

Peter Cromarty

CLIMACTIC SCENE

[Excerpt from *Death or Grievous Bodily Harm*]

'I'll pick you up somewhere convenient for both of us. The southwest corner of the cemetery at Archerfield Airport at zero-three-zero-zero. It's nice and quiet and out of the way. I'm not waiting, so if you're not there, I'll go without you.'

'They have a cemetery at Archerfield Airport?'

I chuckled. 'Yes, it's not what you think—it's called "God's Acre" from the old settler days when it was farmland.'

'Okay. I'll be there. But why so early? Wouldn't it be better to wait for daylight?'

'You've worked night shifts. So have I—many years as an air traffic controller. What time of the day are you most tired? When your body is at its lowest ebb? Between three and four in the morning. That's why we're going to hit them then. Catch these bastards fast asleep, I hope.'

'Okay.'

'And look, Golni, I am bringing my son out, come what may,' I said with heavy finality. Through gritted teeth, I continued, 'I've had enough of being beaten, shot at, kicked, and threatened. If these fuckers think they can push my family and me around, they are seriously mistaken. I am not running away anymore. So don't get between me and the people who are holding my son. You can arrest any of them that are still alive when I've finished with them, but don't get in my way. I'm going on the offensive, and I intend it to be very offensive!'

'I understand.'

'Do you? I'm pretty sure you will have no authority or jurisdiction on the base. So you'll be like me—a member of the public breaking into a military establishment. Do you still want to go on those terms?'

'Yes, Toby. I want to get these people. They're responsible for a lot of the death, misery, and crime around here and are making shedloads of money out of it, and they don't give a shit who they hurt in the process. Plus, they beat my friend and colleague 'til they nearly killed him, and they did kill my boss. It has to end. I'm going to help you end it.'

'Good on ya. Okay, thanks Golni.' I paused to collect my thoughts. 'Can you get hold of body armour for three plus yourself? If not, for as many as you can lay your hands on. Oh, and as much firepower as you can muster.'