

EVERY DAY'S A MONDAY

Joseph Dickerson was born just outside Norwich. He is the youngest of six children. His parents emigrated to Australia in 1959, and the family returned to Norfolk when he was nineteen.

He became an Air Traffic Controller, in the Royal Air Force, and also travelled extensively abroad on Government business, before taking early retirement.

With a colleague he then travelled the world as a Venture Capital Assessor, visiting India, USA, Canada, Ecuador, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, Cyprus, The Cook Islands, Fiji, and the Middle East.

Joseph is married to the artist Karen Anne Lindegaard, and they have two children, Glenn and Heidi. They also have four grandchildren, Laura, Sadie, Jessica, and Daniel.

Joseph and Karen spend their times now between Norfolk and Spain.

EVERY DAY'S A MONDAY

Joseph Dickerson

EVERY DAY'S A MONDAY

Olympia Publishers
London

www.olympiapublishers.com
OLYMPIA PAPERBACK EDITION

Copyright © Joseph Dickerson 2011

The right of Joseph Dickerson to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All Rights Reserved

No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with the written permission of the publisher, or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1956 (as amended).

Any person who commits any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damage.

A CIP catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-1-84897-209-4

This is a work of fiction.
Names, characters, places and incidents originate from the writer's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

First Published in 2011

Olympia Publishers
60 Cannon Street
London
EC4N 6NP

Printed in Great Britain

To my darling wife Karen, my best friend, who I always promised I would write this book for. Also for my wonderful family of whom I am very proud.

“Grandpa?”

“Yes?”

“Nanna says you were once sent to prison by some foreign men?”

“Yes.”

“Where was it?”

“In a country, a long way away.”

“What did you do, to have to go to prison?”

“Absolutely nothing.”

“But Grandpa, you must have done something.”

“One day, I’ll write a book about it, and you can read it.”

1

Four hours after leaving Gatwick, on a wet blustery English day, the aircraft descended slowly out of a perfect blue sky. Below it the different blues, purples, and greens, of the Mediterranean Sea sparkled. A red speedboat, leaving a white foamy trail behind it, sped along through the sea, parallel to the coastline. Small flotilla sailing boats, with their white sails, were dotted around the bay, trying to catch a favourable wind, and water skiers zipped along behind their powerboats.

As the aircraft flew lower the passengers could see vehicles on the streets and roads, and then as the aircraft descended finally, they could see sunbathers lying on the beach, enjoying the 37 plus degree heat, whilst others cooled off in the crystal clear waters of the sea.

The ten thousand feet of runway at Barnacal Airport welcomed them to the Island Republic of Gilipollas, hot and sunny, just as the tourists liked, and expected it to be. A holiday paradise for many, indeed more than a million British tourists enjoyed this island every year.

Other nationalities spent time there, some from as far away as the new Russia.

Tourism was the main industry of Gilipollas, and in modern times that's all it had ever been.

As the aircraft taxied in, Alistair Robert MacDougal, or 'Mac' as he was known to his friends, breathed a great sigh of relief. For Mac, who had recently turned 45, this was definitely the best part of any flight. He was a medium height, sandy haired Scot, who hated flying, and his 'flying medicine' of 3 large whiskeys at Gatwick, ensured his discomfort was reduced to a minimum. Several 'top ups' en route kept the anxiety at bay. Mac maintained he was just helping Scottish industry.

Foster Swann his business partner, from Norfolk, was a year older, stood 6 feet tall, and had pleasant features, without being handsome, and his hair was light brown.

Neither Mac, nor Foster, had been to Gilipollas before, and, although this was a business trip, they looked forward to exploring the small island when the opportunity arose.

Little did they know they would get to know certain parts of it better than most natives. And the parts they were going to visit were not on the tourists' map, nor the favourite spots for most of the population of Gilipollas.

In the distant past, Gilipollas had been a British colony, and the UK had used part of the island as a military staging post to the Middle East, but in the late 50's after much demonstration, and no little violence, the island was given its independence.

Many of the signs of British occupation were still there, driving on the left, a modest national health service, and a very large civil service that didn't do very much but kept many Gilis, as they were known, in employment.

Life in Gilipollas moved at a very slow and leisurely pace, the hot weather tended to dictate that.

The partners cleared immigration in seconds. This was a tired wave from a uniformed man, who had more thoughts of a siesta soon, rather than catching illegal immigrants. Heaven knows there were enough of those in this particular island republic, apparently, but they seldom came by air.

Mac and Foster were the first passengers to leave the aircraft. The warm air hit them at the top of the aircraft's steps. Foster turned to Mac, "If they had warm weather like this in the UK, no one would ever leave to go on holiday". Mac nodded in agreement.

They collected their bags from the only carousel that was working on that day, it creaked around, stopped twice, and wheezed back into life. At this point of the journey, as with most travellers, they had that little nagging bit of fear in the back of their minds concerning baggage being lost. On this occasion, they were fortunate, their cases were the first to show.

The two British businessmen walked out of the rather rundown terminal, with its corrugated roof, tin walls, massive overhead fans, and cheap plastic furniture, and into the fierce heat of the midday sun.

A line of old Ford taxis, all black, awaited them, and they walked to the

first in line, where a Gili driver – wearing a rumpled white tee shirt, pale blue crumpled trousers, and flip flops – with his feet on the dashboard, slumbered. All they could see of his face was a stubbled chin beneath a New York embossed peaked baseball cap.

Mac rapped on the metal bodywork of the door. “Come on, you doughnut, wakey, wakey!!”

The driver pushed up his cap, sleepily opened one eye, and muttered, “Where you go?”

“The Nelson Hotel in Rectos City please,” replied Mac.

Slowly the driver pulled himself into a sitting position, making no movement to either help with the luggage, or to open any doors. Mac and Foster popped the boot, put their suitcases inside and slammed it shut. They then opened the rear doors and sat down.

They sat there for about a minute. The driver made no move to go.

“Come on then, get a move on,” said Mac.

“Is my lunch hour,” replied the driver, from beneath his cap.

“What?” exclaimed Foster.

“Is my lunch hour. If I drive in my lunch hour, an extra 5 dinars on top of meter price.”

“5 extra dinars? Bollocks to you, you little toe rag!!” said Foster.

They both got out of the car as one, and retrieved their cases.

Walking briskly to the next taxi in line, Mac spoke to the driver, who could have been a clone of the first, “Can you take us to the Nelson Hotel in Rectos please?”

“No, me number 2, you go with number 1 taxi please,” said the driver, pointing to the taxi they had just vacated.

“He’s on his lunch hour,” said Foster.

“Yes, me too,” replied the driver. “We all on lunch hour.”

Mac bristled, and staring steely eyed at the driver enquired, “How long before your lunch hour is finished then?”

“Maybe 2, 3 hours.” He yawned, and went on, “If you want drive now – must pay extra.”

Mac and Foster looked at each other, dumbfounded, and not a little annoyed.

By now, a queue had begun to form made up of other travellers from their aircraft, as they in turn left the terminal, after collecting their luggage.

“Come on Mac, let’s pay the bugger the asking price to get moving,

we'll be here all bloody day otherwise.”

Mac, being a canny Scot from Perth, rankled, and walked to the 3 cab, getting the same bleary response from the sleepy driver. He came back and raised his eyes to the heavens, “Bunch of bloody morons!”

They both walked to the first cab, and placed their cases in the boot again. They sat down in the back of the taxi, and Foster said, “OK, on you go, we'll pay the extra.”

The driver shrugged, inserted the ignition key, and the car lurched out of the airport car park belching black smoke, onto the single lane road to Rectos City – some 20 miles distance. The taxi knocked over a plastic bollard that careered across the road as it went, narrowly missing a bus that was entering the airport.

The landscape, consisting mainly of dried, browned, shrub land, interspersed by the odd whitewashed cottage, flashed by; there were splashes of greenery, but they were few and far between, this being the summer months when little rain ever fell. They noticed some small herds of goats on the way.

The taxi sped along taking little notice of any speed limits, and cutting across corners with little knowledge of what might be coming the other way, as the scatty driver lit up another cigarette.

“You on holidays, boys?” asked the driver looking into the rear view mirror at them.

“No, we've come to shoot bloody taxi drivers,” said Mac.

“Ah, very funny,” said the driver, and kept himself to himself for the rest of the journey.

To their great relief they soon came to the outskirts of Rectos, Gilipollas' second city. Rectos had a population of some 50,000 people. That figure was substantially boosted by tourists in the holiday months.

Podomia the capital, some 35 miles distant, had three times that, but hardly any tourist industry as such.

The outer suburbs of Rectos consisted mainly of bungalows of different shapes and sizes, but all painted in the same whitewash. They gave way to small two-storey houses, and then high-rise apartments, hotels and office blocks, the nearer the city centre they got to.

The Nelson Hotel was a four-star colonial type building, built by the British in 1954, and it maintained a certain quiet calm in the midst of the bustling, noisy traffic within the City, which was why it was popular with

business people, and tourists alike.

One side of the city was by the coastline, and thus the Nelson had its own private beach, that was cleaned by staff every night. It also boasted a 9 hole par 3 little golf course, that guests tended to play either early morning, or late afternoon, when the heat of the day was bearable outside of the shade.

As the car pulled into the car park, work in progress cones partitioned off some trenches where new sewage pipes were being laid.

The taxi pulled in alongside the first trench and Mac and Foster alighted. The warm air hit them again as soon as the car doors were open, and they stood by the car waiting for the driver to pop the boot, and get their luggage out.

The driver made no movement from his air-conditioned seat, but wound the window down, and said, “20 dinars.” Mac opened the boot, and removed the cases.

The driver couldn’t change a 50 Dinar note so Foster went into the hotel, changed the large note for smaller notes, and returned to the car park area.

Foster paid the driver his 20 dinars, making sure no tip was given, even though the driver looked at Foster with an expectant expression.

As soon as the fare was paid, the driver, seeing no tip was forthcoming, mumbled something to himself in Gili, and started to pull out, but misjudged the distance from the trench, and the taxi slewed one wheel down onto an axle into the trench, the driver gunned the engine but only managed to go further down the trench. He got out of his cab to take a look. What he saw did not please him.

He raised his eyes to the heavens, and shook his head at his predicament.

The taxi driver looked around the car park, but Mac and Foster were the only one’s there. The driver looked at them smiling, and said, “Gentlemen, pleased to help, if you lift the car at the corner where the wheel is down, I can drive.”

“I am so very, very sorry mate,” replied Foster, “but it’s our lunch hour,” and with that they walked calmly past the taxi, and into the hotel, leaving the taxi open mouthed and very angry.

They looked at each other, and smiled broadly.

“Isn’t it so nice to have little victories, every once in a while?” said Foster, laughing out loud, and Mac nodded, and laughed in agreement.

“I just hope that not all the Gilipollas people are like the taxi drivers.”

2

Sylvan Bassura took a long drag on his Havana cigar. His 20 stone plus frame wedged into his rattan office chair. He was ‘large’, as in ‘large elephant’, or ‘large skyscraper’. He had been grossly overweight for as long as anyone could remember.

Behind his back, people said the reason he was so fat, and his brother Coneo so thin, was because he could punch harder than his brother, so he always got the lion’s share of any food that was going.

Sylvan loved all food in general. He took little exercise, except when he visited one of the many clubs he provided protection for. He sweated profusely, as he usually did at this time of the year, the hot air in his small, sparsely-furnished office, was moved around by a small ceiling fan. He had an air conditioning unit installed, but it gave him bronchitis, and so he kept it switched off.

“So when do the English arrive?” he asked his brother Coneo, blowing blue smoke up towards the ceiling.

Coneo replied, “Today at 1 o’clock.”

Coneo, although only 2 years younger than his brother, looked much older than his 45 years. He was of medium height, inordinately slim, had gone prematurely bald on the top of his head at 21, unlike his brother who had long black hair that maintained a greasy look, even after washing.

Neither brother had any formal educational qualifications; they couldn’t see the sense in attending classes every day. Better to go to the tourist areas, and see if they could slip a few purses into their pockets from unsuspecting holidaymakers.

One of their favourite hobbies was waiting until tourists left an outside

café table. Invariably the tourists would leave a tip, and as they departed Sylvan, and Coneo quickly slipped in and the tip disappeared.

School got in the way of fun, and pleasure, especially when they got into their teens. Their father agreed with them, and preferred them to be with him, to run his errands, and help out generally in the various family businesses.

Later, their father had been able to get both into the police force, early in their young lives, with the aid of many white envelopes that passed to the heart of government departments. Sylvan hated it, all that exercise went completely against the grain.

Their father had been a businessman, mainly selling apartments and villas to overseas customers. He also made himself the main man who could get guns for the terrorists who plagued the British troops.

He and his friend Mazinti, whose father owned a boat, would slip across to Syria, when his father wasn't using the vessel, and, provided they had English Pounds, they could get as many weapons as they wanted.

He was one of the first to offer 'protection' to some of the owners of Clubs on the island, after the British left. And it was in this type of business that the brothers excelled. They had guns, and would use them, in tandem with petrol bombs, to ensure payments were forthcoming on due dates.

They had risen to the top of the enforcement, extortion, protection business on the shirt tails of their father, who had also been one of the leaders of the terrorist organisation that organised bombing, and shooting attacks against the British. He organised, but never took part in any of these raids.

When the British left, the vacuum of power was filled by the Bassura family. They made sure their 'associates', and themselves, held the reins that allowed Gilipollas to function.

Their father had died of a heart attack some 5 years previously. He had expired in one of the clubs that his family 'protected', entertaining two young Russian ladies, both just about old enough to be his granddaughters. Officially though, and for public consumption, he died at his office desk.

His funeral had been an impressive affair, with all the local dignitaries attending.

After their father's death Sylvan, who was the elder, and dominant brother, took over the position of 'overlord', and his brother Coneo was a willing 'lieutenant'.

Coneo remained in the police, because Sylvan made him do so, and was a Detective Sergeant, but Sylvan had left after 10 years so that he could manage their business, which had been obtained through many dubious activities, not least of which was informing of potential token police raids on places of prostitution, of which there were many on the island.

These brothers' 'associates', and their 'clubs', satisfied the many rich Arabs, Gilipollas politicians, and businessmen, who visited the houses of pleasure, or had girls and/or boys sent to their hotel rooms. A token raid every six months or so on a 'club' was nullified by the tip-offs, for a price, that Coneo gave his brother – who in turn informed the brothel owners.

Many of the 'girls' were imported from Eastern European countries as 'dancers', but the only dancing they ever did was when naked, by the side of a bed, or in it. As soon as they arrived, their passports were held by the brothel keepers, who, with threats of beatings and sometimes murder, held the unfortunate ladies in an iron grip.

Letters home were carefully scrutinised by their keepers, and telephone calls were listened into by 'watchers' who at the slightest hint of disclosure concerning their fate, ended the call. The girl was then normally beaten to ensure obedience in the future.

Slush money was paid to those in authority at the airport, and the two ports, on the island to make sure no one left the island unless it was OK'd by their 'keepers'.

Many illegal male foreign workers, mostly from poor neighbouring Arab countries, were in Gilipollas to work in the tourist industry, largely as waiters, or construction workers, and the vast majority received only a pittance themselves, whilst a large portion of their "salary" was paid to the Bassuras by the bar owners, and building companies, to ensure no questions were ever asked concerning their legality as Gilipollas workers.

If any fell ill, Sylvan arranged for them to be shipped back to their own country by boat. Normally Syria or the Lebanon. Some never made it back, and many a body was washed ashore only to be buried in a common paupers plot at state expense, and given a Catholic goodbye, even though these unidentified Arabs, with no identification, were usually Muslims.

The Bassuras paid many men and women, in many spheres of influence in the make-up of the Police, Immigration, Civil Service, Courts, etc., and not much happened on the island that they didn't have prior knowledge of, or orchestrated themselves.

Whilst they didn't have riches to the extent that top villains in other societies had, they were still 'kings' on the island republic of Gilipollas.

Only Sylvan was married. It was arranged by his father. His bride was a thin, chain-smoking, sickly native of the Republic, who had never been abroad, and never wanted to. She hated anything foreign, and rarely ventured outside their house.

They had one son, Bladda, who was a younger looking version of his father, and who helped his father's many business dealings. Bladda especially liked visiting the brothels. Mummy's name was Angeena.

Coneo was not married to, but lived with, Putton, pronounced Pew – ton, a dark skinned beauty, who had been bought for him for £10,000 from Sierra Leone, by his brother. She, like many of her countrywomen, had been abducted in the dead of night by a gang, of which there were many, who specialised in supplying women to a ready market of modern day slave traders. Others like her were also sometimes purchased from poor families.

At first Putton fought Coneo off, in her eyes he was not the man of her dreams, far from it. Coneo had had to beat her many times to get her to adhere to his wishes, but eventually she had realised that it was better to do as he said, rather than subject herself to so much pain, and humiliation.

They had no children, Coneo could never understand why not as he was sure he was fertile, so it must have been her that was barren. Actually, Putton was not barren either, but her mother had taught her from an early age the secrets of potions from their native folklore.

One of the potions she took, every 3 days, ensured she never bore children. In her mind, Putton always had the thought of 'escape', and having children would make that almost impossible to put into place.

The thought had crossed her mind of poisoning Coneo, she hated him so much, but that would have invited several responses from his brother and others, and besides, where would she run to, with no money, or friends, here in Gilipollas?

"Have you got all the paperwork for this?" asked Sylvan.

"Yes," replied Coneo.

"Does it look good?"

"Yes."

"And they'll never know?"

"No."

"What if they sniff around?"

“Who will tell them anything?”

“Good.”

“When do we meet them?”

“Tomorrow at 9 am.”

“Where?”

“My driver will bring them to the hotel.”

“Have you arranged for Bladda to be there?”

“Yes, he’ll be with my driver.”

Bladda’s driver was Novi Mazinti, an elderly local fisherman.

Mazinti also did odd jobs, and made many boat trips for the Bassuras, not least of which was for the dropping off of unwanted items, which included dead bodies, that were required to be disposed of.

He also made many runs to Syria, and the Lebanon, to bring in Arab men to work illegally in the Tourist and Construction industry. He had an old fishing boat that was moored in Kellesti, the other Gilipollas port, where pleasure boats, luxury yachts, and the Gilipollas’ Naval Patrol boats were stationed.

The other port on the island was just called The Old Fishing Port. As the name suggested, this was where the small fishing boats of Gilipollas were moored.