

BENJAMIN LYNCH

I'LL SEND FOR MY THINGS

‘So BASICALLY, WHAT captured my imagination was this idea that one hundred years ago there was so much more silence in the world, you know?’

‘Right,’ Tim replied.

‘Right. So one hundred years ago we didn’t have all of this shit in our lives. All this noise, iPods and . . . iPads . . . and media and billboards. Posters for shows. Focus groups. Here you go. White with one, right?’

‘Right. Thanks.’

‘Right. So even the cars that roar up and down out the front here on Latrobe Street. I mean . . . it was quiet.’ Paul paused for a second while looking over the sink, wiping away a spot of butter from the edge.

‘So, what’s your point again?’ Tim said, sipping from his coffee.

‘Well, my p-point, I suppose, is that I think I would have liked it back then. Before the noise. Before this climate of being bombarded every five seconds by someone wanting to sell you something. These loud . . . expressions. It’s all so . . .’ Paul looked around the doorway at Tim, ‘. . . loud.’

‘I understand, Paul.’

‘And it also got me thinking about this conversation I had with a doctor friend of mine a few weeks ago. He said this cancer, well, all cancer, can be thought of, and in fact is thought of, by a lot of oncologists and stuff, as like a kill switch for the body. Like some kind of divine method of turning off the body, or tempering the population.’ Paul went back to wiping down the bench as he spoke. ‘So this idea that cancer must be stopped at all costs, fighting against it, bombarding it with all this radiation and poison. Toxicifying the body to set the cells back on the straight and narrow, well, it may just be the body organically destroying itself. Deciding enough is enough. And what’s wrong with that?’

The two men let the statement hang in the air for a while. Paul had his hands on his hips staring out the kitchen window in his dark suit and red tie; looking across the narrow alleyway at the grey building opposite. Tim sat in the lounge room, in a light suit, moving his thumb up and down the edge of his cup, seemingly transfixed on the floor in front of him. He finally broke the silence, bringing Paul out of his reverie.

'So, the paperwork is all done. Carmen is named in all the right documents?'

'Yes,' replied Paul.

'All other loose ends tied up?'

'Yes. I believe so. As much as they can be, I suppose. There's always shit you can't account for though.'

'I know . . . I know.'

Paul tucked his shirt into his trousers and wiped his mouth with his hand. He walked into the lounge and raised his eyebrows at Tim. Tim put down his coffee and stood up. Paul smoothed back his hair and tucked his tie between the buttons of his shirt and moved his hands to the sides of his thighs.

'Thanks Tim,' he said.

Tim raised his gun and shot him twice in the chest. The loud roar of the gun unsettling him for a moment and making him wince. He took two steps towards Paul and looked over his body. He walked to the stereo and turned off the music while wiping his gun with his jacket, regarding himself in the mirror.