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# BLINDSIDED

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## 1: Thoughts Gathered in a Rush

I remember it as if it were yesterday. I remember the bustling market. The cacophony of voices all shouting over one another for a sale. Children grabbing at my jacket trying to sell me tourist tat as I bought fruit and veg from the stalls.

I remember the smells from the food stalls. Oh, dear god, do I remember them! My mouth waters as I write, thinking on the breads, meats, spices, and rice cooking away, intoxicating to my senses. Yes, I remember it all.

But what I remember the most, was what was to come. I remember it as if it were a recent event, when a lot of time has passed by now. How much time, I do not know? I did keep a track of the days, then lost count, then kept track again, as you'll know about soon enough. For all I know, years have passed me by? Perhaps they have? Time, you realise is both an enemy and an illusion. It is all perspectives. When we're young, we think we have all the time in the world, yet are in a rush to be older. But when we get older, we want to be young again.

I was guilty of that, especially as a child. I was so desperate to leave school and do what adults were doing. I sought freedom from imaginary constraints. From a gaol of adults making, that only existed in my mind. Yes, there were constraints. Certain rules we had to follow, as in anything in life; but I didn't understand that then. The expression, "if only I knew then what I knew now," springs to mind, and is ever thus true given my present situation.

I was a fool then, but we are all blindsided by our own foolishness. We think we know better, when in fact we know very little. History teaches us much, and yet we ignore it, ignorance and temptation our guides, like Sirens calling unwitting sailors to their ultimate demise. Fate and Destiny are funny mistresses. Treat them well, with their Sister Faith, and all shall be fine, but let in their mischievous other Sister, Doubt, and a very different path may await you.

Anyway, I am rambling a bit, which is a lot better than where I was at one stage. Now that was a dark path I went down; but I skip ahead of myself and I don't know how much time I have to write this down? In this case, time may not be my friend, so I will have to get down as much as I can in what little time I may have? Maybe, if I get through this, I shall be able to put down the rest, for there is much to tell.

And so, to what this is about, and to how I found myself here in the middle of nowhere, imprisoned, alone, and unsure what may happen to me in the coming days, these thoughts gathered in a rush...

## 2: The Chaos Effect

That day at the market, all was as it usually was. Absolutely chaotic! I've already mentioned the senses and sounds, but words alone don't put you there, no matter how descriptive you are. London on a busy day has nothing on Cairo. It is sheer madness, and yet after a while, you get used to it.

As a visiting archaeologist, I had been to Egypt many times, as I had across various other places throughout the Middle East, as well as the Mediterranean. I have of course excavated sites in Britain and my beloved home country, Ireland. Different cultures and beliefs have always fascinated me, especially the ancient past.

I had been living and teaching in Edinburgh before I came out here, and was invited by the Director of Antiquities at the Cairo museum to help with a dig just outside the Valley of the Kings, simply because I was good in my field. I had built up a reputation over the years and it usually paid off. I don't mean to brag, but I was a good archaeologist. I solved puzzles that needed solving and found what was lost to time. Alas, I never got to solve the big mysteries,

like where was Queen Nefertiti buried, or where the Ark of the Covenant was, *if* it existed at all? No, I wasn't that good. None are sadly, although one day I believe some of these will be solved or found. With time of course, and a lot of luck and patience.

There are shouts coming from outside. I must write in haste, and fear I may not get my story down, hence keeping it as short as possible.

There are screams now. The poor fellow was dragged from the nearby cell. He is a local man, and will soon be put to death. I have no idea what for, only that there were six of us here, mostly Egyptians, one from China, another from Libya I believe? I seem to be the only one left now, the executions picking up pace these past few weeks, torture not working on some, whilst in some cases it has, but to little avail I'm afraid. They wield the threat of death as if they're the acolytes of the Reaper himself.

I am glad Blue Eyes gave me this pencil and paper. He has been the only one to show some kindness in a very long time, but only just. He wasn't in the beginning, but yet again I jump ahead of myself, such is my haste to get my tale down. Fear is another of the Sisters that rule us all...

That day at the market was very busy as I said, but seemed busier than normal. I adapt quickly to different situations, but even this was too much for me. I just wanted to get my things and get back to my home in a quiet part of the city, and concentrate on my work and the finds we had collected over the past few days. I had high hopes they would lead me to a tomb of a great Pharaoh, and would receive the funds to try to locate the lost tomb of Alexander the Great. He was my Holy Grael, and one I would never give up on until the day I died. I know, the irony of that as I scribble this down.

I fought my way through the crowds, a few people I recognised waved and said hello, a restaurant owner I knew very well, inviting me in for dinner. Abubaker was a good man (his name means noble), and would often invite me around to his home to eat with his family. He was a good and honourable man, and his family kind and welcoming.

Not wishing to be rude, even though I was in a hurry to be out of the claustrophobic and stifling heat of the marketplace, I went over to him, where he greeted me with a huge hug and a wide smile, his eyes kind and caring.

I didn't see it then, and I should have. There was something amiss in his demeanour that I didn't notice because of my desire to get home. There was a nervousness there, albeit slight and hidden.

He ushered me in to his restaurant, begging me to sit down and eat with him, saying it was right he should sit at his table and eat with friends, and not alone at home. Yes, I see it now, and only wish I had beforehand. Things may have been different now. many may still be alive.

Everything plays back in my mind, like a film on the silver screen; all silent, no-one hearing the words of the actors, just the outside noise of everything else surrounding us as we watch. And just as Abubaker is babbling away in his jovial manner, and his waiter brings me the food, it happens.

I heard the screams before the actual explosion, and the gunfire following it. I felt the sudden rush of heat and the objects thrown everywhere through the effects of the blast. And the worst thing of all I remember, was the sheer horror and the faces of those that were caught up in the explosion. Their surprise and fear etched on my mind forever more. I can see them now, their bloody horrified faces ripped apart by shrapnel, other parts torn away from them. No, these memories will stay with me until my final days.

I must have been knocked unconscious for a while, for when I came to, I found the body of a woman laying across me, the waiter who had served me near her. Both, I could tell, were dead. And then I saw Abubaker, his mouth moving silently like those films, blood trickling from his mouth, his face covered and dirty from the smoke and explosion, and also covered in

the sticky fluid too. He looked so sad and shocked. I had to go to him, but the weight of the woman draped over me, plus my own injuries, prevented me from moving. I couldn't think straight, and wasn't sure as to the extent of my injuries, but my first thought was of my friend. I had to go to him. I had to snap out of the shock but it was very difficult to do so under the circumstances.

My hands trembling, yet through sheer adrenaline, I managed to push the poor woman off of me. I crawled over to Abubaker, ignoring the screams and shouts all around me. I especially put out of my mind the gunfire. I couldn't deal with that at that point.

I reached Abubaker then. I leaned in close to him, telling him it would be alright, and that I would get help, but he didn't seem to hear me. His voice was but a low whisper, and I had to put my ear to his bloodied mouth. 'I'm so sorry,' he said sadly. 'Please forgive my people. We are not all the same. Tell my family I love them so much and I shall await them in the next life...' and with that he died.

My thoughts tumbled then, trying to make sense of what had just happened. I couldn't believe it. My country has seen enough bloodshed and the world had seen a war like no other, and here I was in the midst of chaos and hatred again. The world it seems, wasn't content unless it took and destroyed all that was good in it.

A rage burned in me then, and I stood up, roaring, and ran from the destroyed restaurant to the outside chaos, and as I did so, I felt something bash me on the head and it was then that everything went black.

The chaos effect had served its purpose well.

### 3: The Road to Nowhere

I awoke some time later, my head banging and sore. A bump was already forming, and I could feel a little blood there, not quite dried yet, but almost. I had no idea how long I had been out cold for, nor of my surroundings due to the hood over my head and a tight wrapping around my eyes, keeping my vision blind to where I was and who my captors were? I knew we were in a truck and going over rough roads, but no clue as to where and what direction, nor how long we had been travelling for? It was confusing and disconcerting to say the least.

I groaned then and tried to sit up, the bonds behind my back that tied my hands making it a struggle. Voices started shouting then, and rough hands grabbed me, a blow to my face taking me by surprise because of the hood and blindfold blocking my vision. I felt dizzy and sick, my head now feeling even more painful. I screamed at them to stop and asked what was going on, but all I got was another slap and told to be quiet or I would be shot. That did indeed keep me quiet. I had to think fast. I had to know what was going on, and above all I had to keep my wits about me.

Without knowing the number of my captors, nor where we were, I decided to bide my time. My heart was pumping, the adrenaline still coursing through me. Fear does that to you.

Suddenly we came to a stop. There were a lot of voices talking over one another, orders given, panic, I could tell, in some. I was bundled out then, falling to the hard ground, my previous injuries from the blast having not fully healed yet. I was roughly picked up and dragged quickly down some steps, and into a cool room.

From there I was felt I was being taken down a corridor or something, the building getting cooler. And then there were more steps leading down. I was then thrown into onto the ground and a door closed behind me, keys locking it as it did so. I lay there, exhaustion suddenly overcoming me, defeated. I had been brought on a road to nowhere and suddenly didn't care now.

I just wanted to close my eyes and sleep, and that's exactly what I did...

#### 4: The Darkness of Rats

...Only to be awoken by something nibbling at my arms and legs. Suddenly revulsion jolted me awake, and I realised there were rats in the room with me! I screamed and kicked out at them, even though I couldn't make out where they were. I heard them squeal, and I think I crushed one underfoot. I tripped over something in the room, crashing to the ground. I heard shouting from somewhere and then someone coming. I told them there were rats, and asked them what was going on, but they didn't reply. Instead I got a beating for my troubles. The most severe I had ever had in my life. I doubled up in pain as the blows came relentlessly to my stomach and face. I was thrown onto what felt like a bed, and left there, scared and alone, the keys locking the door once again. What was going on? What had I done? Why was I here? And, where was I? I wondered if I would get the opportunity to ask these questions.

I keep mentioning time, and how I can't remember how much went by, but that's easy to explain when you've been unconscious, been beaten, had a hood over your head for days on end, and left in a dark room with no light. I could have been there for a day, or maybe three or more, but it didn't matter for I was taken again into a truck and off we moved to another destination. The only hope I had was that I was being held for something and would possibly be used for leverage, but what for, I had no idea?

I decided to start counting in my head then, for this would give me an idea of time passed. There was a gag over my mouth now, so they obviously needed, or wanted silence from me? Why?

I counted for a long while, and I know I lost concentration at times, but I guess we were travelling for around six hours, give or take an hour or two? We eventually stopped again, and I was similarly thrown into another room with nothing but the darkness of rats for company. This, I was to find, would go on for another day, stopping off twice, and again thrown into a dark room.

On the third, or maybe fourth day, we finally reached our destination where I would spend many months of my life. And it was here I would see and experience the brutality of humanity and what we are capable of as a species. I would prefer the darkness of rats over what was to come any day of the week.

#### 5: Black and Blue

I must have been left alone in that room for days. The hood still covered my head, and there was a blindfold around my eyes too, so I could not see what was going on, and my hands were still bound tight behind my back. Someone would come into the gaol, for that is what it was, pull my hood up just above the nose, and grab me forcibly by the neck, dragging me to a bowl of food, with some water in another bowl. I have no idea what the food was, as it tasted awful, but I didn't care, my stomach growling for anything to fill the gaping hole there. The water was warm, but drinkable. I felt like a dog that gets treated badly by its masters.

Once I was finished, the hood would be put fully back over my head, and I was thrown back onto the uncomfortable mattress and left alone. This would go on for days, and I guessed two weeks passed before something finally happened.

They came and took me out of the gaol, rushing me down to another room where I was forced onto a chair and tied to it. The hood was left on at all times. I did not know how many were in the room with me for I could hear no-one after my handler left me there.

I must have sat there for an age before I realised, I could hear low, measured breathing. Someone was in the room with me. Was it another prisoner like me, or one of my captors? I would soon find out.

‘What is your Christian name?’ said the voice in a heavily accented, yet good English. The tone to the word Christian was not said kindly. It sounded cold and calculated.

‘Terry,’ I said.

‘Your surname too please,’ he said.

‘Keenan,’ I replied. ‘I’m from...’ I was hit hard around the head, the blow knocking me for six, before I could finish the sentence.

‘You will speak when you are spoken to and only answer what I ask, nothing more. Punishment will follow if you do otherwise. Do I make myself clear?’ he said coldly.

‘Yes, I replied, slightly shocked at that.

‘Where are you from and why are you in Egypt. Keep your answers brief and precise. Remember what will happen if you do not...’

‘I am from Kinsale in Ireland which is in County Cork, but I live in Edinburgh in Scotland where I teach archaeology and history at the university there. I am here at the bequest of the Director of antiquities at the Cairo Museum.’ I left it at that, hoping I had answered correctly and would not be punished for it. He didn’t answer immediately so I guessed I had.

‘What is your connection to Egypt and a man at the Cairo museum called Abdel-Fattah?’ he replied after a few moments.

I had to think for a moment, but it was a moment too long for I received a beating worse than the first. I coughed and spluttered, and could feel blood pour from my mouth inside the hood.

‘Answer the question,’ he said.

‘I am trying to think,’ I said, and received another beating for my answer.

‘Think again,’ he replied in a very dark tone of voice.

‘I vaguely know the name, but I meet a lot of people...’ and, not having a chance to finish, that is when I was beaten black and blue, and beyond all meaning, my head spinning, my body taking far too much in the past few days. Before I passed out, I heard my interrogator tell them something in Farsi, and then there was nothing...

## 6: Broken In

After that, I was left alone in my gaol for a while. I wasn’t fed or given water for three days, and no-one came to see me. Since I had been taken, I hadn’t been washed or shaved, and now I smelled awful. What I would do for a bath and shave now I remembered thinking. Thankfully too, there were no rats there to bother me either. It was just me, myself and I. All I had were my thoughts and I was content with that at that moment in time.

Again, I went over the past few days, wondering why I was taken, why had many been killed, especially my friend Abubaker, and why had we changed different places to get here? I also wondered why they wanted me alive, and what they wanted with Abdel-Fattah?

It was true in that I didn’t really know him. The Cairo Museum is very large and full of wonderful treasure that you could get lost in there for days. It takes a lot of manpower to keep it in good order, and many look after different sections on the two floors and the various rooms, so it is difficult to know everyone there, especially as I was out most of the time in digs or at the labs investigating and cleaning up the finds.

I vaguely remembered the name, but I cannot be certain if this is who they meant? It could be anyone? I only hoped that my interrogator would understand that. I would soon find out, and so would begin the game of cat and mouse.

I was woken by hands grabbing me and dragging me away. Out of reflex I fought back, or tried to in my weakened and difficult position, but it was useless. I was dumped into the chair again and left in the quiet of the room, awaiting my interrogator.

He soon came.

The door opened and I heard footsteps nearby. I heard a chair pull up and someone sit down. I also smelled something nice and realised the person had brought food in. My stomach moaned at the thought of it, and I knew it had been heard. This was to be a new level of torture I presumed.

‘Now, we will start again and you will answer me. What is your connection to Egypt and a man at the Cairo museum called Abdel-Fattah?’ he repeated word for word. This time I was ready. I would not suffer another beating.

‘My connection to the museum, I have already told you. I am an archaeologist asked to help there with some work on a dig. I have been called many times in this way all across the world. As for this man you ask about, his name is familiar and I vaguely can picture him, but, if he is the one you mean, I do not know much about him, other than that he works at the museum and is a specialist in burial techniques of the Ancient Egyptians. Other than that, I do not know anything about him? He keeps to himself and I to my work,’ I said in a tired and yet confident way, and prepared for the beating to come, but it didn’t. In fact, there was silence for a few minutes, as if my interrogator was thinking about something. I heard him eat, and this in itself was torture at the moment. My lips were dry and cracked and I needed water badly.

‘What is your connection to the British Government?’ he said unexpectedly.

‘None whatsoever,’ I said. ‘I am not a citizen of the United Kingdom, but Irish’, I replied proudly, and with that I felt something hard hit me from all sides, as the stick, or whatever it was came crashing down on me in a reign of blows. My body couldn’t take much more of this I thought. I was going to die there and then and nobody would know where I was. My family would never be able to bury me. I would be left to rot in the desert somewhere, food for carrion.

I felt someone come close to my ear then, breathing heavy with exertion, as the beatings stopped, and a voice whispered quietly to me. ‘You will be broken in, it said menacingly, and you will tell me everything or I will make you suffer a hundred thousand times worse than you are now’, and with that I was dragged back to my gaol and left alone once more, only to pass out yet again.

## 7: Another Day in Paradise

Days passed into night, and night into day. I couldn’t always tell which was which with the hood over my head and the blindfold still tightly bound around my eyes. The beatings continued along with the questions, most of which were the same. My beard had grown long, and the only wash I had had was with the water I drank from, dipping a part of my face into the bowl.

Sometimes I would be left alone for days on end, still fed like a dog, mistreated by its owner. The only human souls I encountered were my gaoler, interrogator, and the ones who beat me. That was it. It was an endless nightmare without end, and I prayed that they would

release me and let me go home, for all I wanted now more than ever was to return to Kinsale, and be in my beloved town, the harbour and its little fishing boats calling me home. I wanted nothing more than that right at that moment in time.

I had always loved home, but never appreciated it for what it was, and now I walked its little maze of streets, past its pubs with beautiful music being played by musicians inside, pouring out into the streets, beckoning me in, in the only way the Irish can do.

I could smell the freshly caught fish being cooked over stoves, and could hear old Mrs McCarthy telling little Billy O'Brian to stop pinching her scones, giving him a clip around the ear as he ran off laughing to himself, her secretly smiling.

I could feel the sea air hit my face, and the bells on the boats gently ringing as they bobbed on the water, the gulls overhead calling to one another as they eyed the fishermen's catch of the day, whilst in the nearby fields, the cows mooed and ate the grass happily.

I pictured myself walking around Charles Fort, a bastion fortification designed in a star shape, standing proudly guard in nearby Summer Cove, against any potential enemy coming, seeking to take my beloved country, just had been tried before.

I pictured myself in The Spaniard pub, happily drinking a pint of Beamish, talking to friends and family, wiling away the day in blissful ignorance of the world's problems.

Yes, I missed Ireland very much. I missed *my* Ireland.

I promised myself, that should I get out of this alive and well, I would return there with immediate effect and think my life over once again, but this time with a new perspective on things. That, I knew, was what I would keep in my head and aim for. It would be my blinding light and guide to freedom.

But for now, as another round of questioning and beatings came my way at that very moment, I would have to put up with another day in paradise...

## **8: Time Waits for No Man**

I feel time is ticking on now as I write these words down. I am being hurried, and I fear I have little time left. Oh, there is so much to tell and so much I have missed already, so please forgive me now, that I skip much. As I previously said, if I do get out of this alive and well, I will indeed fill in the rest, for I know I must tell my story. It must be heard, but for now, I will continue on. I pray I will be able to tell you more than I have time for.

One day, when I wasn't being questioned or beaten, I heard shouting and screams, and what sounded like struggles. I had the impression there was more than one panicked voice, but silence soon followed. I heard something being dragged along the ground outside my cell, and a door opening and closing, as something was thrown inside. I heard this repeated in another room beside me, the previous one I guessed was opposite mine.

No-one came to check up on me, and silence soon followed.

I listened intently, but could hear nothing. No murmuring, crying, or scuffling. Not a sound. Either the people were unconscious, scared and keeping very quiet and still, or they weren't people at all, but something else entirely, like stocks of food or weapons? I had no idea, but my ears were alert all the same.

I'm guessing around a couple of hours passed before I heard movement in the cell next to me. It was faint at first, and I immediately thought of those rats I had encountered a long time ago. I suppressed a shudder at the mere thought of it.

The noises grew louder, and then a sharp cry followed a crash, as I assumed the person had fallen over, and like me, was bound and blindfolded? I could hear a muffled mumbling too, and this was sounding panicked by the second. They must be gagged too I thought.

I still sat in silence, unsure of what was happening, and if the person moving about was actually a captive like me, or a different kind of problem I wasn't sure I wanted the answers to? I decided to wait things out for a while and play it by ear.

My gaoler came down to feed me, and it sounded he was doing the same to the others, for I heard them both panic and kick out, the one opposite me screaming, and getting punished for it in the process. They would learn soon enough I thought sombrely as silence soon followed and I fell asleep, my dreams disturbed as was becoming the norm.

I awoke to a commotion, and being dragged roughly to my feet, taken down what felt like a corridor, for I was bumping into a wall as I was pulled this way and that, and seemingly into another room? From there, my hands were unbound and then tied to shackles on a wall, facing it, away from what was behind me. The hood was taken off too, the first time it had fully been so, whilst my blindfold was secured tightly and remained around my eyes. I could feel the sun on my back as my shirt was ripped off. My trousers and underwear were pulled down and removed too.

I stood there chained and naked to a wall, blind to my surroundings and what was going to happen next. I was understandably nervous and tried to put out of my mind what was to come.

Oh, in case you are wondering about toilet facilities and so forth, I'll leave that to your imagination for now, but let's just say I stank, as did my cell. It wasn't an easy experience let me tell you.

This was it, I thought. I was going to be executed there and then, or tortured at the very least. I braced myself, and prayed to a god I hadn't believed in since a child, hoping I would be forgiven and taken into his embrace. It's funny that isn't it, that when near death we suddenly find belief, all our previous rebellions against religion gone in an instant. Fear does that to you and sadly I was no different. I felt a fraud then, especially being a teacher of archaeology and history, and of ancient cultures and belief systems gone by; long forgotten to time and history.

Time waits for no man, I thought as I prepared to die...

## 9: A Close Shave

Well, obviously I didn't die did I as I'm still writing this, unless I'm doing it from beyond the grave? Now that would be weird, but I'm not dead, not yet anyway, and still a captive somewhere in the Middle East, although where precisely I could not say? I'll come to that at a later stage. I have to be careful for I want this to reach those I love, my government and Edinburgh University and the UK government also.

You may be wondering what happened after my being shackled up to a wall and left naked, blindfolded and very, very scared. I heard another person to my right being put up next to me, and he was muttering in Arabic about Allah welcoming him, and asking forgiveness, whilst on my left a similar scene was being played out. I was reminded of the crucifixion and dreaded to think what was to come next.

But I need not have worried for water was thrown at us. Sweet, beautiful water, and we were scrubbed hard with brushes until my skin was raw with pain, but I barely felt it, for the water was like manna from heaven. I had never felt so grateful for such a small thing in all my life and I savoured such small mercies. It was indeed a gift.

A chain was undone, and I was turned around, and the process repeated. I was cleaned all over my body, and my long, bushy beard was especially paid attention to. I hadn't been cleaned this thoroughly since a baby in the sink by my Ma back home in Ireland.

I heard many people laughing as this was done, and it sounded like there were many people there, the water dampening my blindfold, darkening it, so what little light came through suddenly went again. The water to my eyes was a relief though and I welcomed it.

It was as I felt a razor to my neck, that panic and fear filled my head once again. I was going to die! They were playing with me!

But no, it was to be a trim. I was being given a shave of sorts. Cleaned and tidied up. Everytime the razor neared my throat, I felt a wave of anticipation, but again, I need not have worried.

Once this was done, another rush of water was thrown over us, and then we were latterly left to hang there and dry, the sun burning our backs. Not long afterwards, we were dressed in what felt like new clothes. Gone were the trousers and shirt, to be replaced with what I was to learn, was a *gallebaya* and *ssserual*; basically, a long dress and trousers underneath respectively. Our hoods were put back on, or at least mine was anyway.

We were then taken back to our cells and left alone. There were no beatings, no questions and no torture. The day had been very much a close shave indeed.

## 10: An Unexpected Series of Events

The following morning, there was a commotion. Something was happening and I could not make out what was going on? Suddenly, my cell door was open and I was taken, quickly and, from what I could tell, in a panic. My sandals I had been given were lost, my feet catching steps as I was hurriedly taken up into the outside world.

Once outside, I heard voices all shouting over one another, and caught a few words I understood, whilst others I guessed at. I knew a few languages, but they were speaking a dialect I didn't know, but the gist of it was, that someone was coming and they had to move, and fast.

A beacon of hope sprang to my heart then, for the first time in an age. Did I have rescuers coming to get me? Was I about to be freed? I was unceremoniously grabbed and thrown into the back of a waiting truck, its engine roaring and fumes belching out into the hot desert heat, like some worn out and tired dragon.

I felt my two companions from the other cells being thrown in with me, one babbling in fear and confusion as we were sat up and pushed nearer to the front, away from a possible escape.

I felt a gun jab at my side and was told not to move, as we suddenly moved off. I heard the panic we were leaving behind, and this was followed by gunshots, and then more gunfire from our truck. Someone was hit nearby, for a warm liquid spattered my clothes. I guessed it was blood. Chaos and panic make terrible companions in a fight, and I would know for I have fought in a battle before.

This though, was as scary as it gets, and unable to defend myself or see what was going on, only made matters worse. With no idea where we were headed or what would happen, I could only hope that I would be rescued and live to tell the tale.

Eventually, the shooting stopped and the truck fell into a quiet relief, although I wasn't of course. I fell into confusion and wondered what had happened to our pursuers? I would never find out.

We must have been travelling for an hour or so, perhaps more, for I have no idea, when we finally came to a stop.

We were taken out of the truck and hurriedly taken deep underground, for the steps were slippery and wet. I had the feeling we were in a cave but I could not be certain? The sounds of dripping water and it being very cool in there led me to believe it was indeed a cave and very well known to my captors too.

The tension in the air was thick and everyone was speaking in hushed tones which reverberated and drifted around the cave like ghostly whispers of the dead. It was an eerie and surreal moment.

A brief argument erupted sometime later and I heard one of my fellow captives taken and a click of a gun, followed by a heavy breathing, and then a sigh of relief; thankfully not hearing the expected shot. I knew then that they were panicking and thinking what to do with us. Something had gone wrong and they thought killing us was their only way out. It was a scary thought, and one I was getting used to now. That of my imminent death.

We stayed there for two nights, before we were moved on to our final destination which is where I am now and have been for some time. I have no idea how long for, as I have already mentioned, but it was a series of unexpected events that brought me here to this point in my life.

Did the beatings stop? Was I tortured again deprived of my humanity? What more happened to me whilst captive?

As I have already mentioned, this is not the full story. I have more to tell, like why Blue Eyes is helping me get this down and sent to those I love. I also have to tell you about my fellow captives who decreased and increased in number over time, and the horrors we had to endure through it all, for this is really where the story of my isolation and pain truly started, and which no human being should have to ever endure.

Maybe one day, if I get through this, I shall tell the tale, but either way, I am not going home to my beloved Ireland, and to my beloved, beautiful Kinsale...

