



Scott Hudson  
**Survival**



*Five childhood friends, former soldiers, are working for the Italian mafia in New York. One of them, Will, is being blackmailed. His wife and 4-year-old daughter were kidnapped, forcing him to execute his boss to set his family free. Discovering the dirty reason of the kidnapping, the game becomes irreversible. Somebody has to pay. Everybody is trying to escape from the trap.*

# Survival

by Scott Hudson

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## Survival

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## 9. The Blackmailing

*In fact, this is a blackmail of the terrorists at the expense of the suffering of the hostages.*

*Alberto Fujimori*

Will arrived home. Before getting out of the car he looked at the house for a moment, thinking that Kelly wouldn't be happy hearing that he'd not quit until Friday. He got out of the car, walked to the door, and opened it. The house seemed quiet. He wondered for a second and then, smiling, mumbled to himself the obvious solution.

"They must be shopping...women!"

He walked down to the basement, into his office, which was closed at all times because of Carrie. He opened his gun box and took out two pistols. He broke them down and cleaned them well for Friday. Then he routinely put them back together. He locked his office door again and walked back up to the kitchen. There, he started cooking for Kelly and Carrie thinking they would arrive tired from shopping. His phone rang. The ringtone of a female voice called out a warning, "Attention! Unknown number! Attention! Unknown number! Attention!"

His phone's ringtone let him know that he did not know the number that was calling. Will had assigned different ringtones to everyone he knew, based on the kind of relation he had with the person, or upon their character. Will didn't like the ringtone. This ringtone was never supposed to be heard. He carefully checked the screen, which read, "Harry Rodriguez 1-246-291-8982." Will had never heard the name. His phone number was private, but somehow somebody had got it. Will waited for a few seconds. He had no voicemail on purpose. Will had an

agreement with Kelly. If Kelly called him from an unknown number, she'd hang up after the sixteenth second of ringing, so Will would know he had to call that number back. The sixteenth second passed and the phone kept ringing. It must be a telemarketer scam, he thought. Then, he decided to answer.

"Hello? I'm not buying anything!"

Martin covered the phone's microphone with a napkin and spoke in a well-practiced Russian accent.

"Missterr Hant?"

Will had a strange feeling, and didn't like it. He could hear that a man with a Russian accent was calling him, but he knew that no Russians knew his number! He also realized that the name did not match the Russian accent. He wondered how it could be possible that the Russian guy knew his name? Will tried to trace back where he may have made any mistake with the phone, breaking the calling rules. Maybe he'd called someone for more than twenty seconds. That much time would be enough to locate him and figure the number was his. He ended up realizing that he'd never broken his self-imposed rules. Neil often checked the guys' phones, including his, for wire tapping a couple of times every week, randomly. Neil had never found wire tapping or a bug. Will wanted to know how the caller had found his number.

"Yes! And you're...?"

Martin continued in the Russian accent and didn't notice Will's suspicion. This was their first time to hear each other.

"Ez a rezalt ov lest nait'z shutting, wi want retribushion! Wi hev yor femili kepchurd..."

The neutral expression on Will's face changed to one of a mad killer. The hand holding the frying pan started shaking. Will never thought this could happen to him. As an experienced

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mafia member, he professionally handled all situations, even if he wanted to kill the caller.

“Prove it!” he said, his voice shaking.

Martin tried to keep the Russian accent as authentic as possible while projecting the mannerisms of a mafia leader.

“Du nat bi apset, Mr. Hant! Yu’re nat de onli taf guyy in dis siti! It’z taim tu pey for yor diidz! Yu went pruf? Yu’ll ged it, jast lissten!”

Martin played Kelly’s voice.

“Don’t bullshit me! What do you want from us? Can you guarantee our safety?”

Will started talking to Kelly. This was her first time being in danger and Will wanted her to stay calm for her own safety.

“Kelly, Kelly! Stay...!”

Will realized it was a recording, so he couldn’t give advice or promise things. The kidnappers had edited it, it was a playback. They had time to edit! They may have kidnapped them, when he was at Moretti’s. They had to be waiting outside, waiting for him to leave. It was a planned action...well planned. Will wanted to have one feature in his phone badly—to be able to shoot the caller through the phone.

Martin kept on talking, Will’s silence made him feel he was winning.

“Wi want yu tu du as a litle fevor...”

Will knew that money usually solves many things. He knew he had some and could still borrow from Moretti, even if he had to delay his quitting repaying the money.

“I can give you money! How much do you want?”

Martin smiled at Will’s offer. It told him that Hunt wanted his family badly.

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“It iz nat abot mani! Lissen karfuli! Yu hev tu kil Morreti in de neksht srii deyz. Yu hev yor frendz tu help yu! If wi don’t heer bifer Fraidey nait abot Morreti’s deasth, yur famili’s gona bi ded!”

Martin hung the phone up, leaving Will with many questions.

Will lifted the frying pan and hit the stove so hard that the pan’s handle broke off. Only the handle stayed in his shaking hand, the pan and food fell onto the floor. Then he tried to quell his anger. Anger, he knew from long experience, was never a good advisor. Will looked forward with an empty stare. He knew he had to reboot his mind to shake off the shock of it all. His self-control began to kick in. His hand slowly stopped shaking. He realized from what Kelly had said that it was not threatening for her...yet. But he wondered what he could do now.

Tom looked at Martin, curious.

“So...? Is he in?”

Martin had a winner’s grin on his face. It should have been obvious to Tom.

“Of course, he has no choice!”

“Did he say yes?”

“He didn’t. But he has no choice!”

“Three days then.”

“That’s right! Three days! Hunt is going to hunt for us.”



## 10. Getting help

*Condemn none: if you can stretch out a helping hand, do so. If you cannot, fold your hands, bless your brothers, and let them go their own way.*

*Swami Vivekananda*

Will stood in the kitchen. He put down the frying pan handle and lifted the phone. As always when he was in trouble he called one of his friends.

Neil was at home watching TV. Will always could rely on Neil when he had problems, for the most stupid request or the most serious. Neil checked the display and saw Will's caller I.D. He answered, joking. "Say at will!"

"Neil...?"

Sometimes they fooled around each other, but Neil could tell this was serious. Will's voice was shaking, which made Neil serious, evaporating his smile.

Will continued, "I have a phone number. Track it down for me and call the boys to the old place in two hours!"

Something was not right with Will. It was a call for a mission. He grabbed a pen and paper.

"I'm listening!"

Will read from the incoming calls list the name and number.

"Harry Rodriguez, it is," Will spelled the name, "H-a-r-r-y R-o-d-r-i-g-u-e-z, and the number is 1-2-4-6-2-9-1-8-9-8-2, thanks!"

"Got it!"

Will hung up and headed to his car. He did look around this time but haven't seen anybody so he got in and drove away fast.

Neil initiated a conference call and put it on his loudspeaker. While the phone was ringing, Neil started his computer. In the meantime he grabbed his pistol and quickly double checked it.

Chris was sitting in a bar drinking beer and watching baseball. A slim girl with long blond hair came in and sat next to him. She was in her mid-twenties.

“Hi!”

Chris looked at the girl for not even a second, saying, “Hello.” and turned his attention back to the game.

“You do want to buy me a drink, right?”

Chris was surprised. He smiled.

“Rather, would you like to buy me a drink..? I’m sorry, but I wouldn’t. I have a girlfriend.”

The girl was disappointed and looked at him sadly, but Chris didn’t even bother to look her way anymore.

The girl was petrified by Chris’ attitude. She couldn’t answer him. Her self-confidence was ruined. In that moment Neil called Chris, who happily answered the phone.

“Hallo?”

Collin was in a supermarket, walking up the cosmetics aisle looking for merchandise on the shelf and comparing it to the ad he was holding. Collin didn’t want Nelly blaming him for not buying the exact cosmetic she’d asked for. Collin grabbed a box from the shelf. Since shopping was tiring for him, he bent over the shopping cart. He was bothered a little by the description, so carefully read the list that Nelly had made—when his phone rang. Collin answered, not even looking to see who the caller was.

“Say!”

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Hal was at home watching News TV while drinking beers. He didn't really know what was going on in the world for a couple of weeks. He was busy trying to date and work. He had to catch up. He was little bored, but answered.

"What's up?"

Neil made it simple and short when everybody was listening.

"In two hours at the old place!"

Everyone hung up. No questions asked. Something was up, and they were going for it blindfolded. This was something private, not a job call. Neil finished checking his pistol and paid full attention to his computer. Chris finished his drink quickly and asked for the bill by raising his finger to the bartender.

Chris opened his wallet and dropped a twenty dollar note onto the bill.

"Find someone else." Chris told the girl and walked out.

In the supermarket, Collin hung up the phone, looked at the shopping list, and then at the box in his hand. The two didn't match. A moment later he dropped both with a bored face into the shopping cart.

"Damn thing!"

He left the cart there and headed out of the store with a relieved smile. Shopping cosmetics was for women. The cashier looked at him curiously. Collin was a returning customer and had never walked out without buying. Collin gave a quick answer for the look.

"Sorry, I left my wallet at home."

Hal turned the TV off, grabbed his pistol, and headed to the door. He went to the garage, got into the car, opened the garage door, and drove out. They had time to ensure nobody was following them and then to reach the old place without drawing

attention. If any of them noticed or thought he was being followed, the meeting had to be called off. That had never happened before. They were more careful when they met for private reasons. It was in the cards that they can be arrested by police, working for Moretti. They didn't want to risk Moretti's business, getting caught when they had private stuffs going on.

Will sat in his car and sped through New York, straight to Moretti's. He was thinking how he could manage to save his family and himself if he shot him. But surviving killing Moretti would not be that easy. He could kill him in his office easily with bare hands, but he wondered how he would get out of the house alive. He knew he could take a gun from anyone, but that still too many men would be shooting at him as he tried to escape. If things got really bad Will was ready to die, but he wanted to see his family set free and safe before that. No point killing Moretti if he died without knowing that his family is really set free unharmed. The guards in the gate let him pass when they saw his car. Will parked and hurried in. Frank greeted him in the hall, with a big smile.

"Will! What brought you back?"

"Hi, Frank!"

Will handed over his gun as usual.

"Is Mr. Moretti home? I have some personal business to take care of."

"Yes, he's. Is everything all right? You look disturbed!"

"I have to see him, that's all."

"Sure thing, he's in the office."

Will walked through the house, past several guards. They nodded to each other. Will and his team usually worked mostly alone, but sometimes they had other guys to help them. They always tried to maintain good relationship with everyone. If one

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day things turned out bad and somebody should save their lives, they could expect someone to do so. Finally Will arrived at Moretti's office and knocked on the door. Moretti shouted out loud from inside.

"Come in!"

Will opened the door. There was Moretti's daughter, Laura, and Vittore. His showing up again was unexpected, he could tell by reading Moretti's and Vittore's faces. Moretti was not a problem though. Will greeted Moretti with a nod. Laura was the problem. She had to go.

"Mr. Moretti!"

Will turned to Laura.

"Hello, Laura, how are you?"

"Hello, Will, I'm OK, you?"

Vittore interrupted them.

"What do you want? You were told to stay home!"

Will ignored Vittore and quietly nodded to Laura.

"Relative."

Will turned back to Moretti.

"Mr. Moretti I have to talk with you in private!"

Vittore looked upset being ignored.

"Go ahead, Will, you do know that Laura knows what we are dealing with."

Will quietly looked at Moretti, and Laura. Moretti understood the silence. Will did look troubled. He knew that if Will looked worried, it was for a good reason. It must be men's talk. Moretti looked at Laura. Laura understood her father's look. She quickly grabbed her purse and waved bye to everyone.

“OK, I’m leaving. Ciao!”

Will waited till Laura closed the door. He was measuring the chances. Taking Vittore out wouldn’t take more than a second, but Moretti might shout. After all he still would be able to kill Moretti and put it on Vittore. Yet killing Moretti first would freeze and shock Vittore. He could just kill both quietly and walk out. He was still unsure if setting his family free and harmless would be that easy. Here was the time to make a quick decision. Moretti disturbed him in his thoughts.

“Sit down, William!”

Will, just like in the morning, sat down opposite Moretti. Vittore was sitting to his right. Moretti opened a wooden Bolivar box and showed it to Will.

“Cigar?”

“No, thank you Mr. Moretti.”

Moretti didn’t offer any cigars to Vittore. Vittore was not valuable enough in the family to be offered one of Moretti’s favorites. Moretti lit a cigar for himself. He did like Will, handled him almost liked his own son. Vittore was allowed to stay, learning business.

“So, let me hear what brought you back today. Must be something! You’re not the type of person who would come back for a nuance thing.”

Will looked at Moretti. The old man didn’t sense the danger he was in. But Will thought there must be another way! He knew he couldn’t do anything now, that the Russians might have a weak point that Moretti knew or could help him, that alone he wouldn’t want to start an Italian-Russian war. It would’ve been too inconsiderate. He knew he had to save his family with the most minimal casualties. Will passed on the chance to kill Moretti—for now.

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“I got a phone call less than an hour ago. The caller said that he has my family captured. He had a Russian accent. I guess the Russian mafia is behind it.”

Moretti was surprised by the unexpected situation, by the fact that the Russians would maybe want to deal in a different position on Friday.

“Huh!”

Moretti looked at Vittore, who was smirking at Will about his situation.

“Fucking Russians, huh?” said Vittore. “You leave home for a second and they want your wife!”

Will looked straight at Moretti and then looked daggers at Vittore, who didn’t seem to mind at all and just kept smiling. Moretti also looked askance at Vittore, but he was busy talking with Will. Will looked back at Moretti and continued.

“They will be set free if I kill you before Friday.”

Moretti began to look serious. That was it. The Russians wanted to make it easy. That’s the reason Will was troubled. Will was risking his family for him. Vittore drew his gun quickly, aiming at Will’s head to protect Moretti. Vittore expected a death sentence from Moretti. To his disappointment, it didn’t happen. Though Will sensed the movement, he didn’t even bother to turn towards Vittore. Moretti smiled at Will.

“Will you?”

“Mr. Moretti, I’m here for help. The caller had a Russian accent. I think if it is Nagirev, you can negotiate my family’s release with him.”

Moretti was proud of Will. He was an example for every man working for him. Will was considerate and didn’t act recklessly.

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“You’re not stupid, William! Of course! Family is untouchable, everybody knows that. I’ll do what I can!”

Moretti started dialing Nagirev, but felt disturbed by Vittore holding his gun at Will.

“Vittore, put that gun down! See, Will is my man! He could have had me killed instead of asking me to help him!”

Vittore didn’t want to put the gun down and didn’t like hearing praise for Will.

“Put your gun down...*now*! You should learn from Will how men do things!”

Vittore was upset with the comparison, and the hidden meaning, but finally followed Moretti’s order. Moretti finished dialing and then put it on loudspeaker.

A man with a Russian accent answered the phone.

“Da!”

“Mr. Nagirev! How are you?” Moretti greeted him.

Nagirev, the Russian mafia leader, wasn’t in the mood. Things had not gone as he’d wanted. The Italians had caused him more trouble than he’d expected. He had no choice, though. The Italians were the ones he couldn’t go around, if he wanted to do business, undisturbed, in New York.

“Mr. Morreti, wat iz de riizn ov yor kaling? Kanseling de miting?”

“No, no, I would like to know if you had any raid on a family today.”

Nagirev became tense being suspected. He hadn’t ordered anyone to trouble Italian interests, but sometimes his men took things in their own hands. They were loyal to family.

“Mament, Mr. Morreti,” Nagirev said, then talked in Russian with someone in the background. When he got the



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answer he continued, “Nooo, wi did nat! Yu shud now de rulz, Mr. Morreti. No femili!”

Will could not believe what he’d just heard. He’d talked on the phone with a man with a Russian accent. He felt it must be the Russians.

“Make sure for me! Don’t risk our weak business relation any more. I need a frank answer. My man was blackmailed by a man speaking with a Russian accent.”

Nagirev’s voice became tenser. He knew there were many poor families in Russian communities who were willing to do many crazy things just to get some money. It made them look bad, doing business with Moretti. He eased a little, tried to be friendlier.

“Ai tod yu wi did nat! No femili!”

“Thank you, I thought so as well! All right then, see you on Friday!”

Moretti hung the phone up. He looked at Will with sorrow.

“As you’ve heard, Will, the Russians are innocent...”

“So they say,” said Will, not believing Nagirev.

Moretti thought for a few seconds how he could help the most, while Vittore eagerly watched Will, like stalking prey.

“I have no idea, who could have abducted your family, Will. Maybe somebody from your past? All I can do is give you men if you need them. On Friday before the meeting report to me if you have your family safe! If not, I’ll have to do what’s necessary, Will. Sorry!”

Vittore felt his time had arrived. Even Laura had chosen him over Will. He didn’t like Will being anywhere around Laura, even if he had his own family. What Vittore didn’t see was that Will was only in it for Moretti and the money.

Vittore interjected, "Which means I kill you, Will!"

*"Vittore! Enough!"* shouted Moretti.

Vittore looked at Moretti as if to ask, "Either way he'll die. What did I do wrong?"

Will knew he'd end up in similar type of trap. He knew the Russians had pushed him into this situation and that for unquestionable reasons Moretti had now given him the next problem to solve. Will didn't want to die that easily. He was troubled by Vittore, whom he knew was more than happy to kill him at any time. Will didn't want to give him the pleasure.

"Understood, Mr. Moretti. Thank you for the heads up.... Never mind Vittore, Mr. Moretti. He never liked me, and it is a mutual feeling. Thank you for your help! I'll keep you informed."

Will stood up, as did Vittore. Moretti was troubled by this unexpected situation. He didn't want to see Will die because of him. Will walked to the door, followed by Vittore. Vittore grinned cruelly, patting the bulge of the gun in his suit a couple of times.

"Friday will be my pleasure!"

Will whispered, "Want to bet your life on it? Because I wouldn't!"

Vittore placed his hand on Will's shoulder, saying, "You're not as good as you think!"

Will respectfully looked back at Moretti, who nodded to him, saying with his eyes, "Teach him a lesson."

Will grabbed Vittore's hand and twisted it, forcing Vittore to bend over or have his elbow broken. Vittore lost his balance and was pushed onto the floor. Vittore grunted with pain, sitting on the floor. Will nodded to Moretti, who nodded back with a

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smile, and Will left the office. Moretti looked at Vittore gloatingly.

“Vittore, you’re trying to fuck with the wrong person! He belongs to us. You should learn discipline! God mercy, who kidnapped William’s family! Believe me, you don’t want to cross Will’s path when he’s angry!”

Vittore felt humiliated, pissed that Moretti, his father in law, had let it happen. He’d just tried to protect him, the family.

Will walked back to Frank and got back his pistol. Frank asked him, “How’d it go? Any success?”

“Cleared certain things up.”

“Friday we gonna kick the Russians’ ass! They have to work for us!”

The guys were excited about the fact the Russians wanted to join to their organization. That showed Moretti understood the business well and was a good leader. Even Frank was excited, who was one of the oldest members of the family. Will answered knowing things that Frank didn’t.

“We’ll see how it goes.”

Will walked to his car and headed for his meeting with the guys.



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