

# RETURN OF THE WOLF

written by Dominic Billings

**PROTAGONIST:** The Basque

**CHARACTERISATION:** chameleonic; multilingual; non-ideological; assassin for hire; runner

**EXTERNAL GOAL:** assassination

**INTERNAL GOAL:** principle; code of honour

**MAIN DRAMATIC CONFLICT:** Civil disobedience vs. radical environmentalism

**THEME:** conservation; ecoterrorism; radical environmentalism; violence; rewilding; resistance; revolution

**CENTRAL DRAMATIC QUESTION:** Is ecoterrorism valid in the face of enormous biodiversity losses?  
*Drinking Molotov Cocktails with Gandhi*

**ENDING:** ?

**ARC:** The Basque prepares to assassinate a series of high-profile businesspeople in acts of eco-terrorism

## STORY ENGINES

**ACT I -** Introduction to The Basque & Iberian wolf/golden jackal

**ACT II -** Anatomy of a Plot

**ACT III -** Anatomy of a Kill

**ACT I**

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**INCITING INCIDENT**

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**ACT II-A**

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**ACT II-B**

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### **ACT III**

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**The ultimate point ties back to the Paris terrorist attacks ahead of COP21. It's to maintain distractions. The fossil fuel interests are financing the executions of the petro-giant heads, as competitors. This, in turn, will drive the price of oil up.**

## Notes

- Marathon Man > running > Julian Alps > Montmartre > Bois du Boulogne > night > Nescafé Noir > Ascenseur
  - Marathon Man book
  - Ascenseur file & soundtrack
  - Nescafé Noir cinematography aesthetic if filmed
- Molenbeek terrorist cell > Belgians of Moroccan heritage
- FN Herstal/FN Browning 1910
- ASICS
- [Wolf hunting - Wikipedia](#)
- [Confessions of an Eco-Warrior](#)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A\\_Very\\_Private\\_Gentleman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Very_Private_Gentleman)
- [Lone wolf attack - Wikipedia](#)
- <https://keep.google.com/u/0/#NOTE/1uNAOQE8c7N9MIZmwCS7HvpqeCgV0eMTwikxGzXJaWhej2tBCyHRYWwrijgiOnTqJ4Bhdclt>
- Molenbeek = Part 1
- Multiple personas/disguises/languages e.g. Chacal > Arabic/Français/Español/Basque
- Le Samourai
- modus operandi
- stealth assassin/assassins > The Perfect Kill: 21 Laws for Assassins - Robert Baer
- Procedural
- CBD
- Drinking Molotov Cocktails with Gandhi - Ch. 8: Return of the Wolf
  - [Keystone species - Wikipedia](#)
    - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keystone\\_species#The\\_wolf,\\_Yellowstone's\\_apex\\_predator](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keystone_species#The_wolf,_Yellowstone's_apex_predator)
  - [Land ethic - Wikipedia](#)
  - [The Importance of Wolves | California Wolf Center.](#)
- Research:
  - Paris
  - Running:
    - Pyrenees/Basque Country > Julian Alps/jackal
- Terrorism as distraction from climate change
- Basque proverb "A land of strangers is a land of wolves." - Longmire, Land of Wolves
- Basque language
- Frederick Forsyth books > procedural
- The Prize/The Quest > TV series
- Deutsche Bank report
- Munich of oil barons > Total/Paris > Shell/Hague; Saudi Aramco
  - Shell > Santpoot/Hoorn
- Munich = Paris > IEA; Rome; Holland canal houseboat; Beirut > Persian Gulf
  - George Jonas - *Vengeance*
  - *Munich* screenplay

- Hamburg > La Defense; Eni, Rome; St. James Pl; Shell House, London
- Saudi princes = Marbella; Cyprus > Gazprom: Athens > Palestinians
- Vengeance > Mossad > Eric Roth/Kushner
- Frankfurt = safe house = Bilbao or Basque Mountains
- Munich = Paris > COP21 x terrorism
- [https://keep.google.com/u/0/#NOTE/13c\\_QBp3cqStS\\_-PlgqcC8mlUjovkl4Y2ICAal1Za\\_BdKAQy2cCw\\_VCpCM7C3RjJmIoblleeB](https://keep.google.com/u/0/#NOTE/13c_QBp3cqStS_-PlgqcC8mlUjovkl4Y2ICAal1Za_BdKAQy2cCw_VCpCM7C3RjJmIoblleeB)
- Could Basque include Odessa File as influence?
- ISIS After Paris - The New Yorker <https://www.newyorker.com/podcast/comment/isis-after-paris>
- POV = assassin/Avner > turns out his handler wanted distraction > he was being manipulated > toying w/ oil barrel price
- Hunting boots & knives > Browning
- PLO/Black September/Red Army Faction
- <https://www.pond5.com/search?kw=bois-de-boulogne&media=footage>
- <https://www.pond5.com/stock-footage/item/222998823-aerial-vertical-view-street-paris-near-monmartre>
- <https://www.pond5.com/stock-footage/item/97563168-triglav-national-park-slovenia-spring>
- Scrivener file
- [Suspense - Wikipedia](#)
- [Thriller film - Wikipedia](#)
- [Espionage - Wikipedia](#)
- [Spy film - Wikipedia](#)
- [Honey trapping - Wikipedia](#)
- [Recruitment of spies - Wikipedia](#)
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexpionage>
- <https://www.alltrails.com/italy/liguria-3/rapallo>
- <https://www.alltrails.com/parks/slovenia/bled/triglavski-narodni-park>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Femme\\_fatale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Femme_fatale)
- [Provisional Irish Republican Army arms importation - Wikipedia](#)
- [The Iberian Wolf, a story of overcoming | Rewilding Portugal](#)
- [Parc zoologique de Paris](#)
- [Howling For Conservation - The Iberian Wolf \(o lobo ibérico\) | Inspire Wilderness](#)
- [Iberian wolves - Picture of Parc Zoologique de Paris - Tripadvisor](#)
- [The Iberian wolf | Parc Zoologique de Paris](#)

### What ought Return of the Wolf and Orest's Forest be?

Reckon I know in my heart of hearts. Return of the 🐺 will be Drinking Molotov Cocktails with Gandhi x The Day of the Jackal.

What you're suggesting sort of calls for integrating Wolf with Orest. Both seem as though they're calling for eco-terrorism. Hmmm well Wolf could easily be cordoned off as a Basque Mountains/Pyrenees/San Sebastian 🍷 trip. The rest migrated to Orest.

Nah, keep Wolf. Maybe just twig the theme. Add a bit more Mask of Dimitrios.

Maybe write as a book first. Not terrorism as distraction for climate change. Maybe just a Munich of oil barons. Targeted assassinations. Mom it needs more than that. Just explore ingredients in meantime.

## RETURN OF THE WOLF

- = Munich script
- Vengeance - George Jonas
- German Autumn / Baader - Meinhof
- Black September
- ~~beat sheet~~
- development worksheet
- BIAM "
- Basque Country
- Ben Burtt - Munich audio
- \* DVD - Portrait of an Era
- Battle of Algiers → newsreel/newsreel → telephoto → handheld
- ~~Munich~~
- Patriot Games (novel)
- The Day of the Jackal proper nouns/index
- Metal Gear Solid novelisation proper nouns
- Robot Studios - Ghent → Eefje Dutch/Flemish
- bullpen; action: triage
- FAMAS/MAS/Starw - Extreme/Desks
- Heckler & Koch Mark 23 USSOCOM w/ silencer
- Desert Eagle / .50 Action Express
- SIG Sauer
- personal area network (PAN) / key card

# Return of the Wolf

- Asiatic cheetah
- " lion
- Barbary "
- striped hyena
- former range: Arabia; Iraq; Iran
- Yemen; Caucasus; Turkey
- Afghanistan; Pakistan; India

- knifework → knives & guns
- ↓
- hunting wildlife
- ↓
- hunts Homo sapiens <sup>never</sup> not
- other species
- ↓
- avoids transport → oil
- ↓
- rare/boats

- Eurasian brown bear: Slovenia
- Pyrenees; Cantabrians; Scandinavia
- Caucasia; Russia; Caucasus
- # ~ 100 - 1000

- sniper/marksmanship
- ASICS trail running shoes
- Malta = Munich basket.
- Budapest → Paris
- Munich zoom lens; doro
- different colours for countries

- cheetah/lion/hyena → Iraq
- nationalist self-determination violence
- x critically endangered species

Europe/Caucasus/Arabian Peninsula/  
Iraq/Iran/Turkey/Syria

- separatist x ~~WEN~~ Red List
- running in the Basque Mountains
- " " Pyrenees
- " " Balkan Alps

- ~~Spatky~~ = a
- Jonuz Kaminski - DJ
- Joanna Johnston - costume
- Rick Parker - pub design

- surfing in San Sebastian/Basque
- Marathon Man - William Goldman
- sniper/marksmanship/guns/small arms



# Return of the Wolf

- pre-production
  - production
  - post-production
  - development
  - writing
  - distribution
  - marketing
- writing
  - publishing
- Eric Ambler / Mask of Dimitrios
  - Day of the Jackal / Forsythe

budget = \$0  
- \$400

book > film

- budget = ~~1,000,000~~
- \$20,000
- length of time: 1-3 yrs
- Batman: Ninja Seminar

priority? → #1, 2, 3

movie star? → quantify

SMART criteria

? collab → crew #?

cameras / audio of pen/paper / Word / Pages / Google Docs

film = cameras / moving picture

## Return of the Wolf

- chaff

- beaver stance

- Wolf Song of Alaska

- 'wolf' in Native American languages

The gunsmith had been pre-eminent in Belgium's firearms manufacturing community. A rising star of FN Herstal, Belgium's national factory, in the French-speaking Walloon area of Herstal, industrial centre of Wallonia, part of greater Liège, on the river Meuse.

Herstal still laid claim as the largest small arms exporter of the Continent. Its holding company owned the iconic American firearms companies, Winchester rifles and Browning.

Browning founder John Browning, designed Herstal's FN Model 1910, which sparked the First World War, a conflagration laying antecedents for its sequel.

The handsome pistol is a semi-automatic, a mechanism John Browning pioneered. Semi-automatics contrasted with automatic firearms, whereby the latter simply required the continued depression of the trigger; or selective fire weapons, capable of interchanging, using a selector switch, between modes of automatic, semi-automatic, and burst mode, firing a predetermined amount of rounds.

The catalysing cartridge propelling the Great War, assassinating Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophie, presumptive heirs to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Sarajevo, was a .380 ACP.

ACP denoted the acronym Automatic Colt Pistol, for cartridge designs by John Browning, for both FN Herstal and Colt firearms manufacturers. John Browning derived the .380 design from his 0.38 inch calibre cartridge, omitting the flanged rim from the bottom of the pistol cartridge for the .380 of similar dimensions.

Pistol serial number #19074, now housed in Vienna's Museum of Military History, was the offending weapon. Its magazine capacity holds six .380 cartridges, yet it took only two to assassinate the Austrian royal couple.

Disassembled, the Model 1910 consisted of five major parts: the magazine; the slide, the uppermost part recoiling back-and-forth as the pistol fires; the spring, kicking back the thrust of the recoil upon propulsion; the barrel, its bore diametrically designed for 0.38 or 0.32 inch calibre cartridges; and the frame.

In complete disassembly, the Model 1910 constituted a couple dozen smaller parts: the extractor and its pin, removing previously fired cartridge casings, making way for fresh ammunition; the firing pin and its spring, providing the impact; the grip plates, screws and decorative escutcheon of the Fabrique National logo; the various safety mechanisms, preventing accidental discharge; the trigger and accompanying sear, holding back the firing pin until a suitable amount of force is exercised upon the trigger, plus a couple extra pins and springs

By contrast, the two World Wars in the European theatre were bookended with another cartridge for the FN Model 1910, as purportedly Adolf Hitler died from a 0.32-inch calibre ACP from his police pistol designed by German gunsmith Carl Walther.

The gunsmith, known only mononymously to The Basque as Glenn, was versed in both the artisanal tradition, as well as industrial-scale mass manufacture. As Glenn told it, It was only for a shift from the cacophony and relative mundanity of the factory floor which had led the gunsmith to become freelance - more underground, than of the shopfront variety.

Proficient in the trade of machinists, as much as the use of manual hand tools, expert in the discipline of ballistics and chemistry. Glenn hadn't served in the Belgian military, but in service to half the nations of the world's militaries in his tenure at FN, he was deeply steeped in military requirement and standards. His paternal grandfather was a painter, Glenn channelling his artistic sensibilities into gun innovations of a more improvised nature - some for his own amusement and curiosity; others fit-for-purpose upon private commission.

Such was the nature of The Basque's request upon Glenn. The two remained professionally acquainted, intermittently, over an eight year period. One knew as little about the other, suffice for what was shared in each's brief windows of exchange. Glenn would receive phone calls asking for an appointment and a suggested time at Glenn's workshop.

Glenn operated from the basement of his home, a two-storey dwelling, of which he occupied the top apartment. A couple in their seventies occupied the bottom apartment. Their relationship was cordial and both allowed privacy for the other. The couple were not aggrieved for Glenn to make use of the basement. The sole proviso was that metalwork was precluded after suppertime at 7pm, and during the couples joint afternoon nap, between 4 and 5pm. In exchange, the couple asked Glenn to store their thoroughly unused bicycles, and some Vlaams Belang flags and paraphernalia. It may have seemed incongruous for a Flemish couple living in Wallonia to be proponents of Flemish nationalism and secession, but it was a reality for many veterans of Fabrique National, opting for walking or cycling proximity to one's workplace than residing fifteen kilometres or more away to the Flanders border. Glenn's neighbours had little excuse, long since retired, yet tied to their home. Glenn's sympathies were similar, identifying as a Flemish nationalist, and perhaps this shared, unspoken bond allowed for minding each other's business without antipathy.

The Rue Jean Volders, on the outskirts of Herstal, adjacent to a large shopping centre, is insulated from the nearby motorway, maintaining a quietness. The street was lined uniformly with identical two-storey, attached dwellings. Brick-facades, pitched, tiled, roofs. Closed roller shutters characterised most homes, with little distinction or outward decoration, but for an occasional box of red-pink flowers and city cars parked in driveways or on the street. Behind each domicile, any manner of private moment may be occurring, banal and domestic, or untoward, each furnished with a veneer of privacy and discretion among neighbours.

The Basque had little reason to either hold an affection or distaste for the gunsmith, Glenn. By appearances he seemed a man of moderate temperament. His quietude lent a mild unease to The Basque's sensibilities. The Basque's inference was that this mildness of manner was more reflective of Flemish sensibilities of modesty, especially so when admirable craftsmanship or talent hid beneath the facade.

The Basque had seen in international news reports that Belgium had experienced a seeming spate of paedophilic incidents in recent history. Using the Rue Jean Volders as a sample size, he wondered what in the chemistry of privacy and modesty and a reserved temperament lent itself to sowing the seeds of such malign phenomena.

At the least, thought The Basque to himself, should Glenn the gunsmith have anything in his closet, it would be in this basement. Better to be running an underground armoury than other unsavoury alternatives.

The gunsmith was truly talented. The Basque did not consider himself technically-minded, more romantic of heart, swayed by his passions, however introverted, kept far below the surface of his visage.

The Basque spoke English, as a bridge to Glenn, whom he knew from prior visits elected not to speak French, though fluent per his former employment at the Fabrique Nationale.

The Basque conceded he had of late not had use for small arms, thus had not been in need of Glenn's services. It was an irrelevant point to either party to note The Basque's absence, and The Basque mildly castigated himself for the show of familiarity such that he'd need to explain himself.

The Basque had contacts for bomb making in both Libya and Irishmen, long-retired veterans of the Provisional IRA whom always surprised him for having greater engineering talent than he'd by appearances and comportment give them credit for. The IRA and Libyan contacts had gone hand-in-glove, relics of importation under the Qaddafi regime from the '70s to the '90s. Hostilities in Eire had ceased under the Good Friday Agreement in '98, but the renewed instability in Libya after the vacuum left by Qaddafi's ousting and death in 2011 had been filled by small arms from myriad sources. The Irish contacts, now strictly in nominal peacetime, retained their knowledge of weaponry and training. In essence, The Basque was content to receive supplies from Libyans, but did not trust them sufficiently to take their accompanying knowledge. Enough Libyan-sourced explosive devices had killed or maimed mercenaries for The Basque to seek the wisdom of an Irish counterpart to trace the serial numbers of devices to ensure what it said on the label was correct. What might have been sold by the Libyans may have been advertised as Semtex plastic explosive, may on occasion be a poorly-emulated improvised explosive. The Libyans were his go-to be bountiful supply, well below what The Basque considered international market rates for black market. But almost always in tandem with Irish counterparts, well-versed in how and whereby the Libyans were likely to shortchange or substitute pale or deadly comparisons. Most of the cross-referencing with The Basque's Irish engineer contacts could be done remotely. More than not, it was of scarce consequence for The Basque to buy than necessary and allow for some items to fall short on quality, able to later part with such items upon consultation with the Irish.

Such rendezvous called for in-person meetings in the remote parts of a Saharan training camp. The Basque would never know the coordinates, flown by helicopter from the Med coast. Within the camp, a considerable cache of weapons charaded as a black market cash and carry. The Basque disdained the experience. He didn't trust the Berber merchants. He didn't trust the safety of the helicopter used to transport him to the arms cache. More than not, he didn't trust the wares, where his Irish partners sorted the wheat from the chaff. He could recognise a complacency within himself, which kept him from taking the uncertain steps to source new suppliers.

The Levant may have borne fruit, due to the interminably consistent state of warfare in the region. The simple, human necessity of procrastination was The Basque's prime preclusion.

Transport from the Libyan coast was not what The Basque would have described as easy or painless. Once he, the customer, had made his order in the training camp-cum-arms cache, he would return to the coast, usually the capital Tripoli. The arms he'd selected would be transported from the desert camp to the Tripoli port. From here, The Basque would commission a freighter departing the Tripoli port for the nearest European Union point-of-entry, the island of Malta, midway between the African coast and Sicily.

The attrition rate of his bounty being intercepted by Maltese customs could, by dint of bad luck, be at times considerable. Again, a by-product of the Libyans' discount rates, which allowed for such disappointments.

For the relatively high likelihood of customs interception, this transport route hindered transporting any items of high value. In such instances, alternate, more circuitous means were called for.

Most often, this alternative meant freight over sea from Tripoli, west along the North African coast to the Moroccan port of Nador. Nador was adjacent to the Spanish enclave within Moroccan soil of Melilla.

The first time he'd transported an item to Nador, he'd holed up in a hotel in Melilla, uncertain what step next to take. He was acutely aware of his short-sightedness, and arguable poor judgement, for having backed himself into resolving his quandary by decamping so close to Spanish soil.

That first instance, he had not been tightly bound by a deadline, thus used the time in hand to enjoy Melilla. Melilla bore an exception to the EU's broader Schengen Area agreement, allowing for free movement among the area's 26 members. Thus, border checks were required between the enclave and Peninsular Spain.

The ace in the hole for The Basque lay - he hoped - were the arrangements for visa exemption for Moroccan nationals resident in Nador.

At a juncture, The Basque felt he had little recourse but to try. He'd effectively cornered himself with a myopic and hasty decision to decamp from Tripoli, close to Spanish territory.

He internally cursed himself for taking such a path. Perhaps he'd overestimated the importance of the items on hand, a shoulder-mounted, surface-to-air Stinger missile, utilising infrared technology to home in on its target. This particular model was Turkish manufactured. Fortunately, the launcher itself resembled a car axle, so potential existed to camouflage as such. The cargo box containing a dozen missiles was the main quandary.

At an impasse, The Basque conceded, for the sake of the job at hand, he realistically needed only, possibly up to three missiles, the latter only as backups. It seemed a waste to leave so many

He hired a Nador taxi driver,

It greatly surprised The Basque how temperate the Libyan heat could be, both by the coast, as well as its Saharan interior. His expectation of the Sahara was to be perennially piercing. Yet the occasions he'd visited the North African country on arms ventures had perchance fallen each instance in January, to which he'd encountered temperatures in the mid-teens.

It lent the sense of the land to a stagnation of continual surprise to him. As if the fourth-biggest landmass in Africa could somehow feel somewhat insular and mildly claustrophobic. Transport within the country was an ongoing hindrance, which perhaps lent to this sentiment felt by The Basque. Public transport for locals meant public taxis, no railways. Both the airports and ports were under-serviced before the civil war had effectively decimated them. Travel by commissioned taxi, characteristic of most African road transit, was always imperilled by breakdowns far-flung from roadside assistance, towing or a workshop.

The Basque's contacts in Libya had preceded the Arab Spring, the downfall of Gaddafi, and the ensuing chaos. The multi-belligerent impasse the country now found itself drew The Basque to the bleeding edge of his tolerance for risk. Access to arms had been less prolific before the Arab Spring, yet the ease of doing black market business in Gaddafi's stable Libya made for straightforward business relative to its current state.

Though a merchant of sorts in death, The Basque's appetite for war zones was not more reckless than the average civilian. The flood of arms, both small, large and in between, were certainly at hand in Syria, due to many proxy incursions of greater powers arming either side. But he had little insurance against becoming caught in the cross-fire of either side's attacks. Moreover, there was little in the way of organised commerce, the belligerents wishing to harness any available arms.

The opposing truth seemingly apparent in Libya was almost humorous to The Basque. Multiple belligerents armed themselves to ostensibly take power as the nominal national government. Yet to The Basque's eyes, the Berber merchant ethos appeared to prevail over such high-minded ideals of national unity or political power. The opportunity for commerce, at the expense of being better armed, seemed the stronger motivation, whether vestigial of calmer times, or an innate urgency rooted in their trading antecedents.

Another hazard, which had metastasized in the wake of the Arab Spring, and moreover the vacuum filled by the Islamic State's activity in Libya. The Basque, utilising the Libyan training camps before the end of Gaddafi regime, had once harboured fears of a missile strike, by the US military most likely, upon an arms cache or training camp, of targeted terrorists.

The Basque seldom knew who else populated the ranks of training camps and arms bazaars. The environment was far from cordial or friendly. Most trainees were from North African; The Basque unaware for what motivations, nor of which specific nationalities. Given the region, many were Islamic, or different degrees of piousness - yet The Basque never necessarily made the leap that faith was the driver for their training.

Though the danger of being caught among wanted companions for an American strike lingered as strong as ever, The Basque could no longer count on keeping far from the fray of the civil war battles along the coast, instead harbouring in more secluded patches of the interior. The nature of the Islamic State was such that raids upon smaller communities speckled throughout the region could occur at whim. It was generally beyond The Basque's comprehension to what degree or not any given community could be a target for the Islamist militant, whether a community was

insufficiently adherent to the Salafist ideology of the militants, or simply poor luck at the hands of humans using the jihadist Black Standard as a guise for bloodthirstiness.

The Islamic State occupied a curious hamlet in The Basque's mind, as did any militant movement, driven by whichever ideology. A simpler mind may couple all as terrorists, omitting the distinct hues of each ideology latent underneath, driving forward such ostensibly violent behaviour.

The Basque saw little parallel between other non-state militants, of whichever stripe. It was of negligent bearing to him as fellow shoppers populating a supermarket. Little linked the individual parties but for the natural human exercise of buying goods for eating, drinking and cleaning. Shoppers bought different items, with little uniformity, and much idiosyncrasy between each customer in the aisles and checkouts. One shopper could buy halal ingredients, whilst he himself may buy chorizo pork sausage. He and the halal observer were distinct individuals, but whilst patrons of the supermarket, could be collectively termed 'shoppers'. Yet The Basque gave little heed to fellow shoppers whilst shopping. A curious glance at items on the conveyor belt at the register before him; a quick profiling of what the smattering of items before him suggested about the psyche and lifestyle of the shopper in front of him. But such reveries were fleeting, and a means of amusement. Once that shopper before him paid and left, he never again would consider them. Such thinking was consistent with his attitude toward fellow militants.

With good fortune, he'd heretofore managed to elude any known encounters with the Islamic State in Libya. His facility with Arabic inhibited his outright conspicuousness in the region. His physical dress and appearance when in the region did not scream an observant Muslim, but instead a modest Muslim, nominally Islamic, but relatively secular. A saving grace was that the Arabic dialects across North Africa allowed for gaps in his Arabic, offering him the insurance of claiming roots elsewhere without arousing curiosity as to specifically where. The Egyptians seemed most able to detect he was not a native Arabic speaker, and more likely to have been trained in Egypt, which was the truth. He'd paid an



The greatest ciphers in Mideast training camps were the so-called Wagner Group, which had appeared to operate in the region since Russia intervened in the Syrian Civil War. Wagner was nominally a private military company, but other sources claimed this to be a cover for a paramilitary arm, or perhaps military intelligence, allowing for claims of deniability behind the facade of a PMC. The Basque found these Russians to be the most inscrutable of all.

The greatest drawback, arguably greater than the threat of bodily harm, was the interminable waiting. Nothing appeared to happen in a hurry, whether freighters leaving port, decisions made for a trade. The days seemed to him to exist in a vacuum. Particularly along the mildly overcast, sometimes windy coast, odd encounters with harassing local merchants pockmarked throughout the day, it instilled in him an almost surreal existentialism.

Little to do but think. Scarce access to internet connections, particularly in the wake of the war. Infrastructure in general had been decimated.

"I have an odd request. It is a...sentimental request." The Basque had not intended to outlay his inner motivations, for there was no sense Glenn would display any outward affectation of his inner thoughts.

"Could you restore a FN Model 1910? I have had greater difficulty sourcing one than I had expected. I thought your contact would be much better than mine. It is not like this model is in demand."

Glenn nodded, without betraying any emotion. "That is easy. I can do that. How soon do you need it?"

"Only as soon as you can get it. How long would you estimate?"

"I think a couple weeks, depending on delivery times. I think I could likely find a seller without a couple of days. If you were willing to collect from a seller directly, perhaps you could have it within a week."

"Yes, that would be great."

"Why a Model 1910?" enquired Glenn.

The Basque was caught off-guard. It wasn't an intrusive inquiry, but given Glenn's ordinary disposition, shows of curiosity were of curiosity to The Basque in turn. The Basque was uncertain how best to respond.

"Why don't you steal the original?"

The Basque was perplexed that Glenn was able to read him.

"Serial number #19074", continued Glenn. The Basque did not know the serial number by heart, but this sounded correct.

"I am not a thief," exchanged The Basque, not qualifying himself for the honour of not being a thief, but rather it was his skillset to be a cat burglar.

"What is the security system like at the Vienna Museum of Military History?"

"I would not know", parried The Basque, smiling at Glenn's show of unanticipated curiosity.

"Why stop at the model, why not the actual pistol?"

"My sentiment does not extend so far as to risk imprisonment to capture the original pistol. A similar model will satisfy."

"OK", conceded Glenn, who seemed mildly disappointed.

The Basque later reflected what in Glenn's mindset may have aroused curiosity of the World War I catalyst. He pondered whether it related to the effect World War I had on this region, and how devastated Belgium was. In researching, The Basque discovered Liège, traditionally fortified, had been the opening battle of Germany's invasion of Belgium, the city as a whole issued the Liège

Medal for its defence. Once Liège fell, the so-called Rape of Belgium ensued, leading to further invasion and occupation.

Concurrently, the war activated the Flemish Movement, fostering greater consciousness of Flemish identity, whilst the fields of Flanders were ravaged by trench warfare, mass loss of life, and land given way to no-man's land.

In a twist of irony, the occupying Germans stoked the movement of greater sentiment toward the Germanic language, Flemish being a variety of Dutch, a West Germanic language. The occupying Germans undertook policies to dissolve French-speaking Wallonia and Flemish-speaking Flanders, and exploited discrimination toward Flemish speakers prior to the war.

The motivations for such lay in the pan-German ideology wishing to unify not just all German-speakers, resident in a unified Germany, Austria and parts of Switzerland, but Germanic languages, including Scandinavia.

It occurred to The Basque the frequency of which he encountered fellow separatists, like he, in his work - either loud and proud, or closeted; militant or otherwise.

As they bade farewell from Glenn's front door, an amiable smile from Glenn, The Basque was in a contemplative headspace. Almost of compulsion, he found himself wandering over to the adjacent shopping centre, a street away. As many do, they roam the shopping centres, bereft of aim, but for the fulfilment of an unidentified emptiness. In vain hope juice bars or a Sunglass Hut may occupy the void. Nor was The Basque immune from such vague pangs of alienation or searching.

Within the shopping centre, he found an EXKi, the delightfully cheery and welcoming chain of Belgian cafe-restaurants, ordering a cappuccino. He valued any coffeehouse which employed automatic coffee machines producing cafe-quality coffees at the press of a button. He had no umbrage with baristas, but there was something about the lack of fuss, an acknowledgement that a machine could do an on-par job for the task, which warmed him.

His current mood befitted the perennially overcast pall of Belgium. In such surroundings, he welcomed it. Overcast spells calling for accompanying temperaments were an occasional fixture of *Euskadi*, perhaps on account of the Basque Mountains meeting the Bay of Biscay, leading out to the greater Atlantic.

Something he was yet to know had stung him at Glenn's. It seemed likely to have emanated from Glenn's uncharacteristic questioning, and a sense of Flemish secessionist sentiment this suggested to The Basque. But for what reason did this have to irk him, or throw him mildly off balance?

Over the cappuccino, he lost himself in thought, not ill-tempered or depressive, but pensive. Casting his mind to all the clients for which he'd worked of a separatist nature, the majority of his work in the name of identity on religious, ethnic or regional grounds. In the employ of armed rebel groups, whether international or state-based. Resistance to a governing power.

He'd naturally given great thought to his native movement, and roots with *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*, for Basque Homeland and Liberty. Driven by the assertion that the unique Basque people and culture deserved political nationhood, separate from its existing French and Spanish territories.

She thought of her mother, one of the few females of the *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* executive. She had inherited her mother's resilience. Only to a degree, did she inherit her mother's habit of becoming lost in books. But she did have her mother's contemplative streak. She was less sure she possessed her mother's idealism.



She thought of the child she had miscarried, to her longest lover, a patriot of the Provisional Irish Republican Army, a native of Belfast.

It was this lover who had sewed her own ties with Libya. Were it not for his connection to North Africa, she thought it doubtful it was an initiative she was capable of undergoing herself. Yet this was true of much of her vocational journey.

Her parents and inner circle of loved ones were not steeped in the Basque nationalism of ETA. When she traced her steps, Séamus was realistically her catalyst. Or James, as he insisted to be called, of the firm belief that the wider world outside the Emerald Isle needn't anymore Séamus' to perpetuate Irish jokes.

Additionally, The Basque suspected he never had the nerve to tease outright; a healthy portion of his insistence was due to an affection for the Dubliner James Joyce. The Basque was sufficiently fluent in English to read and attempt to appreciate Séamus' prose and poetry to know he was no Joyce. Séamus' writing obviously followed a stream of consciousness, yet to an external reader it was intractably difficult to derive meaning from. Not that The Basque even knew what the fuss was about with Joyce either. She had vague recollection of flicking through *Ulysses*, but found it too abstruse and esoteric for the mood she picked it up in.

Séamus was himself a peculiar mixture of esoteric, yet also strikingly of the earth, grounded and simple. Though The Basque now, with decades of posterity, thought better of it, she knew this had been one of the strongest strains of attraction to him for her.

Foremost she found his fervour sexy. She had grown up in Euskadi, steeped in both men and women of such fervour. But in her teens, she found such ardour embarrassing, distant from her preoccupation at the time of young men with motorbikes, and the sense of mischief which came with it. On reflection, she sensed this gravitation toward men with mobility represented an opportunity to spirit her from her Euskadi reality to somewhere exotic to her current station.

The irony now, firmly in middle age, was that after a life teeming with lost comrades, lovers and a miscarried child late in term, Euskadi attracted her with a vigour her teenage self couldn't possibly have anticipated.

Of even sadder irony was to do so, to risk a homecoming, would in great likelihood result in court arrest and doubtlessly indefinite imprisonment. Even throughout the Continent, she lived in the angst of a Europol-issued warrant for her arrest. The worst aspect for the subject of unrealised suspicions was one never knew whether such trepidations were warranted. One never knew whether an encounter with an immigration official, either within or entering the Schengen Area, risked arrest, or in that moment was a figment of her justified paranoia.

Of greatest value as a resource to The Basque was the whereabouts of targets. Therefore the fonts of such value were those able to obtain such information.

Her first port of call was a former contact in Bilbao, occupied by the Baader-Meinhof Gang, the West German far-left militants active in the 1970s. The Basque was too young to have been a contemporary of the Baader-Meinhof, also known as the Red Army Faction.

The Basque had only known her contact, Stefan, in the context of proffering information relating to locations of targeted assassinations. How Stefan obtained this information was beyond The Basque. On a handful of occasions, she had tried her hand at developing this intelligence herself, with laughable results. To her mind, it didn't seem such a difficult task, but somehow it proved to be.

More than a target's physical coordinates on any given occasion, Stefan had the knack of identifying where a mark would be in a space accessible to her. It was one thing to the office or residence where someone worked or lived. It was quite another for Stefan to pre-empt where someone would be in a way optimising The Basque's objective.

She had a couple different intelligence sources, yet each carried differing qualities of risk, with varying degrees of trust.

The Basque city of Bilbao was overcast, yet on the heels of a summery day, a fine veil of shower refreshing the city, a welcome pall counterweighting the previous day's expansive sun.

Little kept the two from meeting in a vibrant cafe in the city centre. They could talk just above hushed tones, eschewing unnecessary feigning of cloak-and-dagger.

It was clear at least two, perhaps three, targets would be centred around Paris. Perhaps another two in London. Oddly enough, her preferences were targets in teeming Continental metropolises. It afforded more anonymity, the ability to disappear among a crowd, than might be immediately apparent.

It wasn't as though she'd coordinate to carry out a job in Trafalgar Square or the Champs-Élysées. Big cities offered ample opportunity to hedge risk, yet sleepier locations, especially rurally, counterintuitively attracted interlopers passing through, attracting unwanted attention.

She apprehended some of her targets from the Mideast would pose a hindrance. It was her overwhelming preference to keep fingers crossed for their visitation to Europe, where she felt secure in her knowledge of the landscape, in contrast to the Mideast, where she knew her intelligence would be a liability to the local denizens.



The same went for a Russian mark. It didn't seem beyond the pale to take the opportunity of their holidaying within the EU. The environment of Russia, or any of the former Soviet states, was an inscrutable cipher to her which she wasn't willing to ally with.

What if she were forced, she anticipated? What if targets were implacably keeping to the home base outside Europe? Could she feasibly venture out? It was her vast preference not to, but she'd have to see how events developed.

Stefan confirmed her doubts around corralling certain targets to a preferable Continental location.



The autumnal chill of the morning air was awakening to The Basque's senses as he left the rented apartment in Ghent to fetch a fresh baguette from the *boulangerie*. A couple paces from the doorway, he recalled again he was in the Flemish portion of the country and a *boulangerie* would likely not be forthcoming - at best maybe a *bakkerij*, in which case a French-style baguette may elude him.

(Insert him talking to the cashier at [Diva](#))

He found it a peculiarity that in a bilingual country such as Belgium, he could speak *Français* to a cashier in Flanders and be met with non-comprehension, as well as a hint of something else he couldn't detect - a perturbation for using French in Flanders presumably.

To then be in a position whereby he'd instead by necessity shift to English to allow himself to be understood, rather than using a national language, was most unusual.

Yet he caught himself, belatedly making the connection that it was seldom different, if not an identical scenario of *Euskadi* and *Espanol*.

The patisserie was two doors down from the rented studio apartment, on Brusselsesteenweg in Ghent. In Addition to a loaf of bread, he got an almond-filled pastry, making note of the great confection selection which could entice him later.

Whilst in Flanders, he endeavoured to do his best with the Flemish.

The studio he'd rented from opportunism. In the planning phase, he didn't need a high level of security - just some privacy. A hotel room wasn't suitable, as it'd be serviced regularly, thus he couldn't leave paperwork strewn around the place.

His needs were a modest space with both privacy and some space to handle tasks suited to a workshop setting. He knew for cultural reasons privacy seemed a given within Belgium, so he was content to remain here, alongside the benefit of several contacts necessary to the task at hand being within proximity.

The space was often rented for a seemingly myriad of purposes, from music production to the likes of himself. He made use of several trestle tables folded against a wall, and laid out the contents of

From the front door, an unattractive door with frames boarded up or with sheets hanging from the inside to block out, stairs immediately in front of the door

German Autumn/Baader-Meinhof Gang

Abu Nadal group

Black September

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mar%C3%ADa\\_Soledad\\_Iparraguirre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mar%C3%ADa_Soledad_Iparraguirre)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mar%C3%ADa\\_Dolores\\_Katarain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mar%C3%ADa_Dolores_Katarain)

Base a little on Olga Martin

- Basque mythological figures
- If you do jackal onscreen you have to transform
- <https://www.euskaltzaindia.eus/en/>
- <https://www.etxepare.eus/en>
- 
- <https://www.slovenia.info/en/stories/trail-run-slovenia-top-running-adventures>
- <https://www.tnp.si/en/visit/unforgettable-experiences/park-trails/>
- <https://www.alltrails.com/trail/france/hautes-pyrenees/pic-du-midi-de-bigorre-et-lac-d-encet>
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- Soundtrack:  One Hour of Basque Liberation Music

The Basque ran along the ridges of the Julian Alps.

It was not his native Basque Mountains. He longed for Pyrenees, yet he could never risk setting foot again on Spanish soil. The truth of the matter was there was no way of knowing whether he and his brotherhood were still wanted. The Spanish national authorities didn't make public who was still wanted from the Basque separatist guerilla movement, other than some high-profile Basque figures known to have masterminded some major attacks with significant numbers of casualties.

The Basque would have to settle for the Triglav in the Julians in lieu of Txindoki. He could still run in the Pyrenees on the French side of the border. Out of an intuition, he'd tended to avoid the French Basque Country, out of a paranoia the French intelligence agencies and police collaborated with their Spanish counterparts in the French Basque Country.

Such a hunch wasn't based on any reliable source, or even any word-of-mouth by former comrades. He couldn't know the in's and out's of the Gendarmerie, or the General Directorate for Internal Security charged with counter-terrorism duties, or the SDECE, the successor to the Cold War-era DGSE, counterpart to the CIA and MI6.

In any regard, he didn't think it worth the risk, but felt at greater ease amongst the French Pyrenees outside the Basque Country. He loved to run in particular the Col du Tourmalet and the Col de Peyresourde in the Pyrenees, and in the Alps, Mont Ventoux and Alpe d'Huez.

Where possible, he was drawn to ranges which shared the limestone profile of the Basque Mountains

Moreover, he couldn't hide to himself his affection for the Alps.

When he ran, however, it was pure. Seldom thoughts of such things - just liberation. Untethered from the modern world in many ways, other than the prized running shoes on his feet. Otherwise, it was him and the natural environment. Sure, the trail he beat was man-made, and he was almost always in proximity to a road, with cars traversing it. But for his own part, within his body and mind, it was he and his running shoes in tandem with nature underfoot - little else to break this bond. Here his thoughts flowed, the endorphins of a runner's high coursing through his body, the sun beating down on him as though he were solar-powered, able to run perpetually by virtue of its warm rays.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyrenees>