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Of Cops and Robbers

Written by Mike Nicol

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MIKE NICOL



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THE ICING UNIT, NOVEMBER 1977

They come down the street in a baby-shit yellow Ford Granada, going slowly, checking out the houses. A whisper of exhaust smoking from the tailpipe. A growl like the pipe is rusted, holed somewhere near the box.

Four men in the car, all wearing sunglasses. The driver's got on racing gloves, olive-coloured racing gloves. The thing about him, his face's huge and red, he's known as the Fisherman.

The man behind him's leaning back, his face in shadow. A cigarette hanging on his lower lip. A cigarette he keeps there like he's breathing through it. He's got mad wild surfer-blond hair.

The one in the passenger seat has his fingers steepled, but not in prayer or contemplation.

The man behind him sports a rictus grin standard on his face, his arm's out the window, big glitzy rings on every finger.

They rumble at a crawl down the street in their baby-shit yellow Ford Granada.

The men are all carrying Browning HPs modified for screw-on silencers. Special issue for the job. The one with the rictus grin also carries an Italian stiletto, his weapon of choice. This one a nine-incher with a hilt inlay of mother-of-pearl. Very snazzy to his way of thinking.

They approach the house. No car in the driveway, the gate in the low wall is open onto a short slasto path to the front door. Rictus Grin and Blondie get out, their soles slap on the crazy paving.

Rictus knocks. Sees the bell push, jabs it with a thumb: bing-bong.

They wait. Hear a woman's voice talking on the telephone, saying goodbye.

Rictus looks at Blondie, raises his eyebrows. Who's this?

Key turns in the lock. A woman opens the door: short hair, pretty face, long eyelashes, green eyes, no colour on her lips. Wears a brown dress to her knees, bare feet. Says brightly, 'Hello, menere. What can I do for you gentlemen?'

Rictus doesn't miss a beat. 'Mevrou?'

'Ja.'

'Mevrou, we're supposed to meet your husband at quarter past six.' He glances at his watch. 'Five minutes ago. Sorry, we're late.'

'You're early, he's late,' she says. 'He's not here yet.'

Rictus with his hands bunched into the pockets of his bunny jacket. He and Blondie not moving.

'Is it about constituency matters?'

Rictus nods. 'Ag, it's not that important.'

The woman smiles. 'Why don't you come in and wait? If he said quarter past six, I'm sure he won't be long.' She leads them into a dining room, the table piled with stacks of papers. 'This's his office,' she says, closing the curtains. She turns to face them, palms out towards two easy chairs. 'Make yourselves at home.' In that moment seeing the gun in Rictus's hand, the fear ritzing her face.

Rictus shoots her one time, chest shot, straight through the heart. What the newspapers will call point-blank. Then he's at her with the stiletto. Grunting with each stab and pull.

Blondie's rooted to the carpet. The speed of the other man's mania brings a sourness to his mouth. He lurches towards his partner, pulls him away from the woman's body. She's on the floor, ripped and still. Her face untouched, her eyes open, pearly teeth glinting between her lips.

Rictus wrenches himself free, bloody stiletto in his right hand, the Browning HP in his left. Blondie hadn't seen him pull either weapon.

Blondie shouting, 'Stop, stop, bugger it, stop.'

At the same time the bell's bing-bonging because the other two, the Commander and the Fisherman, are outside the front door.

‘Okay, okay.’ Rictus bends down to wipe the knife on the woman’s dress, comes up folding the blade into the hilt, crimson stains on the mother-of-pearl.

He watches from his car at the far end of the gravel parking lot. Watches through a night scope the white Subaru stopped facing the beach.

A hard southeaster's blowing, hazing his windscreen with sea spray. So bad he switches on the wipers to clear his vision.

He's been there half an hour, on the west side of the Sunrise Beach parking area. Was there twenty minutes before the white Subaru pulled up. It's midnight, moonless.

Ten minutes later he sees a car peel off the traffic circle, dim its lights, come slowly across the gravel towards the white Subaru. It's a Jetta, black. Black windows. The waiting man gets out of his car. The Jetta stops alongside. Two men step out.

He watches through the scope. Watches the men talking. Their hand gestures. Like these men aren't here for a transaction as they should be, they're arguing. Sees them back off, the two from the Jetta separating either side of the other man. Sees muzzle flash: four shots from the Jetta men, two returns.

'Jesus Christ!' Fish leans forward to start his car.

'Don't,' says the man in the passenger seat. The man holding the .45 at his head. 'Keep watching, my friend. This is what happens when you play shit with us. You get fucked up.'

There're two bodies on the ground. The Jetta man hauls his mate into the car, spins off, showering the other body in dust.

'We know you, Mr Fish Pescado,' says the man with the gun. 'You are the next one. You kill one of ours, we kill one of yours. Last time, the man you shot died, Mr Pescado. Bad luck for you.' He opens the passenger door, backs out. Leans in again, opens the glovebox, takes the gun stashed there. Looks at it. 'What old rubbish is this?' Pockets it.

'Leave the gun,' says Fish.

The man says, 'You better call Emergency for your friend, my friend. They can fill out the, what's it? ... the declaration of death.'

Laughs: ha, ha, hey.

Surfers' Corner, Muizenberg, with a working sea. Waves: deep ocean storm outriders, metre and a half, two metres slamming in, breaking right. Got punch and power behind them, enough to give you the willies on the drop, a thrill across the face.

Fish Pescado and Daro Attilane in wetsuits paddle their longboards to the backline, feeling the sea surge going through the white water. When they get out to the swells and troughs, beyond where the peaks form, they're aching.

Three sets roll under them.

They let them come, go, not talking, taking a breather. Sit on the ocean in the late afternoon, in the mountain's shadow.

Then Daro says, 'I've got something to ask you.'

'Sure,' says Fish, 'long as it's not personal' – grinning while he says it.

He turns his longboard till the nose is pointing at Daro.

Daro Attilane, car dealer, member of the community police forum, veteran surfer. Short grey hair, tanned face, pale blue eyes, built like a rugby flanker.

'This is about my daughter, Steffie. Teenage stuff. Someone selling dagga at school.'

'A regular dealer?'

'Uh huh, Steffie bought some. I caught her with it in her bedroom, blowing the smoke out the window.'

'Nice one,' says Fish. 'I did that too. She give you a name?'

'Kid in her class.'

'You want me to talk to the kid, find out his supplier, I can do that.'

'I know who's the supplier. Seven's the supplier.' Daro gesturing at the beach. Fish follows his arms to the line-up of SUVs: every four parking bays more than two or three million bucks' worth

of hardware. Daro's is a Nissan X-Trail. Fish's a rust-bucket Isuzu two-by-four he inherited, a good few notches outside the financial bracket of his surfing buddy. Fish frowns, realises it's not the beachfront Daro's referring to but the warren behind the upmarket apartments.

'Problem is,' says Daro, 'dagga's just the start. Next it's pills, methamphetamine, tik. It gets to tik, you've got a major show. That meth bites.'

Fish looks at Daro, Daro not meeting his gaze.

'Thing is, you know I'm on the forum.'

The forum wanting to clean up the resort. The scene in Mui-zenberg being hectic. Back in the warren behind Atlantic Road, crack houses, dagga dens, prozzies, young and old, putting out on the street, in the gang houses, anywhere for a globe of tik. And lord of it all, Seven. The bane.

'No secret I'm on the forum. Everybody knows it at Steffie's school. We've done talks to the kids, told the youngsters what's what. Steffie knows, you get onto the hard stuff, you're hooked, bugged. It's that bastard, Seven. He's targeting her to get at me.'

'Seven is?'

'I think so.'

'You give him that much credit?'

Daro serious, eyes on Fish now. 'I do. This's his style. This's how he does it. The last chairman of the forum's on tranquilisers, had to move away. What worries me, one day I'll answer the doorbell there's a kid, nine, ten years old standing there with a gun. Gang initiation. So long Mr Attilane.'

'So raid his place again.'

'Every time we raid, he's clean. He's got a source in the cops.'

'Don't they all,' says Fish.

Fish: Bartolomeu Pescado on his birth certificate. Nowadays has this discreet earring in his right lobe. His wild surfer hair, his quick eyes, his earring is how you notice Fish Pescado for the first time. Fish to his friends, for obvious reasons. Bartolomeu after the Portuguese explorer. No one but his mother called him

Bartolomeu. By way of earning a crust Fish's an investigator with not too much work on the go.

Fish stares down at his bare feet in the green water. A chilly sea about twelve degrees C. This sort of temperature he should wear booties like Daro. Except booties upset his balance. Make him trip and stumble. He's never worn booties. Booties are for older guys like Daro. Barefoot is cool, despite the cold.

He wipes blond hair off his face, looks at Daro, says, 'This happened before?'

'What? Steffie and drugs?'

Fish picks at a knob of wax on the board, flicks it away. 'No. Any kind of threat? Letter? Telephone call? Stalker?'

Daro laughs. 'Only the sort of threats that happen on a raid. That crazy "I'll-get-you" stuff.'

Their boards touch, both men backpaddle.

'Maybe Steffie's just experimenting.' Fish keeps backpaddling. 'You told your wife?'

'We've talked about it.'

'What's she say?'

'Teenage curiosity.'

'But you reckon Seven's the issue?'

Daro nods. 'I do. In the bigger picture.'

'I can have a word with Seven, if you want. I can say the sort of things you can't.'

Daro shakes his head. 'Nah. Maybe later.'

'So what's the thing you want to ask me?'

'What?'

'You said you want to ask me something.'

Daro's facing the open sea, points behind Fish. 'They're coming. Big ones.'

Fish and Daro see the first of a set roaring at them. Rising up, thinning at the top, feathering in the offshore breeze. You listen you can hear the hiss approaching.

'Yours,' shouts Fish, lying flat, paddling to get over the peak. He breaks through, goes down the back, there's a mother staring

him in the face. A huge green wall, foaming to his right.

Fish swings the board round, stroking to get some speed, the water being sucked from under him into that mad crazy moment when the wave takes you, grips you. Fish letting out a long whoop all the way down the drop, getting to his feet, arms flung out, crunching off the pit onto the wall. Glued there, racing ahead of the white.

Fish's surfed all his life. Started as a five-year-old grommet at this very beach. Fish can't get enough. If he doesn't get a surf on any given day he's seriously miffed. Seriously. Fish drives by the ocean two or three times a day just to eye the swell. First thing in the a.m. he fires up his laptop to check the surf report. The steadycams at the peninsula's breaks.

Surfers' Corner his home zone. Okay, the waves don't carry the kick of Long Beach or Noordhoek or the Reserve, but, hey, they're a drive away. The nursery's right on his doorstep. He rides the other breaks from time to time, but for a quick pop and peak, the nursery's fine. Two minutes from his pad. He can walk here if he wants, which mostly he doesn't. Fish believes in having wheels ready because you never know when you're going to need them. A call-out. A chase. A getaway. Fish Pescado, investigator, always has wheels ready to rock 'n roll.

But now he's surfing. Kicks out of that first long ride well stoked. Paddles through the incoming rollers, taking the first opportunity. This late hour of the afternoon he can't pick and choose. The grommets and the hot kids are surfing the last light, like waves are never gonna happen again.

A glassy wall comes at him, picks him up, hollows, spits him over the falls. Bang into the washing machine. Fish tumbles, the board jerking at the leash like a wild thing. Fish with his hands clutching his head for protection.

He's seen plenty guys got hit in the face in this sort of situation. Broken teeth, broken nose, enough blood loss to whistle up every great white in the bay.

He breaks the surface gasping. Another roil of thunder bear-

ing down. Fish takes a breath, dives. Listens as the churn passes overhead, his board tugging at the leash, dragging him. He waits out the set in the foam, then strokes for the backline with the lull.

Half an hour later Fish's taking a breather, three more rides notched, two wipe-outs that cleared his sinus passages. Daro, kneeling on his board, paddles over.

'Not bad.'

'Very cool,' says Fish. 'Way to end the day.' Would've been the way to pass the whole day for that matter, he thinks. There not being too much on his plate right now. Not being anything on his plate right now, truth be told.

'One more then I'm done,' says Daro. 'Can't keep the family waiting.'

Fish squints at him. 'If this drug thing's on your mind, you'll let me know?'

Daro nods. 'Course. Thanks.'

'Your call,' says Fish. Wondering what was the question Daro really wanted to ask.

The two of them sitting there, eyes on the backline, the ridges dark against the horizon. They're about to line up for the next set when a guy waving calls, 'Hey, Fish. There's a chickee on the beach after you.'

'They all are, man.'

'Says you should get yourself in chop-chop. Says you've got five minutes. Whatta stunner, hey. Nice rack.' The surfer cupping his hands at his chest. 'Wouldn't keep her waiting.'

'Vicki,' says Fish to Daro. 'Keep your mind clean,' he shouts at the surfer.

Gets as answer: 'Just delivering the message, bro.'

Then the next set of peaks are on them, Fish and Daro stroking over the first. Fish whooping, pivoting his board, 'Time to pump my soul.' And he's paddling down the drop, feeling the wave thump beneath the board with the gathering speed.

Vicki Kahn, Vicki with an 'i', stands next to her Alfa MiTo, scoping the ocean. The light's bad, one figure out there much like another. Sees she's being checked out by two young guys, zipping up their wetsuits. The one staring at her cleavage.

'Hey,' she calls to them. 'You know Fish?'

The boob starrer shakes his head like he's trying to shake the inside bits into place, refocuses, says he does. 'The tallish blond guy with the earring?'

'Exactly. Tell him he's needed, here, now.'

'Sure, sure.' The surfer sliding his board out the back of his bakkie.

'Not in half an hour. Right away.' Vicki keeping the please out of her request. With waterheads you have to stay direct, simple.

She orders a flat white at Knead.

The Nigerian waitress with the pixie smile who always serves her, them, says, 'To go? We're closing up. I'll bring it to you.'

'Lovely,' says Vicki, pointing at her MiTo, the blazing red one. 'I'll be there.'

The waitress nods.

Vicki crosses to her car, hears her iPhone ping: couple or five emails waiting. One from the senior partner. The smooth-talking, American-twanged, highly connected Clifford Manuel. Not someone she trusts. Not someone you want as an enemy. Guy has family connections that go back into the bad old days of the struggle. Family connections now worth millions in fees, gratuities, introductions, heads-up at the trendy Bolshoi Bar.

She clicks open his email.

'Hi Vicki.'

Hi Vicki. Approachable, despite he lives in a suit. Impeccable suits. Silk shirts. Ermenegildo Zegna ties. Doesn't need to but

wears braces. Who wears braces? Something he picked up in the States. And brogues. Never anything but brogues.

‘Don’t forget the meeting. This is important.’

Authoritative. Straight to the point. Wouldn’t think that he could be lechie with the young associates. One even laid a harassment complaint. To no effect, except she left for other pastures.

He tried it on with Vicki at a cocktail party, not long after she’d joined the firm. Some time back now. The cocktail party to celebrate the firm’s eighty years of legal practice. Cabinet ministers, MPs, DGs, CEOs, CFOs, ambassadors, consuls, judges, the legal sharks, glitterati all in attendance. And Fish. She got out of Clifford Manuel’s smarm by introducing him to Fish.

Fish said, ‘Howzit, nice place.’

‘Yes, well, I suppose so,’ Clifford Manuel replied, not smiling, trying to withdraw his hand from Fish’s grip. Then massaging his fingers when he did.

‘Impressive,’ Fish said. ‘All this artwork.’

Clifford Manuel smiled, smoothed his tie with his clean hand. ‘Local artists. Kentridges, Goldblatts, Ractliffes. That statue’s an Alexander. It’s called *Serviceman*.’

‘I know.’

‘You like art, Mr Ah ...?’

‘Pescado,’ Vicki said. Repeated.

‘Mr Pescado.’

‘Bartolomeu Pescado, otherwise known as Fish, consults for us,’ she said.

Fish shrugged. ‘I’ve got pictures by most of them.’

‘Have you now?’ Clifford Manuel looking hard at him.

‘Ractliffe’s dead donkey. An Alexander print, a Goldblatt photo of some graveyard. They’re getting expensive. I’ve got to buy younger talent now.’

‘Interesting.’ Clifford Manuel backing away, holding out his right hand limply, like a rag. ‘You’re an interesting fish, Mr Pescado. Please. Have a drink. Enjoy yourself.’

‘Thanks,’ said Fish. ‘I will.’ Turned to Vicki, said, ‘Mr Smooth.’

‘He is.’ Vicki grinning, loving it. ‘But he’s also my boss.’

And now Clifford Manuel so insistent on her being at a meeting. Nothing she’s been briefed for.

‘I just want you there. Want you to meet someone, that’s all,’ he said. ‘Will be a good contact for you. Actually he asked for you, he knew your aunt.’

‘My aunt?’

‘That’s what he said. He’s a client, Vicki. An important client.’

Clifford Manuel being mysterious. Clifford Manuel being Clifford Manuel, never letting out all the information.

‘Who?’ she said.

‘You’ll see.’

‘One flat white,’ says the waitress, smiling her pixie smile. She points at the beach. ‘He’s come in, your boyfriend?’

‘Yeah,’ says Vicki. ‘He knows what’s good for him.’

The two of them watching Fish slide his board onto his Isuzu single cab. ‘Great body in a wetsuit,’ says Vicki.

The waitress giggles.

‘Don’t say anything.’ Vicki waves at Fish and Daro, Fish giving her the thumbs up, Daro mouthing hello, heading off towards his car. ‘Real beach Adonis, you can pick them up any beach around the city. All that lovely blond hair. The blue eyes, the hard bod.’

Fish comes up, peeling the wetsuit off his arms, makes to hug her.

Vicki steps back. ‘Oh no you don’t.’

‘Doll,’ says Fish, ‘where’s the romance?’ He takes a swig of her coffee. ‘That’s weak. Needs two hits of espresso.’ Rubs a towel over his chest. ‘You’re nice ’n early.’

‘I’m not staying,’ says Vicki.

‘No?’ Fish giving a side glance.

‘I can’t. Clifford wants me at a meeting in town. To meet a client. Guess who.’

‘Tell me.’

‘I had to drag it out of him.’

‘Vicki?’

‘Jacob Mkezi.’

‘The big man himself?’

‘The disgraced man.’

‘He’s a scapegoat.’

‘You don’t think he’s corrupt?’

‘Of course he is. But still a scapegoat. Take down the top cop, looks like you mean business. Everyone else in government pulling a scam can breathe easy.’

‘That’s cynical.’

‘That’s a fact of modern life.’ He touches her face lightly. ‘So come afterwards.’

‘I don’t think so. Tomorrow, okay? For the weekend.’ She finishes the coffee. ‘Promise.’ Sees the suspicion in Fish’s eyes, like he thinks something else’s going on here. ‘I’ll call. Soon as I’m home I’ll call.’

Fish watches her drive off, the lovely Vicki Kahn. Not like other women he’s had in and out of his life. With Vicki he plays it loyal.

Daro's *bête noire*, Seven, is pulling a number. He and his *pellie*, Jouma, in the mammal gallery of the South African Museum. Rows of cabinets, rows of stuffed wild animals: bucks, cats, hippos, elephants paused on their savannahs, silent in the dim light. The gallery hushed.

'No, my bru, not this one. Nay, you's mad,' says Jouma.

'This one, my bru. I got a buyer.'

'Strues?'

'Strues, maybe.'

'Maybe?'

'Ja, definite maybe.'

The men stare at the rhinoceros in the glass cabinet.

'We can't, man, not in here.'

'Why not? I got a plan, my bru. Everything's sweet inna street.'

'What plan?'

'I tell you.'

The men shut up as tourists approach, the one edging the other to the far side of the cabinet. The tourists, a man and a woman in shorts and T-shirts, read that this specimen is a white rhinoceros, that it is one hundred and twenty years old, that it once roamed in the Cape. That it was donated to the museum by Cecil John Rhodes. The tourists smile at the two men through the glass cabinet, pass on. The two men smile back: the one has no front teeth.

Seven and Jouma are smartly dressed in jackets and clean jeans. Open-necked shirts, black *takkies*. They've been in the museum twenty minutes, paid their way in as good citizens do.

Jouma waits until the tourists have left the mammal gallery, says, 'Nay, my bru, we's not in this line.'

'We's branching out, my bru,' says Seven. 'Freelance onna

razor's edge.' He comes close to Jouma, whispers in his ear, 'Twenny grand, ek sê. Now we's talking bucks.'

Jouma stares at the rhino. 'How we gonna carry it?'

'No, my bru, what you thinking, my bru?' Seven laughs, smacking his thigh. 'Just the horns. No harm done. They make new ones that looks just like these, so when you's standing here yous can't tell the difference. Win-win situation. Who's the loser?' He wags his chin at Jouma. 'No one.'

Jouma says, 'Nooit, never, nay, my bru.'

Seven points at the rhino. 'This thing. This is a worthless thing. What they call priceless. Not for sale.' He comes up close to Jouma. 'So if it not for sale it doesn't matter if we take the horns. Like I say, they gonna make new ones.'

Jouma crouches to look more closely at the rhino. 'Yous don't know it's real. Maybe it's plastic.'

'Ag, no, my bru. Why's a museum gonna have a plastic rhino? This's for real. Check.' He squints at the legend. 'Donated by Cecil John Rhodes. This thing walked the earth, my bru, that's why it's here.' He jabs his finger at the legend. 'It says, mos. Roamed in the Cape. It's real, my bru. Real like you and me. This thing was alive. Now it's inna exhibition. Stuffed by Cecil.'

Jouma nods, looks round at the rows of silent animals. 'I suppose.'

'Better than killing a live one. No animals hurt in the making of this fortune.' Seven cackles, beckons Jouma out of the gallery.

They're playing dominoes in the security guard's office when the museum closes. Seven has won every time.

'How long we gonna wait?' says Jouma.

'There's still people working, moegoe,' says Seven. 'Yous a stupid or something?' He wins another game. Says to the security guard, 'Don't you play dominoes in Malawi, Paul?'

'Mozambique,' says Paul. Paul's a big man, tall, muscular, his shirtsleeves tight over his biceps.

'Ja,' says Seven. 'There.'

‘We play dominoes.’

‘But you don’t win.’

‘Sometimes I win.’

‘Except, my bru, against an ace champion.’ Seven laughs, slides tiles to Jouma and Paul.

Nine o’clock, Paul the security guard gives the thumbs up, fetches a two-kg club hammer from his locker, a small handsaw, gives them to Seven. The three men go down to the mammal chamber, the security guard leading by torchlight.

‘Aaa, my bru, this is spooky,’ says Jouma, the animals looming and vanishing in the beam of the torch. To Paul says, ‘You like this job?’

‘Not so much. Your money is better.’

‘Fat bucks.’ Seven holds out the hammer to Jouma. ‘Take it. Come on Mr Demolisher.’

Jouma shrugs off his jacket, spits on his hand, lifts the hammer above his head. ‘Here goes, meneer.’ Whacks the hammer into the glass case. The glass cracks but doesn’t break. Jouma drops the hammer, rubs his arm. ‘Jusses.’

‘Security glass,’ says Paul. He hands the torch to Seven, takes the hammer from Jouma, brings a blow down on the wooden frame that shatters the glass.

‘There’s it,’ says Seven.

Paul clears away shards of glass, reaches in to break off the horn. A couple of pulls, it doesn’t budge.

‘That’s why we’s got a saw’, says Seven, taps it against Paul’s elbow.

Paul takes the handsaw, goes at the base of the big horn, Seven encouraging him. Halfway through he rips it off. Holds the horn in both hands. ‘Beautiful.’

‘Aitsha! How’s that?’ says Seven, taking the horn. ‘We got nine kilos here.’ He passes it on to Jouma, adjusts the torchlight for Paul.

Paul starts on the smaller horn with the handsaw.

‘Careful, my bru,’ says Seven. ‘Yous don’ wanna damage it.’

You damage it, who's gonna buy it then? Softly, my bru, slowly.'

Paul keeps on with the saw, cutting through the skin, through the model stuffing. When he's almost done, grips the horn with both hands, pushing, yanking. His wrestling with the horn topples the rhino against what's left of the glass cabinet.

'Agge nee, my bru! Now look what you's doing? You understand English, my bru, slow, hey, softly.' Seven flagging him down with an outspread hand. 'You must hold the horn, push back the head, saw some more. Ja, this makes sense?'

Paul grunts, does as Seven says, cuts off the small horn.

'What I say, my bru? What I tell you?' Seven takes the small horn from Paul, shines the torch on it. 'Very nice.' He weighs it in his hand. 'How much you say, maybe three or four kilos?' Seven whistles. 'Jackpot in one night. Everyone smiling.' He hands it to Jouma.

'Where's the money?' says Paul, puts down the handsaw.

Seven shines the light in Paul's face. 'Like I told you, my bru. We's got to get paid first. Doesn't happen all in a rush.'

Paul stands over Seven, reaches for the torch. 'You must not lie to me.' He twists the torch out of Seven's hand.

'Nee, my bru, never,' says Seven. 'In a few days everything's sweet.'

Paul puts the light on him. 'I come with you. To your house.'

Seven nods. 'Yes, my bru. Okay, okay.' He holds up a hand to shield his eyes. 'Time to go, hey.'

Paul leads them out of the gallery. Seven behind him, Jouma last, carrying the horns. Jouma complaining in Flats-speak about being the slave, about this Mozambican coming home with them. Not noticing Seven make his move, going round Paul. Jouma crashing into Paul as the big man stops, dropping the torch, his hands clutching at his chest.

In the darkness Seven dancing away, springing forward to put the flick knife in a third time. The Mozambican folding to his knees. Seven sticking him in the neck.

Jouma says, 'Yusses, my bru. You's fast.'

‘Part of the plan, no foreigners,’ says Seven, panting, picking up the torch. He turns it on Paul’s jerking body. They watch until the security guard lies still.