

HANNU MÄNTY



HANNIS

HARTVIK
—THE LIST—

Hans Hartvik – The List

*I dedicate this book to my children, with the following advice:
Be bold and be silly and do everything you can to live your lives
without regret.*

Daddy

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I stepped out of the Grange St. Paul's Hotel in London at 3:00 p.m. and right into Sir David Jones' Jaguar. I had just finished the London assignment and was really quite happy in my job as a headhunter, but not with the way this day was going. This time round, I was only in London for four days and had made it almost physically intact and injury-free for this part of the project. Mentally, I didn't have to give any more thought to whether this job made any sense or I was doing anything wrong, much less illegal. I'd covered this ground so many times before. I was doing the right thing, even though it meant killing people. I killed in order to save lives.

It was my eldest daughter, Elisabet's birthday and I called home to my wife, Päivi, asking her to put Elisabet on the phone. I sang Happy Birthday to her in my gravelly voice and she giggled on the other end of the line, exclaiming, "Daaaddy, stop!" I told her I would be home late that night and she shouldn't wait up for me, but rather get to sleep at bedtime. I would see her in the morning, give her a big hug and a nice little gift. Elisabet always expects me to bring her home something nice from my trips. I had started this little tradition because I love Elisabet and all my children above all else.

After a phone call and hotel breakfast, I left the Grange St. Paul's and headed toward the Thames. Even though I had been gearing up and preparing myself for this day for two months, it still managed to sneak up on me quite suddenly.

My mission was to take out three of Osama bin Laden's closest business associates, who handled the cash flow and investments for his criminal organisation all over the world. They had made an agreement with some American general for

the purchase of two specialised nuclear devices. Fortunately, an organisation called MUMS had got wind of the deal and kidnapped the general, giving him a new directive and forcing him to do exactly as instructed. I joined the project on behalf of MUMS, serving as the general's aide-de-camp, who would handle the negotiations with bin Laden's associates.

The price was four billion dollars for two devices, which were in North Carolina under the general's command. All the details had been agreed upon in three separate negotiations held earlier in London, and all that was needed now was a final confirmation of the deal. bin Laden's associates had used different names each time we met. And each time I met with a different person. The first time I met a Mr. Eyre, with the meeting place—if you could call it that—being the world-famous London Eye. The meeting was brief, but intensive. We met next to the ticket booth, where I was to stand wearing a blue baseball cap. And, when Mr. Eyre arrived, he only uttered the words: "Fireball and code". That was my cue to hand him a small envelope, which contained nothing more than an account number. But, this was no ordinary account number – it would be receiving their down payment of one billion dollars. This would then set in motion a process, in which bin Laden's organisation would get their hands on two nuclear devices in the United States. It was at this meeting that I was given envelopes, containing instructions on the next meeting.

The second meeting happened on the very next day with a different person. His name was Mr. Code. My job was to give him the detonation schematics for activating the nuclear devices, provided that the control units for them would first be replaced. I met Mr. Code in front of Big Ben. This time, I was supposed to wear a yellow baseball cap and red sneakers. I was holding nothing but a plastic bag, into which I had put folders holding the detonation schematics. This was also a matter of

ensuring security on the street, as we didn't have to worry as much about some junkie being tempted to grab a briefcase right out of my hand. A plastic bag isn't quite the target for thieves.

Mr. Code showed up, as agreed, and the exchange was made without any fanfare. He handed me yet another envelope.

The third meeting was a bit longer. I met a Mr. Beer in a pub called Zizzi, which was located right on the Thames. The purpose of this meeting was to outline the details for the fourth and most important meeting, during which we would hand over information on the precise location of the nuclear devices in Charlotte. There, we would grant bin Laden's men access to the site with tricks to extract the devices. They would also be provided with new control units to work with the detonation schematics. At the same time, they would transfer three billion dollars to our account. The meeting had gone well – we managed to agree on all of the precise details for the following meeting. That meeting would be held at Lloyds Banking Group.

I would be forced to act and react to situations quickly and on their terms, as it was they who had suggested meeting at Lloyds. Sir Jones sat on the Lloyds board of directors and he rang me on my Nokia mobile immediately after I had called my contact at MUMS regarding the situation and next transfer – in other words, the next meeting at the bank. Sir Jones wanted to meet me straight away and was already on his way to my hotel by taxi. Everything happened quickly – perhaps too quickly.

I guessed that I had approximately ten minutes to get ready for the meeting with Sir Jones. I guessed wrong. Only six minutes had passed when I heard a knock on my door. Upon opening the door, I was greeted by an extremely tall and lean Englishman. Sir David Jones was surely over two metres tall and around fifty years of age, but he was certainly in better physical condition than many top judokas in their thirties. Sir

Jones didn't say a word – he just put a finger to his lips and motioned me to follow him. Because I was ready to go, I simply closed the door and left with him. We didn't take the lift, but rather followed the emergency exit instructions and used the stairs, descending five floors and ending up in the alleyway next to the hotel. It wasn't until this moment that Sir Jones addressed me by asking: "Mr Kiefer?", to which I replied: "Sir Jones?" Once that was established, he suggested that we go to the nearest pub for a chat, as there were eyes and ears in the hotel.

We stepped into the nearby Patch pub, where we ordered a couple Magners. We drank in silence for a time, savouring the subtle, seasoned flavour of the ciders. At the same time, I noticed that I was beginning to feel some hunger pangs, but now was the time to get right down to it – food would have to wait. And, indeed, Sir Jones got straight to the point. He explained that we had had a bit of luck, because the terrorists were long-standing clients of the bank. They not only trusted the bank, they also believed that no one suspected them, due to their legitimate business involvement in both the petroleum industry and consulting all over the world. Sir Jones was also on the MUMS payroll, which meant that we were already on the same side and had no reason to provide assurances to each other as to what our objectives were. Our job was quite simply to eliminate three terrorists. We hashed out the details over three drinks, and the plan for the next morning was set. Sir Jones was no killer. He was a banker and facilitator of a great many things. I was the killer.

The next morning, Sir Jones would be receiving the terrorists in accordance with their wishes. It was his task to organise the facility and technical aspects of the plan for us. Based on the plan we worked out together, he would also be providing me with the requisite supplies for our meeting as well as taking care of the business at hand. Now was the time for action.

I would be walking approximately a kilometre and a half to the bank. I wanted to get there with a clear mind and physically ready for action, if such a need arose. My objective was to kill all three businessmen – in other words, the terrorists. I was personally motivated to kill them, because, by doing so, I would be saving hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of lives all over the world. I had no hangover from the three drinks from the night before, as I drank more than a litre of bottled water when I got back to my hotel room. Just to be safe, I also took a Burana tablet from my suitcase and washed it down with some water.

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I woke the next morning at six o'clock on the dot. I set the clock alarm and requested a wake-up call from reception as a failsafe. The clock woke me up at precisely six, but did not get the wake-up call until 6:10 a.m. A bit bothered by the lack of promptness, I called down to reception. When someone on the other end picked up the phone, I said to them: "Good morning! Time to wake up!" and then hung up the phone, laughing at my little jab at the hotel. I put on my running clothes and shoes, stashed my keys in my pocket and left the hotel. I decided to take an easy two-kilometre run to get my blood pumping. I headed down toward the Thames from the hotel and the sun was just beginning to peek above the horizon, bathing London's streets in light, even though the street lights were still on.

My morning run went quickly, and I was back in my hotel room showering within fifteen minutes. I got myself together and strolled leisurely down to the breakfast buffet in the spacious, airy lobby to

load up with the required carbohydrates, sugar and protein. A balanced meal in every way to carry me well through the day. Before leaving, I checked my emails on the laptop. I had a few messages from clients and one from a trainee, who had participated in an international headhunting case. He brusquely declared that he no longer wanted to be part of the process. A brusque, short statement with no explanations. On occasion, a trainee might have some personal or work-related matters to attend to, thus forcing them to quit. I also checked my spam folder, where I might find some instructions from MUMS. They were usually disguised as an advert for a toner supplier, but were always addressed directly to me and, in some cases,

to my immediate co-workers. This time, however, there was nothing to be found.

I walked down to the Thames and began to saunter along the riverfront walk. I enjoyed the sunshine, which was something of a rarity in rainy London. I walked at a deliberate pace, making sure I wouldn't get sweaty, which is, in my opinion, always unpleasant when wearing a suit. This feeling effectively kills any sense of self-confidence – it's quite distracting when your dress shirt begins to stick to your body. Of course, this is a different story when you're working out. Sweating is very much part of the deal. My attire for the day consisted of a tailored black suit from Turo and black Lloyd dress shoes. This was, after all, a business meeting in a bank, and I had to dress the part. The Turo suit was adequate in terms of quality, but it had a suitable amount of stretch for any physical activity I might run into today. My white Jousipaita dress shirt complemented the outfit, which was accentuated by a navy blue Boss tie. Indeed, I presented a convincing picture for the bank's elegant conference room.

I arrived a bit ahead of time at Lloyds Banking Group. The building was a stately, castle-like edifice, positively oozing prestige and centuries of age. It was built in the 17th century and had been renovated and remodelled over the years in a manner befitting its venerable status. The dark grey façade was skilfully fitted with tinted glass windows, which gave the bank a dignified, elegant air. I was carrying a dark brown briefcase, which contained only a Dell laptop, a black notebook and three rather valuable ink pens. Because Lloyds is a commercial bank, it offered no clear invitation for a casual visitor to enter. I had to press a black buzzer next to the oak entrance doors. The door opened and I stepped into a state-of-the-art security vestibule, where three armed guards faced me. They were all extremely fit security professionals in their thirties. One stood

slightly out of sight behind a metal security gate, watching my every move. The two others instructed me to remove my suit jacket and shoes. I did as I was told, removed the jacket and shoes and handed them to one of the guards. He inspected them whilst one of the other guards patted me down to check for any weapons I might be carrying. He then went to inspect my briefcase. He opened my laptop and used a scanner to see if there was anything to suggest that it contained an explosive device. The guard also checked the pens by writing with each one on a piece of paper. The entire inspection took only two minutes. I had already put my shoes back on when a stone door hidden in the side wall of the vestibule opened to reveal a smiling Sir Jones.

“Welcome, Mr. Hartvik – what a pleasure it is to meet you!” This didn’t faze me in the least, as I was accustomed to playing this role. “Thank you very much, Sir Jones. The pleasure is all mine. How lovely it is to visit your famous bank!” We shook hands as if it was for the first time in our lives and this was just a normal business appointment. The guards continued to monitor the situation with intense, unblinking eyes. I could easily see that these were top-flight security guards, ready for action. They had received special training.

Sir Jones showed me in to a dedicated lift, which took us to the third floor. We stepped out of the lift into the corridor of a completely modern office, which stood in stark contrast to the ultra-traditional exterior of the building. I followed Sir Jones along the right side of corridor for around ten metres, along which there was not a single door on either side – just a stone wall painted an elegant silver from the floor up to eye-level and then gold up to the ceiling. Spotlights in the corridor gave me the feeling that I was walking through one of Egypt’s ancient pyramids, as the ceiling was skilfully painted with images borrowed from the age of pharaohs. But, this was no time to

admire the scenery – we went straight into a conference room on the left. Upon entering the room, I noticed that it was extremely well equipped for holding conferences and negotiations. It had a long, glass conference table surrounded by ten leather chairs with silver frames. There was a serving table at the back of the room, fully stocked with drinks and fresh fruit. I saw that everything was in order and ready to go – at least technically. We were therefore ready for the meeting, provided that Sir Jones had taken care of his end. We sat down and Sir Jones opened the festivities: “We’ve made all the necessary arrangements as per your wishes. If you need anything at all, please don’t hesitate to ask.” I noticed that he stressed the word “all”, which meant that the equipment I had ordered was in place and ready for when the time came. “Thanks very much, Sir Jones,” I said with a smile, and then asked: “Any idea as to when my partner will be arriving?” Sir Jones looked at his watch and said: “They should be pulling into the sub-level garage any minute now.” At that instant, the mobile in Sir Jones’ hand rang. He answered with a pleasant “Yes?” and then listened to the person on the other end of the line for a moment. I noticed that Sir Jones was thinking intently about something as he listened to the person on the line. He then responded, providing instructions. I could hear them quite clearly as there was no other noise in the conference room. Sir Jones said: “Let them hold on to those and send them straight here. Then, go to points two and four. Thanks very much.” Sir Jones turned off his phone and smiled at me. “Your associates have arrived.”

I was a bit nervous whilst waiting for them to come up to the conference room, but I knew that nervousness would evaporate quite nicely when the door opened. I enjoyed the situation and my adrenaline level began to climb. I was ready.

There was a knock at the door and Sir Jones moved quickly to open it. Three familiar men, the ones whom I'd already met with, entered the room. They were dressed in sharp Armani suits and, being the professional that I was, I noticed immediately that two of them had the tell-tale bulges of concealed weapons under the left arm. This, however, caused me no concern, as I understood that the worst threat was always the person. Sir Jones politely introduced himself and wished us all a productive meeting before leaving the room and softly closing the door behind him. Just before closing the door, he looked me dead in the eye without betraying anything in his facial expression. I was now on my own and I simply had to trust what Sir Jones had told me about the bank building and arrangements made. I also hoped that the equipment would work. In most cases, the equipment provided by MUMS worked flawlessly, but on one occasion a technical failure nearly cost me my life.

Muhamed II bin Laden, Hamir Mirt and David Stenson were the names of the men sitting at the conference table with me. I knew their names because they were widely known in business circles. What was not widely known was their position as key financial operatives for al Qaeda. The task right now was for the clients to transfer three billion dollars to the bank account I had specified and provide them with information on nuclear devices in the United States. Lloyds Banking Group was the bank chosen by these terrorists. The bank would confirm the transfer of funds once they had received the co-ordinates of the devices.

I stood up and fetched a water pitcher from the serving table, offering to pour each of them a glass. All of them declined, so I poured myself a glass. Taking a swig from the glass, I cleared

my throat with some emphasis to indicate that we would begin. “Gentlemen, shall we get right to it, then?” This was no question – indeed, it was a proclamation. I pulled my laptop and notebook out of the briefcase and placed them on the table. Muhamed II bin Laden took out his own laptop. I quickly surmised that he was the highest-ranking of the three. He was the financial brain of this terrorist cell, and the other two protected him and established business fronts. In actual fact, these two men were the bodyguards of Muhamed II bin Laden, who was related to Osama bin Laden himself.

Muhamed II bin Laden said: “The transfer has been made. I would like to see the map and data now.” I smiled because I knew there was no turning back at this point. “Of course. But, I would need to see a confirmation receipt in your online bank first.” The look that Muhamed II bin Laden shot me a look that could have killed. He stood up with his laptop and walked over to me, placing it on the table in front of me. I looked at the screen and saw the DenizBank online interface, which showed that three billion dollars had been transferred to my account at Lloyds. I smiled in my mind’s eye as Muhamed II bin Laden circled back around the table and sank heavily into his leather chair, which groaned under his roughly 80 kilogram frame. However, my face showed no emotion, no response. Now it was my turn. I opened my briefcase again, pulled out a pen and opened my black notebook, which contained a small, neatly folded map. I slid the map out of the notebook and opened it, laying it flat on the table. Muhamed II bin Laden leaned forward in his chair, as did his two colleagues. Holding the pen in my right hand, I leaned out over the table and pressed the pen rather hard into the map, circling a spot in the middle.

My lungs began to protest and a slight cold sweat broke out on my forehead. I opened my eyes and inhaled deeply. I had counted slowly to a hundred and twenty, adding a few seconds

just for good measure. I was fairly certain that two minutes had elapsed since I drew the circle on the map with my pen. The nib of the pen had released a cloud of gas that spread instantly over a five-metre radius. Just one whiff of this gas would immediately render anyone unconscious. Muhamed II bin Laden and the two other terrorists passed out in an instant, without knowing what had happened. I leaned gently back into my chair, as I had to hold my breath for roughly ninety seconds. The effect of the gas in the room lasted for roughly one minute. For safety reasons, MUMS had instructed me to hold my breath for at least ninety seconds. But, I wanted to use this opportunity to test my lung capacity by holding my breath for as long as two minutes. I could manage this because I had played water polo for the Vaasa Dolphins during high school. Part of the training regimen every Saturday was to hold your breath for two minutes. Under normal circumstances, this wasn't difficult. But the adrenaline in my blood made holding my breath much more challenging. Now, there was no time to lose. I had to be extremely precise in my task as well as efficiently quick.

I opened the conference room door. The corridor was empty, as it should be. I looked down the ceiling line both ways to spot the security cameras and could see that the red power indicator lights were off. Naturally, I had noted the glowing red LEDs on my way in. Sir Jones had thankfully taken care of this detail. I returned to the conference room and quickly placed my laptop, notebook and pen back into the briefcase and then laid it on a chair. I took off my suit and shirt, draping them carefully over another chair to keep them from wrinkling, and then set my shoes on the floor next to the chair.

I undressed in just a few seconds and then banged on the front of a brown cabinet in the corner of the room. I knew that the cabinet door would open by giving it a good smack. Inside,



The List is the first instalment of the HANS HARTVIK series.

Hans Hartvik is an international headhunter. He is a successful headhunter for an international company and leads an almost perfect life. But, Hans Hartvik is also a contract killer who goes by the name Hans Kiefer.

Hans Kiefer is an operative for a secret organisation called MUMS (Murder University of Managements), which is headed by Schröder, Putin and Bush.

MUMS has made a list.

It is a hit list and contains many names, the most famous of which is Osama Bin Laden. Hans' mission is to eliminate him.

Books two and three of the List series will be out soon!



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