared to observe.

“Let’s just say I don’t trust him,” Mac confirmed, fidgeting in his seat. “I get a bad vibe every time I see the guy, and that doesn’t happen very often.”

Sam nodded. “Tell me about it, you usually see *some* good in everyone. You’re a regular glass half full kinda person. This guy must be seriously rattling your cage...” He discretely lifted his Canon and took a crafty shot of McDonald.

The Scot was up on his feet again having discarded his paper, and was now prowling the center of the carriage. When he spotted MacGyver watching him, he shrugged. “I get travel sick,” he hastily explained, and then vanished into the next compartment.

MacGyver watched him go, and was only distracted when the opaline overhead lighting kicked in, signaling the train was about to start moving. There was a brief jolt and then the outside world began to move and eventually whiz by in flashes of blurred kaleidoscope imagery.

At the bottom of their carriage the same woman from earlier appeared and began to give them a brief overview of the 373 and the tunnel they’d be traveling through. It was all very official and very grand, but Mac couldn’t focus on a word of it.

Sam appeared to notice. “Forget about him,” he suggested as the woman talked. “We only have just over half an hour and we’ll be in Paris! Then you can finally show me some of the sights over there.”

Mac shifted in his seat, but relaxed just a touch. He really needed to get out of the habit of being on alert 24/7. This was his downtime, after all. He folded his arms and

settled into listening to the rest of the Eurostar history from its inception to huge budget overrun.

By the time they reached the actual tunnel, Mac was almost enjoying himself. Right up until the view from the window turned dark.

He didn't know why, but being buried under the sea by tones of concrete suddenly brought back the feeling that things were out of whack. Maybe it was down to the time he'd been trapped on a mini sub searching for a mystery German U-boat, but no, there was more to it than that.

Mac's senses were tingling, and he couldn't shake the feeling that it was all down to meeting David McDonald. He didn't say anything to Sam, but began to scan the carriage for the Scot. He still hadn't returned.

"How far are we into the crossing?" MacGyver stood up as he asked Sam the question.

Sam shrugged. "Ugh, about halfway, I think. Why, you're not getting claustrophobic as well as Acrophobic are you?" He half-joked.

Mac didn't even hear Sam. Beneath his feet he'd noticed a distinct change in the thrum of the train. It was slowing – in the middle of the channel tunnel – and no way was that supposed to happen.

The woman in blue had noticed too. She frowned and stopped her tour speech.

Mac took advantage of the pause. "Excuse me, ma'am, are we scheduled to make a stop? Maybe a little show for the news hounds among us?"

The woman's eyes glistened with something, but it wasn't amusement, it was fear. In that moment, MacGyver felt the same thing. Sam wasn't safe here, no one was.

"No...no," she stammered. "We're not even supposed to slow down..." As she finished her sentence, Eurostar 373 jolted, its whole frame shuddering on the track so violently that the overhead lights dimmed, flickered, and then vanished completely.

Somewhere ahead, MacGyver felt an eruption – no *an explosion*. He'd know the sensation anywhere, even in the darkness. Within seconds, the carriage was lifted from its tracks and tossed against the inner wall of the tunnel.

Items seemed to spin in the air as if they were weightless, including some of the passengers, but no one bore witness to it because there was no light.

Mac sensed someone close to him crumple into the wall of the carriage with a grunt, and there was a muted female scream from somewhere up front. Was that Markham he'd heard yelping in pain?

And then it was over. 373, or what was left of it, came to a rest on its side in a dented mass of smoldering metal. The sounds of groans and someone crying filled MacGyver's ears, but for a second he was too stunned to react.

Eventually, he blinked, forcing his eyes to try and adjust to the gloom. Somewhere in this mess, Sam could lie hurt, or worse. And even if Sam was okay, there were obviously others that needed his help.

Mac mentally checked himself over and decided that apart from hurt pride at letting this happen, he was in one piece. He tried to sit up, found a briefcase and several other items from the overhead lockers on his chest, and quickly brushed them off.

“Sam!” Mac heard his own voice croak out, and he tried again. “SAM!”

There was no reply.

The train’s emergency lighting should have kicked in, but it hadn’t. And for once, Mac didn’t have a lighter or a match in his pocket. He tried to recall if there were any emergency flashlights when he’d boarded, and where they might be. There had been something near the rear exit in a case, but was it a light?

Mac let his hands feel out the side of the compartment, but in the dark it was disorientating, and he wasn’t sure if he was going to the back or the front of the carriage. He sighed, and was just about to give in, when something illuminated in front of him.

It was David McDonald, and he already had a flashlight in his right hand.

And it didn’t look like it was Eurostar issued. *Why would he bring a flashlight unless...*

McDonald paused when he saw MacGyver in the beam, as if evaluating what to do next. It was brief awkward moment, and then the Scot, or whatever he really was hurried over and offered Mac a hand up.

“I think we hit something in the tunnel,” McDonald suggested with a quirk of his eyebrow.

“That felt like an explosion to me.” MacGyver watched McDonald for a reaction, but there was none save another quirk of his brow.

“Forgive me, Sir, but you can tell the difference? What are you MI5?” The Scot shrugged off his own suggestion with a nervous laugh. “Then again, not with that accent.” He played the flashlight around the carriage, stopping here and there to pick out people trying to pull themselves free from hand luggage and spilled drinks.

“Over here!” Mac felt guilty, but he couldn’t fight the parental urge to look for Sam before anything else.

McDonald complied, redirecting his light onto where Sam had been sitting. The seat was empty, but after a little tweaking the shaft of light danced off something shiny, and Mac realized it was the lens of Sam’s camera.

Sam was sitting in the central walkway rubbing at his head, his SLR still slung around his neck. As the flashlight hit him, he winced, his eyes sensitive to the glare after being in the darkness.

“Sheesh are you trying to blind me,” he grumbled, then hastily added, “Dad? You okay?”

MacGyver moved over and pulled Sam to his feet, looking him over in the sparse illumination McDonald provided. Sam appeared to be disheveled but in one piece.

Mac stopped fussing and opened his mouth in dread as their eyes met – not because there was anything wrong with his son, but because of what he could see out the small Eurostar window over Sam’s shoulder.

It might be pitch black in the tunnel, but right now outside the train was lit up like the Fourth of July, and not in a pleasant way. Flames licked up the side of the carriage, unhindered because any fire suppression systems seemed to be out of order. The fire burned bright, like there was some kind of accelerant involved.

And worse still, the inferno appeared to have engulfed the whole of the front of the train, including their carriage.

Part Two

Sam saw his dad’s face and whirled around. “Oh boy...”

“The Eurostar systems can withstand the fire and heat for over thirty minutes. We’re quite safe...” It was the woman from before, and she apparently had been trained well on the tunnel’s safety measures. “I’m Tara by the way.”

Mac didn’t take his eyes from the blaze. “And what happens after the thirty minutes?” He dared to ask with a tick of his right brow.

Tara sucked down a breath. “Well, if the train is still moving it’s diverted to a special emergency platform for the fire to be put out. If it’s stuck in the tunnel, special fire safety STTS vehicles can reach it in around ten minutes via the service tunnel.”

MacGyver still didn’t like it. “Sounds good, but theory put into practice almost never works the way it’s supposed to. We should see if we can get out one of the rear carriages just in case.”

Sam apparently agreed. “I’ll go back there and see if everyone is okay, and if there’s an exit we can still use.”

“I’ll go with him,” McDonald chimed in. “People might be hurt...”

Mac nodded, but wasn’t convinced of the Scot’s motives. He wanted off the train, and MacGyver doubted very much whether anyone else’s well being counted. The real

question, though, was whether McDonald was part of what had happened. He'd acted suspiciously, but was this really an act of terrorism?

“Right, I'll check on everyone in here and slowly start to move everyone back towards the rear of the train, just in case.” MacGyver looked around, finally spotted an emergency flashlight near the compartment door and grabbed it.

He watched Sam and McDonald go, and then turned back to play his own light over the front of the carriage.

Most of the passengers were up and sitting on the edge of seats that were now at a forty-five degree angle. Some were even scribbling notes for a future scoop on the event. Mac shook his head, reporters never ceased to amaze him.

Further forward the carriage door that led into the engineer/driver's compartment had buckled slightly and several of the seats there were mangled. MacGyver remembered Angela Markham sitting in one earlier, and he hadn't seen her since the train had derailed.

If Angela had been conscious, all hell would have broken loose by now.

Mac quickly brushed past other reporters until he came to Jurgen. The German was sitting on an upturned table rubbing at his temple where it trickled blood. In the dim light from the single flashlight, it took a moment for him to recognize his old friend. “MacGyver? I might have known there would be mayhem with you onboard,” he bemoaned in almost perfect English.

Mac nodded, and then bobbed his head towards the damaged seats. “Have you seen Angela?”

Jurgen blinked. “I'd rather not, thanks...” Then he seemed to realize what the implication meant and spun around. “She must still be over there...”

Both men dived forwards until they reached the twisted metal of the seats. Mac weaved his light underneath the mess, and was instantly greeted with a groan as the beam picked out two bleary blue eyes.

“I...I think I'm trapped under here,” Markham sputtered. “Please help...”

The plea was so pitiful it shook MacGyver. Angela was a loud mouth who would normally be screaming for some “idiots to get her free.” For Markham to be begging like that, she had to be terrified, and in real trouble. Any memory of her scathing remarks vanished as he kneeled to see how badly she was pinned.

The damaged seat had Markham's right leg trapped against the carriage wall, and there was blood – lots of it. That, accompanied by the growing fire outside meant they had to work fast.

MacGyver squinted in the dull light, evaluating the state of the seats, the way they'd been warped, and how they'd originally been fitted into the floor. It looked like large

bolts held the main sections in place for safety, but the top parts were secured by large screws that seemed to go into some kind of captive nut the other side. It was this part that had been mangled, and this part that was holding Markham down.

Mac considered getting some of the men together and simply trying to yank the part off the reporter, but with all the sharp edges there was a good chance she'd be hurt further. He passed his flashlight to Jurgen and pointed. "Can you give me all the light you can right here?"

The German nodded and stepped carefully into place, trying not to obscure any of the precious beam with his shadow.

MacGyver hunkered down, flicked out his penknife and secured the largest screwdriver blade it held. It probably wasn't going to be big enough, but he tried anyway. The blade was a surprisingly good fit, but that was a moot point. The thing spun in his hand as the captive nut the other side moved instead of holding.

Mac grimaced and let his fingers probe the back of the metal segment. The captive was sharp to his fingers and had definitely been damaged along with the bar it held. He pulled back and realized his hand was wet with Markham's blood.

If he'd had tools, he could have gotten a pair of grips on the spinning clip, but he was on a burning train in the middle of the Euro Tunnel with very little light, and even less in the way of any mechanical gear.

Markham took MacGyver's silence as a bad sign. "I'm trapped, aren't I?" She seemed to accept it a little too easily. Maybe she was already going into shock.

"A little," Mac admitted. "But nothing we can't fix." He smiled reassuringly and then looked up when his light was blocked by a newcomer. It was Tara, and she looked a little less confident than before.

"I think we need to hurry," the Euro Tunnel worker whispered. "The fire is spreading fast. Everyone else is moving to the last compartment until we hear back from your son and the other man."

MacGyver didn't seem to hear her. Instead, he stared at the scarf she wore. It reminded him of the ones the British Airways flight attendants had worn on his way over, but that wasn't the really interesting or cool fact about it. No, the cool fact was that Tara's scarf was probably about to become the tool that saved a life.

"S'cuse me, but can I just borrow this please?" Without really waiting, Mac gently tugged the scarf from around Tara's neck and stuffed it behind the twisted metal until it was behind the spinning clip.

He pressed it hard onto the metal fastener, and then used the driver attachment of his knife again on the other end. The screw and clip both started to spin, and the material of the scarf spun with it until it grew tight around the clip, effectively holding the thing as good as any mechanic's tool.

Once the captive nut was held fast, the screw slowly retreated from its place in the metal, and Mac was able to pull the bar for the upper seat away from Markham's leg. She yelped, then seemed to pass out.

In any other situation, Mac knew well enough not to move someone, but today, in the tunnel, he had no choice. Gently grabbing Angela's free hands, he tugged her from under the mass of seats and up into his arms.

MacGyver nodded to Tara and Jurgen, they were the only ones left this far forward now. "C'mon, we need to get back with the others and fast..."

Neither argued with him.

* * * *

The last compartment on the 373 was packed full of staff, reporters, photographers and a few security people – and most of them were in the early stages of panic.

MacGyver gestured for them to clear a space and carefully placed Markham onto the floor. Someone dressed as a guard came forwards with a first aid kit, and once Mac was sure they knew what they were doing, he left them to help the reporter. He pushed through the throng of people until he found the rear exit, along with Sam and McDonald. The latter seemed agitated, and not just because of their situation.

Mac couldn't quite describe it, but the Scot's actions were like those of a man who was suddenly not getting his own way.

The fact that no one had left the train already suggested that they had a problem, so MacGyver focused on that first. He could always deal with McDonald later, should the need arise. *If we actually make it*, his mind warned.

"Dad, the fire's reached the rear of the train already. I think maybe we could jump for it, it's only on the surface, burning the paint right now, but..."

"But some of the people on here don't have such long legs to carry them away from the flames..." Mac looked back, thinking of the woman aboard who wouldn't have as far reaching a leap, or the older generation who just wouldn't have the energy to make a dive far enough to get them clear. Not to mention Angela Markham, who was in no condition to jump, period.

Mac looked back at the upturned seats – the material they were made of, and indeed covered with would be flame retardant. He tugged out his knife and tossed it to Sam who caught it like it was thrown at him every day.

"Strip the material from the seats, soak it in water and then wrap it around everyone who might not be able to jump far enough away from the flames. It's not ideal, but it's better than nothing. I'll start to get the evacuation of the rest under way."

Sam nodded and didn't waste time asking questions. Slinging his camera back over his shoulder out of the way he raced through the crowd and began cutting like lives depended on it – because they did.

MacGyver turned to everyone else and noted they'd not only grown silent, but they were watching him as if they expected him to take charge. Mac swallowed and held up a hand. "Okay, folks, the flames aren't that bad yet, so we're going to open the door and take a running jump away from the rear of the train. As soon as you land, make sure you roll as much as you can to put out any fire."

Some of the woman turned white, along with a couple of the men.

Mac tried to look reassuringly at everyone, but they were terrified, and why shouldn't they be? He glanced at McDonald again, unable to extinguish the idea that the man had played a part in the events transpiring any more than he could extinguish the flames outside.

If he started this mess, he can help finish it...

"McDonald, you go first and help people as they land. Make sure they roll if they've picked up any sparks." MacGyver watched the man for a reaction, and there was a slight pause before he bobbed his head in agreement.

McDonald would be trouble later, Mac was sure; just how much trouble remained to be seen.

Jurgen bit his bottom lip and stepped closer to Mac. "Once you open that fire door, we'll have very little time in here..."

Mac winced. He already knew that. Everyone had to be herded out like cattle, no strays bringing up the rear, no hesitating at the door. And then the ones Sam was preparing had to take their chances. He peered back to see Sam had already begun turning people into living mummies. That was good. "I know," he finally conceded. "So let's make this fast. You stand on the right, I'll go on the left and we'll usher them through like a squad of paratroopers. Got it?"

Jurgen nodded, his ancestry finally getting the better of him. "Ja..."

MacGyver took hold of the fire door bar and pushed until it gave way to his weight. Immediately, he could feel the heat from the tunnel and the flames now licking at the door frame, eager to get inside.

McDonald smirked strangely, and then jumped, landing safely several yards clear of the train and the fire. He brushed himself off and gestured for more to make the dive.

Mac pointed to the most able-bodied he could find. "You, you and you, let's go!"

The staff members he'd picked had at least been given some emergency training, and MacGyver hoped they'd go out quickly and without wavering to give everyone else confidence.

His gamble worked.

The three men jumped clear of the fire and rolled effortlessly to join McDonald.

“C’mon!” Jurgen waved his hand at the next group. “No sitting on the fence! Move it!”

More and more jumped clear until there was just Sam’s group and Markham left. There were three women, two older reporters and one guard that looked like he’d been on the Orient Express’s first journey. All of them were swathed in the fire retardant material.

“Just remember,” Mac instructed them. “Take as long a run down the carriage as you can and don’t slow as you reach the open door.” He could see one of the woman grimacing as she seemed to ignore his words in favor of being mesmerized by the blaze now teasing its way into the cabin. *Right, she’s first...*

Mac gently took the lady photographer’s hand and squeezed it. “Hey, I’m scared of heights, so I try not to look down. Just run at the door and don’t focus on anything but reaching the others you see out there, okay?”

The brunette nodded, gulped, and surprised MacGyver with a sudden full-frontal at the smoke-filled opening. She attacked the jump like she was fighting a Sumo wrestler, and it worked. Her arms flayed around, her legs buckled as she landed, but somehow, the terrified reporter was clear.

A guard helped her up, and she shook a fist in the air with relief and triumph.

MacGyver couldn’t help but smile – there was one person he’d definitely underestimated. The others followed her attempt without question, all making it clear of the train into the rising heat beyond.

It was down to Jurgen, Sam, Markham and Mac.

“You two now...”

Sam looked at his dad and his eye flashed with what looked like annoyance for a second. “Why do you always have to be last?”

Mac didn’t waste time with his words. “A parent shouldn’t outlive his kid, and I don’t intend to today. Carrying Markham is going to weigh me down. I won’t get as far from the train when I jump. It’s simple physics.”

“So, *I’ll* do it. No father and son argument required...” Jurgen surprised them both with his bold statement.

Mac gaped, and Sam blinked, and in that instant the little German had grabbed the unconscious Markham and had begun his “take off” run.

The flight from the rear of the train was short lived. Jurgen's legs weren't long enough to carry him the distance and he dropped perilously close to the flames engulfing the 373's exterior.

A stray spark danced from the nearby cab and found its way to the German's trousers. Unlike the others, he hadn't used any of the train's retardant material, and his pants instantly caught fire.

To his credit, Jurgen didn't panic. He scrambled to his feet, Markham held as best he could at arms length away from danger until one of the others was able to take her from him.

Finally, after deadly seconds, Jurgen began to roll over and over on the ground until the flames were out.

MacGyver grimaced. It should have been him taking Markham; he had the longer stride, the better chance...

Sam slapped his dad on the shoulder, breaking him from his reverie. "Dad, we need to get out of here. Like *NOW!*"

The pair moved back together and took a run at the door side by side. At the last moment, Mac dared to steal a glance sideways, making sure Sam was still with him.

Sam smiled back, and then it was over. They were landing and rolling just as the others had done.

When MacGyver was able to stand, his gaze searched out McDonald and their eyes locked. The Scot still didn't look happy – and while none of the people from the train were exactly jumping for joy, there was something eerie about McDonald. *Creepy is the word you're looking for*, Mac's mind offered helpfully.

But MacGyver didn't do, creepy. He stepped closer to McDonald, intent on confronting him, but one of the security staff and Tara moved between the pair, stopping any argument, at least for now.

"There's something wrong," the security officer spoke rapidly, gulping in the thick air around them. "The system should be taking away the smoke and keeping the air clean for us, and its not." He wafted his arm around for effect.

Mac hadn't really noticed before, but what the man was saying was true. The fire burned bright, and it had already gotten inside the open train. Sparks flew from the overhead power that fed the 373, and it wouldn't be long before that exploded with the heat too.

The heat – inside the tunnel was getting hot, not just warm. Mac licked his lips and realized he'd soon need to take his shirt off just to bear it. Some of the others in the group already had. How long could the concrete lining of the tunnel last at these temperatures? How long could *they* last?

MacGyver looked to the front of the Eurostar where the main explosion and impact had been. The cab had been turned into a mass of torn and ragged sheet metal and wiring. The driver hadn't stood a chance.

But that wasn't all. Part of the actual tunnel wall and ceiling had been damaged. How deep were they here? Would it stand the pressure now its structural integrity had been compromised?

Tara shook MacGyver's sleeve, breaking him from his reverie. "What he's trying to say is that the ventilation system is designed to move smoke in one direction down here, making sure we've clean air to breathe while we evacuate, but it's not working. None of the emergency systems in this section seem to be."

"What about exits?" Mac was worried, and his tone showed it, even though he tried to hide his emotion.

Tara pointed to the inner wall. "There are exits into the service tunnel every three hundred and seventy five meters, and any smoke that gets in there should be vented elsewhere..."

"Should be?" Sam countered as he joined them.

Tara shrugged. "All we can do is try? It's our only option right now. And don't forget the emergency services can reach us within about ten minutes via that shaft, so by the time we get there, the cavalry should be arriving."

MacGyver nodded, and then coughed as the smoke whirling around them began to irritate his lungs. Not only that, it was starting to hamper his vision too. His eyes were smarting and watery, but he ignored it. "Tara's right. Let's get everyone to move back down the tunnel, away from the flames and towards the first fire door. Sam, you take point, I'll bring up the rear and make sure no one gets left behind."

Sam nodded and moved towards the main group, explaining the plan and organizing who would carry Jurgen with his burns, and Markham, who now seemed delirious.

Soon the assembly was moving on the tunnel sidewalk at a half decent pace. No one talked; they simply kept their heads down and hurried.

MacGyver watched them from his position at the back. He'd been in many dangerous situations before, but this felt different. Maybe now would be a good time to have words with McDonald.

Mac lengthened his stride, passing two security staff until he was level with the Scot. Any attempt to talk to him, was swiftly brought to a halt however, when the tunnel shaft suddenly shook violently until the few emergency lights that were working began to flicker.

Pipes and conduits around them groaned and some burst, spewing out steam and compressed air.

The ground beneath them shuddered like there had been some bizarre seismic event, and then there was a boom that could have been an aircraft hitting the speed of sound, had they been topside.

MacGyver grabbed at the tunnel wall to steady himself and realized it felt hot, even here. The heat from the original explosion and fire was spreading.

Someone ahead screamed, and Mac could hear Sam trying to calm everyone.

“The tunnel’s collapsing! We’ll all be drowned or crushed!” One of the reporters was panicking, and if the situation wasn’t calmed, it would only spread.

Mac pushed past the rest of the crowd to stand next to Sam and held up a hand. “That wasn’t the tunnel lining giving way, it was another explosion. Trust me, I know...”

“And just how is that?” The reporter wasn’t giving in. “You some kind of terrorist? Maybe you’re behind this? I know you sure ain’t no journalist.”

“He’s ex-U.S. government and if you want to live through this you should listen to him...” It was Jurgen. He was obviously in pain from the injuries to his legs, and he grimaced as he spoke, but he was very sincere as he addressed the crowd.

Everyone stopped mumbling and just waited, and MacGyver realized they were actually waiting for him to take charge now. He shot a glance to MacDonald, who had gone from confident when they’d first met, to jittery, bordering scared. He didn’t strike Mac as someone who usually showed those emotions.

What’s the matter, has his plan backfired?

“Dad, I think that’s the door over there that we’re looking for.” Sam was gesturing into the shadows with a flashlight he’d procured.

Hiding in the gloom was a recess that led to a huge yellow door that was probably the cross-tunnel hatch they needed to escape.

MacGyver carefully made his way over to it and looked at the warning signs that were spattered all over it in both English and French. The hatch was fire rated and pressure resistant, and worked with hydraulics that meant anyone getting in its way when it swung open was likely to get spattered. There was a black and yellow hatched area in front of it that warned as much.

Down either side, more pipes hissed and moaned, but at least none of them had actually burst or split here. To the left, in front of the hatched area was a yellow wheel that if spun left or right obviously opened or closed the door.

“Okay, everyone, stand back, I’m gonna try and open this thing, and we don’t exactly know what’s the other side.”

“The service tunnel I hope,” Tara said almost sarcastically. “Or my training was all a lie.” She rolled her eyes dramatically and Mac began to tug on the circular handle

with a small smile of his own. Sometimes a little humor in the middle of danger could take away a whole lot of fear.

The door agreed with him, and with a harsh clang began to swing outwards at a painfully slow pace. Eventually, it was open enough for everyone to slide inside, and Mac stopped turning the handle.

Instantly, McDonald was there, suddenly at the front, and with every intention of being the first through into the service area. MacGyver seized his jacket collar and tugged him harshly back.

“Someone needs to check it out first, and I doubt as a reporter you’re qualified.” The remark was meant to be scathing, and Mac didn’t wait for the Scot to give a retort. He moved through the solid hatch with his flashlight into the secondary shaft beyond.

The tunnel was already lit with emergency lighting, and it surprised MacGyver with its size. There was enough room for two STTS vehicles to run side by side.

The bad news, however, was that the area of tunnel they’d entered was as full of smoke as the one they were leaving. Someone had really done a great job of sabotage. By the look on McDonald’s face as he pushed his way on after Mac, maybe even too good a job.

The man was now genuinely scared, and was that anger flashing across his face too.

Mac didn’t waste time asking because they had another huge problem on their hands – the service tunnel was blocked in both directions. The explosion they’d felt only moments earlier was the most probable cause.

And the tragedy of it didn’t even end there. From the French side, the rubble was dripping water, not heavy yet, but how long the shaft would hold was anyone’s guess. And from the British side, the blast had taken out the two emergency STTS vehicles sent to save them.

One was completely buried in the debris, with only the crushed front panel on view. The other was almost on its side with the chassis slightly raised off the ground, leaving a gap that MacGyver could hunker down and peer through. It was far too small to escape, but it did give hope.

Not that there was any hope for the crew of the STTS. The cab of the vehicle had been crushed by a massive slide of concrete. In fact, the dust was still settling, making the acrid smoke even denser.

Behind him, Mac could hear everyone following him through the cross tunnel hatch, even though he hadn’t beckoned them. Sam joined him first, squirming at the sight of the bizarre cave-ins.

“Whoa...someone didn’t want us getting outta here, did they?”

MacGyver agreed, and he'd had enough of playing the game of charades with McDonald too. He yanked McDonald around, pulling him away from the rest of the group. People were panicked enough.

"This wasn't part of your plan was it? What's the matter, your terrorist friends not as good at their job as you thought?" MacGyver was angry, and that didn't happen very often. But then, meeting someone with no soul and conscience didn't either. Most bad guys had some modicum of decency, even Murdoc on the odd occasion, but McDonald was colder than ice.

Finally McDonald gave in and shrugged, and as his arm moved back, it rapidly slid under his jacket to reveal a gun. It was a strange looking oddity that MacGyver knew was home made so it could be slipped through a metal detector in pieces. Something similar to weapons made it prisons.

That didn't make it any less deadly.

"They were supposed to blow the hatch door and keep us in the main tunnel a bit longer. Call it a wee bit of a distraction I wanted. But then, they weren't supposed to mess up the air flow in there, either. Good help his hard to find these days." McDonald's accent changed to a rich Irish lilt, and finally Mac understood why it had sounded wrong, and yet right before.

The crowd finally noticed the weapon and all the chatter from before stopped. They apparently had something new to be afraid of besides the fire.

"Why would a terrorist want to be at the heart of the explosion he planned?" Sam asked, a hint of possible confusion in his voice. "You don't strike me as the suicidal type?"

McDonald laughed. "I didn't plan on dying down here. Hell, I didn't need *anyone* to die to get what I wanted. We were all supposed to be a nice big diversion that captivated the nation, that's all. I like to think of myself like the boy who cried wolf..." He sucked down a breath, coughed and the look of annoyance returned to his face. "We were all supposed to get rescued together and then I'd mingle in with the crowds and be gone. The question is, now that you know who and what I am, what can I do with you?"

McDonald waved the gun in an arc, slowly letting it play over the crowd as if he was toying with them. Eventually, the barrel stopped, its tip pointed straight at MacGyver's chest.

Part Three

The Irishman's finger ticked on the trigger, and for a moment MacGyver's life flashed before his eyes. Then, in the time it took to blink, Tara was standing between them, her face as defiant as one of the Light Brigade as they'd made their fateful charge.

McDonald saw the funny side and snickered, but the gesture earned him a slap straight across the right side of his face.

The distraction was all that was needed. Sam sprang at the terrorist, swinging his camera like a bolas on its strap. The Canon smacked McDonald hard on the back of his hand and he was forced to reflexively drop his weapon.

The rest of the crowd pounced, swarming McDonald like he the object of their best tackle. The Irishman screamed, possibly in fear of actually being trampled.

Tara glanced at Mac and smiled. “Good old British rugby scrum,” she joked and picked up McDonald’s gun. She looked at it distastefully and offered it to MacGyver holding the butt with two fingers.

Mac took it, but as the crowd finally broke, he quickly handed it over to one of the train’s security detail. The man stared at it for a second, and Mac remembered that in this country carrying weapons, even for the police and their counterparts wasn’t standard.

The guard took the gun and pointed it at McDonald as Sam dragged him to his feet, somewhat bruised, but in one piece.

“Can you watch him?” Mac asked the man honestly.

The guard nodded, but the home-made pistol shook in his hand. Nevertheless, his face said he might just be angry enough to use it if pushed. Mac wasn’t sure he liked that amount of anger, but he understood it.

Hopefully they wouldn’t be down here much longer to have to play nursemaid to McDonald – if they could find a way through the blockage.

Sam hunkered down as if reading his dad’s mind and peered through the gap. “There’s a light the other side. Maybe another rescue crew?”

Mac took a look, but it was really too hard to tell whether it was emergency lighting filtering through the gap, or light from more STTS vehicles. He listened, but couldn’t hear any voices.

And the service tunnel their side was filling with more and more smoke.

Sam appeared to share his concern. “Dad, can we do anything to get outta here ourselves? I’m not sure I want to wait for someone to come digging.”

Mac scrutinized the collapse. If they tried to just dig their way out from this side it could make things worse. The STTS fire vehicle was wedged in such a way there was a gap below, and a small gap over the top, but neither big enough to climb through. The rubble that held it there looked very delicate, and as he tentatively touched the surface a small section crumbled away.

It was like the truck was held precariously in position by a piece of metal from one of the “pods” it carried. The metal was protruding from its side down into the base of the collapse. It was possible given a little pressure that the metal section might be able to

be used as a pivot point to tip the truck into the space above, giving them more room to crawl through. But it was far too unstable for anyone to actually climb into the hole to apply pressure to find out.

“It’s pretty unstable...but if we could just move the STTS up slightly, into the gap above it, we might be able to crawl through.” Mac ran a hand through his soot-stained mullet, but didn’t get chance to ponder the thought.

One of the women reporters had been listening and strutted up to him like a posing peacock. “Crawl through *that*? Are you crazy? If I sneezed the wrong way that whole thing is going to come down!”

“We can brace it if we can just lift it a little...” Mac spoke quietly, hoping his words inspired the others, rather than terrifying them as the women’s were likely to.

“Mister, I’d rather sit here and choke than climb under that truck!” The reporter stormed off and sat on the ground in a corner, her face a masque of panic.

“She may have a point,” Tara offered more quietly. “How can we lift that thing, it must weigh several tones!”

Mac smiled wanly. “You just have to think outside the box, or in this case outside the fire truck. It’s too dangerous to get in there and move the thing ourselves, so we find something else to do the hard work for us.” He started to look around as Tara scratched her head as if he’d gone mad.

Sam began to search around them too, although he obviously had no actual clue what his dad was looking for.

Mac did a circuit of the tunnel area they were trapped in with Tara in tow and stopped at a water main. He stared at it, thinking, until Tara spoke.

“These provide water to the main tunnel at 410 feet intervals. Not that it will do us much good in here...”

MacGyver didn’t hear her speak. Something had clicked inside his head and he jogged back to the trapped STTS vehicle. The pod on the upper side was still intact and hadn’t been buried by the collapse. He quickly undid the latches and breathed a sigh of relief when he found it contained various hoses, including one that looked about ten inches – the size of the outlet he’d just found.

Sam joined him, apparently as perplexed as Tara. “I thought we were trying to get through the cave-in, not fight the fire?”

“We are,” Mac agreed. “Water can create pressure, and that’s just what we need against that section of metal to move it!”

Sam blinked. “Err, doesn’t the water need to be *in* something to make that work?”

“Hey, I’m working on it…” MacGyver bit into his bottom lip and then tugged on Sam’s backpack. It had been a present from Pete for Sam to keep his camera equipment safe in. *Safe and dry*. “Is this water tight?” He asked, examining the bag as he spoke.

“Well, yeah, it’s an OB Boatmaster – the best you can get – fully submersible. But Dad, they’re made to keep water out, not hold it in!”

Mac didn’t see the difference. Before Sam could argue he was tugging the pack off his son’s shoulder and emptying out the contents. After another quick appraisal, Mac decided it just might work. The pack looked like it held forty or fifty liters, though, and that might not be enough to give the required lift once filled.

*The bag was to keep his camera safe and dry…*and there were a heck of a lot more photojournalists on this trip who probably thought the same of their expensive equipment.

MacGyver held up a hand, attempting to get people’s attention. “Okay folks, has anyone got a watertight bag or hold all like this one for their cameras?”

There was a quiet mumbling amongst the newspaper gurus and two photographers finally stepped forwards. One had a bag similar to Sam’s the other was a slightly larger “dry bag.”

Mac quickly got them to empty them both and began jury-rigging the hose from the mains outlet to each bag. It wasn’t going to be a perfectly watertight connection given what he had to work with, but as long as the flow of water went in faster than it came out, the effect should be good enough.

“So we basically place the bags in the tunnel under the metal section and inflate them, and the pressure hopefully tips the truck jut slightly enough for us to slide through?” Tara seemed to be finally getting the plan. “There’s just one thing? Someone still has to go in there to place the bags in just the right position, or it won’t work?”

MacGyver shrugged. It was his plan, and if anyone was going to risk it, it should be him.

“I’ll do it!” Sam volunteered instantly.

“No way, this is my idea, it should be me that…” Mac was still talking when Sam dived into the gap under the collapse with the three rigged water-tight bags.

MacGyver’s heart skipped when he realized his mistake. Sam was simply too fast for him. *Jeez I’m getting slow in my old age*. Still, there was no way to get Sam back now. He leaned over, playing the beam of his light into the gap so he could watch Sam’s progress and pray nothing went wrong.

Sam was crawling along on his back with barely enough room to move his limbs. Occasionally, debris would tumble on him like tiny rivulets of doom, but the kid didn’t stop until he reached his goal.

Once he got to the metal segment holding the truck he paused, squeezing his arms further forwards with the bags until he managed to get them in position. He gave a small thumbs up and grinned, and then tried to reverse out.

Going backwards in the confined space was not an easy task, however, and Sam soon realized he was causing more rubble to fall with every push of his legs. He stopped, breathing heavily, probably not from exertion, but from sudden claustrophobia.

MacGyver handed his flashlight to Tara and was in the hole after Sam before anyone could stop him. All he needed to do was grab Sam's sneakers, then someone in the service tunnel did the same to Mac's, and everyone pulled.

The three person "snake" emerged from the collapse with three grunts and a good portion of concrete dust.

"Th... thanks," Sam coughed. "I think you can turn on the water now..."

MacGyver let his heart calm just a second, pondered chewing Sam out, and then thought better of it. Instead he double checked the bags position and then signaled for one of the reporters to turn on the large faucet at the water main.

The hose quickly inflated, zigzagging through the service area and into the cave-in.

Everyone watched, silent, and yet hopeful.

Something in the collapse groaned like metal grinding against metal, and Mac dared to duck down and take a look what was happening. The bags were filling with water, and as they grew, they were pushing on the pod section just as he'd hoped.

The vehicle juddered and began to slowly tip into the space above it, and the movement was so gentle that the concrete and soil around it didn't budge very far.

Tara slid down next to MacGyver and watched in awe as a whole truck was spun by the mere power of water and a few hold alls. "You really did it!" She gaped.

"We really did it," MacGyver corrected. "And we still have to shore it up with something before anyone goes through. Don't forget the truck can swing back just as easily until we fix it in place."

"Okay, but you already know how?" Tara was smiling.

"The explosion the French side tore up some track sections." Mac agreed. "I'm hoping they're the right size to wedge inside the collapse and hold the truck. The water alone won't do it forever..."

Tara nodded and then trotted off back to the others. Mac opened his mouth to ask what she was up to, but he soon realized she was organizing a work party to get the beams and put them in place.

Fifteen minutes later, the STTS vehicle had been secured, and the home-made tunnel was just big enough for them to escape through.

Everyone looked to Mac for what to do next. There was no panicking or arguing who was going out first. They were happy to trust the man who had already saved their lives.

“We should get Jurgen and Markham out first,” Mac suggested. “They need help.”

The group nodded, but then Tara stepped forwards holding up her hand. “You go with them.” she looked directly at MacGyver. “You made all this possible...”

Mac swallowed. It was nice to be appreciated, but he really didn't feel like he'd done anything special. And, if he was honest, he wanted Sam out of the tunnel and out of danger before anything else. It was a selfish notion he knew, but one any parent would agree with.

“I want Sam to go through with them. It doesn't matter when I get out. In fact maybe I should go last...”

The guard watching McDonald spoke up, the gun still slightly shaky in his hand. “Your son goes first, then Markham, the German, then you.”

The rest of the crowd murmured their agreement, surprising MacGyver. No one here was thinking of self-preservation anymore. Not even the female reporter who'd groused at him earlier.

Tara tugged at his arm. “Will you just move? The smoke in here isn't exactly getting any thinner and frankly, it's ruining my make-up,” she teased.

Mac took the hint and nodded to Sam who scrambled into the tunnel head first. He was a quarter of the way through when one of bags finally popped, covering him in a deluge of water momentarily. The other two bags followed within seconds.

Sam paused, but the track pieces they'd put in place held the truck, and he was eventually able to maneuver himself around to help drag Markham through. MacGyver followed with Jurgen.

As they reached the other side the collapse, arms appeared in the opening, grabbing them and pulling them clear.

Mac stumbled to his feet to find a British rescue worker looking him up and down.

“You lot must be mad to try and squeeze through that gap! Why didn't you wait for us to break through?” The man watched as Mac wiped sweat from his brow and shook his head.

“There's too much smoke. We'd suffocate if we waited. Not to mention I don't think digging would have been the best option. It's too unstable the other side.” Mac tried

to explain over the sound of two STTS ambulances arriving; shortly followed by two more vehicles he assumed were to evacuate survivors.

“The suppression systems and air movement system in the secondary should be taking the smoke away from you?” The rescuer was confused and distracted as more people began to be pulled from the small opening in the collapse.

Tara came through next and answered him before Mac could. “Nothing is working in there. This wasn’t an accident. It was planned!”

MacGyver nodded. “And the man behind it will be coming through with one of your security staff anytime soon. He needs watching carefully.”

The rescuer’s radio began to scream and he answered topside, for the moment ignoring Mac’s advice. Another tunnel worker started ushering survivors towards the rear two STTS vehicles, and wouldn’t take no for an answer when Mac tried to argue.

“There’s a terrorist in this group! Someone has to listen to me and make sure the police arrest him!” Mac tried to pull away from the man, but was summarily shoved on the STTS so hard he almost tripped. Sam followed, complaining as much as his father.

Before they could climb back off to see what was happening with McDonald, the vehicle began to move.

Tara shook her head and sank into the nearest seat. “Efficient lot, but not exactly good listeners...”

“Will there be someone topside who *will* listen?” Mac rubbed a hand through his hair. “Because from what McDonald was saying, this wasn’t even the main event...”

* * * *

***Eurotunnel Emergency Management Center
Folkestone
Kent***

It took twenty minutes before they saw daylight again, and MacGyver counted every one of them. In his mind he couldn’t help but play over and over McDonald’s words.

We were all supposed to be a nice big diversion that captivated the nation, that’s all. I like to think of myself like the boy who cried wolf...

What exactly had the Irishman meant? Mac was convinced something bigger than the tunnel explosion had been planned, but what and when? If the Eurostar event was a diversion, the main event had to be soon.

The STTS vehicle finally came to rest at a siding and people were quickly ushered off and given blankets and warm mugs of tea. Throngs of helpers in yellow or orange vests were taking names, information, and giving out instructions where to go next.

Surrounding the platform was a circle of armed police officers with snub machine guns. It was these men that drew Mac and Sam's attention.

MacGyver headed for a cop he noted was a sergeant and hoped the man would listen. "Excuse me, officer? I have some information about what happened on the train. It's urgent. Is there anyone here from Scotland Yard yet?"

The cop's small moustache quivered before he answered as if he was thinking. "I'm sorry, sir, you'll have to wait on the platform until my superior arrives."

Sam apparently couldn't believe his ears. He waved back towards the tunnel. "There was an I.R.A. man down there, and one of your rescue vehicles is about to bring him here. You *have* to arrest him!"

The sergeant's hand flexed on the Heckler and Koch he carried, as if he was suppressing his irritation. "Young man, I think I'm the one wearing the uniform here. Now if you'll just step back with the others before things have to get unpleasant..."

MacGyver took Sam's arm and led him back into the crowds. The cop was following an explicit instruction, that was obvious, and any hope of trying to talk to him until Scotland Yard or indeed MI5 arrived on the scene was going to be pointless.

"Dad, why won't he listen?" Sam dropped down onto a bench and fiddled with his camera, his apparent annoyance filtering out through his hands.

"They have procedure," Mac sighed. "For all they know *we* could be the bad guys. You have to understand their point of view. But in the meantime, McDonald's people could be finishing off what they started..."

Sam looked up expectantly. "So what do we do? We can't just sit here drinking tea!"

MacGyver agreed. First they needed to get away from the armed police, and then they needed to find out just who McDonald really was. His real identity just might lead them to his next objective. "We need to identify McDonald..." he offered up his thoughts. "You got a picture of him in that?" Mac nodded to Sam's camera.

Sam grinned back. "More than one, but I need a dark room to develop them, and it's not like we have access to any mug shots once I have."

Mac already had an idea who might be able to name the Irishman, and maybe even help with the dark room problem. First, they needed access to a phone. He looked around, but there was nothing on the platform that resembled a booth, and no familiar red phone boxes as far as the eye could see.

Just get off the siding; there'll be one on a sidewalk somewhere...

Before Mac could actual figure out a way to escape, the sergeant they'd spoken to earlier jumped into life, talking frantically into the radio clipped to his shoulder. He ushered several of the armed officers over to the edge of the first STTS vehicle and began to brief them.

The cop's words were straight to the point and spoken quietly, but it was obvious there was a big problem. He glanced awkwardly at MacGyver, and Mac realized what was going down probably had something to do with McDonald.

Seconds later the officers jogged off down the track back the way the first STTS vehicle had come – despite the second one being due to arrive.

Tara pushed her way through the people on the platform and nodded towards the police as they vanished over the horizon. “I overheard a little. The second STTS has stopped halfway here. There were reports of gunfire...”

“McDonald's escaped?” Sam looked at his dad expectantly. “Now what do we do?”

Both Tara and MacGyver answered in unison. “We stop him!”

Mac turned to Tara. “Can you keep the cops that are still here busy while me and Sam make a run for it? I have a friend that might be able to help stop McDonald at whatever he's up to, but I need to get to a phone.”

Tara smirked. “I do a great girl in distress,” she cooed, then strutted over to the nearest cop.

Within seconds, she was babbling so frenetically at the man that he was forced to call over a colleague. That left a gap in the perimeter for Mac and Sam to escape.

MacGyver edged to the front of the siding and looked around. No one seemed to care what he was doing. He carefully dropped down by the nose of the STTS truck and waited for Sam to follow.

Using the truck for cover, they moved back away from the remaining cops and then made a run for it across the tracks into a large hedge. It was prickly, but Mac ignored the thorns, focusing on the mesh fence beyond.

He glanced back at Sam, took a run at the barrier and was over. Sam joined him moments later, his camera swinging wildly around his neck.

“Now what? You realize we just might have made ourselves fugitives?” Sam's expression said he wasn't sure he liked the idea.

Mac slapped Sam on shoulder. “We find one of those red phone booths they have here, and we call a guy who is already a fugitive...or would be, if anyone knew he was still alive...”

Sam's brow furrowed. “Did you take a bump on the head back in that tunnel?” He half-teased.

* * * *

MacGyver felt like he'd stepped from the phone booth one moment, and was hearing the screeching of tires on asphalt the next. He looked up to see a Jaguar XJS careering around a corner at about three times the local speed limit.

The soft top skidded to a halt leaving a trail of rubber behind it and the driver chuckled heartily at Mac's pained expression.

"Sam, meet a friend of mine. This is Paul Watkins..." Mac nodded towards the still grinning driver. "Paul, this is my son, Sam."

Sam held out a hand, but Watkins merely nodded his greeting and pushed open the front door. "Nice to meet you, Sam. Now get in and let's get moving. It won't take the Tunnel security that long to find out you two are missing, and that's going to give Scotland Yard's boys a very wrong impression."

MacGyver noted Watkins was as abrupt as ever, but what he was saying was true. Ironically, they could easily be suspects. He ushered Sam in the back and then took the front seat next to the ex-S.A.S. man.

Before his body had touched the leather seat, the car lurched forwards and was once again speeding through the narrow city streets.

"So you think this McDonald character is I.R.A.?" Watkins asked, fishtailing around a very British roundabout so fast it earned him several hoots from other driver's horns.

"I'm betting on it," MacGyver confirmed, holding onto the dash to steady himself as they bounced off a curb and into inner London traffic. "If you can get us a dark room, Sam can develop the film in his camera and maybe we can identify him. I was kinda hoping he might be someone you know?"

"Aye, I've been involved with those people a few times," Watkins scowled. "Didn't end pretty..." He swerved to miss a Honda Civic then spun the steering wheel so hard the Jaguar almost slid sideways into an alley.

Watkins hit the brakes hard, stuck the car in park and was out on the pavement in seconds. He looked at his two friends expectantly. "Well don't sit in there all day! The police will be looking for it by now..."

Mac clambered out, followed by Sam, who looked at the car incredulously and then back to Watkins. "You stole it?!" Sam glanced at his dad. "Are you sure you two are friends?"

Watkins found the exchange amusing. "Well you don't think I could actually afford a car like that? Not to mention I wouldn't be seen dead in one. Besides, I like to think of it as borrowing." He winked at Mac and then waved them to follow him.

A few hundred yards from where he'd parked, there was a locked entrance marked "*The Sun* – staff only." Watkins pulled a small pouch from his pocket, pulled out a couple of tools and had the lock open two seconds later.

Sam rolled his eyes. "Great, now we're breaking into a national newspaper. Can this get any worse?"

Watkins face grew grim. "Depending who McDonald really is, it can get a whole lot worse son, trust me."

* * * *

While Sam did his work in the newspaper darkroom, MacGyver filled Watkins in on what had happened in the tunnel. And while Mac had seen his fair share of terrorism over the years, he had to admit that this really was the ex-government man's territory.

Watkins in turn wasn't surprised by what had happened. It had only been a few months since the mortar attacks on Heathrow Airport, and while the situation in Ireland was getting better, there would always be extremists.

Mac glanced over his shoulder, worried as several office workers milled around them, seemingly unsuspecting that they were hanging around near the darkroom. "How do you get away with this?" He eventually couldn't resist asking.

Watkins smirked and pulled out an I.D. badge that said records department. "Well, it helps that I work here part time. Even ex-agents need to live somehow, you daft bugger!"

"So you didn't really pick the lock back in the alley?" Mac raised a brow.

"Nah, just mucking about seeing as your kid was along for the ride. I did borrow the Jag, but the owner knows." Watkins eyes twinkled. "She's a pretty lass, I can tell you..."

Mac held up a hand and his own eyes couldn't help but sparkle. "I don't think I want to know!"

The door to the darkroom opened, saving MacGyver from any lurid details Watkins might have given otherwise. Sam exited a few moments later with several photographs in his right hand, and his empty camera in the other.

"Here we go." He passed the images to Watkins first. "This is the guy. Just looking at him gives me the creeps now I know what he did back there."

Watkins grabbed the pictures and rifled through them like he was counting a wad of notes, his mirthful features instantly changing to something very serious. "I know him alright," he confirmed. "His name's Ryan Davy, and he's a pretty evil ba.." He cut himself short, wincing apologetically at Mac.

MacGyver got the picture. “Any idea why the Tunnel business would just be a decoy? I mean what could he be after that’s even bigger than that? He could have caused mass destruction and death there, but he used it to cover something else? *What?*”

Watkins bit into his lip. “You said he’d had help down there?”

“Yeah, he wasn’t too pleased that they’d messed up, either.” Mac thought about Davy’s face when he’d realized the service tunnel had been blocked by accident.

“I’m betting part of that help came from his younger brother.” Watkins tossed the pictures down on a nearby desk. “And he lives right here in London. C’mon, let’s go ruffle a few feathers and see what happens.”

Sam looked at his dad. “We’re not going in the stolen car again? I so don’t wanna get arrested my first time in England.”

“Nah,” Watkins answered before Mac could speak. “We’ll take my wheels this time. I think you’ll appreciate them more.”

Sam glanced at MacGyver with an expression that suggested he wasn’t so sure.

But then again, knowing Watkins as he did, Mac wasn’t sure either.

* * * *

True to his word, Watkins had produced a vehicle more to MacGyver’s taste, although with four wheels, it wasn’t exactly Sam’s. The 1954 Land Rover looked like a barn find, complete with torn seats and multi-colored paintwork, but under the hood, was a V8 that had most definitely not been installed from new.

As Watkins bounced the 4x4 around the city streets, it growled like a prowling beast. “What do you think to the old gal? Bit more me, I reckon?”

“Oh it’s very you,” Sam couldn’t resist. “But what about Davy’s brother? If he’s in on this whole thing, I doubt we’re gonna find him at home?”

“Aye, but he’s dating a lass that models here in town – lives with her. I reckon we can find her, and from all accounts, she has a very big mouth.” Watkins pulled the Landy into a tiny space and killed the ignition. He nodded to a building that had obviously once been an old warehouse, but had been converted into waterfront apartments. “She’s on the second floor. Name’s Mandy.” He glanced in the side mirror as he spoke, apparently reflexively checking for any tails.

Mac looked over his shoulder. “Sam, stay here and keep a lookout for Davy or anyone that looks suspicious. We’ll go talk to the girl.”

Sam nodded, and Mac and Watkins climbed out of the ancient truck, warily making their way to the main entrance to the apartments. There was the usual buzzer system in place, but Watkins shook his head when MacGyver reached up to use it.

“I’ll get us in...” Watkins pulled out his lock-picking kit, and this time really used it on the high-Tec security door. He was in faster than if they’d had a key. “Apartment four,” he whispered as they took the stairs two at a time.

Mac nodded and took point, reaching Mandy’s dwelling in just two minutes. He paused at the top of the steps and swallowed. The door to the model’s home was ajar. He signaled to Watkins, who quickly slid a hand under his jacket and retrieved his signature Sig Sauer.

MacGyver winced, but didn’t try to talk Watkins out of the weapon. That would waste precious time they probably didn’t have. Instead, he dodged across the stairwell and positioned himself to the left of the open door. Watkins took the right and they both stopped, taking time to listen before their full-frontal.

The apartment was silent.

Mac nodded to Watkins and then raced at the door, kicking it wide as they dived inside, both rolling to the left and right across the floor and then back up again into crouched defensive positions.

After a second, Watkins lowered his gun.

Mandy was slouched across the couch, her body wet with blood from a vicious wound to her throat.

MacGyver checked for a pulse, but found none. The body was still warm, her eyes staring wildly as if she’d been surprised and shocked by what had happened to her.

The sight turned the troubleshooter cold. Either Davy or his brother had done this to keep their secret. What could be worth it? He looked up to see Watkins pulling back a curtain to reveal an open window that led to a fire escape outside.

Watkins frame stiffened and he suddenly re-entered “attack mode.” The Sauer was back in his grasp, and before Mac could ask him not to, he’d let off two rounds at someone outside.

“Paul! What the...” Mac sped over to the window as Watkins turned.

“It’s Ryan and his brother! There heading for the car park out back!” Watkins jumped through the open window and began sliding down the fire escape. “Get the car and meet me out there!”

MacGyver didn’t hesitate, the Davy’s had to be stopped, and this could be their only chance. He turned tail, scooting back down the apartment block’s stairs three and four at a time, because with Davy on the loose, hundreds of lives might depend on what he did next.

Part Four

MacGyver dived into the Land Rover so fast Sam didn't even have time to blink before he'd got the V8 running and the truck in gear.

"Where's Paul? What the..." Sam didn't finish his sentence as he was slammed back into his seat with the truck's acceleration.

Mac dipped the clutch, hit the next gear and yanked the steering hard over before answering. "Davy and his brother are here...one of them killed Mandy..." He bounced up the curb, over a grassed area and into the car park Watkins had mentioned.

McDonald/Davy was diving backwards into the rear of a white Ford transit van, a small automatic rifle bursting with staccato gunfire until he'd emptied the clip. Watkins was behind a Rover, returning fire as and when he dared to break cover.

As Watkins saw his truck round the corner, he made a beeline for it, ignoring the bullets strafing the ground perilously close to his feet. He landed in the passenger seat next to MacGyver at about the same time Davy landed in the back of the Ford and vanished.

The Transit skidded past an old blue police call box and was lost from sight.

"Step on it! We can't lose them, Mac!" Watkins was reloading his Sig, much to MacGyver's chagrin. He averted his eyes, focusing on the narrow British streets as he gave chase to Davy whilst trying to avoid commuters on bicycles and daring pedestrians on the sidewalk. *Do Brits even call it a sidewalk?*

"Over there, Dad, he's heading out of the city!" Sam had caught sight of the white van and was attempting to take some shots of it. His camera rocked in his grasp as the Land Rover swerved across a roundabout and across oncoming traffic.

The van's rear doors swung wildly as it dodged in and out of cars, and every now and again, Davy would appear and fire off a clip at them.

The 4x4's windshield cracked into a myriad of pieces as two slugs smashed into it, but somehow no one inside was hit. Watkins used the butt of his weapon to knock out the damaged glass and muttered something unrepeatable about the damage under his breath.

"I thought you "Bond" guys had bulletproof cars," Mac dared to tease.

Watkins huffed. "Aye, and I thought you Uncle Sam types could drive better!" He let off a volley of rounds at the Transit which earned him a scowl from Mac.

"I was aiming at the tires, *I swear!*" Watkins toothy grin suggested otherwise as more slugs from Davy battered the Land Rover and he was forced to duck. There was a massive pop, followed by a hissing sound and a plume of smoke from under the 4x4's hood.

MacGyver slammed a fist onto the dashboard as he was forced to hit the brakes. He pulled over onto a grassed area and popped the hood only to be greeted by more smoke. Sam and Watkins joined him.

“Can you fix it?” Sam asked, seemingly asking the impossible because he knew his dad was capable of it.

Mac wafted away the steam and dared to poke his head into the engine bay. One of the Irishman’s bullets had gouged a hole in the radiator top hose and it was spilling antifreeze out. “I might be able to make a temporary repair, but it has to cool first...”

Watkins shook his head, flicked on his Sig’s safety and tucked it safely away. “That’s time we don’t have. Davy and his brother are going to scarper and we don’t have a clue what their next target is!” He waved his hands in the air in apparent defeat.

Mac sucked down a breath. Watkins was probably right. He ran a hand through his hair and looked around. A road sign caught his attention. They were just off the A30 – and according to the sign, very close to Heathrow Airport. Could it be *that* easy?

Mac pointed to the sign and raised a brow. “You don’t think..?”

Watkins gaped. “Bloody Hell! There were three attacks on Terminal Four back in March. We suspected Davy was involved but could never prove it!”

Sam wasn’t so sure. “Hey, c’mon, the Channel Tunnel is way bigger news than an airport they’ve already attacked. They wouldn’t use the Tunnel as a diversion; it would be the main event.”

Mac stared at the road sign. There was something he was missing.

Something from earlier...

He tried to think back to when everyone had been on the train. What had Davy, or rather “McDonald”, been doing that had seemed odd?

MacGyver’s mind flicked into reverse gear. The Irishman had been jittery all the while he’d been reading an article about Gerard Carter, a multi-million dollar stock embezzler who was being extradited back to the U.S. And what was more, the jet he was being moved on was getting there via Heathrow that afternoon.

“I don’t think this was ever about terrorism,” Mac offered breathlessly. “I think it was a diversion to keep the security forces busy elsewhere.”

“He’s I.R.A.” Watkins almost yelped. “What could it be about if not terrorism?”

“Money,” Mac said sadly. “I saw Davy reading an article about Gerard Carter – the man has embezzled millions, and his F.B.I. escorted flight is landing there,” he pointed to the sign for Heathrow, “Right about now. I’m betting that’s why Mandy had to die, she knew the real motive behind their actions and they couldn’t afford to

let it get out this wasn't about Ireland, at least not until they were all safely in some extradition-free country."

Sam saw his dad's point quicker than Watkins. "You think he's using the skills he's learned in the I.R.A. to free Carter in return for money? And he's used the tunnel incident as a distraction?"

"Right!" Mac turned back to the Land Rover and began drying off the now cooled hose as he spoke. "Paul, do you have a car phone? We need to call the airport security people and the police..." He slipped a hand in his pocket, pulled out a roll of flattened duct tape and tore off a small strip just big enough to cover the hole in the hose. He put the patch on, then took the remaining reel of tape and wrapped it around and around the patch as tightly as he could.

Watkins shook his head. "No, I don't have a phone, and no way is that going to last once I crank the engine..."

"It'll last to get us to the airport," Mac argued. "After that, it won't matter..."

* * * *

***London Heathrow Airport
Terminal Four
Thirteen minutes later...***

MacGyver pulled the Land Rover up outside the terminal as people poured from the nearby exit. The panicking crowd was being ushered out by police officers in body armor and carrying automatic rifles.

Davy was here, of that there was no doubt.

At the sight of the bedraggled, bullet-ridden 4x4, the lead cop broke away from his shepherding duties and dived across the tarmac, placing himself in front of the Land Rover's hood.

The officer held his weapon high at the broken windshield, finger itching on the trigger. Beside him, more cops appeared until the truck was surrounded.

Mac held up his hands. "Hey, take it easy." He glanced over his shoulder to Sam, making sure his son wasn't doing anything that might cause a bullet to head his way.

He wasn't.

"Out of the car, nice and slow, and hands where I can see them!" The cop was barking at MacGyver, Watkins and Sam, and as he spoke his eyes ticked back and forth between them, daring them to make a move other than he'd demanded.

Mac kept his hands up, but Watkins totally defied the order. He moved slowly, but purposefully, opening his door and sliding out into the terminal's parking lot. Once on his feet, he slid a hand into his jacket and pulled out a small leather case. He opened

it, carefully showing the nearest officers its contents. “Stand down!” He grumbled. “We’re on your side!”

Whatever he’d flashed at the police seemed to partially do the trick. They kept their aim, except the lead cop who’d initially addressed them. He let his weapon slip to his side and grabbed at the radio on his shoulder clip. “I’m sorry, sir, but I’m going to have to confirm your credentials. It’s protocol...” He called some unknown office and proffered up a string of numbers and letters that must have been on Watkins’s I.D.

Ten seconds later, the officer held up a hand to the rest of the response unit. “Okay lads, stand down and back to your original positions.” He looked at Watkins expectantly, then to MacGyver curiously.

“Why the evacuation?” Watkins was back in S.A.S. mode, and he wasn’t happy.

“We have a situation inside. I thought that’s why you were here...”

“What kind of situation?” MacGyver asked, suspecting he already knew the answer.

“There’s a bomb in the center of the terminal.” The cop jerked a thumb to the doors behind him. “We’re still getting people out, and the bomb disposal unit is on its way, but I’m afraid from the time left on that thing, they’re not going to make it.”

Mac winced. Davy was using his terrorist training perfectly. It was one decoy after another while he got away with Carter, and a whole lot of stolen cash for his trouble. The problem was, they couldn’t just ignore the bomb and go after the bad guys – and that small fact was what Davy and his crew were counting on.

“Show me the device,” Mac asked the cop as forcefully as he dare, considering he didn’t have any fake credentials of his own.

The officer swallowed and his eyes flicked to Watkins for approval. “Sir...he doesn’t have clearance...”

“He’s probably the best damn explosives man in the country,” Watkins Yorkshire accent was thick and guttural as he spoke, signaling just how intense the situation was getting. “And he’s all we’ve got. Get us inside, show us the bomb, then get your men the hell out. Understood?”

The cop nodded and beckoned them to follow him inside.

Mac looked back just once to Sam. “Stay here. No matter what, okay?”

* * * *

The terminal was ghostly quiet and empty. The boards had turned every expected flight to “delayed,” and any planes that were down had kept their passengers onboard and well away from the expected blast area, in case the bomb should go off.

MacGyver hated the silence. The sensation was overwhelming, like the end was nigh, and there was no stopping destiny. He walked past a kiosk selling ice cream and confectionaries. How many kids had been here only moments before buying candy and not realizing what was about to happen?

It's not going to happen, we're going to defuse the dang device and find Davy before he gets away...

“Mac, you better get a look at this?” It was Watkins, and he was standing over a row of seats peering down at an open briefcase. The cop had already begun to retreat for the door, relief showing clearly on his features.

“How bad?” Mac asked, joining his friend.

“On a scale of one to ten, I'd say it's about a twenty,” Watkins half-joked, rubbing at the stubble on his chin as if it might show him a solution.

MacGyver brushed past him, hunkered down and examined the bomb and the case that held it. There was an abundance of C4, two triggers and everything seemed to be connected to a motion sensor or tilt detector of some sort or another.

The whole contraption was wired into a simple battery operated travel alarm, and the controls had been snapped off, so there was no way to reset it. The thing had nine minutes left to run and ticked away happily as they watched.

“We can't cut anything without it triggering,” Watkins bemoaned. “Maybe we should make a tactical retreat while we still can? The building's already evacuated. The only thing that's going to get hurt here is concrete and good old British pride.”

Mac didn't like the idea of defeat. Going outside and simply waiting gave Davy the nine minutes he obviously wanted and needed to escape with his embezzler friend.

And Mac didn't like losing to people like him who built their lives on intimidation and destruction of others. He peered at the bomb again, willing himself to come up with an answer.

The clock was ticking down, and cutting the wires to it would trigger an explosion. But if the clock simply stopped before it reached the set time..?

Mac turned and looked at the kiosk he'd passed moments earlier. He ruffled in his pocket, retrieved a few English coins and handed them to an incredulous Watkins. “Go get me an ice lolly...”

“Huh?” Watkins eyes almost popped. “Any particular flavor?” He asked sarcastically.

Mac didn't have time to explain what he was thinking. “Nope, just as long as it has that little wooden stick...”

Watkins scurried off, his face a mask of curiosity, and just a little fear. MacGyver ignored the latter. His own stomach was churning just like it had back in 'Nam when he was working with land mines or booby trapped bodies.

He flexed his fingers, wiped his brow with his forearm and then pulled out his knife.

The trick now was to be able to carefully tease off the clock's battery compartment without disturbing the wires to the alarm or to the bracket that held it in place. Too much jarring could easily trigger the motion sensors there.

Watkins returned, pulled off the wrapper and handed over the lolly. It was multicolored and shaped like a rocket.

Mac smiled wanly, took a bite, and then broke off the remainder until only the wooden stick was left.

Finally Watkins got the picture. "You're going to push that between the battery and the metal contact, stopping the clock and alarm without cutting any wires?"

"I'm going to try," Mac admitted. "You might want to take cover, just in case the bomber anticipated the move..."

To his credit, Watkins didn't budge, but simply smiled thinly. "Go for it, you mad bugger!"

Mac flexed his fingers again, suddenly feeling like they were ten times their size in the confines of the briefcase. He picked up the flat wooden stick and slowly and deliberately pushed it against the clock battery.

The clock stopped ticking, the fingers stopped moving, and there was an ominous click from its plastic casing.

MacGyver and Watkins dived for the floor, flattening their bodies against the linoleum, hands over their heads in a futile attempt at self-preservation.

And silence followed.

There was no explosion, no blinding flash of light, and no wanton destruction. Both men rolled over, stared at the briefcase and then began to laugh nervously.

After a few seconds of taking in they were still in one piece, MacGyver was on his feet first and gave Watkins a hand up. He glanced at the briefcase, but for now the danger had been averted. The bomb team would be arriving soon to deal with the aftermath.

"Where will Davy most likely have headed?" Mac was looking for a way out of the terminal that led onto the runway as he spoke.

“I think the flight Carter came in on was a private F.B.I. one.” Watkins pointed to a fire exit and began to jog for it. Mac followed. “It will be at the far end of the bays...if Davy hasn’t already taken over and flew out.”

Mac pushed on the emergency exit bar and when the door didn’t immediately give, stepped back and kicked at it with his sneaker. The door flew outwards and Watkins moved out first, producing his Sig again magically.

MacGyver scowled at him. It was becoming a habit. “Now where?”

Watkins spun around on the spot then stopped, like a compass needle finding true north. “Over there, I think Davy has left us his calling card...”

At the edge of the runway a small Learjet sat askew, like the pilot had parked it while inebriated. The door was slung open, and under the right wing laid two bodies dressed in black suits – stereotypical F.B.I. garb.

MacGyver was surprised. “They’re not taking the plane?”

Watkins suddenly began to run. “They’re taking *that* plane.” He pointed with his automatic and Mac instantly realized they were too late.

All air traffic in or out of Heathrow had been grounded, and yet a small Cessna 172 was taxiing for takeoff. It had to be Davy, his cohorts and Carter, the embezzler.

“We can’t *run* after them!” Mac gave in trying to chase the impossible and waved his hands in the air in defeat. Then he stopped dead in his tracks as he spotted a resolution closer than he could have thought possible.

To their right, in a cordoned off area, was a bright red Wessex helicopter. There was red carpet up to the boarding area, along with a similar colored thick rope all around the machine held in place by large brass stands. The chopper shone in the sunlight like it had been polished for a month, but then maybe it had.

“We could take that?” MacGyver started for the Wessex before he had engaged his brain fully and realized just what he was looking at.

Watkins enlightened him. “Are bloody crazy?! That’s the Queen’s Flight! We can’t steal Her Majesty’s helicopter!”

Mac wasn’t fazed. “Have you got a better idea? Do we just let them get away?” He ignored Watkins protests and jogged up to the cordoned off Wessex.

As if by magic, a man appeared, suitably attired to belong to M15, or some other British clandestine agency. He had an earpiece in, and his hand moved uncomfortably close to the inside of his jacket, suggesting he had an automatic there and wasn’t afraid to use it.

“This is a restricted area. I’m going to have to ask you to leave.”

Watkins stepped up, stared the man down for a second, and then flashed the badge he'd used on the officers outside the terminal.

The agent took it, examined it, and then eyed Watkins for another thirty seconds before smiling. "These aren't your credentials. I'd heard *you* were dead?" The voice was mocking, but he didn't reach any further into his jacket.

"Who says I'm not?" Watkins moved so fast MacGyver didn't even see his fist impact with the agent's nose and then a second blow smash into the man's jaw. By the time Mac realized what was happening, the agent had tumbled to the ground unconscious.

"Do you treat all your fellow operative's that way?" Mac kidded as he stepped over the man and clambered into the chopper.

Paul shrugged. "Just the one's I remember." He glanced around the Wessex. "I assume you can fly this thing now we've stolen it?"

Mac sucked down a breath, peered at the controls and shook his head. "I can fly, but not helicopters. I was kinda hoping..? I mean aren't you James Bond types trained for this stuff?"

Watkins climbed up into the pilot's seat, strapped on his harness and began flicking buttons until the engines fired up and the rotors slowly began to spin. "I suppose it's a good job I'm not dead after all," he shouted over the noise as the chopper prepared for take off.

MacGyver remained in the back compartment where the blue "Royal" seats were fitted, keeping the side sliding door open, but he poked his head through just to ask, "Just how did you manage to survive that firefight in Bosnia anyhow?" His brow ticked up as he remembered Watkins walking into a smoke-filled battlefield full of enemy soldiers.

Watkins tugged on the cyclic and collective controls and smirked. "Hey, I can't tell you all my trade secrets! Bond wouldn't!" The Wessex lifted off the ground at a sharp angle and soared into the air, finally giving chase to Davy and his crew.

The radio screamed as air traffic controllers spotted that they had two birds in the sky that didn't belong, and when they realized one was the Queen's Flight, things got even more frantic. "You better figure out a way to bring Davy down pretty quickly," Watkins warned. "Because we just became public enemy number one – I knew we shouldn't have nicked this thing..."

He climbed fast; bringing the Wessex around several times in an attempt to spot Davy's escaping Cessna. On the third try, MacGyver caught sight of the plane low on the horizon. "Over there!" He yelled over the roar of the speeding engines. "Can we catch them?"

Watkins checked his altimeter and airspeed, winced and then brought the helicopter around hard. "I'm damn well gonna try," he snapped. "I'll come in above them, so hopefully their pilot doesn't see us until the last minute. What I want to know is, then

what? We can't exactly shoot them down with my automatic, and knowing you, you wouldn't let me try anyway..."

MacGyver didn't answer. He slid back into the rear compartment and started making an inventory. It didn't take long. Apart from the light blue seating, an emergency flare, and more of the thick red rope used to cordon the chopper off at airports, there was nothing.

Mac picked up the rope and examined it. It was heavy duty stuff and quality too – but then he'd expect nothing less for the Queen of England. The problem was it most definitely hadn't been manufactured for what his mind was conjuring up.

If the rope would hold, then that was one part of the puzzle solved, but he also needed somewhere to tether it. He dared to hang out the door, inspecting the Wessex for signs of a winch. The framework was gone, no doubt removed when the helicopter had been fitted out for Royal duty, but inside, the metal support structure remained.

It might just work...

Mac stuck his head back in the cockpit. "Are we gaining?"

Watkins pulled away one side of his headset to hear and nodded. "Aye, but only because they haven't seen us. Have you come up with anything?"

MacGyver offered up the red rope. "Yeah, I was thinking of going fishing..."

It took Watkins a few seconds to register just what the troubleshooter was suggesting, and then he gaped. "You're *joking* right? You think we can hook that bird with a piece of ceremonial rope? It will never hold, and even if it did, this helicopter wasn't made to pull other aircraft out of mid-flight. It's insane!"

MacGyver didn't think so. There was an element of risk, yes, both to them and Davy's people. But the option of letting a madman get away wasn't on the table. Davy and Carter had to be stopped.

Mac bit into his bottom lip. "How much weight can this thing carry?"

Watkins seemed to calculate in his head as he adjusted the controls every few seconds to stay shadowing the Cessna. "Well, it's based on a Sikorsky H-34, and variants of that have taken loads of over 2000kgs."

"And the Cessna is what? About a 1000kgs?" MacGyver concluded. "We should be able to hook it easily."

Watkins shook his head as if Mac had gone mad. "You're forgetting that 2000kgs is a sling load under the chopper that isn't fighting back. We'll be pulling the Cessna backwards against its engine's thrust. Can you work those variables out in your head? Will the rope stand the strain of being in a tug of war as well as taking the plane's weight?"

MacGyver stared down at the thick red braided cable. “I’m betting it will.”

Watkins fell into a deep sigh, but didn’t argue. Instead, he began to bring the Wessex closer and closer to Davy’s little plane until the helicopter’s shadow fell across its tail.

As he flew perilously close to the Cessna, MacGyver dived into the rear compartment and began securing the rope to the winch frame he’d discovered moments earlier. Once it was tight, he risked leaning precariously out of the side door with his massive “lasso.” The idea was simple – Mac intended to swing the noose over the tail of the plane, let it tighten and then signal for Paul to take it up.

At least, that was the theory.

As he tried to swing the rope, the wind brought it back again against the chopper, and before he could make a second try, a hail of bullets slammed into the metal panels to his right.

Davy’s brother, Patrick had opened the Cessna’s door and was hanging like a trapeze artist with one arm, whilst firing with the other.

The Wessex yawed to the right as Watkins realized what was happening, but it was too late. More bullets tore across the front, several ripping through the plating and into the cockpit area.

MacGyver heard a yelp and the helicopter veered wildly to the right for a second, almost forcing him to lose his grip on the door. He steadied himself, and was about to check on Watkins when the Wessex slid back into its original position.

The barrage of gunfire paused and Mac realized Patrick was reloading, and he was finding it difficult given his position outside the plane. His fumbling was buying time, and MacGyver wasn’t about to waste it.

He swung his body out against the Wessex’s fuselage as far as he dared, yanking the rope across so hard it finally bounced against the Cessna’s tail. He tugged just a little more, praying for the wind and downdraught to be in his favor this time, and it was.

The rope slid over the little plane’s tail and hung there.

Mac rolled back inside the Wessex and grabbed a spare headset and yelled into the mike. “Paul, take us up, they’re hooked!”

There was a pause and Watkins answered, albeit breathlessly. “Aye, let’s reel ‘em in!”

The helicopter started to climb just enough to tighten the lasso and the Cessna immediately began to fight the pull on it. The plane’s engine roared defiantly, but its tail was dragged backwards and into an angle until it was almost vertical. There was a jarring motion as it lost all lift of its own, and suddenly the Cessna was the burden of the Queen’s Flight.

“It’s holding!” Mac shouted over the struggling Wessex engines. “Can you get us down anywhere fast?” He leaned out of the side door to watch the Cessna dangling like a toy – beneath it they seemed to be over a large lake in a spacious garden, complete with summer house.

Now the only issue was, once the chopper got the plane on the ground, how were they going to fight Davy’s people and stop them? Davy had more weaponry, and a bigger contingent.

Mac dumped the headset and clambered back up to the cockpit to get Watkins answer. When he climbed up into the co-pilot’s seat, he finally realized his friend had been hit in the leg when Patrick had been shooting at them. Watkins had tied his belt around it and seemed oblivious to the blood oozing from the hole.

“Are you okay? You’re bleeding all over the Queen’s property you know...” Mac smiled and Paul huffed back.

“Oh I think we’ll have more to worry about than a few blood stains in a minute...” Watkins pointed to a helipad he was gently lowering the Cessna down onto. “This isn’t just private property we’re landing on. It’s *Royal* property...”

Finally, the penny dropped. “You’re setting us down in Buckingham Palace?” Mac was gaping.

Paul smirked. “Perfect really, the security people will be on hand to take Davy and his lads into custody. They’ll be all over us the second we touch down.” He looked at MacGyver apologetically as several suit-wearing individuals appeared from nowhere, running in their direction. Behind them was a group of armed police officers. “Course, they frown on people who steal Her Majesty’s property, so you’re probably off to the Tower.” He shrugged. “I’m already dead, remember, so I don’t count...”

For a second, Mac actually thought Watkins was being serious, then the Wessex’s wheels hit the grass with a thump and the ex-S.A.S. man couldn’t resist winking at his American friend as they were surrounded by security.

* * * *

The Ivy
West Street
London
Two Days Later...

MacGyver looked around the swank London restaurant and wondered why Paul Watkins had chosen it for their meeting place. It was definitely too up-market for the Yorkshireman, and Mac was already feeling out of place – rich, he was not, and a lot of the clients around him probably earned more in a week than he did in a year.

“You okay, Dad?” Sam was watching his father, an expression of amusement spreading across his face.

Mac rolled his eyes. “Let’s just say, between Professor Atticus and the Channel Tunnel, I’m ready to go home and maybe hide out at the cabin for a month...no, make that a year.” He looked at the menu, decided he really didn’t want to eat and popped it back on the table.

When Mac glanced back up, Watkins was hobbling across to meet them. He pulled up a chair and sat down, wincing as he eased his injured leg out for maximum comfort. “I thought you’d have ordered by now,” he said, obviously trying to sound sincere.

“I’m starting to think I’d prefer some of your unhealthy chips compared to what they serve here,” Mac admitted. “But then, you knew that didn’t you?”

Watkins chuckled. “Just trying to get you a bit of the *James Bond* lifestyle before you go back over the pond.”

“Well, we won’t be going back with a story, despite everything that happened and all the shots I got.” Sam was fidgeting with a napkin, and he didn’t look happy. “Some guys in suits came by our hotel and took all my film, told us to forget anything ever happened if dad didn’t want charging with the theft of the Queen’s chopper...”

“*Right...*” Watkins nodded as if he’d expected as much. “The tunnel cost a pretty penny, went over budget, and *can’t afford* to fail – if one word of what happened got out there’d be a mass panic and everyone would suddenly want to get back on a ferry. The government can’t let you publish the truth; it would be a major embarrassment, not to mention an open invitation to other terrorists to try something.”

Sam still wasn’t happy. “So whatever happened to the freedom of speech deal, and freedom of the press? Huh?”

MacGyver put a hand his son’s shoulder. It was hard to explain to someone so committed about the bigger picture, and how sometimes the very act of silence could save lives. “Sam, printing what happened here might get people hurt. It’s not just about saving face for the government.”

“Well, yeah, it is,” Watkins huffed. “But like your dad says, it would make us seem a weak country to other terrorists too. And that can never be a good thing.” He looked at his watch and then to the door.

“You have to be some place else?” Mac asked, knowing Watkins was still “technically” a wanted man, since MI5 had now realized he was still alive. Heaven only knew how he’d gotten away from the palace when they’d landed.

Paul smirked. “Nope, but the reason I brought you here has just arrived, right on time...I did promise you James Bond.”

“The real equivalent to 007? Is he a friend?” Sam’s dejected face turned into one belonging to an excited puppy. “Could you get us an interview? An introduction even? I don’t expect photos of course...”

Watkins chuckled. “I don’t know about “real” not unless you take your films way too seriously?” He jerked a thumb to a corner table where someone looking remarkably like Pierce Brosnan was being seated.

“He means movies,” MacGyver offered helpfully. “But isn’t that the guy from *Remington Steele*?”

Paul was still smiling. “Aye, and he’s your new Bond. He’s just been cast.” He took a sip of water from a glass on the table. “See, I’m ex-intelligence, I *know* things...” He winked, and finally Sam and Mac couldn’t help but smile too.

It had been an intense week, and not a good ending for Sam, the photojournalist having to stifle a story, but at least they’d come through it together.

“Well, *that* version of Bond might like to eat here.” MacGyver tapped the menu with his forefinger. “But right now, I think I’m ready for those fish and chips of yours.” He looked to Sam. “And I know Sam would just love British junk food.”

Sam grinned. “If it’s greasy and heart attack-inducing, I’m in!” He moved to get up, then paused mid-motion and looked questioningly at Watkins. “Just answer me one thing? If all that happened has been suppressed, what about Davy, and Carter?”

“Carter is already on his way back to the states, with the original charges, and a few new ones to answer to.”

“And Davy?” MacGyver asked, raising a brow. “If nothing officially happened, how can he technically be charged with anything? Please tell me he’s not going to walk free?”

Paul’s sardonic smile turned into something a little more serious, a little more *dark*, but it was still a smile. “Oh, he won’t be causing anyone any trouble for a long time, don’t you worry. I hear he’s being charged with the theft of Her Majesty’s Wessex, and for breaking into Buckingham Palace grounds...”

It was Sam’s turn to smile as he looked to Watkins and then his dad. “Sounds almost as good as this British junk food you’re going to introduce me to!” He offered Paul a hand up, and the limping Brit took it gratefully.

“Oh, well I can direct you to a chip shop,” Watkins said hopping up onto his good leg. “But I can’t *take* you to a chip shop...”

“Ah, the bad guys on your tail and all that?” Sam guessed with a grimace.

“No,” Paul corrected, looking sternly at MacGyver. “It’s because a certain bloody Yank broke my Land Rover!”

Mac broke into a grin. “Ah, c’mon, stop being so melodramatic – it’s nothing a little more duct tape won’t fix!” And to prove it, he brought out a neatly flattened roll from his jacket pocket and tossed it at his friend.

The list of profanities that came from Watkins mouth made everyone in The Ivy turn and stare, to which he reacted by turning bright red. Ex-S.A.S or not, it would seem even Watkins could be embarrassed.

“I think we’re ready for those chips now?” Sam scurried for the door before anyone could ask them to leave, and Mac and Watkins weren’t very far behind.

“Forget the chips,” MacGyver muttered under his breath. “I’m ready for the cabin before any more trouble can find us.”

“Any room there for a gimp with an accent?” Paul asked, almost sincerely as they mingled into the city crowds, hailing a black cab.

The End