

Shooter

Bill Carver

The Shooter waited patiently behind the window on the eighth floor of the room that he had rented. It was a fleabag hotel and with cash being the only payment option along with the grime of the room he knew that he would retain his anonymity using this location. No one noticed anyone else in this type of hotel. He had scouted out Victim and knew that he would be coming out of the dance club down the block within the next hour. He had to remain vigilant because Victim could depart quickly. But Shooter knew his talents and along with the distance and timing of the shots would be enough to successfully do the job. Uncle Sam had paid a lot of money to train him to do this type of work and he knew that he was good at it. Maybe not the shooter he was when he was younger and getting lots of practice overseas, but even now he tried to keep up on his training. He knew that he was going to use in on the man coming out of the club. It only regret was that Victim was not going to know why or who took him down. But that was the life of the sniper. A bullet from the distance and then walk away.

He shifted around unkinking his back as he watched the area of the club's front door looking for clues or actions that were out of the ordinary. He checked out the people in line waiting to get in and the activity in the street as limos and cabs dropped or picked up patrons of the club. His rifle scope was so good that he was able to lip read some of the conversations that were occurring on the street. He went from watching a girl arguing with the bouncer at the entrance line to the street to watch a limo pull in the front pickup spot. He scanned the plate number and recognized the number. This was Victim's ride to the next spot.

He took a deep breath and nestled his body against the rifle stock and settled down into his killing position. He slowed his breathing as he set his sight on the area between the door of the club and the now opened door of the limo. From the edges of his vision he could sense the movement of the crowd making room for the Victim.

Then Shooter had him in his field of his vision.

Shooter fired three times.

The first shot hit Richard Parker. He was a bodyguard assigned to the protection of Casper Dragos, a software tycoon. Parker fell to the ground with a shattered right shoulder. Parker was shot first to allow Shooter a clear shot at Victim.

The second shot clipped Casper in the right arm and passed through and hit a second bodyguard named Alan Fontan who took the round in his mid-section. Although he was wearing body armor, it was not enough to prevent the high speed bullet from entering Alan's body.

The third shot hit the third body guard who had reacted quickly enough to the attack to push Casper's body forward and down to the ground. The bodyguard, Ted Hertz, then took the bullet at the front base of his neck and it blew his throat apart.

All this happened in the space of four seconds.

All survived the assault except for Ted Hertz who was pronounced dead at the scene.

The Shooter pulled back from his eyepiece and refocused his eyes. He had taken his shot at Victim and he was unsatisfied with his complete shooting results. Too many peripheral people had been hit but he didn't know how badly they had been hit. He had taken his best shot and he knew under the conditions that he worked with now it was not the best work that he had ever done. Too many years had passed. He shrugged his shoulders in his mental conversation with himself over the results and then he started dismantling the rifle. He would drop pieces of it throughout the building and the street as he left. Let the authorities try to put it together.

The gun was now in pieces and he reached above his left shoulder to open the clasp there.

The scene in front of the club was in chaos as the first police arrived sending witnesses and those Good Samaritans trying to help scattering as they took control of the situation. Casper was laying under the body of the bleeding bodyguard, Alan Fontan, who had crawled over to cover the man who was under his protection. As Casper screamed out at those around him, Alan passed out trapping the small man under him and the police decided that no one would move until the paramedics arrived to sort out the men who had been shot.

The police quickly set up checkpoints on the streets two blocks around the perimeter of the club. Shooter arrived as the first checkpoint as it was being set up. He had disposed of the rifle parts on his controlled stroll against the flow of the crowd as it moved toward the scene at the club. None of his assignments in the wars had ever required him to move through a city after he had taken his shot. They were controlled and planned exits. It made the shootings very clinical and impersonal. But this was different. This was personal and although he knew that he was justified for this shooting nonetheless for the first time in his life he felt like a criminal.

He confidently walked up to the checkpoint and the policeman manning it took one look at him and didn't even bother to search Shooter's backpack. He simply waved him through the roadblock. It was the exact reaction that the Shooter had expected and planned for. He nodded to the policeman but he had already moved onto the next person in line.

Shooter continued walking down the street.

The next morning, Shooter had arrived home and watched the CNN reports on the work that he had done in New York City in the early morning hours. By now Casper was out of the hospital and putting on a tirade about being the target of an assassin. But it read false to anyone that could read Casper's body language. He was relieved that he survived with so little damage to himself but it allowed Casper to be in the headlines and Casper had no intention of giving it up. Shooter watched the little man and gave a wan smile to the image on his television screen. The interviewer brought up the other casualties of the shooting attack and only after paying the slightest lip service to the bodyguards who had taken shots for him did Casper return the conversation back to himself.

After the funeral of the dead bodyguard, Casper was again on the news shows offering a seven-figure reward for the capture of the person who had taken the shots at him.

The police were tired of Casper and cursed out the sniper for missing the killshot on him. They found pieces of the rifle but by the time that they realized that the gun was in pieces many of the garbage receptacles in the neighborhood had already been emptied. They worked with Casper on his list of enemies and who would want to harm him. They diligently pursued their leads under the glare of Casper's impatient publicity.

Shooter was amazed that after two weeks that the police hadn't found the link between him and Victim. His red herring was working better than he evened planned.

Two months after the shooting Casper had lost the limelight and in an effort to regain it had made a big commitment to a nationwide private investigation firm to review the work that the police did and to find the person who had shot at him. This earned him another tour of the news shows and the undying hatred of the New York Police who by then were rooting for the shooter to get away with it.

Five months after the shooting Casper had run out of ideas to keep his name headlined in the news because of the shooting. He quietly fired the private firm and worked with his publicist on his next software promotion.

Six months after the shooting, a CNN wrap up investigative piece on the Dragos' shooting which decided that the crime would remain unresolved with the current information. If something new came out then the investigation would continue but the case now was considered open but in the non-working files of then NYPD.

The Shooter smiled at the end of the report.

“Something make you happy there?” asked his wife.

“Just feeling a little better today.”

“No pain?” she asked hopefully.

“Some. But it doesn’t seem that bad today.”

“That’s great. Can I help you with that?”

“Sure.”

She walked behind him and as he put his artificial arm into position she only needed to snap the clasp into the hold position and it locked his left arm onto his shoulder. She then patted him and went into the kitchen.

Shooter looked at his phony arm and thought back. He knew that the police would never look for a one-armed sniper which is why he removed the arm after the shooting and carried it in his backpack. The policeman took only one look at him with his missing arm and had let him walk unobstructed past the checkpoint.

It still amazed him that the police never worked past his red herring to find the easy link between him and Victim. But he had chosen well. He knew from his research that Dragos was a very self-centered and selfish man who would take the attack very personally and very loudly in the news media. So all the attention was directed to and centered around Dragos. They all felt that he had failed in his assassination. But they didn’t know that he was 100% effective in taking down his targets. This was no exception.

He then wandered back to the day eight years ago when the bomb went off causing the loss of his arm and his other internal injuries. It was Victim’s fault that it happened and while Victim left the service and enjoyed living large with his customers as their bodyguard Shooter stayed here in pain, doing therapy and his family living on government subsidies because of his injuries.

But Captain Ted Hertz was now dead and the Shooter was feeling better day by day.

The End