

But! What If. By HK Mayfield

Anything you can do?

Premise: When pity is cast aside and ignored.

The owner of a chain of supermarkets, Tony Bonillo, a sixty-year-old, solidly built middle-weight. He is a business identity of Anglo/Italian heritage, and he is in conversation with one of his close friends and associates, Albert (Crazy Albie) Woods, a tall, wiry enigma of a man who is well-known and fearfully respected, villain and criminal gang boss. While riding together in the privacy of a train carriage travelling into the city, they are in discussion regarding a matter that is important to Tony.

The matter of Tony's nephew being the victim of a standover man, known as a tax-man, to extort money by force and violence, not discounting murder in their endeavours. It was the unmistakable belief that Tony's nephew had access to Tony' wealth or maybe he could be used as a ransom demand that he had been abducted, tortured, and dis-embowelled by a notorious and despised underworld figure in the process, and is now confined to a wheelchair, and forced to wear a colostomy bag.

Tony is respectably and gratefully reminding Albert that it is with the money that he had stolen earlier in their criminal career that had set him up and made him successful in straight business dealings. Albert simple nods in agreement. Then he asks Tony politely what he can do to help him with his dilemma? Tony informs Albert that the police have a character in custody at a suburban police station, under arrest and being held for questioning regarding serious allegations. He is expected to be held there for a minimum of two more days. Then he will receive bail and have to periodically visit the local magistrate’s court to defend charges.

Tony assures Albert that this is the same man responsible for Tony’s nephew’s torture and serious injuries sustained in the attack. The information gleaned from the underworld seems to confirm this beyond a doubt. The accused, Eric Sampson, is a well-known and highly feared psychopathic, sadistic brute, from the North. Hailing from Brisbane, with an intimidating look about him. With him having a square jaw and an utterly flattened nose like that of a prizefighter, and what appears to be a slight lisp, and a permanently grumpy attitude, who believes that he is so feared that nobody would ever think of trying to take him on or harm him, only because of his reputation.

He seldom leaves the area that he hails from, that being from Brisbane. But he does own a little known holiday bungalow in Port Macquarie, in N.S.W. where he feels the safest and protected while away from his own turf, where it is doubtful that he will come under any form of attack. But there are the odd occasions that he has to travel further afield, such as the regular appearances at a magistrate’s court, and also at times to areas in N.S.W and Victoria to ply the horrendous and heinous trade that he practices.

Eric Sampson is what is known in the criminal world as a tax-man. He has a small band of equally deranged sadistic psychopaths who act on his every command. He is one of the lowest forms of criminal with him preying on other criminals, as far as stealing their ill-gotten gains by way of extreme torture methods. His favourite targets were drug dealers, and high-end robbers and crooks. Upon learning through the criminal grapevine of any significant drug deal whispered to go down, or cash robbery, Sampson would pounce on the individuals concerned, abduct them and take them to a secluded location and torture them until they gave up their money or goods. He was known to stab and slash people. Use electricity and oxyacetylene torches on them. He would use sulphuric acid to drip on victims or casually pluck an eye out, and worst of all, disembowel one or two. It is known that some people who he is accused of attacking had been killed in the process. Murders were not beyond him. From those in the criminal world who did know of his existence, he was despised. He was also well-known to wear body armour underneath an oversized wind-cheater as his most common attire. He carried a Russian nine mil automatic handgun and brought a large dagger with him at all times.

Albert is listening patiently when Tony asks him if he could arrange the abduction of the police suspect while he was being held in minimum security circumstances. Albert does not appear to be shocked by request but asks Tony if he thought how awkward that would make things on a political level, such as raiding a police escorting party and abducting or freeing a prisoner. That would leave egg on a lot of people’s faces, and viewed as rather severe in the eyes of the law, similar to the seriousness as that applied in the great train robbery convictions. Robbing from the Crown! Now that was a big no-no.

Tony agrees with Albert. But he reminds Albert that not so very long ago, men used to rush a small jailhouse somewhere and overpower the few, if not single law enforcement officer on duty and free the prisoner. Whether it was to release an accomplice or to get access to a person whom they would then deal with as a lynch mob and hang them. The point being, Tony says, is it can be done, and it can be done swiftly. Pick the best opportunity to strike when the target is being escorted on foot by protection officers between buildings or structures while moving to or from the transport vehicle that they arrive in or are due to leave in.

In actuality, it could be accomplished quite quickly if the men involved have what it takes, and has the commitment to commit to the attack. He adds as an inducement that he is prepared to pay, very handsomely, any man that would be involved in the venture. Albert sits for a while to ponder in silence. After a while, he tells Tony to let him think things over.

It is when the train eventually arrives at the city terminal, Tony and Albert part ways. Tony returns to his home to think and to plan revenge. It has been made clear that the actions and intentions of the attacking team are merely for the illegal release of a prisoner, and no more. To reduce any possible charges should anybody be arrested in connection with the crime at a later date? They could not be held responsible, or to account as to the welfare or whereabouts of the said freed prisoner once they had released them.

This would be an area entrusted to men the most loyally aligned to Tony, in the form of two of his other nephews, the brothers of the injured nephew, Edward, one of them being Chris, a well-controlled, intelligent guy. Then there was John, a smart, witty, and psychopathically questionable character. They were well aware of the treatment their brother Edward had suffered at the hands of Eric Sampson and had vowed to switch off emotionally and show him absolutely no mercy or quarter when it came to any treatment they would inflict upon him should they ever get the chance to. Their opportunity was coming.

Tony Bonillo and Albert Woods had been inseparable friends since boyhood. They were from an equally economically poor background and raised alongside each other in the derelict part of Darlinghurst, Sydney, living in rat-infested accommodation. But the people of the area knew love and concern for each other. They had gone right through their schooling years together and were as close and loyal to each other as natural brothers.

They had been mere scallywags up until they were about fourteen years of age. Then they had started to venture out on criminal activities that were of a more severe nature. What had started off as pinching the odd lolly or sweet from a corner shop had developed into breaking and entering of commercial premises, burglary on regular shop premises, and even cash snatches from people taking or bringing their business takings to the local banks. Tony had always escaped conviction, but Albert had on some occasions been collared and sent to a juvenile detention centre, and eventually to jail, forcing him to grow up rather rapidly, and hard.

Over the years they had gotten deeper and deeper into criminal activities. It was not merely robbery anymore; they had branched out into the protection game. Not as standover merchants threatening businesses, but as good deterrents concerning the mugs and the maggots that tried to shakedown any unsuspecting corner store or grocery agent. Their reputation as hard men was without question. They had spent their time letting it be known that they could look after themselves, and would always back up or square up for any violation against them.

After a decade or so of dangerous criminal activity, Tony had reached the stage of accruing and saving enough money to enter into legitimate business. He had started by investing in one supermarket and had developed his interest in a successful chain of supermarkets in relatively short few years. The change had been brought about by the relationship between Tony and a young lady he had been courting for some years, Brenda Marriot, who was the second youngest daughter of a very wealthy family.

He had married Brenda, but unfortunately, it was destined that they could not produce any children of their own. This had led to Tony solidifying his relationship with his three nephews, Edward, Chris, and John Norris, his sister's children. The hidden blessing was that when Tony started his venture into legitimate retailing, any question made about where he got his startup revenue from was usually put down to interest-free loans from Brenda's Family. Albert had chosen to stay in his chosen profession and continue in a totally illegal, yet very profitable and well protected criminal empire of his own. He was one of the actual criminal governors in Sydney, and was old school, that not being involved or dealing drugs. Albert was more a case of sheer and deadly muscle.

A month of covert planning had gone into Tony's original request. Albert informs him that things could indeed be arranged as intelligence had forewarned Albert that Sampson was due to appear in a local magistrate’s court to face minor outstanding charges. But it would be quite a costly exercise for Tony, should he wish to commence with the contract. Tony assures Albert that all is acceptable with him, and Albert could merely bill him when Sampson is handed over. When Albert asks Tony where he wants Sampson delivered to, Tony tells him where they take anybody that they are going to off. Albert simply nods.

Albert reflects back on his relationship with Tony, and he can't help but giggle or shake his head at old memories. How cheekily funny Tony was. How charming he could be. How naturally polite he was to women. The how game he was to have a stand-up knuckle, and just how skilful and proficient that he was in a dust-up. But most of all he was remembered as a brilliant thief and criminal organiser. Albert had a small habit of rubbing an old, thick, scar on the left side of his neck starting just under the ear and running towards the centre of his neck when he was in deep thought about anything substantial. He knew that if it were not for Tony’s intervention that the initial slash wound would have gone around his neck entirely to his right ear.

Albert and Tony had robbed and plundered Sydney’s commercial financial heart and the rest of N.S.W. for decades. They had been involved in many notorious robberies. They had also been heavily involved in what was regarded as necessary protection schemes. Just like any reputable security company, they earned their money by deterring the average mugs from targeting certain businesses for standover reasons. Albert would joke that they were the real anti-extortion squad.

But Albert knew in his heart, and from experience that he could rely on Tony’s loyalty, help, and support to the ultimate point, that of murder when it came to rival members in the criminal world. Otherwise what is referred to as civilians was as safe as houses when it came to violence and criminal unrest.

Even though Tony had become successful and recognised for his genuine charity work around his local area, the link between Tony and Albert had never been broken. Tony had undoubtedly dropped off active criminal duty as far as personally appearing on raids and robberies were concerned, but he would often confer with Albert as to the planning or occasional assistance in a crime. He was also very active in what they called ‘The dispute settlement industry.

They did a lot of work for unions, all within legal parameters, but with a leaning towards a threat. No developer, builder, or project manager was ignorant to the power and persuasion that could be applied by the use of their services. Albert was terrifyingly feared for his level of violence and the ability to administer it. Whereas Tony was known to be more like a gentleman and deemed as being far more intelligent and business-like than Albert, but a man that you did not fuck with. He was known in circles as: ‘No Baloney Tony.’ He did not suffer fools easily, and he was known to have great shit detectors. He was tough to fool, bluff, or successfully deceive.

Tony did have the ability though to completely divorce himself from crime and its tentacles when it came to his wife and family. He was as passive as a Labrador with them, never losing his temper; he is free in his praise and proud of them. He is devoted to his Sister and her sons and went out of his way to keep them on the straight and narrow, but the two younger boys, Chris and John had started to lean towards a life of crime without Tony's direct influence. Considering this determined attitude by the younger brothers, Tony had agreed to take them under his wing so as at least keep a protective eye on them. Their elder brother Edward was as straight as a dye, but he was extremely loyal to his family. He was managing one of Tony's busiest supermarket stores and thriving in the job.

Eric Sampson had gotten word through an ex-employee of Tony’s busiest supermarket situated in Randwick, Sydney, that over a weekend the store could take and keep in its large vault-like safe, as much as twenty thousand dollars in cash before banking on a Monday. It was also rumoured that a lot of drugs in the form of cocaine, kilos worth, was also believed to be kept in the safe. This rumour was pure rubbish and was used as an embellishment to the information, based on a guess or suspicion that with the supermarket being owned by Anglo/Italian interests, it acted as a safe house for drug distribution.

Sampson set his sights on the supermarket. Not knowing that the manager, Edward Norris, was a relative and nephew of the real owner, Tony Bonillo. He was, in fact, Tony's sister’s eldest son, and he was intensely loyal to Tony. Although married with two small children of his own, Edward put everything he had into making the supermarket a profitable and expanding business. He would often stay behind after the nine pm closing time after all of the other staff had left for home. He ran the store with responsibility like it was his own.

Sampson had slipped into Sydney unnoticed with a plan in mind. He was hell-bent on making an attack on the supermarket, mostly because he had chosen to believe the bullshit about the safe housing kilos of cocaine. He envisaged walking away with millions all for the sake of an hour or so of his time plying his favourite trade.

Sampson and his team had found themselves in separate hotel accommodation for their stay in Sydney. The attack would happen on the Sunday evening after closing time, as the store was permitted to trade on a Sunday by the local council, when the employees had left, and the manager was left alone, inside of the store. The plan was to pounce on him when he was going and, bundle him back into the store and force him to disconnect the alarm system. And then to bundle him into one of the chilling rooms where the small goods from the delicatessen were kept, believing it to be soundproof from any of the howlings or screaming that was likely to take place if the manager did not comply with demands to immediately give up the combination number to the safe.

Sampson’s plan went off without a hitch catching Edward by surprise by its swiftness and him still being deep in thought about the business as he is locking the front doors. He is bundled back inside and has the good sense to obey the demand to disconnect the alarm system. The doors of the store are locked by an assistant of Sampson’s and then they all head for the chiller room.

A chair is found and dragged into the chiller for Edward to be seated upon and bound. Before he knows it, he is tied fast. He is frightened but not yet panicking. Sampson wastes no time in standing in front of Edward and delivering what he perceives to be a quick, sharp stab of pain. To gain the immediate attention of his victim, by poking a rigid thumb directly into Edwards eyeball, causing him to yell out in pain before Sampson waits for the first howling and objection coming from Edward to subside. Then he positions himself and fires four powerful blows with a clenched fist to Edward’s face, breaking his nose and fracturing an eye socket.

He tells Edward to get the message that he is going to give up the combination to the safe or he is going to suffer really severely… not gently like he has just experienced. Edward is mentally reeling from the effect of the blows, but he says nothing and tries to suck up the pain. Sampson then produces a large knife and commences to draw it lightly across Edward's throat, not enough to cut into his wind-pipe or be fatal in its administering, but enough to cause bleeding and for Edward to feel it running down his neck and having to deal with the physical pain involved.

Sampson spits at Edward; what is the combination? Edward does not answer. Sampson reaches forward and rips open Edward’s shirt, and then he slashes Edward across the upper chest with the knife, opening a large, long gash that bleeds profusely. Edward screams out in pain and then collapses into the chair wriggling uncontrollably even though he is bound, trying to deal with the agony.

When Edward has gotten to a stage of heaving and hissing trying to handle the pain he is in, Sampson says to him, “Once more, idiot! What is the fucking combination to the safe?” Again Edward refuses to answer. Sampson then tells him that it is OK, as they can now get down to business proper. But he says, “Before we do… why are you so fucking loyal to a gang of spics who don’t really give a fuck about you, and what’s more, it isn’t your money that I’m taking. If you don’t want me to kill you… then give me the fucking combination.” Edward will still not speak. Not to give any information, not to plead for any mercy, and not to satisfy his attacker. It is now that Sampson informs Edward that he is going to ramp things up.

He steps to the side of the chair holding Edward and places his left palm firmly on Edward’s right hand. He then takes hold of Edward's little finger with his right hand and quickly raises it upwards and backward breaking it. Again Edward howls in pain. It is then that Sampson shifts to the other side of the chair and repeats the process on Edward’s left hand. It is too much for Edward to bear and he passes out.

When Edward does regain some agonising consciousness, he hears Sampson calling out a command.

Sampson instructs two of his henchmen to join him and to hold Edward’s head in a position facing the ceiling of the chiller, and they do so. One of the goons then places a piece of wood about twelve inches long by two inches thick into Edwards’s mouth to keep his jaws forced apart. Sampson then removes a pair of pliers from his inside jacket pocket and begins to start manually loosening and then pulling out some Edward's teeth one at a time. This process causes Edward to pass out from the trauma and pain. Sampson steps back to gain his breath, and the two sycophants drop off momentarily. Sampson comments that he can't believe it, the endurance for the pain that this little mongrel could muster, as most victims had well sold their souls by now.

Edward is still unconscious, and the goons are trying to bring him around calling him and waiving a bottle of smelling salts under his nose. Edward does regain a very agonising consciousness when he hears Sampson say, “Now get yourself ready for this one idiot. I’ve told you, give it up… or you will be given up.” He then instructs his lackeys to remove Edward’s shoes and socks. They do so.

As Edward sits in the chair, one of the goons raises one of Edward’s feet and places a wooden block under it letting the toes rest upon the block and forcibly holds it in place. Sampson is passed a hammer by another accomplice and immediately starts to smash it down on Edwards exposed toes, setting Edward off into another screaming episode. He passes out again.

They again try to resuscitate him. It takes a while, but they are eventually successful in doing so. Edward can only groan, moan, and whine, but he will still not talk. Sampson points out to his goons that this is what you call a fucking idiot-moron taking the torture that he is for some other bastard. Sampson is then reminded that they have been there longer than planned and the regular security guard would be making his way around shortly to check on the doors and windows and such, and they would be better off not still being there, just for security’s sake.

Sampson tells the goons to hold the other foot under the wooden block so as he can continue for a while. He says that if the victim doesn't give up the combination after this onslaught, then he Sampson, would put an end to it and leave. He commences bashing Edward's other foot with the hammer causing the same reaction he had already caused with the first assault on his feet.

Edward has finally melted into the chair holding him and can only gargle and moan when Sampson closes in on Edward and tells him to have it his own way. He asks Edward if he knows anything about hara-kiri. He then commences to open up Edwards’s shirt entirely, and then he stabs Edward in the right-hand side of his stomach and then cuts across the stomach until he means to start pulling the knife in an upwards direction. This causes Edward's bowels to be revealed and begin to fall out of his belly. Edwards's scream of pain and agony is so loud that it is inaudible to the human ear, but the grimace of torture on his face and the look of absolute terror in his eyes are unmistakable.

One of the goons comments that they should get a move on and get the fuck out of there, as he was dying for a beer, without any concern whatsoever about Edward. They decide to leave Edward for dead and leave the store without locking it. As they start to disappear into the night, Sampson rips off his head mask and complains that this result is the reason that he usually likes the luxury of more extended periods during these exercises, to have time to finish the inquisition satisfactorily, coming away with the prize. He curses these rush jobs.

For some reason or other, not long after ten pm, the store’s assistant manager tries to call Edward at home to discuss some store-related matters, as he expected Edward to be well home from the store. He is informed by Brenda, that Edward has not arrived back yet. He then tries to call the store, but with no answer to the call. Purely on an uncomfortable hunch, the assistant manager decides to travel over to the store to see if Edward was still there working extra late.

Upon his arrival, he is astounded to find the front doors opened and nobody to be seen. He initially walks around the store calling out Edward's name, but no answer comes. It is a short while after checking the offices, toilets, and storage areas that he realises that there is only one place he has not reviewed, and that was the freezer and the chiller rooms. He heads for the main freezer first only to discover nobody inside. He then heads to the chiller and opens the door and enters.

He is immediately confronted with the sight of Edward slumped in the chair in horrific condition, covered in blood, patently evident that he had been bashed, and a telling omen of extremely dark blood pooling on the floor. It shocks and causes the assistant manager to balk and nearly puke at sight. He is initially frozen to the spot not knowing how to react, to employ fight or flight.

After a couple of moments, his instinct is to rush towards Edward and to see if he can help or assist him in any way. It is not until he is holding Edward that he realises the severity of his injuries when he views Edward's bowels hanging out onto his lap. He shudders and dashes out of the chiller to use a phone to call the police and an emergency ambulance, before returning with swathes of mutton cloth from the butcher's department to try and stop some of the bleedings and to plug wounds until the paramedics arrived.

In a fantastic time, both the police and the ambulance arrived on the scene almost simultaneously wasting not a moment trying to stabilise the critically injured Edward before whisking him off to intensive care, and the police can only secure the crime scene and take a statement from the assistant manager.

It is some weeks before Edward can be taken off the critical list due to the nature of his injuries and the odd infection that set in during recovery. He is eventually able to sit up in bed and have a conversation, although heavily medicated and still on painkillers. He is visited by Tony who has been well informed of all points of the attack.

The first comment that Edward makes to Tony is that this morphine stuff is hot shit. Tony agrees and tells Edward that the drug is so good and so useful that it is however highly dangerous and sought after by addicts. He reminds Edward that he might not know it yet, but he is successfully weaned off the drug so as not to develop a dependency on it when he finally leaves the hospital. Tony cannot stress how highly addictive morphine is.

Tony is not only shocked at the resilience and stubbornness of Edward regarding the attack. He tells him that he cannot believe that he would put himself through such a terrifying and agonisingly horrendous experience just to protect money. He says that they can always replace money, but not human life. He asks Edward what he was possibly thinking. Edward tells Tony that he doesn’t rightly know, but all that he could concentrate on was the fact that there wasn’t anything he could do really to improve his predicament, as he believed that Sampson intended to kill him all along, and he could only think, and focus on one resistive thought just. ‘Fuck you, cunt’, while he faced Sampson. Tony can’t resist breaking a small smile of approval appearing to understand.

Tony tells Edward that the matter does not end there, and Edward is specifically to leave things to Tony. It is then that Tony asks if Edward has any clue as to who is attacker could have been. Edward says no, as they remained faceless with hoods over their heads throughout the attack. But, Edward says he remembered that the chief torturer spoke with what is referred to as a short tongue, with sibilance on the s’s, similar to the actor Sean Connery. Tony registers this fact and tells Edward to take as long as he wishes to recoup and convalesce before he even thinks of returning to work. Tony promises to try to make it up to Edward for his unwavering loyalty by supplying whatever creature comforts Edward would like. Edward tells him that there is no need for that… after all… they are a family.

The final stages of the plan start to take shape, and the men chosen to take part have been deployed into training and practising the raid in a para-military fashion. They have gone as far as re-enacting the most likely movements and the path they would follow by the accused and his escorts. The intended scene of the abduction would take place in a large builder’s yard in a commercial area, controlled by one of Albert’s business associates. From the street layout, the open sections, and the perceived police paddy wagon at the rear of the magistrate’s court supplied for prisoner transport. This time Sampson would not have the luxury of having his body armour on or his gun or knife in his possession. Both Chris and John are to make their way to a property controlled by Tony, out in the middle of nowhere. It is a farm, primarily for vegetable production, but it has a small off-set piggery. ‘Who dares wins’ was the motto of Albert’s men.

The brothers are meant to arrive at the property to find Eric Sampson already ensconced, sitting handcuffed and strapped to a high armed wooden chair. But the job of the brothers was to primarily keep an eye on Sampson and to keep him where he was until the arrival of Tony, who would then deal with things and instruct any action to be taken.

Between the brothers, they discuss just how vicious or revengeful Tony was reported to be, or to have been. One thing stood out as being obvious, though, in their talk was that he was renowned for being tough! But he was equally famous for being fair! How he would treat Sampson upon his arrival, they could only guess. What if this… but what if that?

The raid to captures Sampson is on. He is to be transported back to jail upon being dealt with by the magistrate. There is an avenue of opportunity as he is being led to the police vehicle for transportation. Within seconds the unsuspecting escorts are piled upon and overpowered. Sampson is snatched and dragged away and quickly has a sack placed over his head before he is physically thrown into the back of a nearby waiting van to be promptly removed from the scene. The attack ends with some police officers handcuffed on the ground with their weapons missing but otherwise unhurt as the attackers disperse and disappear.

After a lengthy and uncomfortable ride for Sampson, who has received quite some bruises merely from bouncing about in the back of the van in which he is travelling? He is taken still handcuffed, with the sack in place over his head and shoulders into a structure and then down some steps, along with the corridor, and eventually into a small room where he is placed into a wooden chair and strapped in tightly. The sack remains over his torso, and he is left alone locked inside the room. He can only sit and wait and to think of the present predicament that he now faces. He has no clue as to what, or why this experience is happening, but his instincts are telling him that it was pay-back!

When the brothers first arrive at the property they initially drive close by the area sectioned off as the piggery. One of them mentions that he understands why it is built so far away from the residence… it fucking-well stinks. They arrive at the homestead and make their way inside. They drop their bags in a bedroom each and then organise making a fresh brew of coffee. John says while they wait for the coffee that he will just pop down into the cellar to make sure that Sampson was there and he was secured. He does so. On his return, he tells Chris that all is in order downstairs, and then he starts to drink his coffee.

The brothers eventually make their way down into the cellar and pass along the brick-lined corridor passing what appear to be holding cells. They open the door and enter the room where Sampson is. Sampson tenses upon their arrival and calls out in a meek challenge, “So you’re here then, are you?” Chris approaches Sampson and starts to cut away at the top of the sack covering his head and his shoulders until there is a hole made large enough for Sampson’s head to now fit through so as he can see clearly all that is around him. It is then that he realises that the chair he is sitting on and bound to is, in reality, an old-fashioned commode.

It looks like ‘old sparky’ the American electric chair used for executions. It is even rigged up to conduct electricity, but it isn't hooked up to an electrical source at this time. He also notices some items or objects that look like they have been specially designed to act as torture implements. Some he is sure that he recognises others he doesn't. He appears to strangely appreciate the set-up. He breaks into a wry smile when he notices the dentistry equipment and the handheld gas burner cylinders. He would be more content with the situation and the expected happenings that were about to take place if he were not the one sitting in the chair.

Sampson's first instinct is to ask where he is… and who has organised this? He is told to settle down and to remember that he is in no position to be asking questions, as it seems perfectly evident that it is him who is going to be required to be answering questions, not asking them. Sampson cannot help but call out in a faint disguise of bravado, trying to live up to his un-giving reputation. “So you are going to kill me then, are you? Well, make it fucking quick then.” John chimes up, “If we were here to kill you, pancake nose, you maggot, it would have been when we first entered the room… believe me.”

Sampson carries on with the first bluff and threats that he is used to making to other trussed up victims he has tortured. He suggests that the brothers better make sure that they do kill him as the consequences otherwise would be absolutely horrific and agonisingly painful for them both. He screams at them, “Don’t you fuckers know who I am?” He is ranting about all sorts of vicious and spiteful ways of torturing people. He tells the brothers that what they plan on doing to him doesn't matter, as he is a devout sadomasochist. Just like Jesus Christ himself. He professes; Now there was a man who understood pain, and he never winged and whined when it came his way! A man after my own heart he insists. I’m not saying that he was God, as God is a load of shit… so is the Devil. But he sure was a glowing example of resistance under pressure. And he, Sampson, is not afraid of being tortured, as at least he will get some pleasure out of it. Chris calmly says to him, “Oh, we’ll soon put that to the test Eric.”

John adds, “Fucking right we will”, followed by, “I could cut your wedding tackle off and let you bleed to death. Or slice your ears off like silly Mark Chopper Reid did, and let you bleed to death like he nearly did, the big, stupid, fat bastard. He was ignorant of the anatomy when it came to blood loss from the ears. If it weren’t for the screws, he would have bled to death, the silly, bloated oaf.”

Besides, comments John, if you don't believe in God, or the Devil, then where do you think that you're bound for, Heaven, or Hell. Sampson replies; nowhere, lights on, then lights off! Then it's all over. No God. No Devil. No Heaven... and no Hell.

John disagrees with him. He suggests that there is a Hell and Sampson is destined to dwell there.

He tells a story out loud. He says that one poor soul ended up in Hell, to be greeted by the Devil. He was given an initial guided tour to view some of the choices he had concerning the area and conditions he would spend eternity in. He is shown a room with people shivering beyond belief, wailing with the burning pain of ice burn. Then he is shown a room with people standing inside a roaring red-hot furnace with huge flames leaping upwards, shrieking in agony at the intense, unbearable heat. He is then shown a room with men standing up to their shoulders in a pit of mud-like substance, drinking hot mugs of coffee and smoking cigarettes.

He says that he chooses to stay in this particular room when the Devil invites him to jump into the pit where he will be handed a mug of coffee and a fag. He does so, jumping into the pit of what he realises through his sense of smell at the last moment, is that the hole is full of mashed human excrement. As he is handed a mug and a fag, a demon foreman arrives and instructs everybody that the tea-break is over, and they are to get back on their heads. John starts giggling uncontrollably at his own joke. He then asks Sampson. "Hey, Eric… What do you call a Russian with three bollocks?" Without waiting for an answer he says; "Who’dya… nickaknackeroff!” Then he guffaws in laughter.

When Sampson takes a break from his ranting and sneering, John informs him that no matter what Sampson wants to blather on about, he is destined for one thing only. When that thing is to be accomplished, it will be by one of two ways depending on the circumstances and mood at the time. One way would be for Sampson to be rendered stupefied and helpless, but still conscious and being held by the ankles and wrists and then lowered slowly into a tank of sulphuric acid that was on hand in another small room of the cellar, until he was totally submerged. Then John, explaining in minute detail, the last gulp of air while taking in unimagined agony that Sampson would feel before a mouthful of the corrosive and destructive acid was being sucked into his lungs during the process, before being completely submerged and becoming liquefied.

Or, John calmly comments, that Sampson while in the same stupefied state, may be bound and thrown into the tree shredder that was also on hand at the property, to reduce him into smaller chunks. Then the same pieces could be put through a commercial meat grinder on the side at the property, and then fed to the pigs. Who would be monitored for a few days so as they could be witnessed shitting out the evidence? “Either way, Eric, you’re fucked. The game is up for you… you disgusting, pagan bastard.”

Chris calmly sits and listens to the exchange as if he were a counsellor interviewing a married couple in relationship therapy. He shows no sign of anger or frustration. He lets John vent that.

John becomes engrossed in some of the tattoos that Sampson is sporting. There is a number on his forearms that were naturally applied by a professional artist and tattooist. These were not cheap prison tattoos made with black ink or blue ink and looking amateur. John says that he really like the one on Sampson's left forearm, and when they have finished doing the business, could John have Sampson's permission to remove it before disposing of him, like the Nazi's did with Jewish prisoners and make lampshades out of them. Sampson smirks at John and tells him that he can do as he fucking well likes after Sampson has gone. John says excitedly; "yes I'll do that… that's great… cheers Eric." Sampson just scowls at him.

Chris addresses Sampson as if he were a client and not so much a hostage when he tells him that he and John are no threat to him, if he behaves himself, as they are only there to keep an eye on him and to service his basic needs. There is no need for Sampson to be hostile towards them. This makes Sampson think for a moment, then he spits at Chris, “You know what’s going on. You condone it, so, therefore, you are as fucking involved and guilty.”

“Have it your own fucking way,” chimed in John. “I have no qualms treating you like the bag of shit that you really are. Shut the fuck up, unless you are spoken too… or you will see a mean side of me. Your reputation doesn’t scare me. We all know have vicious and nasty that you are, but I’ll match you any day, Eric… and more. So if you are asked a question, … answer it fucking civilly!” Eric just glares at him.

Chris goes on to explain that it may be better if Sampson was to come to terms with actual reality and for Sampson to equivocate it with somebody in the not so long ago past who had been found guilty of murder. He says that Sampson has been found guilty in his absence of heinous crimes against society by a Judge alone hearing the evidence and making a lone decision regarding the verdict and sentencing. He has been duly found guilty and sentenced to death. He has been escorted to a place of execution, and he will be put to death.

By the authority of what fucking court is that then, asks Sampson? By the jurisdiction of the court of decency Eric… the court of virtue! Says Chris.

Chris continues; Why not view John and me here merely as the prison screws assigned to keep you from being alone, with the light permanently on, and passing the time in idle conversation about anything and everything, rather than discuss the real reason for the prisoner's incarceration and his pending fate. Why make the remaining time such a futile hassle?

After a while, Sampson asks why they don't just get it over and kill him, instead of prolonging the wait for the obvious and inevitable. He is again told that his position will remain as it is until the arrival of their boss, then and only then would any action of any kind take place. It is suggested that they eat. Sampson is reassured that he also will be fed once the guys had cooked up some food. True to their word, Chris returns to the cellar room with a cooked meal and fork feeds Sampson a nice dinner. He was first told that he should merely eat and not to ask questions. He had agreed to do so. When they were finished, Chris wipes Sampson’s mouth area with a clean damp cloth. He finishes by giving a drink to Sampson, and then he takes away the food tray. As he is leaving, Sampson asks who their boss is. Chris replies that he will introduce himself when he arrives.

Sampson fixates on a white cabinet against a wall and interprets it as being a medicine cabinet of sorts. His imagination starts to run wild at what precisely the cabinet may hold. Could it be emergency medical supplies? Or worse still, surgical instruments? He had used such implements willy-nilly and with relish and without any form of sedative or anesthetic being applied when he had tortured others. He was making himself edgy, and he was becoming anxious. He knew full well that the boot was on the other foot. The only thing that he didn’t know was who was responsible for him being in this present situation, and precisely for what reason? There had never before been any hint of pay-back for Sampson’s actions and activities. ‘Why now?’ he thought. He sits in the dimly lit room and wonders.

Upstairs the brothers are ensconced on the comfortable lounge watching a movie on TV. The home telephone rings. It is Tony, he advises them that he is due to arrive at the property the next day, and was everything in preparedness? He is assured that it is. John, who has taken the call, looks across at Chris and winks at him signalling that things were on the move. They both make their way off to bed.

Tony is at home relaxing with Brenda. They have an agreement that they put in place upon first getting married, and that was that she would ask no questions about Tony's background or business dealings with Albert, and therefore she would get told no lies. Brenda was intelligent enough to know that Tony probably did get involved in some nefarious activities, but she knew that if she knew nothing about them, then she could not give him up. She was more than happy merely being Mrs Bonillo.

Tony stayed up a little late going through his intentions for the next day's activities. He sits cleaning a handgun and checks on the condition of the bullets for any looseness or corrosion. He wants everything to be smooth, reliable and functioning like clockwork. He packs an overnight bag and a complete full change of clothes, including shoes. He then heads off to bed for a sound night's sleep.

As he initially lies in bed he hears the sound of an owl off in the distance and its mild hoot sounds like somebody expelling a breath of air, plus it is in time with Tony's natural breathing rate at the time. It acts as a pleasant metronome for Tony to breathe along to and it soon becomes hypnotic, and he is gently lulled off to sleep by the comforting and steady similarity.

The next morning the brothers have finished breakfast and are down in the cellar in the process of feeding Sampson his. Chris has spoon-fed Sampson porridge, fried bacon, and scrambled eggs washed down with coffee. There are some comfortable seats in the cellar room, so the brothers decide to stay and chat a little with Sampson. As they sit in a lounge chair each with raiseable leg rests and small trays at the side that could be raised to accommodate the likes of a drink, or an ashtray at arm’s level and easy to reach. This is where they would lay their large calibre handguns for comfort that were generally kept in body holsters.

As they sit chatting about everyday occurrences, and not specifically Sampson's capture predicament, Sampson tries to explain his way of life and operating when he is told not to bother. Although not realising the fact that the brothers are aware of the fact that he had tortured and disembowelled their brother Edward, Sampson starts to spout about one of his recent torture victims, unwittingly, that of Edward. As he proudly and braggingly gloats about slicing open his victim and watching his bowels empty out of him, after refusing to give up money from the weekend takings of the supermarket where he worked as the store manager. Sampson offered to slice the throat of the man, if the victim wished, just to speed things along, but the victim begged him not to.

This comment touches a tender nerve with John and forces, John, to instinctively reach for and pick up his handgun and point it at Sampson in a threatening manner. He is in the process of telling Sampson that he might think, or pretend to be a non-feeling, pitiless goon, who feels that he can get away with anything, who the… when a massive bang takes place, and John’s gun quite accidentally fires and shoots Sampson in the upper chest, catapulting him backward a few inches heavily into the rear of the chair. The sound of the gunshot in the small cellar room has a significant effect on John and Chris’s hearing. They are both overcome with numbness in the head and have only faint, distorted discussion.

It takes them a little while to get used to the miserable state, and then they check on Sampson. Who has been blown a little further back into the chair from the blast of the vast 45 calibre bullet that has entered him making a smallish hole in his chest, but had exited out of his back area leaving a noticeable three inch round hole? From the way, he is gargling it is apparent that he has significant lung damage.

Chris asks John, through a continuously opening and closing jaw movement and with a surprised look on his face, with questionable eyes. “What the fuck?” When John tries to explain that it was an accident, the gun had fired before he even got close to attempting to squeeze the trigger. He had just gotten sick of Sampson’s attitude and only wanted to threaten him. Chris asks what the fuck Tony is going to think and say about the matter. He reminds John that Tony wanted to deal with this shit-bag himself. Now what was going to happen, they didn’t know.

Chris then suggests that John check the medicine looking cupboard to see if there was anything in it that they could use to try and stem Sampson’s bleeding, and some gauze 0r padding to plug up the hole in him. They had to try their best to keep him alive until Tony arrived.

John goes to the cupboard and opens it to have a look inside. He mentions that there are swabs, bandages, and field trauma blocks to use as stuffing agents into significant wounds. Chris tells him to fetch them so as they can get busy with their nursing duties.

When the brothers have untied Sampson and removed the sack from over his head and torso and plugged the massive hole in his back with the field dressing blocks, they bandage him the best they can. All they could do with the entry hole was plug and tape that also. All during the process, Sampson is groaning in agony. He is eventually laid back in the chair with his head dangling, crying and moaning.

The brothers both take a seat and stare at Sampson pondering their own thoughts. Sampson’s moaning and groaning in itself is off-putting and pitiful, but the men have switched off all emotion regarding Sampson. They don’t give a care for his discomfort. They are only concerned with trying to keep him alive for a little while longer to suit Tony’s intention.

It is John who first mentions that Sampson’s groaning and gargling noises are a little disconcerting, and is fucking-well annoying him. The groans are actually getting louder with each passing minute. Chris suggests to John that he should look again in the medicine cupboard to see if there are any painkillers to help try and quieten Sampson down. Otherwise, he says that he is going to have to go upstairs to escape the moaning and wait for Tony.

John heads over to the cupboard once again and starts to have a rifle through it. After a few moments, he declares with a little glee, “Well look what we’ve got here.” He holds up a vial of liquid and informs Chris that it is a vial of morphine, the same as those used in military field kits. He produces a hypodermic syringe also and makes his way over to the seated Sampson.

He breaks the neck and holds up the glass vial so he can fill the hypodermic syringe. Before he administers the shot, he says to the moaning and spluttering Sampson, “Don’t you fucking-well think I’m giving you this out of any sense of compassion or care. I’m only trying to get you to shut the fuck up and to keep you alive a little longer, you no good piece of shit!” He then starts to drive the hypodermic into Sampson’s upper thigh without bothering to drop his trousers to administer the morphine, saying at the same time, “Consider yourself fucking lucky.”

In approximately twenty minutes or so, the difference in Sampson’s condition is apparent as far as his discomfort is concerned. The morphine has kicked in, and it is having its effect. Both brothers are quite surprised and both interested in the impact. They have a discussion as to how useful and convincing that the drug really is. They comment on the rate of Sampson’s breathing and the apparent easing of the pain and discomfort, although Sampson still groans, has a splutter, and appears to be trying to say something from time to time.

As they sit and watch him, the brothers question each other as to what they think or imagine Sampson is trying to say. John asks Chris if he thinks that Sampson is asking them to get it over with, or if he is begging for medical help. Chris tells John that he’s fucked if he knows, as it is all noise, and moaning and groaning to him. John asks whether Chris thinks that Tony will be really annoyed with him over the accident. Chris tells John that he shouldn’t worry about it too much. After all, Sampson was there to be dealt with and killed, no matter which one of them shot him. John seems to settle a little.

John comments, “Now look at that”, as Sampson coughs and splutters something. “What do you think he’s trying to say?” Chris says sarcastically. “He’s probably saying, ‘Tell that mouthy fuckin brother of yours to shut the fuck up.’” John retorts, “No, he's trying to say something for sure. Have a listen to a bit more closely,” he tells Chris. Chris tells John again that he doesn’t give a fuck… and they should just monitor Sampson and try to keep him going until Tony’s arrival.

The brothers now enter what can only be described as a guessing competition. It starts with John asking Chris what he thinks Sampson is thinking. Chris replies that he hasn’t got a clue. John wonders if he is thinking about himself… or maybe his missus, or his family. He then asks if perhaps he is thinking of better times, holidays and the likes when he was king of the castle. Chris says that he doesn't know, and suggests that John ask him himself. John says that he will. He faces Sampson and asks him what he is thinking about. Sampson can only gurgle and gargle an undecipherable reply.

“I’ll bet you he's only evasive, the cunt,” says John. “Not so fucking confident and chatty now, is he? Not so mouthy now, Jesus… are you smartarse? How’s that delicious painful masochistic bent of yours going? Give us a nod if you want a bit more.” Sampson makes a noise and John questions it. “There you go Chris, what do you think he’s trying to bloody well say?” Again Chris says that he doesn’t give a fuck. “I wonder if he’s asking for a cheese sandwich or something,” says John. Then he adds, “Nah, he doesn’t look like a cheese eater. Probably more like ham, or roadkill.” Then he asks Sampson what he wants for his dinner… how about a lovely fresh, dead, carrion-eating fox or the like.

Then John calls out in sudden surprise, “I know! I know! I know! I’ll bet you that he’s asking for a fag. Yeah, he’s probably hanging out for a smoke. You want a couple of puffs to settle the nerves… don’t you Eric? I’ll bet my bollocks he does,” finishes off John. Chris says, “A fag? A fag? With the condition that his lungs must be in, I don’t think it’s a fucking fag he’s asking for.” John asks, “What, then?”

“I don’t know,” Chris retorts, annoyed. “He could be asking for his bloody Mummy for all I know. He could be asking God to forgive him. He could be asking the Devil to fucking mangle us. I don’t know, mate. Stop giving a fuck about him,” Chris suggests.

Chris is paying absolutely no attention. He is engrossed in a crossword. John sits looking inquisitively at Sampson, who is looking more gaunt, and weaker and weaker as the time passes. After a while, Chris asks John if Sampson is still breathing, as he has appeared to have stopped groaning and fidgeting, and his breathing now is very shallow and hard to hear. John goes and checks on Sampson. He pokes Sampson in the chest area of his injury, but Sampson does not respond. He tells Chris that he can still locate a weak pulse, but that was probably due to blood loss, that’s all. They continue to wait.

John mentions that Tony appears to be running quite late as he was expected much earlier. Finally, they hear the door at the top of the cellars stairs open, and a voice calls down, “Are you boys down there?” It is Tony, he drops his overnight bag, and he makes his way down into the cellar and along to the room holding Sampson.

When he enters he senses an uneasy vibe. He looks towards Sampson sitting in the chair but in a very distressed looking state. He asks the brothers what the fuck has been going on. He is told calmly by Chris what had eventuated causing the accidental shooting of Sampson, and the action they had taken to try to keep him alive.

Tony asks if he is still alive. To which John replies, “I don’t think so Tone… but I’m not one hundred per cent certain sure mate.” Tony then tells them that they had better make sure. Then he steps forward and removes a small .25 handgun from his coat pocket, he points it at Sampson’s forehead and without saying a word he fires point blank into his head. The brothers both initially flinch at the gunshot and the sudden action taken by Tony.

All three are left to deal with the effects of the explosion upon their hearing, and then after a while, Tony tells the brothers to clean up and dispose of the corpse in one of the usual ways, before returning to the city. He reassures both of the brothers that they need not worry about the mishap, whatever the planned intentions are, as you can only torture somebody so much, and you can only kill them once. Then Tony takes his leave after thanking the boys for their involvement and suggesting that they paid attention to the recommended procedure when it came to handling firearms, the moral of the story being ‘Never point a gun unless you intend to use it.’ Plus, a gun is designed to do one job only! John comments that things are sweet… not a problem and he will keep Tony’s advice in mind from now on.

John then turns to Chris and casually asks him what it was going to be, the tank or the tree shredder.

The End