



THE HUNTER HAS BECOME THE PREY...

SCENT OF A  
**KILLER**

KEVIN LEWIS



[www.penguin.co.uk](http://www.penguin.co.uk)

Scent of a Killer  
by  
Kevin Lewis

Copyright © Kevin Lewis, 2010  
All rights reserved



Penguin Books Ltd

This is a limited extract from *Scent of a Killer*

To find out more please visit [www.penguin.co.uk](http://www.penguin.co.uk)

# Prologue

At first he thought he must be dreaming. Then, as the fog clouding his mind began to lift, he started to feel uneasy. Finally, with the full reality of his situation slowly becoming clear, Raymond Chadwick started to panic.

The brightly lit room he had woken up in was eerily quiet and smelled of antiseptic. He had no idea of where he was or how he had got there. The only thing he knew for sure was that something was terribly, terribly wrong.

The overhead lights were dazzling, like staring directly into the sun, but when Chadwick tried to shut his eyes and turn away nothing happened. He couldn't move. For some reason his whole body seemed to have stopped working. His arms, legs, fingers, toes, lips, tongue – they were all useless. He couldn't even blink.

What on earth was going on? The last thing he could remember was sitting in the passenger seat of a fast-moving car. After that, everything had suddenly gone blank. And now he had woken up in . . . a hospital? That was the only thing that made sense. There must have been a crash, some kind of accident. How badly hurt was he? Was he going to be paralysed for

the rest of his life? Please God, no! Anything but that.

Chadwick forced himself to calm down, to concentrate, to slow down his racing heart and take in as much as possible about his situation. He knew he was lying on his back, naked from the waist upwards – he could feel the cold air against his skin – but nothing hurt, he wasn't in any kind of pain at all.

His fuddled brain searched desperately for an explanation. He still felt as though he was waking up from a deep sleep so perhaps he had just undergone an operation and was coming out of the anaesthesia. That too seemed to fit the facts. But if that was the case, why was there no one here with him? Why had he been left all alone?

Then another thought came into his mind and terror started to rise within him. What if the operation had not yet started? What if he remained awake during the whole procedure? He had read about cases like that and they had become the stuff of his nightmares.

Then, from somewhere off to his right, came the sound of footsteps. Solid shoes against a tiled floor. A steady clip, clip, clip, coming closer and closer. The footsteps clipped their way around the room, moving to one side, pausing for a few seconds, then moving back. A few moments later came the sound of a voice, a gentle, slightly muffled voice repeating his name over and over, assuring him that everything was going to be all right, that there was nothing to worry about.

A sense of ease slowly washed over him. The physical presence of another human being in the room was all the proof Chadwick needed that he had not been forgotten, that he was being cared for.

And there was more. The fact that the doctor was talking to him meant they knew he was conscious. Also, the fact that he was being reassured meant he was surely over the worst and on the road to recovery.

As he began to calm down he focused on the voice. There was something familiar about it. Chadwick knew he had heard it before but struggled to place it. Just then something appeared at the bottom of his field of vision. A head, covered in a tight-fitting green cap, was leaning over his torso, examining him. As the head moved along his body he could see the edge of a surgical mask covering the lower part of the face, leaving only the eyes visible.

For a brief moment the eyes looked directly into his. They were cold, detached. He could sense no emotion in them as the head vanished out of view.

A clatter of metal against metal was followed by the return of the head and a warm sensation on Chadwick's chest as a soft palm pressed down on to the space between his nipples.

The muffled voice spoke again. 'Don't worry, Raymond. It's all going to be okay. I'm going to make it all okay.'

The fingers were spread wide and felt good against his cold skin. A thumb started to slide back and forth

across his sternum, pushing his chest hair aside. Slowly the hand began to press more firmly until it was forcing his shoulder blades flat against the bed beneath him.

Then a new sound. A muffled giggle. A laugh. The tone of the voice changed, becoming harsher, rising with excitement. ‘You really thought you were going to get away with it didn’t you?’ the voice said. ‘You truly believed that no one was ever going to find out. But you were wrong, Raymond. So wrong. You can’t go around treating people like that. You just can’t. Now you’re going to have to pay. You know what I’m going to have to do to you, don’t you?’

Chadwick’s heart began to race. He tried to move but found himself still paralysed. He stared back at the eyes, which were now wide with excitement, and he could sense a smile beneath the mask.

Then came something new. Something awful. It was at once white-hot and ice cold, a pin prick of intense pressure that seemed to pierce downwards, moving deep inside him, becoming more and more agonizing by the second. The pain was like nothing he had ever known. He felt his skin tearing, his muscles ripping, as the razor-sharp surgical scalpel sliced into him. He felt the fountains of warm blood spilling out over his sides, the pinch of cold air against his exposed internal organs. Chadwick tried to open his mouth and scream, but no sound came out.

The hands were deep inside him now, pulling, twisting and wrenching his organs apart. It couldn’t

be happening, but it was. He was being cut open by someone who was only too well aware that he was still awake. This was no mistake, this was no innocent error. He was witnessing his own cold-blooded murder.

The voice that had once gently called his name was now breathless with excitement. The sound of euphoric laughter was still ringing in Chadwick's ears as the life seeped out of him and the bright lights slowly faded into absolute, eternal darkness.



# I

‘I know the drill.’

Detective Chief Inspector Neil Barker looked across the table and stared hard at the stern-faced woman sitting opposite him. ‘Then you know that we have to go through it anyway,’ he said, trying hard to hide his irritation. Then, as he looked around the room, his face seemed to soften slightly. ‘Listen,’ he said quietly. ‘No one likes being on the receiving end of all this. Let’s just get through it as best we can.’

‘Whatever,’ came the surly reply.

DCI Barker shuffled the sheaf of papers in his hands, cleared his throat and began. ‘For the benefit of the tape, please state your full name, your warrant number and the unit to which you are currently attached.’

‘Stacey Elizabeth Collins. 177265. MIT South.’

‘Thank you. I am Detective Chief Inspector Neil Barker, attached to the Anti-Corruption Unit of the Directorate of Professional Standards. My colleague is ...’

Barker switched his gaze to the black woman in the neat grey trouser suit sitting on his right.

‘Detective Inspector Karen Willis, also attached to the Directorate of Professional Standards.’

‘Also present on behalf of DI Collins is a Federation representative. Could you introduce yourself?’

‘Alan Matheson. Police Sergeant 383, posted at Plumstead Police Station.’

‘Thank you,’ said Barker, nodding in the man’s direction. He then twisted his body to face the middle-aged man behind him. ‘And the final person in the room is . . .’

The man leaned forward so his soft Scottish accent would carry across to the microphone. ‘Detective Chief Inspector Warren Milton. Serious Organized Crime Agency.’

Barker turned back and continued. ‘The date is Thursday, 13 May, and the time by my watch is now 5.32 p.m. We are in an interview room at Peckham Police Station. At the conclusion of this interview I will explain the procedure for dealing with the tapes and your access to them. Do you understand?’

Collins raised her eyes to the grey-flecked tiles of the suspended ceiling. ‘Of course.’

‘Before I say anything further I will caution you that you do not have to say anything but it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence. Do you understand?’

Collins understood only too well. After eighteen years in the police force she had given the same warning on hundreds of occasions – every time she made an arrest. And, as one of the Met’s leading

detectives, Collins made more arrests than most. This was the first time she had ever found herself on the opposite side of the interview desk, and it was an experience she would have happily gone without.

Normally she would have been sitting in one of the comfortable wooden chairs, not the flimsy plastic one that flexed every time she moved and was almost impossible to relax in. It was, of course, just one of a number of ploys used to give officers an edge over suspects during interviews.

*Don't rise to the bait. Don't let them get to you.*

'I understand,' Collins said softly.

'Then let us proceed.' Barker jerked his head towards Willis, who opened a slim manila envelope and pulled out a series of grainy colour photographs. She slid the first across the table towards Collins. 'This was taken by SO11 officers involved in long-term surveillance of the main target in a drug-trafficking investigation,' she said. 'You will see there is an obvious cause for concern. This is your chance to explain.'

Collins glanced down at the print and needed no time at all to take in all its details. After all she was in it. She had lived it. Taken at dusk using a powerful telephoto lens, the photograph showed her speaking to a man called Jack Stanley in a park near the ruins of an old manor house in Chiselhurst, Kent.

Collins had known Stanley for just about as long as she had known anyone in her entire life. And for just about as long as she had known him, Jack Stanley

had been on the wrong side of the law. Over the years he had progressed from a petty criminal on the Blenheim Estate, where he and Collins had grown up, to a leading figure in the South London criminal underworld.

When Collins joined the police service she quickly reached an agreement with her childhood friend. Stanley provided her with tips about the activities of drug gangs and armed robbers, and even helped her to recover stolen goods. In return Stanley received subtle hints about potential police investigations into his growing criminal empire and detailed explanations about the latest forensic techniques that might be used against him.

It was a covenant with the Devil that saw Collins's career go from strength to strength as she developed a reputation as an outstanding and highly effective officer, but Stanley benefited even more. The majority of his tip-offs led to arrests of members of rival gangs who were trying to muscle in on his patch, thus clearing the way for his own people.

What Stanley didn't know was that Collins had, for the most part, always managed to avoid doing anything illegal. The hints about police investigations amounted to little more than underworld gossip, while details of new techniques and technology could all be found in publicly available sources, just so long as you looked hard enough. But there were plenty of times when Collins sailed too close to the line or briefly stepped over it. It was, she told herself

time and time again, the only way she could do her job. It was a necessary evil.

Collins cut her ties with Stanley soon after he was arrested as the prime suspect in a gangland slaying. He was acquitted after all the key prosecution witnesses suddenly and mysteriously withdrew their statements and developed collective amnesia. In the years that followed, Collins always knew there would come a time when their paths crossed once more.

The meeting in the park where the photographs had been taken was the first time they had seen one another in several years. Collins had run into a brick wall while investigating the case of a young boy named Daniel Eliot, who had been kidnapped and murdered. Thanks to his criminal contacts, Stanley had been able to help out, but in return he had wanted Collins to help him uncover an informant in his organization. Collins had refused point blank, as it was clear that Stanley would have immediately had the grass executed and Collins didn't want blood on her hands. But soon afterwards her daughter, Sophie, had gone missing and she had needed Stanley's help once more.

Collins had been trying to stall Stanley ever since, but now the demons of the past were coming back to haunt her. Not even her closest colleagues knew just how much assistance this gangland figure had provided for her over the years. And they could never know. While she could justify her behaviour to herself, allowing the whole truth to come out would

mean instant dismissal and possible prosecution. If she was going to get out of this with her career intact, she was going to have to tread very carefully.

Collins looked up at each person in the room in turn before fixing her gaze on DCI Barker. ‘I’ve known Jack Stanley my whole life,’ she began. ‘We grew up together on the same estate. When I joined the police he became an unofficial informant. As I’m sure you’re aware, a lot of that kind of thing went on back then, before the regulations were tightened up.’

‘That’s ancient history,’ interrupted Willis, her dark eyes flashing with irritation. ‘This photograph was taken three months ago –’

‘I was just getting to that,’ said Collins, turning her gaze to meet that of her accuser. ‘I haven’t seen much of Stanley since I joined MIT, but I looked him up when I was working on a kidnap case. The money drop had been due to take place on the Blenheim and I thought some of Stanley’s people might have seen something.’

‘I know that, technically, it was a breach of protocol, but we were up against the clock and there was no time to go through official channels. As it turned out, Stanley was able to provide some crucial information that had a significant impact on the resolution of the case.’ She was doing well, sticking as close to the real truth as possible to keep her story convincing and her delivery natural.

Willis nodded slowly. ‘We’re fully aware of your

role in the Daniel Eliot case and I can see that someone in Stanley's position would have been well worth talking to.' She slid three more photographs across the table as she spoke. 'But that still leaves the question of why you went to see Stanley again three weeks later. And exactly why on earth you felt the need to take your thirteen-year-old daughter with you.'

Collins breathed in slowly and deeply through her nose, attempting to fill her lungs with a much needed calming breath without letting it show. She had expected the pictures of her and Stanley in the park. She had not expected these new shots. All her earlier responses had been carefully rehearsed. Now she would have to do it on the fly.

*Don't rise to the bait. Don't let them get to you.*

She carefully studied each picture. The first showed Collins getting out of her car in front of a set of large metal gates, the entrance to Stanley's palatial home. Inside the car, clearly visible in the passenger seat, was Sophie. The second photograph had been taken a few moments later. The gates were open and Jack Stanley was leaning casually against one of the posts. The third photograph showed Sophie out of the car and Jack Stanley smiling broadly at her.

Collins could sense that every pair of eyes in the room, including those of her Federation rep, were staring intently at her. She looked up from the photographs and met the gaze of DI Willis head on. 'It's completely innocent,' she said softly.

‘Sophie had gone missing during the course of the kidnap investigation. I was distraught because the kidnapper had uncovered some personal information about me, and there seemed to be a possibility that he had snatched my daughter. I knew she had last been seen on the Blenheim, so I asked Stanley to help find her. A couple of hours later he delivered her safely to my parents. The day these photographs were taken, Sophie and I had simply gone there to thank him.’

There was an uncomfortable silence after Collins had finished her explanation.

‘That seems a little unlikely,’ said Willis, leaning back and folding her arms in front of her. ‘And, might I say, pretty bloody convenient, considering what you are being accused of.’

‘And what exactly am I being accused of?’ asked Collins.

Willis looked across at Barker, who leaned forward, placing his elbows on the table in front of him. ‘We are investigating allegations that you have been passing police intelligence to Jack Stanley.’

*Don't rise to the bait.*

‘I have never done any such thing. I never would.’

‘During the time he was an unregistered informant, did Stanley ever ask you for intelligence information?’ asked Barker.

‘Of course not.’

‘Have you ever offered Stanley intelligence information?’

‘No. Never. Absolutely not.’

‘And what about during these two meetings? Did he ask you for anything in return for the assistance he had given you?’

At that moment Collins slowly, deliberately, swept her eyes across to her right in a move she had practised to absolute perfection.

Years of training and experience had taught Collins, along with other officers, common ways of telling when people are lying. When a person remembers something that actually happened to them, their eyes usually move to the right, an outward manifestation of the brain activating its memory centre, which is located in the right lobe. By contrast, when a person tells a lie, their eyes move up and to the left as their brain activates its cognitive centre to enable the person to create a false story.

Collins knew that looking to the left while she gave her explanation about the photograph would be an indication that she was making up her answer. But if she was going to survive this encounter with the DPS and SOCA officers unscathed, she was not only going to have to lie but she was also going to have to get away with it. Few could fake their eye movements as well as Collins could.

‘No. He didn’t ask me for anything. He wouldn’t do that.’

DI Willis sat forward again and exhaled noisily. It was clear that she didn’t believe a word of what she was hearing. ‘This could all be bullshit. Is there anyone who can even confirm that your daughter

had gone missing in the first place?’ she said, a sarcastic tone evident to all in her voice.

Collins could feel the muscles tightening in her chest and her hackles rising. ‘What are you trying to say? Are you calling me a liar? You asked me to explain why I had my daughter with me and I’m doing just that. At least do me the courtesy of hearing me out.’

‘I did listen. I heard every one of your lies loud and clear and I don’t care to hear any more.’

*Don’t rise to the . . . ab bell with it.*

A red cloud of mist seemed to fill Collins’s eyes, and she slammed her fist down on the table in front of her. ‘How dare you? Yes, there are other people who knew about Sophie being missing. I was desperate. I called everyone. Check with James McNultie, check with DS Woods, check with my parents, for God’s sake.’

‘We will, we’ll check with them all. You bet we will.’

‘You do that, and then you come back here and apologize when you realize I’ve been telling you the truth.’

‘I’m just doing my job,’ snapped Willis.

‘What job is that? Spreading so much fear and mistrust among the rank and file that honest coppers are too scared to stick their necks out.’

‘Anyone who sticks their neck out too far deserves to get it chopped off.’

Collins leaned towards Willis.

‘Are you threatening me? You pissy little . . .’

Barker raised both his hands in the air. ‘Okay, okay. Calm down. Both of you. I’ll tell you what’s going to happen right now, DI Collins. At this time there is no intention to charge you with any offence and therefore you will be free to return to your duties. You are not suspended. You’ll be joining a new murder squad reporting to DCI Anderson. Per my orders, he’ll be keeping a close eye on you. And if you want to use Jack Stanley or anyone else as an informant of any kind, you’ll have to register them. I also suggest that in future any meetings with him – accidental or otherwise – should be logged with DCI Anderson or another senior officer.’

Collins shook her head. The time had come for her to make her closing statement, to wrap this up in a neat package. ‘It was just a one-off, based on the circumstances of the time. There’s no reason to think I’ll be meeting up with Jack Stanley ever again. He was part of my past and, during the Eliot investigation, he briefly became part of my present, but I can assure you he has no place in my future or in that of my daughter.’

‘Probably just as well,’ said a voice from the far corner of the room. DCI Milton was speaking for the first time. ‘SOCA are getting ready to make a move against Stanley’s criminal empire. It’s going to be a devastating blow. You wouldn’t want to be anywhere near him when that goes down.’

Barker, Willis and Milton watched Collins and her

Fed rep walk out, shutting the door of the interview room behind them.

‘So, what do you think?’ asked Willis.

Barker sat back down and placed the tips of his index fingers at the base of his nose. ‘She’s hiding something. I’d put money on it. Covered it up well at the beginning, but it showed through when she lost her temper. Tell you what, Karen, you’ve got that annoying sceptical tone down to a tee.’

Willis giggled like a schoolgirl. ‘There’s nothing like a good wind-up for loosening the tongue. I’m not convinced she’s passing information, though. She’s way too savvy for anything like that. I’m inclined to believe her.’

‘But pictures don’t lie.’

‘No, but we had that DI on her unit’ – she checked her papers – ‘Drabble, who was keeping an eye on her and she didn’t come up with anything. I’ve reviewed her last few cases and as far as I’m concerned she’s clean. Not totally flawless but clean enough.’

DCI Milton moved to the centre of the room and perched on the edge of the table. He wore glasses and had a neatly trimmed full-face beard that was just beginning to go grey at the outermost edges. Barker looked up at him. ‘Being a bit free and easy with the old intel there, aren’t you? I wasn’t aware that SOCA had a raid planned; I didn’t think you’d got that far.’

Milton smiled. ‘We haven’t. There’s nothing

planned,' he said. 'But I want to see if any news of it gets back to Stanley. If it does, it can only have come from one place. And we'll know for sure if Collins is dirty or not.'