

CHAPTER 17 KILLING

Jack, Ray and Bec are heading out to pick up lunch at the Edgecliff shopping centre, when they get sidetracked. Bec spots a suspected crim.

‘Hey guys, isn’t that a mate of Neil’s? Remember we saw them together at the races. I did a bit of research on him last year after the Sydney Cup and he is dangerous. I remember now, he is a suspect in the bashing of a horse trainer and doping of a few horses. Nick Gryzac’s his name. Look he’s just put his hoody on and pulled around his face so you can hardly see him. What’s in the shopping bags, hey?’

‘Oh yeah, it’s him,’ says Ray.

‘Bloody hell, let’s break up and see what he’s up to. Keep each other in sight. Go!’ urges Jack starting to use his portable radio. An Armaguard van pulls up and Nick heads into the shopping centre. With lunch now forgotten, the three cops break up and move in, closely watching Nick. He heads straight towards a security guard who is delivering the payroll of a substantial amount of cash to the centre’s administration office.

Nick has planned this hold-up to the last detail. He’ll quickly disarm the security guard, pack the steel cans holding the money into his two normal green shopping bags and leave the centre without a fuss. All within five minutes. His gun, a Smith & Wesson five shot 38 calibre, is loaded just in case, although he expects the guard to just give over the money and not be any trouble. While following the guard, he is totally focused on his plan. He has already done his homework, staking out the centre for a month, checking the weekly routine of the guard and making sure there is no security or CCTV. He is confident no-one will come to the aid of the guard.

Once he’s in the hall leading to the office, Nick gets up close to the guard and lifts his shopping bag so the guard can see him pointing a gun through the bag directly at him. The guard instantly knows what is happening.

‘What? Shit, here you go, don’t shoot, here just take the money.’ Eric the guard is frightened, but he keeps it together. He does what he is

told and packs the steel boxes of cash into the shopping bags. The whole robbery is over in a minute.

Then Eric tries to step back, slips and falls to the ground.

‘Stay still you fuck head,’ whispers Nick, who panics and moves straight into the guard’s face jamming his Smith & Wesson revolver into the side of his head, ready to shoot. Nick brings his focus back to his plan, holding his bags closely and turns ready to walk out of the centre. Then he bumps into a young mum carrying one child and she has another baby screaming in a pusher. He also gets a glimpse of Jack who has arrived on the scene. Panicked, Nick grabs the kid from the mum’s arms as she is passing him and uses the child as protection so he won’t get shot. He indicates to the mum with his gun for her to get over to the shops. The mum pushes the pram to the side and shopkeepers come out and help her, taking her and the baby in the stroller inside their shop. They are hysterical and the mum wants to go to her child. The Asian beauty shop owner phones 000.

‘Help! There is a gunman here outside our shop at Edgecliff Shopping Centre, No. 28, Asian Beauty.’ The manager is screaming into the phone the details of what is happening at the centre. They all huddle behind the counter for protection.

Jack is first to reach Nick. He kicks him hard in the right knee, making him buckle and drop to the ground. Jack quickly snatches the child and takes it to safety in the shop with the mum and bystanders. Jack can see Ray arriving at the scene, so he ensures the innocent bystanders are safe before moving closer to the gunman.

Bec rings 000 as is procedure to ensure emergency services react to the now violent scene unfolding.

‘Fuck this!’ yells Nick. He fires his gun and the shot hits the security guard in the top of his collarbone while he is trying to get away.

‘Police, put down your weapon.’ Ray yells as he unholsters his gun making the decision to shoot Nick.

Then Nick turns, points his gun straight at Ray ready to fire.

‘Police!’ Ray yells again, then shoots him twice aiming straight into his centre mass. Ray then tries to grab the gun off Nick and turn to the right to disarm him but the crim has been through this before. He

quickly rams his shoulder into Ray's head, so hard that Ray drops to the ground. Now they are both on the ground in extreme pain. There is a discharge from Nick's gun while his hand is being twisted right and he shoots Jack in the foot.

'Rash get him, I'm down!' Jack yells. It's his right foot again, then his foot hits the sidewalk hard, twists and Jack can hear the sound of breaking bones. He is in agony on the ground grabbing at his leg and fighting to stay focused with his foot seriously injured this time. He struggles to stay alert to try and protect the public.

'Rocket keep still now.' Ray yells back. Ray decides to remove the threat as Nick has shot two people, threatened children with a weapon, as well as the public and police.

Ray is left-handed so he puts his right foot forward and braces with left foot then has his finger on the trigger, 45 degrees aiming at Nick. He fires without hesitation into Nick's chest.

Meanwhile, Bec helps the guard, Eric to safety and checks his wound. She gets Eric to put his hand on his collarbone where the bullet is still lodged and to sit upright to try and manage the blood flow. Then her attention is back on the gunman.

Nick looks critically injured. Bec quickly moves over to try and stabilise him, being mindful he is still armed. She instinctively tries to take his gun not realising it has jammed and Nick has no energy left anyway. Backup and ambulances are on their way.

Nick's body goes into spasms, blood flows from his mouth and he lashes out with his arms and legs while screaming and still trying to hurt anyone who comes near him. He screams and moans and screams some more.

Ray uses the tactical force of twisting Nick's hand with the firearm to the right to make him drop the gun naturally. It takes all his force to pull the gun out.

'Let it go, let it go, or I'll shoot you again!' he says, while twisting his hand.

Although Nick's screams are mostly incoherent Bec is sure he yells, 'Neil'll get you for this, you arseholes!' while staring straight into Ray's eyes all the time.

His eerie, angry screams can be heard throughout the shopping centre and it feels like he is climbing all the walls, digging his nails in and lashing out at everyone, while fighting death.

Nick's body finally collapses. Then all goes quiet and Nick is dead, his eyes still fixed on Ray.

Ray is white, he drops his gun, then he falls to the ground himself, all the time shaking. Bec and Jack wonder if he has been shot.

Backup police arrive, take over and lockdown the scene. They contain those involved and work with the ambos. Nick is pronounced dead at the scene. The guard, Eric is checked and taken by ambulance to hospital. He is in a stable condition with a bullet still lodged in his collarbone. Ray is checked at the same time and is quickly put into the ambulance.

'You're safe now Ray, you're in the ambulance, can you hear me?' asks the ambo. Bec gets in and holds his hand while they travel to a nearby public emergency hospital. 'Ray, I'm here, try to take deep breaths, it's over now, you'll be all right,' she says tenderly. She just wants to hold him, but the ambos move her back while they stabilise him.

Jack is taken off to St Vincent's Emergency hospital by ambulance, to have his foot fixed again which looks smashed and is causing severe pain. The bullet went through his foot and the police found it up against a nearby wall. He hopes Jill is working and feels comforted by this thought as the ambos work on him to stop the bleeding, try to stabilise his foot, get him on a ventilator and start drugs flowing into his system. The ambulance arrives at the hospital and Jack is transferred into a waiting room for emergency assessment and then taken into an operating room. He is dropping in and out of consciousness and in severe pain so they rush him through the process to get him onto the operating table to try and save his foot.

Jill is dealing with a young pregnant girl and her partner who seem to have both overdosed. She sees Jack come into the hospital and watches as he is taken straight through to an emergency room. She knows it must be serious.