

Killing Sam Forever (extract)

I've included two extracts to portray some of the atmosphere.

The first is from the beginning of the book.

'In the game we play, one group of people, representing 5 billion of the world's 6 billion, sit bemused, befuddled and ignored. They're the world's poor. They have human rights, identical to you and I. And if I had one hope...'

What the hell am I listening to? Jerome said to himself. He reached to search for another station. He hesitated. For a moment he listened to a little more. Compelling stuff, he thought as he drew his hand back and replaced it on the steering wheel. Who is this guy I'm listening to? I don't usually listen to all this crap.

Second Extract

This second extract is taken from halfway through Chapter 2, when Jerome Millar has just received an email from Sam Crichton, someone whose death he witnessed 30 years earlier. Jerome's mind flashes back to that moment. I based it on my own experience.

Their orders that day were clear. Once the terrorists started to wake up and move around, Jerome and Sam - forward lookouts for an elite commando troop - were to open fire. This would signal an all out assault by firepower from the rest of the troop. 'Make mincemeat of them,' their lieutenant said at the briefing, 'and give them hell.' Nobody could doubt they did that, Jerome thought, remembering the carnage.

A barrage of rapid fire from thirty automatic rifles ripped the terrorists to shreds. Mortar bombs dropped all over them and pre-positioned mines blew what was left of them to bits. To finish things off, the supporting helicopters fired rockets at whatever still moved. The smell of death was everywhere. 'Poor buggers,' Jerome remembered saying to Sam just before the machine gun let rip at the two of them. The bullet missed Jerome's head by inches. It hit his left food pouch strapped to his waist and twisted inwards towards his stomach.

The sequence of events that followed were indelibly etched in the memory cells of Jerome's brain. Almost as an anaesthetic, he reached for yet another slug of his whisky as he recalled the intensely hot sensation, the searing, indescribable pain and his shock and horror when his hand reached down to his stomach. All he could feel was a horrible gungy mess.

'Shit, I've been hit. Get me out of here,' Jerome remembered yelling, in panic. Then he looked at Sam. He felt deeply shocked and nauseated. Sam's face was blown apart by a grenade, and an exit wound from a bullet, the size of a football, was gaping wide open in his back. It must have gone straight through his heart. There was no mistaking that he was dead.

That was the last he ever saw of Sam. After being winched out of the jungle, Jerome was hauled safely into the rescue helicopter fully aware that the remaining terrorists, using every weapon in their possession, were doing their utmost to shoot the chopper down.

'He's definitely dead,' Jerome had said, with complete confidence, to the helicopter crewman. The pilot and the crewman were considering another drop of the winch to pick up Sam. Jerome knew that the risk in going in to pick up a dead body was too high if weighed against the need to evacuate him to a safe hospital. Jerome's last recollection was of the helicopter rising into the sky, banking, and heading quickly away from the spot where poor Sam was left lying - later to be posted as 'missing, presumed dead'.