

A Method to the Madness

by HK Mayfield

A crack team of Australian police detectives are gathered in a meeting discussing the earlier success of the audacious yet brilliantly successful Australian police sting that was employed to trap, catch and convict Brett Peter Cowan. This is the notorious paedophile responsible for the rape and murder of Daniel Morecombe, the young Queensland schoolboy whom he abducted from a bus stop. The sting took up to ten years and millions of dollars in expenses to come to successful fruition, with the utter dedication and determination of the investigative agents never diminishing over time.

What is in progress is the initial planning of another extremely covert police sting operation that has the full support of the Health Minister and the Police Minister, and all relevant bodies and government departments. This time, however, it concerns a serial killer who is expected to be found not guilty due to medical grounds, with an insanity plea by his defence counsel. It is likely that he will be incarcerated in a secure forensic medical facility instead of being imprisoned. Also, there is a possibility that he will be deemed sane at some stage during the period of his stay at the mental facility, which causes the police great concern.

The police interest in this offender is that he is the undisputed prime suspect in the possible murder of a family of seven, reported to be missing, presumed dead. Although he had been sloppy, or careless, in the crimes for which he is about to be tried, there was not quite enough damning evidence to charge him with the murders.

His name is John ‘Jackie’ Rimmer. He is a twenty-eight-year-old IT specialist with his own successful business. He is an arrogant, aloof personality, genuinely believing that he is of superior intellect and standing to others, continually spitting bitter sarcasm. He is vain, contemptuously dismissive, pathologically unsociable, deluded, hyper-egotistical to the point of exaggeration, but he does possess a noticeably high IQ. He is therefore knowledgeable, in addition to being well educated, polite and quietly spoken, and extremely well read. He will not, however, enter into any discussion, interview or any form of questioning when it comes to the matter of the missing family. His standard answer is that he has no comment to make.

He thinks that he has committed the perfect murder and that he will get away with it as he is aware that there is only scant circumstantial evidence that may be presented. Nowhere near enough to put before a jury: no apparent motive, no known association with the family, never having been seen or recognised in the area of the family home by any of the family’s neighbours. Plus, he had a sound enough alibi for the period that was estimated to be the time of the family’s disappearance.

To him, the missing family members are his most prized trophy, and he is determined not to divulge where they are. He believes wholeheartedly that he is the winner in some form of significant competition with the police and the authorities. Threats, inducements, pleas for him to show compassion concerning the returning of the family’s remains, all fell upon deaf ears, even with the assurance that he would not be charged for the murders, by being granted immunity, if he were to disclose the whereabouts of the missing family. It was a classic case of ‘I know. You don’t know. You want to know, and I’m not telling you!’

The police are aware that even if they could locate the bodies of the missing family members, it would not necessarily be beneficial to them as far as charging and putting the suspect on trial, as he would probably be found not guilty, again on the grounds of insanity. Their primary objective is to try to discover the location of the bodies, and therefore their retrieval for proper burial.

Various ideas are floated as to the possible ways of trying to extract the information needed. One of the detectives present suggests that he has a plan that could be considered as a plausible ploy to hopefully gain the trust of the suspect, enough for him to at least reveal the location of the bodies, through a genuine belief that doing so would positively alter his current situation.

If the insanity plea is accepted, the suspect will be sent to a psychiatric facility after his trial. The detective suggests that they should plant a convincing undercover agent in the facility, with the distinct purpose of gradually befriending the suspect and presenting him with a tempting enough inducement, so that he reveals the location of the missing family members. But they knew full well that it would have to be an inducement big enough to entice the suspect to sell his soul to accept. Some wondered if he had a soul.

Of course, this would mean that an officer or agent would have to voluntarily agree to be incarcerated in the medical facility for an unspecified time, as a supposed psychiatric patient. The extremely covert nature of this plan would mean that only the facility’s chief of staff and his assistant would be aware of the operation and of the undercover agents, for necessary security reasons.

After thoroughly examining the idea, they ask if any of them feel that they may have the courage to take on the role, and believe that they are confident enough to be convincing playing a psychiatric patient for a sustained period of time.

As it happens, one of the older detectives mentions that he may be interested in volunteering as a candidate for being the plant. Sergeant Thomas Pearce, fifty-seven years of age, has had a love affair with amateur dramatics for decades and had often performed in amateur repertory theatre as an off-duty interest. Also, before he had joined the police force, he had been in the Australian Army and had spent most of his time as an MP, stationed in a military prison. As a warder he was reasonably well acquainted with the behaviour of the soldier prisoners: brutes, fools and the mentally challenged, those suffering from post-traumatic stress. However, for the sting to occur, he would have to go through intensive courses in various fields. He would certainly need some in-depth insight into the behaviours related to psychopathy, schizophrenia and multiple personality disorder.

How they would plan and execute such a sting goes into overdrive with suggestions. It is agreed that it would be beneficial if they could keep their intended sting as realistic and truthful as possible. It is then suggested that their plant should impersonate an already institutionalised serial killer, one who is housed in another psychiatric hospital, but whom they could arrange to be supposedly transferred to the facility accommodating their suspect.

They agree to search police, prison and psychiatric facility records to find a suitable candidate for impersonation. They would look for a serial killer from earlier times, known to the public, but only vaguely remembered by most, as the case and trial had ended with an insanity finding and therefore it would have received only a modicum of newspaper and television coverage at the time.

There would be some information regarding the case on the internet, but any photographs of the offender would be quite dated, and his physical appearance would naturally have changed over the decades since his incarceration, making it extremely hard for most people to remember or recognise him in this present time. It is also insisted that for back-up and safety’s sake, two undercover agents would also be supplied to the hospital as orderlies, to keep an eye on and to protect Pearce if need be.

Their goal would be to plant their undercover operative, Thomas Pearce, into the facility that would receive their suspect, Rimmer, on a supposed inter-hospital transfer. Duplicate official and personal files about the real patient would be furnished to the hospital in question so that the medical staff and the orderlies would not suspect or question the identity and validity of the transferred patient. Apart from the hospital’s chief officer and his assistant, the police plant would be on his own and at the mercy of the existing hospital patients, the oblivious and unsuspecting medical staff, and the orderlies.

A suitable nominee for the identity swap is found through records - Henry Patterson, a serial killer from the 1980s, responsible for numerous contract killings on behalf of organised crime, plus some dated yet heinous murders. While incarcerated he has been diagnosed with a multiple personality disorder. He is the host of numerous personalities, some of them being:

Alan - a passive and fearful, extremely introverted Cornishman,

Jock - a loud and extremely aggressive Scotsman,

Arthur - a wise and patient Irishman who sounds like Liam Neeson,

Stan - a silly, foolish, but passive and highly amusing Yorkshireman.

As it happens, the older officer who has acting experience is an expatriate Englishman, well versed in British accents. He can convincingly speak with any of the accents that may show up in Henry Patterson’s personalities.

It is thought and agreed by the team that the appearance of any of these personalities may just hold the key to a cat and mouse game with their suspect. It is hoped that one of them or the plant’s supposed natural self, Henry, might strike a chord with their suspect and eventually gain his trust, somehow.

The trial of their suspect is imminent. The police have successfully implemented the supposed transfer of the serial killer. The undercover agent, Thomas, is now ensconced as Henry Patterson, a psychiatric inmate in the facility. He is acclimatising and initially adopts the personality of Alan, notoriously reclusive. This is so that he can merely watch and asses all those around him in the criminally insane unit, the habits and rituals of the group, and also so that he can convince the institute’s staff of his condition. As is the usual procedure, the nursing staff and the orderlies are informed of the patients who suffer from multiple personality disorder and are advised to recognise the personality that appears to be present and to address the patient as such, as it helps with communication.

It is weeks before the police suspect, Rimmer, eventually stands trial, and an expected finding of not guilty on the grounds of insanity is recorded, and he is committed to a secure medical institution.

On his arrival at the institution, Rimmer arrogantly ignores everybody. Medical staff, orderlies, and patients alike, he treats with contempt, and he makes it understandable that he does not want to associate or communicate with anybody. He believes that everybody is inferior to him, and academically beneath him.

Usually, the only time that the suspect, John ‘Jackie’ Rimmer, would speak to staff or other patients was to ask questions, such as who other patients were, and what were some of their complaints. He was not at all interested in what their crimes may have been. He discovers that one Henry Patterson is also a serial killer, but although the name rings a bell with Rimmer, the details of Henry’s reported crimes are only vague to him and Rimmer cannot remember having seen any photographs of the man.

Henry, the plant, has been using the Alan personality for a while, and when Rimmer sees Alan continually cowering away from everybody in the common day room, sitting hunched on a chair against a wall, Rimmer contemptuously whispers at Alan, “Why don’t you just neck yourself, you pathetic waste of time!” Alan hunches up noticeably and merely stares at Rimmer.

One mid-morning, Rimmer is in the day room but ignoring all of the other patients. He notices Henry sitting reading a magazine article, and he does not seem to be as pathetically cowardly as he has been of late. An orderly arrives in the day room and approaches Henry saying, “Come on Henry. You’ve got an appointment with Doctor Patrick.” Henry springs out of the chair onto his feet and bellows in the most aggressive and threatening of ways, in the distinct and clear Scottish accent of the Jock personality, “Hey, you cunt! Don’t you dare start with the orders with me, or I’ll bash your fucking head in and make your face resemble a pizza! Get me, do you, bastard? I’ll come with you when I’m fucking well ready.”

The orderly raises his hands in a stopping gesture, and says calmly, “OK, Jock, just take it easy, mate. I’m no threat to you.” Jock relaxes a bit and says, “Well, as long as you know!” then he follows the orderly off for his doctor’s appointment. Rimmer merely watches on, but he has registered the Jock personality, realises that Jock could be dangerous and even a threat to him, so he decides not to give Jock any reason for them to clash.

On another occasion, Rimmer is having his breakfast in the ward dining room when Henry enters to have his lunch. Henry has assumed the personality of Stan. He clowns about and performs silly mannerisms. Such as blasting out a whistle sharply and loudly, then, raising his hands in line with his forehead, he begins to slap himself on the forehead with the palm of one hand, and as this hand rebounds from his forehead, it smashes back into his other raised palm and then back again to his forehead. He repeats this sometimes, getting faster and faster with every short cycle, finishing with an excited short yell, before giggling manically and then sitting down to eat his breakfast. He says in his Yorkshire accent, “You wouldn’t be dead for quids, would you?” Looking on, Rimmer shakes his head with disdain and decides that Stan is utterly imbecilic and that he will refuse to have anything to do with him.

At another stage, Rimmer gets to see the Henry personality. Rimmer is staring out of the common room window when he is approached quietly by Henry, who says quietly and calmly to Rimmer, “Here, have you thought of having it away from here?” Rimmer turns towards Henry, who is now speaking in a thick Cockney accent. Rimmer answers him, “Not yet. But I’m sure that I will get around to it!” Henry then says, “Well, when you’re ready, son, let me know. I’m Henry, and I’ve got a 100 per cent foolproof plan to escape from this fucking hell-hole!” Then Henry walks off.

Sometime later, Rimmer sees Henry in the morning room talking to a visiting psychiatrist. Henry seems to be excited, angry, annoyed and aggressive towards his visitor. As Rimmer watches, Henry jumps up from his chair at the table and, grabbing hold of the psychiatrist by the hair and shoulder; he forces the visitor to the ground and starts to absolutely lay into the man on the floor, with vicious kicks and stomping. As Henry screams abuse at the fallen man, he continues the vicious attack by hitting him with one of the plastic chairs.

The alarm is raised, and the orderlies arrive in numbers. As he is pulled away from the fallen man, the maniacal Henry is further subdued and held firmly on the ground. Two of the orderlies loosen Henry’s belt and lower his pants to administer into his buttock a hypodermic sedative - what is referred to as ‘the liquid cosh’. Within moments he is rendered unconscious and harmless. He is placed on a gurney and taken to another area of the facility to be monitored. Rimmer is excited and pleased by the explosion of violence he has just witnessed.

The visiting psychiatrist who had been assaulted by Henry makes his way back to the car he arrived in and climbs inside. Where three other detectives are waiting. When the faux psychiatrist, himself an undercover agent, comments that he thinks that Thomas/Henry really meant it and that he was very convincing, so he was glad that he was padded up for the set-up assault, planned to impress Rimmer. He adds, “I hope he’s not really going fucking nuts in there! I don’t know how he does it. I couldn’t!

After a week or so in isolation, and experiencing the horrendous side effects of the sedative that was administered, Henry knew that he didn’t want to experience that again in a hurry. He returns to the general unit area. Rimmer approaches Henry in the common room and asks him if he is finished reading the communal newspaper. Henry answers, like Henry, that he has, and that Rimmer is welcome to it.

Rimmer asks Henry, in his usual calm and clearly enunciated way, if he remembers approaching Rimmer with a proposition. Henry replies that of course, he does. Rimmer asks him if he was prepared to expand on the idea he floated. Henry says, “Yes, by all means, but you’d better be absolutely sure that you’ll become a partner in the venture, or you can forget it right away.” Rimmer professes to be genuinely interested in what Henry has in mind, but he would like to hear a logical and reasonable enough plan before he’ll commit to it.

Rimmer mentions to Henry that he knows that the whole facility is monitored and recorded 24/7, and he is convinced that there are concealed microphones and tiny spy cameras planted everywhere. Henry suggests that Rimmer relax a bit. He agrees that the facility is monitored and recorded, but that Rimmer might be just a touch paranoid about things.

“What are they going to glean from any of us in here? They know the so-called atrocities that we are accused of have happened, and we’ve got nothing to hide anymore. They can’t punish us any further, so what’s the fucking point?” He adds, “Have they got all the outside grounds bugged as well? I think you're just a little paranoid, my old mate!”

Rimmer thinks about what Henry has just said and agrees, well maybe just a little.

“But I’m telling you, you can’t be too careful, Henry!”

Henry tells Rimmer that his plan is 100 per cent achievable and foolproof, but it will entail the killing of all of the night staff, numbering ten. Rimmer is not shocked, surprised or fazed by Henry’s declaration. Henry then goes on to inform Rimmer that he is trying to formulate a plan that will allow him, or them, to surprise and overpower all of the staff at the same time and to quickly and efficiently kill them. From then on it would be easy for them to escape, after retrieving all the keys for the facility from the dead orderlies and staff on night duty. They could then flee through one of the non-alarmed ground floor windows in the chief medical officer’s quarters. From where they could climb out into the facility’s grounds and use any ladders kept in the ground’s gardening sheds to scale the perimeter wall and drop down to a waiting vehicle that would be on hand for them via Henry’s criminal associates. They would then travel for some distance together and then part ways for good.

Henry assures Rimmer that he can arrange for stand-up passports, international driver’s licences, birth certificates, and even valid credit cards, plus various other items of ID for both of them, through his loyal criminal contacts with whom he still communicates via personal visits. Then he adds, “It’s not what you know in life, Jackie boy, and it’s not who you know. It’s a matter of how well you know them!” This most certainly gains Rimmer’s attention. He says nothing for a moment, absorbing the information and opportunity offered to him.

He then asks Henry, “What if you were to be inhabited by one of your other personalities at the time of the planned escape?” Henry answers him with, “What fucking personalities?” He goes on to explain that although the doctors and psychiatrists tell him he has a multiple personality disorder, he has no recollection of ever being anybody else but himself! Therefore Henry suggests that if he should be struck by any other character but himself, Henry, then the escape attempt would just not take place unless Henry is in full control at the time. Rimmer says nothing. He ponders for a moment.

“But I’ve still got to come up with a feasible and workable plan to kill all of the bastards at the same time,” Henry says, adding, “And by the way, you’ve only ever killed people one at a time, haven’t you, so they were easy to overpower. But I’ve got some multiples to my credit. I’m not intimidated by numbers, heroes, or have-a-go merchants.” Rimmer interjects, “You’re wrong in your assumption. I have indeed, multiple killings to my credit.” Henry waits a moment and then asks, “Who?”

“At the moment, just take my word for it, Henry.”

Henry says, “Fine, please yourself!” Then he adds, “You know, your input on a suggestion for an actual plausible method of attack with the best chance of rapid success may be valuable. It doesn’t matter how fucking gory it is, or how vicious it is, as long as it is successful. I mean to get out of here with or without your help. But remember, you may have to become one of the earlier fatalities if you mention our discussions to anybody… Unless you want to try and get in first to save your arse!”

“There’s no need to be thinking along those lines, Henry,” answers Rimmer. “Sure, I don’t mind a bit of gratuitous killing, and I’ve got no objection to you feeling the same. But do not threaten me in any way, Henry, or we shall soon become deadly enemies. If we are going to trust and rely on each other for this venture, then that is what we need to do.” Henry says, “Fine,” and wanders off.

After a visit from some of Henry’s friends/colleagues, he approaches Rimmer in the common room and suggests that he put a Mr Roger Morton, solicitor, down as one of his chosen visitors, as Mr Morton would be showing Rimmer some exciting material during the visit. Henry gives Rimmer the necessary details and leaves it to him to place Morton on his visitor’s list.

After a little time, a Mr Roger Morton, solicitor, arrives at the facility to interview Rimmer. The purpose of the visit is for one of the undercover agents, impersonating the solicitor, to show Rimmer a very official looking passport with a copy of Rimmer’s mug shot on it, plus an international driver’s license with his photograph on it. And other ID, before placing them back in his briefcase. It is to prove to Rimmer that Henry is not bullshitting about his escape plan and that he still has strong professional contacts on the outside who are aiding him. Rimmer is quietly pleased and excited. He merely nods to Morton, and the interview finishes. As he makes his way back to the common room after the visit, Rimmer spies Henry standing by the window. He closes in on Henry and whispers, “I’m in, Henry. Let’s do it… and soon!” Henry simply nods in agreement.

The planning of the attack and escape starts to take place. Rimmer is both keen and excited, not just at the possibility of escape and freedom abroad, but at the opportunity to mercilessly kill the night staff, for the thrill of it! He can’t wait to tell Henry how he feels when he discovers that Henry is now possessed by the Alan personality, and there is just no sense in trying to communicate with him. Rimmer thinks that he is in limbo and becomes depressed, and as bitter and as angry as ever towards the staff and orderlies, even spitting with frustration at Alan, “You should fuck-off!” But all to no avail. Alan is wide-eyed and fearful but does not attempt to communicate. Rimmer storms off to his room in an absolutely foul mood. Alan merely sits trembling.

Rimmer becomes increasingly impatient and nasty as he waits for a change of personality in Henry. Then one morning Henry comes bursting into the breakfast area as the loud and aggressive Jock character. He is his usual boisterous self, insulting everyone and everything. Rimmer sighs in disappointment. He drops his knife and fork onto his breakfast plate and abandons it, quietly seething.

Henry adopts the personality of Jock for over a week, and Rimmer knows that he can’t make any approach to Jock. Therefore he is receding into the nastiest form of his real personality and has mainly become ensconced in his own room, pacing the floor and mumbling to himself always.

One morning Rimmer’s eyes widen, and he takes a great gasp of air as his heart pounds when an orderly happens to say that Henry was having breakfast in the meal area and mentioned that he was looking forward to speaking to Rimmer. Rimmer takes-off out of his room to join Henry for lunch and a much-needed catch-up.

Rimmer grabs a breakfast tray and then joins Henry at his table. They huddle and talk in very faint voices. Rimmer immediately asks Henry if he is thinking clearly and if he is on top of things. Henry assures him that he is. Rimmer exhales a sigh of relief. Then Rimmer admits to Henry that he has missed him. Henry looks at him, confused, and says, “Why? Where the fuck has you been?” Rimmer looks at Henry, stunned momentarily, then realises that Henry has no recall of being the Jock personality.

Rimmer then tells Henry that he is more than impressed with the paperwork that Mr Morton had shown him and that he felt that they should start formulating a plan of action right away. Henry declares that they should know a little more about each other before they continue further with the idea. He professes that he wants to see if he can be sure that he can rely on Rimmer when it comes to the mass slaying of the night staff. He assures Rimmer that he will be as reliable as anyone possibly could be when it comes to the mass slaughter, as he had used more methods of gruesome killings than he could remember, and he didn’t differentiate when it came to victims: women, men, old folk, cripples, and children! But Henry said he wanted some sort of assurance that he could trust and rely on Rimmer.

Rimmer asks Henry what sort of reassurance he wanted. Henry tells Rimmer that he doesn’t know what, he just wants some! Rimmer goes on to explain to Henry that he is quite well versed in the art of killing, thank you! He says that he may have been charged with seven murders, but he had actually committed more than a dozen and a half in total, including a job lot, as a matter of fact. Henry asks Rimmer what he means when he says a job lot. Rimmer tells him, “You know! A bunch of them all together like the Saint Valentine’s day massacre!”

“I can’t recall anything about a load of geezers getting blasted up against a garage wall,” says Henry.

 “No,” says Rimmer, “not exactly up against a wall, but mowing them down, yes. Seven of them, all at once!”

“Still doesn’t ring a bell,” says Henry.

“That’s because they haven’t found them yet,” Rimmer declares.

“You’re talking in fucking riddles mate,” says Henry.

“Look, this is all I’m going to tell you,” Rimmer declares. “It’s true, without a shadow of a lie. I did a whole family at the one time, and I disposed of the bodies in a communal grave which won’t ever be found. You see, Henry, they are my trophies, my souvenirs, mementos of a perfect crime, murder and all. The last offence committed by me, and it being undiscoverable and un-prosecutable. That’s what the thrill is all about!”

“Hang on a minute, Jackie. It doesn’t matter how many we kill on our way out, they will know we are responsible for it. Where is the glory in that?”

Rimmer tells him, “You have to get away with it before it is a perfect crime. I mean, think about it, Henry, all of the hits you have made, especially way back in the gang war era, and for which you were never convicted. Well, they’re perfect crimes. Revel in them, Henry. Revel!

“Fuck all that,” Henry professes. “It’s the ones that have placed us in this fucking placethat matter. We fucked up, there’s no glory in that, mate! And I don’t intend to fuck up on this caper, as all that I want to do is have enough time to locate and kill the bastard who put me in here. He’s still fucking alive! I don’t give a shit what you do, or where you go, just help me get out of here and you have all your tickets to permanent freedom waiting for you in a car on the other side of the boundary wall. OK?”

Rimmer replies, “Yes, Henry, OK!”

Rimmer says that he is going to his room to have a think on how to perform the planned attack on the night staff. When he has gone, and nobody else is in the place, Henry says to nobody, “I hope that you boys got all that?”

Rimmer is well wired and buzzing with anticipation when again he receives a downer, as in Henry slipping into another personality. He is now Arthur, the gentle, patient, friendly, passive character that roams the wing doling out wonderful advice to other patients, with the confidence of a practised psychiatrist or psychologist. Rimmer’s disappointment is evident and toxic throughout this period.

By now, Thomas needs a break from the stresses and demands on him to always stay in character. Therefore, he decides to adopt the personality of Jock once more so that he can play up and be banished to a room in the isolation ward. There, he could at least communicate generally for a while, at least with the two undercover agents acting as orderlies, even though it might be a case of having to initially undergo the woeful effects of the liquid cosh. It would give him at least two weeks in isolation away from all the regular patients to get over the long lasting side effects of the tranquiliser: heavy lethargy, sitting in a wheelchair having both nightmares and hallucinations, and slobbering uncontrollably for the first few days.

While Henry is in isolation, Rimmer is at the point of lashing out. He is becoming increasingly impatient, waiting for Henry’s return. Henry is kept informed of Rimmer’s behaviour by the bogus orderlies, so he can best time his re-appearance in the general community area. He wants Rimmer absolutely chaffing at the bit when he does re-appear.

He has been assured by the agent/orderlies that Rimmer’s confession as to killing seven people all at the same time has been captured and recorded and now the team is hoping that Henry will be able to extract the location of the bodies from Rimmer.

Henry has had time to think and to also be briefed via faux visiting psychiatrists as to possible suggested dialogue to entice Rimmer to open up. Henry knows that he will just have to confront Rimmer and ask him how the fuck was he able to get rid of all the bodies after he had shot them all. After all, moving seven dead bodies into some sort of vehicle, to allow for the dumping of or hiding of the bodies, must have been quite a mammoth task in itself. And to have absolutely no eye-witnesses to the family’s disappearance during the operation seems just incredible. It is about this that he plans to confront Rimmer.

Rimmer interrupts Henry’s thoughts by asking him if he has formulated a plan of attack yet. Henry says, “No, at least not a reliable enough one yet.” Rimmer suggests that they start to put their heads together full time to arrive at a workable plan. Henry promises to do so. Then he decides to inform Rimmer of what he has formulated so far.

Henry explains the bones of the plan: firstly, after they have locked down for the night, get the criminally insane unit’s two-night orderlies into a known blind spot from the security cameras; secondly, overcome and kill them. Speed and surprise would be the key, using the maximum force required to kill quickly.

Rimmer smiles with anticipation and suggests that they could just cut the orderlies throats, leaving their bodies out of view of the cameras. Henry tells him that that would be no good, as blood would most certainly be splattered and caked on the orderly’s uniform and that could prove detrimental to the plan. They were going to change clothes with the dead men to look familiar at first glance, and then they would, as the opportunity presented itself, unexpectedly fall upon and kill the other pairs of night staff at their known locations throughout the complex.

However, that would only be after they had made their way to the overall security suite, where two operatives would be on duty, monitoring all the areas of the complex in a detailed fashion. Should anything be amiss, these guards would immediately raise an internal alarm, and one to a local police station. Therefore it was imperative to kill these men first, to help thwart discovery. It would not matter what was captured on the security cameras from then on, as escape was the goal, not the unimportance of who was responsible for what was happening in the video footage.

Henry then tells Rimmer that he has something to show him. He takes out of his pocket a small photograph of Henry that had been taken by one of the agent/orderlies. He was holding an open rag with two long-handled bricklayers’ lump hammers clearly visible on it. Henry then tells Rimmer that he has the hammers that he has filched over the previous weeks from the maintenance workshop, where he had occasionally spent time. One each safely stashed away for when they would be required. He adds that not only are they acceptably efficient, and a silent method of killing, they don’t tend to make the victim bleed as fluidly as an open gash or tear caused by a sharp instrument. Plus they would come in handy if they had to bust down a door or such, including smashing the re-enforced window panel in the CMO’s office to climb out into the grounds, and to the maintenance shed, where Henry knew there were ladders kept.

Rimmer is attentive and accepting of Henry’s suggestions so far. Henry suggests that Rimmer think about it and tighten up or improve on the first draught of the plan.

Henry recaps that there is four-night staff in the central quadrangle of the facility, with only restricted camera vision of each of the hospital’s wings. There are two-night guards in the primary security suite. There is two-night-staff in the hospital isolation section, with two-night personnel assigned to the quadrangle, acting as relief staff during night staff breaks.

He also reminds Rimmer that when they attack the quadrangle, there would be four large, fit and determined orderlies to overcome, and they would be ready for the duo. Even though the pair may have a guard’s key to allow access into the working area of the quadrangle, it would take some seconds, by which time the staff inside the quad would be aware of their presence and ready to retaliate.

This is where Henry’s concerns regarding Rimmer’s determination and ability would come into question. Henry explains to him that he wouldn’t want Rimmer rolling over like a dog to have his belly tickled if he shit himself during the attack. “After all,” Henry says, “you are only used to killing them one at a time, aren’t you? It’s not as if you’ve got any experience in killing savagely and gruesomely in numbers, have you? You strangled all of your poxy victims, didn’t you?”

Rimmer stares at Henry for a moment and then responds, “You shouldn’t go assuming things, as it could make an ASS of U and ME! Don’t you worry, Henry, I’ve done my share of multi’s! As a matter of fact, seven! Just like the St Valentine’s Day massacre.”

“What? You lined seven men up against a wall and blasted them to death with a machine-gun?” asks a sceptical Henry.

“No, not exactly like that… more like the killing of a group of seven all at the same time,” says Rimmer.

“I can’t remember hearing anything about a crime like that,” says Henry.

“That’s because they haven’t found them yet, and they won’t,” retorts Rimmer.

“Why? Where the fuck did you put them or hide them?” asks Henry.

“Ooh, now,” says Rimmer, “that’s my secret. They are my trophy, my memoir and reward for committing a perfect crime, and that being the most severe of crimes – murder, Henry, murder!”

“Fuck all of that bollocks!” retorts Henry. “You got away with it, didn’t you? That’s all that matters, getting away with it! Doing it is the easy part and, as we both very well know, it isn’t as easy as some might think. We obviously made mistakes, and left some tangible evidence for them to convict us.”

Rimmer can’t help but brag, “Yes, but when we are cautious, we both know that it can be done, as the proof is in the pudding. How about the ones that we have both done in our careers that they cannot pin on us? You see, Henry, even you have your little trophies and memoirs of your so far perfect murders, the ones that they don’t know about or don’t have enough evidence to nick you for. So enjoy the achievement and the significance of it,” suggests Rimmer.

“The only significance that killing people had for me was that it provided a good living and walking about money for me, no more than that; a financial incentive only,” says Henry.

Rimmer tells Henry, “You don’t know what you’re missing: the utter pleasure, joy, and wonderful high that killing gives!”

“I’m not interested in why you killed all the fuckers you have, and I don’t give a fuck about them. “You enjoy killing for personal pleasure and thrill. I kill merely as a job, no big deal!”

He stresses that as long as Rimmer helps kill all of the night staff, he can take as much personal pleasure from it as he likes, as long as he is focused, thorough and successful in the killings.

Rimmer is delighted that a plan, which he now sees as workable, seems to have a high degree of expected success, so wanders off to his room with an arrogant smile on his face.

The next meeting that Henry and Rimmer have is out walking together in the facility’s grounds. Henry can’t help but half joke, through sarcasm, that Rimmer should feel a lot better with his paranoia about being recorded by covertly placed cameras and listening devices. Rimmer merely responds by telling Henry not to fool himself, and the police are known for secretly eavesdropping on suspects.

“Yes,” Henry agrees, “but that is usually to get information to help convict the suspect. And we are no longer deemed as worthwhile chase-able suspects. They know there’s no fucking benefit in putting us on trial again. ‘Never to be released’, remember! Anyway,” he adds, “if you were right in your fucking paranoid suspicions, we could always tell them that we were bullshitting to each other… seeing who could piss the furthest, trying to out-do, or impress each other. Come on, Jackie boy, we’re supposed to be crazy, lying fuckers anyway, aren’t we?”

As they walk in the warm spring sunlight, looking like a carefree father and son chatting to each other, Henry turns to Rimmer to ask him directly, “What’s the deal with the St Valentine’s Day massacre all about?” It had, supposedly, simply intrigued him.

Henry politely but inquisitively asks Rimmer to merely clarify how he killed and disposed of the seven people he had professed to have murdered, as it was beyond Henry to figure out how such a complicated and time-consuming exercise could have been carried out by one person. He said he had wracked his brains trying to figure it out but to no satisfactory conclusion. He declares that he doesn’t think Rimmer is lying about the incident, but he is merely intrigued. This hits home with Rimmer’s enormous ego and, with gloating pleasure, he starts to tell Henry all about the murders.

Rimmer tells Henry that there was a guy, whom he did not know from Adam, who had insulted and belittled Rimmer at a social function because Rimmer had dared to try and speak to one of his daughters, and Rimmer was determined to get his own back. He made separate enquiries and discovered the identity of the offender, plus his address, and some personal particulars of the immediate family members, and what vehicles they drove.

There was the father, mother, three teenage children, and two adult children, all living at home in a large house on a large acreage out of town. Information that Rimmer gleaned was that they were all invited to a large society wedding that was due in the upcoming months, to be held at a lovely, well- known homestead out in the country, one that was extremely popular for hosting social celebrity weddings.

Rimmer had done his homework thoroughly. He had driven out to the famous homestead and confirmed that the road leading off the highway to gain access to the property was the only road in the area, and it was a dirt road. It wound its way for approximately eight kilometres through open country, with various private and well-maintained acreages on each side of the road for the first couple of kilometres.

There was, however, one property located about three kilometres up the dirt road to the left-hand side that looked as though it had not been cared for or tended to in quite a long time. The paddocks were overgrown with sparse grasses and weeds. No livestock was roaming the pastures. There was no sign of the property having any occupants. Rimmer had decided to make enquiries with the local real estate agents and found out that the property was indeed owned by a rural family, but they did not live on it or run cattle or sheep anymore, and it was merely sitting idle at that time.

Rimmer knew that, although it wasn’t exactly a race against time, he would have to act promptly if he was to exact revenge on his target, as it was only a couple of months before the society wedding would take place. He had organised by phone for an out of town earth moving contractor to come to the address of the property to dig pits. This was a standard procedure on rural properties that of digging out large, deep oblong holes to accommodate rubbish which accrued around the property: old machinery, household goods and furniture and general debris. Then, when the hole was three-quarters full, the heavy machinery would back-fill the rest of the enormous gap, and the excess dirt would settle back into the ground, leaving a hump.

Rimmer had instructed the contractor that he would be required again shortly to re-fill the pit, as the family wished to put the property up for auction. Rimmer had told the contractor that the local heavy machinery hires companies in town were fully booked, so it was nothing unusual for the contractor to venture out into the country and dig a farm or property pit. It was all paid work to him.

So strong was Rimmer’s determination to exact revenge that he said that it cost him quite a sizeable chunk of his own money to achieve his desire: paying the contractor in cash, hiring a utility and trailer, and hiring road stoppage signs and rerouting signs for his plan.

Rimmer had already arrived at the property, had cut the rusted old padlock on the double gates with a pair of bolt cutters and opened the gates to allow access for the heavy digging machinery. The contractor headed his vehicle and trailer into the property. After climbing the rambling dirt road that continued upwards for some distance from the property’s entrance gates, he was directed to follow the track that led around the back of the hill and to stop at a site a short distance behind the hill to the right of the gates. This spot could not be seen from the roadway or from anywhere on top of the hill.

It was at this location that the contractor started to dig a massive, ten meters long, two meters wide, and five-metre deep pit. The job was completed in less than four hours, and the contractor had his machinery back on his float trailer and was on his way out of the property and back down the hill via the winding dirt road. After he had left, Rimmer replaced the cut padlock with a new one that he had brought and for which he had the keys. It was agreed that the contractor would return to backfill the pit on the day after the planned celebrity wedding had taken place.

Rimmer had then hired a utility and a trailer and had filled it with metal rubbish, consisting of old car parts - body parts, wings, doors, etc. He made his way out to the secluded property and entered it, coming to a stop by the pit, and then he unloaded all of the scrap metal and junk near the open hole. He then drove around the vast acreage, with no neighbouring property to be seen for miles, looking for other forms of scrap. He ended up collecting more rubbish than was required for his intentions, but this bothered him not.

Rimmer waited patiently for the day of the wedding to arrive and he had obtained a silenced Uzi submachine gun capable of firing hundreds of rounds per minute, with half a dozen magazines of ammunition.

He expected the family to travel to the wedding in at least two cars and he intended to covertly immobilise three of the family cars on the night before the wedding, as they sat parked outside the family’s garage. He would not immobilise the father’s seven-seat, four-wheel drive, or the Holden Commodore belonging to the eldest son.

He intended to make his way out to the property early in the morning, on the pretext of going shooting on the static property, should anybody question him for any reason, but he would keep his fingers crossed that nobody did. He would wait at a vantage point up the hill that would allow him to watch any vehicles that came into the dirt road from the highway. The last private acreage was a couple of kilometres below the homestead. Therefore any local residents who might happen to use the dirt road would have well entered their own properties, before getting up to the position where Rimmer was waiting.

When he recognised the expected family’s vehicles, after they left the freeway and made their way up the hill, he would spring into action and place the ‘Road Closed’ bollards across the road just ahead of the static property’s gates. Then he would finish cutting through a tree, already mostly cut through with a chainsaw, so that it would fall across the road, blocking passage. There would be detour signs placed to indicate a route through the opened gates of the static property and signs with arrows signalling a track leading to the right, around the hill to the right-hand side. After this planned detour, the vehicles would only travel a short distance before they would have to come to a halt at the large, deep pit that would suddenly appear in front of them.

Rimmer’s plan was at this stage to appear from cover and mow the family down with the submachine gun, while they were still seated in their vehicles. He then planned to jam a heavy object onto the accelerator of the first car, sending it into the pit. He then planned to do the same with the second vehicle. Then, if either vehicle’s engine were still running, he would stop them with machine gun fire. He planned to place all the metal junk he had accumulated into the sides of the pit and on top of the vehicles, then shovel a thin layer of dirt over the cars before the contractor came to back-fill the hole the next day.

He had watched various vehicles head up towards the homestead throughout the morning, and they seemed to be arriving less and less frequently as the morning drew on.

Finally, Rimmer recognised one vehicle. The family had arrived at the dirt road, in the father’s seven-seat, four-wheel drive. The family had fallen for the ruse and had driven straight onto the static property and were following the direction of the arrows. Then, before he knew it, the father, who was driving confidently at medium speed up the slight hump before him, in reality, made from the soil and dirt from one side of the pit that the excavator had removed, suddenly came to an unexpected and severely deep hole in the track. The father was slightly too late applying the brakes and the four-wheel drive nose-dived into the pit with an enormous bang and shot forward before coming to rest at the far end of the hole, stalling the engine.

Rimmer professes that he was surprised at the unexpected speed of getting the car into the pit, but he revelled in the fact that the whole family was trapped inside their vehicle, as the hole was not wide enough to allow the doors to be opened to allow any escape. He said that it was great - it was like shooting fish in a barrel. He said that he stood at the top of the pit and just rained down magazine after magazine of bullets, quietly piff-piffling, and peppering the roof of the vehicle. “It was impossible for anyone to have survived the onslaught,” Rimmer states.

He then started up the utility that he was driving and started to load the dummy ‘Road Closed’ signs and detour signs onto it, and then he tied the fallen tree to the utility and dragged it onto the property, returning the road to the homestead to its normal condition. After re-locking the gates and driving the utility to an area out of sight of the road, he then spent the rest of the day, and into the evening, placing junk around and on top of the four-wheel drive. When shovelling loose dirt down onto the hidden vehicle started to take its toll, Rimmer crashed in a tent he had brought with him, until early the next morning when the contractor arrived to backfill the pit.

The contractor was not at all suspicious, apart from commenting what a bloody waste it was as the pit was only just half full. Rimmer had explained to him that the old property was relatively bare and much cleaner than they had anticipated. “Oh well,” commented the contractor, and he went about his business of back-filling the pit. It was much easier to back-fill the hole than it was to dig it, and the job was completed with a densely packed mound rising up about half a metre. Like a grave, this would subside a little in time, but would still retain the shape of a grass filled mound, not at all out of place in the country.

When Rimmer finishes speaking, Henry says merely, “Well, I’ll be fucked! I’d have never thought to go to the lengths you did. But then again, you fucking well got away with it, Jackie boy! No wonder they’ll never find them.”

“Yes, I know!” retorts Rimmer.

Henry then excitedly asks if Rimmer still has that silenced submachine gun stashed away, as Henry would just love to use it on the bastard that he was intending to kill. Rimmer says that he does, and it is wrapped in a diesel soaked cloth, safely stashed away at a relative’s home, ready for use if Rimmer needed it. This relative was utterly unaware of its existence, let alone its location.

“Fucking beaut!” Henry comments. Rimmer’s face is beaming with pride, exposing a substantial gloating smile.

Henry knew full well that there were agents covertly listening in to their conversation, via the military grade audio-visual equipment hidden in the grounds. He remembered one of the technicians telling him that their hand-held audio receivers could pick up a sparrow farting at a distance of over two hundred metres so they would have picked up the information and recorded it. He knew that search warrants would be drawn up for all of Rimmer’s known relatives and extended relations to try to retrieve the firearm. This would be a great result, obtaining physical evidence, if they could recover the weapon used to kill the family.

Henry knew that from the description Rimmer had given of the high-class homestead, with only the one dirt road entrance off a highway, and renowned for its popularity with the social set, it would not take much checking by the police. And then could take place an examination of the properties along that dirt road, looking for a prominent mound. As Rimmer had described it, it was close to the road, and around a hill to the right-hand side of the entry gates, and only a short distance to a noticeable mound of earth.

It is within weeks that the police locate the property and successfully exhume from the pit the remains of the missing family, all still in their seats. The submachine gun has been discovered and recovered from a property owned by a distant cousin of Rimmer. The discovery of the remains of the missing family is all over the media, electronic and print.

For security’s sake, all free newspapers usually supplied to the hospital are suspended. The television coverage is blocked from the facility’s communal TVs, and the staff is instructed not to speak to any of the inmates about the police findings regarding the case of the missing family, as this sort of news seems to excite or stimulate them.

It is Sunday, and Rimmer approaches Henry, insisting that he could not be any more prepared for their attack and escape attempt than he is at present. He asks excitedly when he and Henry are going to make their move. Henry tells him that it will be any time now, most likely within the next few days. Rimmer appears to be delighted. Henry suggests that it be on the Wednesday evening coming, just three days away. When Henry asks Rimmer if he is entirely ready for the task, Rimmer replies with unashamed glee that Henry could bet his bollocks on it! It is agreed upon, and they both make their way to their individual rooms, to concentrate on the upcoming task without the annoying distractions of any of the other patients.

Monday morning comes around, and Rimmer heads merrily and excitedly into the breakfast area, expecting to join Henry for breakfast when he is confronted by Henry who has reverted into the Jock personality. He is sitting at a table, aggressively mumbling and cursing at nobody in particular. Rimmer’s demeanour immediately changes to that of an utterly heart-broken lover. He stands and desperately wishes that things weren’t as they were.

Then Jock begins to play up. He starts by hurling his breakfast plate at the wall. “This food is fucking atrocious and only fit for pigs! How all of you fucking loonies can stand to eat this shite, I don’t know!” he bellows.

The suppression team is summoned immediately, and they burst into the breakfast area. Two of the larger orderlies grab hold of Jock from each side and place him in a secure grip, pinning his arms and shoulders. Jock struggles violently, but instead of taking Jock down to the floor to apply the liquid cosh treatment, they drag him back and out of the breakfast area, so to not inflame or enrage any of the other patients present. Jock continues to curse and bellow until his cries of defiance are reduced in volume and then finally unheard.

Rimmer is just about broken. He nose-dives into an immediate depression and sulks off to his room to absorb this latest last minute setback. Unbeknownst to Rimmer, Henry has been extracted from the unit by the two undercover agent/orderlies assigned to protect Pearce. Rimmer is told, upon enquiry the next morning, that Henry has been deemed far too dangerous for the facility and he has been transferred to another more suitable facility. Rimmer’s heart sinks. He knows his hopes and dreams of a successful escape have been dashed.

It is on Wednesday morning, the supposed day of the planned escape, that Rimmer is escorted up to the fourth-floor area and to the waiting room of a suite in the facility, to be interviewed by a panel of psychiatrists. As he sits outside the suite waiting, he watches the reinstated TV coverage on the television screen affixed to the wall nearby. He is accompanied by a single orderly who sits next to him reading a magazine article. The mid-morning news is being transmitted, and it consists of coverage and updates, including re-run news footage of the exhumation of the missing family that Rimmer is responsible for killing.

He at first is noticeably shocked, and as the announcer speaks of the discovery being due to critical and reliable information supplied to the police, instinct tells Rimmer that Henry has turned dog. He had apparently given Rimmer up to the authorities to do some kind of deal to make his existence more comfortable in some way or other. He does not suspect that he was the gullible victim of a well-orchestrated and convincing sting. He quickly and viciously smashes his elbow into the cheekbone of the unsuspecting orderly sitting next to him, breaking his eye socket and rendering him half unconscious. Then he jumps up, and rains blow after blow down upon the orderly’s unprotected head, forcing him onto the floor and leaving him in a stupefied state.

He then screams at the top of his lungs, “Henry, you no good dirty bastard! You’ve stolen my trophy. Why did you do it?” Then, in a frenzy, he attacks the television screen on the wall and tears it away from its holding bracket. He continues to pull and drag at it to break free the power cord and any accompanying cables. Once he has done this, he turns to face the window at the far end of the waiting room, and he runs at it, carrying the TV screen. As he gets closer to the window, screaming a continuous “Aaargh!” in anger and frustration, he hurls the television screen through it.

After the TV has smashed through the window, Rimmer immediately follows it out in a diving motion, as if he were still clinging to the TV. The commotion and the sound of breaking glass command the attention of those in the interview suite and they come out to investigate the cause. They enter the waiting room, observe the injured orderly still moaning on the floor, and the obviously broken window and they then walk to the window. When they look down from the fourth floor, they witness the TV screen, smashed to pieces, and the crumpled body of Rimmer lying on the concrete driveway below.

As it happens, at the time, a group of insane patients are being escorted past the area. One of the patients stops, after witnessing Rimmer’s fall, and starts to sing a well- known Rod Stewart song, ‘Sailing’. He stands, swaying from side to side, with his arms outstretched, singing the words, “Sailing… I am sailing… out of the window, to be free!” He is giggling, as the orderly tells them to move on and keep going, as someone will be there shortly to deal with the matter.

The incident is officially recorded as a suicide. Detective Sergeant Thomas Pearce is rewarded by the Police Department for his incredible efforts leading to the retrieval of the missing family’s remains, bumping him up to the rank of a uniformed Inspector. With a comfortable and cushy desk job role, mainly consisting of public relations duties, he can see out the last years of his service, before retiring from the force.

 The End