

The Richard Montgomery Matter
(A film script)

The Players

1. The Good Guys

Daniel Haggar: U S Naval Intelligence officer
Mike Langley: U S Navy SEAL
Tony Rapello: U S Navy SEAL
Det. Insp. Tim Sewell Scotland Yard Special Branch officer
Lady Majorie Davenport: Director of MI5
Sir Walter Arrowsmith: Permanent Undersecretary to HM Treasury

Rear Admiral Gordon: Chief of British Naval Intelligence
Vice Admiral Newman: Chief of US Naval Intelligence

2. The Bad Guys

George Audrey Fitzsimmons MI5 Deputy Director
Harry Shears: ex-SAS and mercenary
Kenny Adamson: ex-Royal Marine Commando and mercenary
Thomas (Turf) McLafferty: ex-IRA assassin and bomb maker
Ronnie Swan: ex-convict and terminally ill cancer patient

3. Other Interested Parties.

Strawberry Stern (Mrs Whippy): Brothel owner and procuress
Stella: A young prostitute
Gloria: A young prostitute

4. Incidental Characters

Clarence Dodds A retired bank manager
Mrs Eunice Dodds Clarence's mother
Terence Smith An MI5 communications officer
Uniformed Kent policemen
Kent CID officers
US navy personnel
Royal Navy personnel
Prostitutes
British Treasury officials
Civilians

The Richard Montgomery Matter

A Film Script

By

Tom Deegan (writer) and Ronald Angel (story/author)

The Richard Montgomery Matter Synopsis

The script is intended to present a violent action and conspiracy film set in the present day. It is based upon a real historical incident and a genuine perennial threat to life and property in the Medway towns of Kent in England.

The US explosives carrier Richard Montgomery sank in the Thames Estuary in August 1944. It was loaded with explosives and the British Admiralty decided to leave the wreck and its dangerous cargo undisturbed. The wreck lies just a few hundred yards offshore between the Isle of Grain oil refinery and the town of Sheerness and about three miles from the Medway towns of Gillingham, Rochester and Chatham. Rumours about the ship and its cargo have circulated in these towns ever since.

* * *

George Audrey Fitsimmons is a, corrupt, high ranking member of the British secret service (Deputy Director, MI5). He indulges his passion for masochistic sex with prostitutes and he is a gambler who has suffered heavy losses. He has recruited a gang of disaffected ex-servicemen: Harry Shears, ex- SAS; Kenny Adamson, ex-Royal Marine commando and Thomas (Turf) McLafferty, ex-IRA assassin and bomb maker, to carry out an extortion plot against the British government. He knows that the real reason the wreck of the Richard Montgomery was left undisturbed by the Admiralty was because it had a cargo of American made chemical and poison gas warheads on board as well as high explosives.

* * *

The first act opens with a daylight scene of McLafferty purchasing a mobile telephone in a shop in Herne Bay, Kent. As he leaves, Clarence Dodds arrives and also buys a mobile telephone. McLafferty drives back to a house nearby and enters. Inside are the other two conspirators, Shears and Adamson. McLafferty places the mobile phone inside a conical shaped bomb and connects it to apparatus within. He then asks one of the others to select a five digit detonation code. Shears selects 01232 (dialling code for Belfast) stating that; that whole fucking city should be blown up.

The following scene is at night and shows the same three men approaching the wreck of the Richard Montgomery using underwater chariots. They are towing the bomb behind them on a line. While McLafferty and Shears manhandle the bomb on to one of the decks, Adamson runs an aerial lead up to the mast just above the high-water mark. He then returns to join the others on the submerged deck. McLafferty sets the bomb and indicates

to the other two that it is active and ready to detonate on their signal.
The conspirators depart.

* * *

The following act introduces the American bomb disposal and underwater warfare expert, Commander Daniel Haggar, who is a specialist teacher at the US Navy SEALs training establishment in ???

He is seen instructing SEALs on various types of underwater mines and methods of defusing them underwater around a large pool. During the lesson he receives a telephone summons to Washington.

The following scene sees Haggar arriving at the office of an Admiral of naval intelligence in the Pentagon who explains to him that the British government have a major problem concerning American property left over from WWII. The details of the sinking of the Richard Montgomery is explained. He is told about the cargo of high explosives and the presence on the ship of early experimental chemical/gas warheads. He is told that the Allied powers had obtained intelligence that Hitler intended to disregard the Geneva convention prohibiting the use of gas and chemical weapons in a last desperate attempt to turn the tide of the war in Germany's favour. As a response to the perceived threat, the Americans had deployed chemical weapons in Britain for retaliatory purposes if American troops fighting in France came under gas attack. After the war, all of these warheads were recovered and returned to the US, but not those on board the Richard Montgomery as that wreck was too dangerous to approach safely. The British Admiralty and the US Navy Department agreed to leave the chemical weapons undisturbed. The Americans had discovered subsequently that the chemical weapons were much more dangerous than they had first believed and could distribute lethal airborne gases over hundreds of square miles before dissipating sufficiently to become harmless.

The admiral tells Haggar of the extortion demand made against the British government. He is assigned to travel to England to assess the danger and to do whatever he can to avoid a catastrophe. Very few people on either side of the Atlantic knew about the chemical weapons during the war, and even fewer knew about them as time had passed. Haggar is warned that the British believe somebody with high security clearance in the British intelligence or naval establishments was probably part of the conspiracy. For that reason he is to work undercover with two US Navy SEALs of his own choosing. Only four people of undoubted integrity in Britain would know of his involvement.

Haggar returns to the SEALs base at ??? and selects two officer candidates, Tony Rapello and Mike Langley, to travel to England with him. He then returns home to his wife and children to tell them he is going to England on naval training business for a couple of weeks.

* * *

Eunice Dodds lives with her bachelor son in Herne Bay. She is constantly ailing. She is concerned that she will take a bad turn while he is away from home for more than a few minutes. Clarence is a retired branch

bank manager and has recently bought a mobile telephone so that his mother can reach him if she does take a turn. Clarence's mobile phone number is the same as the bomb's number apart from the last four digits (0451) and (0541). Mrs Dodds frequently dials the bomb's number in error.

* * *

Haggar, Langley and Rapello, now in civilian clothing, are met at London's Heathrow Airport by Detective Inspector Tin Sewell of Scotland Yard's Special Branch. He drives them to a London hotel and drops Langley and Rapello.

He then takes Haggar to the Admiralty in Trafalgar Square and leads him to the office of Rear Admiral Gordon, Chief of Naval Intelligence. Sir Walter Arrowsmith, Permanent Secretary to the Treasury and Lady Marjorie Davenport, Director of MI5 are present.

Lady Marjorie plays the conspirators' tape to Haggar. The £50 million demand is made in the name of the IRA. McLafferty's accent is clearly Irish in origin and a recognised IRA code is used. Details about the chemical weapons cargo on board the Richard Montgomery are given on the tape as well as the bomb's non-interference capabilities. Lady Marjorie tells Haggar they believe the conspiracy must involve some person or persons of high rank inside the British secret services because of the detailed information known to the conspirators.

Sir Walter explains to Haggar that the government have resolved to pay the ransom as demanded, £50 in uncut diamonds each of at least 4 carats in weight, but that they will play for time to allow Haggar to examine the device and see if it can be neutralised.

Lady Marjorie tells Haggar the Prime Minister who has authorised the American mission. He will have complete co-operation and security clearance with British secret services, police and naval authorities to carry out his mission. Det. Insp. Sewell is assigned to assist in any way required and only those present in the office know of his and his colleagues identities and involvement, apart from .

When the meeting is over, Haggar returns to the hotel with Sewell who issues the three with firearms and special licences. The four men then depart to a safe house in Chatham, Kent, near the Royal Naval dockyard.

* * *

Harry Shears and Turf McLafferty arrive at a Mayfair brothel used by George Audrey Fitzsimmons. Several scantily clad prostitutes are seen with bondage and masochistic sex apparatus visible in one of the rooms. The three men enter a private room and reveal to Fitzsimmons that somebody is dialling the bomb, sometimes several times daily. After some discussion of the possibilities during which McLafferty points out the co-incidental code numbering system used which would increase the chances of the bomb being triggered accidentally, Fitzsimmons tells them he will have to trace the caller using one of his staff at MI5. He tells Shears that the man he uses to trace the call must be eliminated immediately afterwards in a way that will not arouse any suspicions. McLafferty is flippant

about the whole matter and suggests they simply ignore the threat of accidental triggering of the bomb but Fitzsimmons becomes angry and insists that they cannot take chances. If the bomb explodes prematurely, they will not be able to collect the £50 million.

Shears and McLafferty depart and Fitzsimmons returns to the pleasures of the brothel.

* * *

Fitzsimmons is in his office in the headquarters of MI5 on Friday afternoon. One of his staff, Terence Smith (Smithy) is a fifty year old career man who is retiring early on medical grounds. He is clearing out his desk and saying goodbye to friends and colleagues. He approaches Lady Majorie's office, enters, knocks and enters.

Lady Majorie greets him warmly and tells him how sorry she is to see him retire after many years of valuable service. She wishes him luck.

Smithy then approaches Fitzsimmons' office, knocks and enters. Fitzsimmons also greets him warmly and shakes hands wishing him luck. As he is leaving, Fitzsimmons asks him to make a discretionary check on the sources of calls to some telephone numbers, telling him it is an inter-departmental affair that could be embarrassing. Smithy goes back to his office and checks out the numbers on his computer. After fifteen minutes wait, he gets the answers and returns to Fitzsimmons' office and gives him the sources of the calls. Fitzsimmons thanks him and wishes him good luck again.

Fitzsimmons then leaves the MI5 offices and uses a street telephone to call Shears. He gives Shears an address. He then returns to his office.

* * *

Haggart, Langley, Rapello and Sewell enter the Royal Navy dockyard at Chatham at dusk. They are met by a young WREN lieutenant who leads them to a small submersible vessel in the dock. She thinks they are doing some sort of research and instructs the American on the details of the craft. Then she leads them to a changing room where the three Americans don their Scuba outfits. Sewell is to stay behind to await their return.

* * *

Shears, Adamson and McLafferty arrive back at their rented house in Herne Bay in daylight. They are waiting for night to eliminate the Dodds whose address they have received from Fitzsimmons. McLafferty argues against killing innocent people and tells Shears and Adamson that the bomb cannot explode anyway. He produces a computer card and explains that he never had any intention of killing thousands of people and had substituted a dummy card in place of the real one. Shears and Adamson pretend to agree with him that the British government will pay the ransom anyway, rather than take a chance. They agree not to bother with the

Dodds and to lie to Fitzsimmons.

Shears, however, telephones Fitzsimmons and gives him this new information. Fitzsimmons tells Shears to kill McLafferty and to replace the dummy card in the bomb with the real one. However, before they kill McLafferty they must get him to make a tape explaining how the £50 million in diamonds is to be handed over.

Shears produces a cassette recorder and McLafferty makes the recording. While McLafferty makes the tape Adamson prepares to kill McLafferty after a signal from Shears. He leaves the room to get his knife and returns after McLafferty has finished the tape. He then and stabs McLafferty in the back. The two then enter the garage of the house where there is a trailer with Scuba gear and chariots. They load McLafferty's body on to the trailer.

* * *

Shears and Adamson again approach the wreck of the Richard Montgomery at night with their chariots and underwater lamps. They go to the bomb and open a port in the casing to expose the electronic meters inside. Shears then produces the new computer card but Adamson sees the Royal Navy submersible approaching from another direction. The two men swim away quickly to hide in the superstructure. They watch.

* * *

Haggar and Langley leave the submersible wearing their Scuba gear and approach the wreck. They see the bomb on an open deck and approach it cautiously. Haggar indicates to Langley that the open port in the casing means that bomb can be dealt with. He is puzzled at the carelessness of the conspirators. He motions to Langley to remain with the bomb while he returns to the submersible to acquire tools. He then swims back to the submersible and enters.

* * *

Adamson and Shears seize the opportunity to attack one man alone. They swim out and surprise Langley. They both stab him several times. Shears then replaces the computer card in the device and locks the port shut again. They then turn to swim away with Shears leading.

* * *

Haggar returns to the bomb and sees Langley's body floating past him. He sees Adamson ahead of him and pursues. He catches Adamson just as he and Shears reach their chariots. Haggar fights with Adamson and stabs him. Shears sees the fight and makes to return to help Adamson but sees it is too late. Haggar sees Shears face with his lamp through Shears' diving mask as he turns to face back but Adamson is already dead and Shears uses his chariot to escape as Haggar swims to pursue him. Haggar gives up the pursuit and return to collect the body of Langley. Rapello is waiting in the submersible unaware of the activity outside.

* * *

Shears, is in the back garden of the Dodds home. He looks through the window and sees Clarence sitting before a bureau with his stamp collection while his mother is watching television in a different room.

Shears comes up behind Clarence as his mother calls for him to make a cup of tea. He is naked and wields a kitchen knife. He stabs Clarence in the side, wounding him badly but not killing him immediately. He then enters the living room and approaches the startled mother. He stabs her through the heart. He then returns to Clarence dragging him back as he tries to crawl to safety, and demands to know where he keeps money. Clarence denies there being any money and Shears stabs him again. Clarence confesses to some money in a box in his mother's room. Shears then asks where the mobile phone is and Clarence shows him its location. Shears then stabs Clarence fatally. He recovers the mobile phone and smashes it on a wall. He opens drawers and cabinets and spills their contents on the floor to make the event look like a psychopathological burglary. He then goes upstairs and repeats the exercise. He finds the money in the mother's bedroom and then goes to the bathroom to shower.

* * *

Haggar is reporting to Lady Margaret, Sir Walter and Rear Adm Gordon in the admiralty. He tells them the bomb cannot be defused or moved. His examination showed it is a very sophisticated device and any attempt to interfere with it could be highly dangerous.

Lady then tells Haggar that two bodies were recovered in the Thames estuary that morning. Both had died from stab wounds. Both bodies had already been identified. One was Adamson, former Royal Marine and mercenary, the other was Thomas McLafferty, known as Turf, an IRA bomber who had not previously been arrested but who had been known to the RUC and anti-terrorist forces by his nickname.

MI5 had come close to arresting him two years earlier but he disappeared, possibly because of a tip-off. Intelligence now suggested he had parted company with the IRA and was working free-lance. He was believed to have gone soft after a horrific bombing he had perpetrated that had killed and maimed dozens of civilians and children three years earlier. Unfortunately, the discovery and identification of these bodies did not advance the investigation immediately but efforts would continue to trace all known associates of both men for the past several years.

Lady Majorie then thanks Haggar for his help and tells him that the British government will pay the ransom and keep the affair quiet. She sees no point in Haggar remaining in Britain. However, Haggar insists that he should be allowed to stay as he wants to get the other man responsible for the murder of Mike Langley. Lady Majorie reluctantly agrees to allow Haggar and Rapello to stay until the ransom is paid.

As they are leaving the Admiralty, Sewell mentions to Haggar that Kent police are investigating an appalling burglary and murder in Herne Bay. Haggar is interested and asks for details. After enquiries with Kent police, the two men decide to travel to the murder scene.

* * *

Shears arrives at Ronnie Swan's council flat in East London. He greets Swan as an old friend. Swan sends his wife and two children out of the room while he talks to Shears. Swan is an ex-serviceman turned thief who served with Shears in Northern Ireland. He is dying of cancer and has less than six months to live. He confirms his willingness to collect the diamonds in return for Shears promise that his wife will receive one million pounds if he is caught and goes to prison, or dies, afterwards. Shears gives Swan some money and departs.

* * *

Haggar and Sewell arrive at the Dodds' house in Herne Bay. They survey the scene. Kent CID officers tell Sewell and Haggar they are looking for a psychopath. All the evidence indicates torture and robbery. Money is missing along with other small items of jewellery. The stamp collection is still in the bureau. Haggar wonders why the mobile phone is deliberately broken. As they leave, he sees a telephone bill unopened on the hall table. He opens it and looks at the numbers. He sees that the mobile number is dialled frequently, and also that a similar number is also dialled. He asks Sewell to check out both numbers.

* * *

Smithy is finishing a pint in his local public house late in the evening. He says goodnight to the landlord and walks home. He is followed by Shears who carries a rolled-up newspaper. As Smithy turns into his own quiet street Shears calls out and asks for directions to another street nearby. Smithy helpfully turns and points. Shears sprays Smithy in the face with a lethal gas and turns away quickly. Smithy staggers a few yards before collapsing dead on the pavement.

* * *

Haggar and Sewell arrive at MI5 headquarters and go straight to Lady Marjorie's office. She meets them and takes them to the communications department which is overseen by Fitzsimmons. Fitzsimmons sees them enter the communications room and approaches them to enquire if he can help. Lady Marjorie introduces Sewell as Special Branch and Haggar as special operative with ministerial authority to find a mole in the department. She tells Fitzsimmons they want to know who traced the source of certain telephone calls the previous Friday. Fitzsimmons denies knowing but offers to help in any way he can and leads them to a computer console to check files. They retrieve the name of Smith. Lady Marjorie tells

Haggar and Sewell that Smith retired on Friday, a few days earlier and that his wife had telephoned that very morning with the sad news that her husband had collapsed and died in the street the previous evening. Everybody in the department was shocked and saddened by the news.

Haggar and Sewell are suspicious of the co-incidence of Smith's death and decide to visit his widow. When they arrive at the Smith house there are neighbours consoling Mrs Smith. Haggar offers his condolences and discovers that neighbours of the Smith's, a husband and wife returning home, had actually discovered Smith dead on the pavement and called for an ambulance. On questioning the neighbour, he learns that the wife, a trained nurse, had attempted vainly to use mouth to mouth resuscitation and had detected a strange smell from the dead man's throat.

Haggar believes an untraceable cyanide compound has been used on Smith and that he was in fact murdered to conceal the identity of whoever had asked him to check the source of the telephone numbers. He returns to MI5 headquarters and tells Lady Majorie his suspicions. She agrees to give him special status as an outside mole hunter and allow him to question staff in the department. Haggar then talks to various people who had contact with Smith before he left the previous Friday. As this involved almost everybody in the department, including Lady Marjorie, he is unable to gain much but, as he leaves, he discovers that Smith said goodbye to Fitzsimmons twice.

* * *

Haggar and Sewell are in the Admiralty with Lady Majorie, Sir Walter and Rear Admiral Gordon. They are listening to the new tape made by McLafferty explaining how the diamonds are to be passed over. The plan is for them to be brought to a public place, a restaurant in a shopping precinct. One of the conspirators, not yet seen or heard, will collect the diamonds. They are told the collector is a sick man who has not long to live and who is experienced with precious gems. The diamonds will be checked for radiation and other devices to trace them later. They are warned against any attempt to follow the collector after the hand-over.

Lady marjorie tells Haggar the British government has decided to pay the arnsom and try to trach down the conspirators later. Haggar aks that he be allowed to be present when the diamonds are delivered. This is agreed. He then tells the others that he will not rest until they catch the other man who killed Mike Langley.

* * *

Ronnie Swan arrives at the hand-over point where Sir Walter Arrowsmith, Haggar and Sewell wait with a briefcase containing the diamonds. Swan wears a crash helmet but takes it off in the restaurant. He introduces himself and shows the three of them a waistcoat with primed explosives in the pockets. He then proceeds to spill the diamonds on to the table. He spends several minutes examining each stone and passing a gieger-counter over them. Sir Walter offers Swan a deal, freedom and money, in return for help to catch the other conspiratos but Swan is unmoved. He puts

the diamonds into his own bag and departs. Other undercover Special Branch men are observing and surreptitiously taking pictures. Swan leaves the restaurant and the precinct and mounts a motorcycle. He speeds off. He is not followed.

Swan drives to Hyde Park and into the underground car park. He quickly passes the diamonds to Shears who waits in a car. Shears and Swan then leave the car park by different entrances.

Swan drives around the Bayswater Road parkway. He accidentally collides with a woman driver. He falls from the motorcycle. A uniformed policeman approaches him. Shears tries to remount the bike but accidentally detonates the explosives he has on his body.

* * *

The trail has gone cold and Haggar waits with Lady Marjorie to hear from the conspirators about the codes to disarm the bomb. No messages are received. Haggar offers to try to defuse the bomb alone but is over-ruled.

As he leaves the MI5 headquarters, he sees Fitzsimmons and decides to follow him, playing a hunch.

Fitzsimmons drives to Oxford Street. Haggar loses his quarry outside Selfridges but enters the store and walks through the store looking to pick him up again. After some fruitless searching, Haggar turns to leave but walks through the restaurant. He then sees Fitzsimmons from the back apparently leaving the company of another man who is facing him. Fitzsimmons is carrying a bag similar to the one used by Swan to collect the diamonds. As Haggar walks after Fitzsimmons he recognises Shears' face from their underwater encounter. Haggar challenges Shears and points a gun at him. One of the store staff panics and knocks the gun from Haggar's hand. Shears reacts quickly and runs through the store, pursued by Haggar. Haggar catches Shears at the top of an escalator and the two fight to the death. Shears produces a knife but Haggar kills him with it. Shears' body lies on an ascending escalator. Haggar retrieves his gun and shows his special licence to member of the store staff.

* * *

Haggar leaves the store looking for Fitzsimmons. He looks around neighbouring street and sees a car similar to Fitzsimmons' leaving the store car-park. Haggar runs across the road and stops a motorist. He pulls the driver out and pursues the suspect car. He gets close enough to see the suspect car parking near Centre Point (New Oxford Street). He drives into the forecourt in time to see Fitzsimmons entering the building. Haggar parks and runs into the lobby of the building. There is no sign of Fitzsimmons but Haggar sees an company notice board and sees the name of (associate this name with Fitzsimmons earlier) a safety deposit box company on the penultimate top floor. He goes to the lifts and travels up. When the doors open he sees Fitzsimmons entering a secure area with the bag of diamonds in his hand. Haggar shouts. Fitzsimmons turns, sees Haggar, panics and runs through a door into the emergency stairsace. Haggar pursues.

Fitzsimmons produces a gun and begins to shoot back up the stairs at the pursuing Haggar. Haggar shoots back and one of his shots shatters a large glass window on the next landing below Fitzsimmons. Glass falls inside and outside. Fitzsimmons runs down to the next landing, again with Haggar in pursuit, both men firing their guns. Fitzsimmons slips on a piece of broken glass on the landing and drops the bag of diamonds. Diamonds are scattered. Fitzsimmons scrambles to pick up the bag of diamonds as Haggar leaps down stairs. As Fitzsimmons stands up again, Haggar arrives on the stairs above him. Fitzsimmons raises his gun but Haggar shoots him in the stomach. Fitzsimmons staggers back and falls out through the broken window. He screams as he falls and the diamonds begin to scatter in the air. Haggar walks to the window and looks down. Fitzsimmons crashes on to the top of a lamp-post over which he stays hanging in the air at the side of Centre Point. There is a scattering of broken glass on the ground already, and a shower of diamonds falls amongst the broken glass. A tramp in a walks over from a nearby doorway, unaware of the body above, and picks up a diamond which he then discards it in favour of a sliver of glass which he uses to penetrate a (garment or such). The tramp then throws the glass away and walks off.

End.

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The Richard Montgomery Matter (Alternative title)

Prologue:

Fact
(Text on screen)

In August 1944 the US explosives carrier vessel Richard Montgomery sank in the Thames Estuary close to the Medway channel. Location: Sheerness Middle Sand 51: 28' 00" N 00: 47' 02" E. The carrier was loaded with high explosives and other perilous cargo. The sinking was kept secret for the duration and immediately after the war the British Admiralty

announced their decision to leave the wreck alone as it was said to be too dangerous to empty her of cargo.

If the cargo exploded the blast would destroy the town of Sheerness and the oil refinery on the Isle of Grain. The tidal wave created by the blast would affect populated areas on both sides of the Thames Estuary including Southend-on-Sea and the Medway towns of Chatham, Gillingham and Rochester. Destruction or collateral damage would occur over a ten mile radius.

That is the official British Admiralty line about the wreck. The masts of the Richard Montgomery are visible at all times. The wreck is enclosed by a cordon sanitaire. It is marked with a wreck buoy and diving on or near the sunken vessel is prohibited under the Protection of Wrecks Act. It is kept under 24 hour observation by units of the Royal Navy.

* * *

Speculation about the Richard Montgomery has persisted among local people since its sinking. The Admiralty's explanation that the cargo was too dangerous to evacuate was not believed by everybody. Too many other dangerous cargoes had been safely dealt with for this explanation to be truly credible.

The Richard Montgomery is rumoured to have experimental warfare bombs on board. Until recently, only a select number of British and American military personnel and government agents knew the truth about the wreck of the Richard Montgomery.

George Audrey Fitzsimmons knew the truth ...