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Notorious

The Maddest and Baddest Sportsmen
on the Planet



Richard Bath

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**Notorious: The Maddest and
Baddest Sportsmen on the Planet**

«HarperCollins»

Bath R.

Notorious: The Maddest and Baddest Sportsmen on the Planet /
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Straddling humour, trivia and sport, 'Notorious' brings together for the first time one hundred of the most potty sportsmen in history. From boxing to cycling, soccer to baseball, and most sports in between, here are the hard-men and the criminals, the psychos and the loonies, that make up the sporting madness hall of shame. Among the prime candidates for sporting lunacy in this book: Prinya Charoenpal, one of the most talented kick-boxers in the sport's history, who wore make-up and pink nail polish, broke down when asked to strip for the weigh-in, pummelled the opponent who made the mistake of mocking her with a camp embrace, and who fought solely to get the money for a sex-change operation. Jack 'Hacksaw' Reynolds, the San Francisco 49-ers linebacker during the 80s, who once got plastered after losing a college game, went out to the car park with a hacksaw, and cut someone's car in half. The Brazilian football star Edmundo, infamous on the pitch for beating up fans, referees and journalists, and making his name off it by crashing his truck and killing three people, and being arrested for force-feeding beer to a chimpanzee at his son's birthday party. And there's more. The rugby league hard-man with a predilection for sticking a rigid digit finger up opponents' rears on the field of play; the baseball Hall of Famer who wielded his bat to beat up unsuspecting victims; the golfer hospitalised three times for alcohol poisoning, who came through two suicide attempts, three divorces, plus countless hotel room trashings and suspensions; the Irish jockey involved in an air rage incident who copped 110 hours of community service... And closer to home, the likes of Roy Keane, Alex Higgins, Vinnie Jones and Paul Gascoigne are also featured in this wildly captivating, and often shocking, collection of crazed sports celebrities.

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For Ollie, Ailsa and Lochie

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Introduction

I vividly remember the day that this book was born. It was in the autumn of 1993 and I was editing a small rugby magazine when I received a phone call from a French journalist, who proceeded to recount the sorry demise of Armand Vaquerin. It was, quite frankly, such an unbelievable tale of wanton lunacy that I presumed that the writer in question, keen to earn a commission, had been hamming it up in the time-honoured fashion of all freelancers. In fact, quite the opposite was true, and the tale of the French prop's premature death remains a tragically unbeatable tale of sporting excess.

I didn't know at that stage that Vaquerin's folly would launch this tome, but as I discussed the story with my colleague Chris Pilling, we began to chuck around the names of sporting mentalists of every hue. As the process continued over the weeks that followed, and the ranks of Vaquerin's challengers swelled, the extent to which sport is a breeding ground for cranks, eccentrics, obsessives, and psychopaths became increasingly obvious.

Sport spawns individualists of huge self-confidence whose desire to win is so strong that they push their minds and bodies to the outer fringes of sanity. It also provides a Peter Pan environment in which there is a temporary moratorium on the need to grow up and assume the responsibilities and social norms by which the rest of the planet is governed. Crucially, success in sports like football and baseball also provides vast wealth, endless hours to fill and the sort of uncritical adulation that ensures every top sportsperson always has someone on hand to tell him or her how great they are. In such circumstances it is little wonder that some sportsmen and women come to believe that the usual rules simply do not apply. If you don't believe that to be the case, reflect on this: a study by the US National Institute of Mental Health found that between 1988 and 1991 more than one third of sexual assaults committed on American campuses were perpetrated by students on sports scholarships, who account for less than two per cent of students.

Like all projects, this one has mutated. It started off as a quest to find the most unhinged sporting practitioners in history but morphed as it became clear that a list of 100 Vinnie Jones-style hardmen would constitute a onedimensional bore. Anyway, in the colloquial sense madness is a subjective term which encompasses everything from outrageous heroism through extreme eccentricity to profound psychological trauma. The selection of the following 100 men and women (and despite a conscious effort to spread the net across all sports, circumstances, countries and genders, these pages are dominated by Anglophone men) represents an effort to include as many sporting forms as possible of the mental short-circuiting we know as madness.

I tried to set myself some ground-rules, although readers will undoubtedly argue that I've included exceptions to each of my rules, and in some cases they will probably be right. I decided, for instance, that simply doing a crazy sport—sky-diving, cave-diving, drag-racing, mountain-climbing, ultra-distance running and the like—couldn't be a sign of madness on its own. Otherwise this book would just be a collection of athletes who do remarkable things rather than athletes who are themselves remarkable. It is, I feel, a crucial distinction.

The abiding principle in compiling this list of my 100 biggest loonies is that all of the people in the following pages have either acted in a consistently irrational manner or have demonstrated that they are capable of extraordinary responses to extraordinary situations. That, I suppose, is as close to an objective definition of madness as I am willing to offer. Over and above that, all 100 of the individuals in these pages have stories that have touched me in some way, usually by prompting a macabre and wholly reprehensible freak-show fascination.

I've tried to be as inclusive as possible, neither dismissing individuals because their stories are so well known—Diego Maradona, Paul Gascoigne, George Best, Eric Cantona, Roy Keane, and Alex Higgins all come into that category—nor avoiding fringe figures like Rollen Stewart and Pretty Boy Shaw who exist on the very margins of sport. I was surprised, however, by the degree to which there

seems to be a correlation between madness and genius. Or perhaps it's just that the memory of crazy deeds perpetrated by sport's colossuses lingers longer in the memory and in the archives. The other major surprise was the degree to which some unexpected sports churn out the warped and depraved, while others simply don't. For every rugby-playing fruitcake, there are ten baseballing lunatics. As the Yanks would say, go figure.

I have also to thank those friends and colleagues who have helped me research this book or read over sections and provided feedback. Vicky Stirling deserves a medal for listening to me droning on about nutters and for providing her frank opinions on the merits of the lunatics upon whom I eventually alighted. I started off with a list of around sixty sportsmen and women who I thought would pass muster, but less than half of those made the final cut. More than twenty of the seventy nutcases I subsequently found while researching the nooks and crannies of sporting insanity were suggestions from friends and colleagues. For their input I'm truly grateful.

In particular I'd like to thank Jon Hotten, whose fascination with sport's macabre twilight zone and whose willingness to give of his time and surprisingly deep well of knowledge was much appreciated. The following colleagues also gave up time and ideas, and deserve acknowledgement for their input: Craig Lord, Dermot Crowe, Jon Rendall, Iain Fletcher, Mark Woods, Martin Gillingham, Jeremy Hart, James Allen, James Eastham, Stuart Weir, James Hipwell, Richard Verrow, Gary Sutherland, Ciaran O'Railaigh, Rick Weber, Mark Woods, Neil Forsyth, Rob Eyton-Jones, Gulu Ezekiel, Jonathan Dyson, Peter Roebuck, Alix Ramsay, Harry Miltner, Ivan Goldman, Neil Jameson, Phil Ball, Dan Brennan, Richard Fletcher, Stuart Cosgrove, Dominic Calder-Smith, Gregor Paul, Tom English, Alex Massie, Steve Downes, Eamon Lynch, Matt Zeysing, Michele Verroken, Bill Lothian, Alistair Hignell, Lucinda Rivers, John Huggan and Alan Pearey. My apologies to anyone I've missed out.

I'd also like to thank my wife Bea and beloved kids Ollie, Ailsa and Lochie, who all displayed characteristic forbearance at my continual absences during this work's troublesome gestation. This book is for my three little nutcases.

Finally, I'd like to thank my agent Mark Stanton and my publisher Michael Doggart, without whom this book would have remained an argument between two blokes on barstools.

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PARINYA CHAROENPHOL

Lady-boy killer

The Thai people might have an ambivalent attitude towards sexuality, but there's no doubt that Thai kick boxing, or Muay Thai, is among the world's hardest—and most masculine—of sports. That makes Parinya something of an oddity because from his first bout as a young boy aged 12 one of the most talented kick boxers in the sport's history fought solely to get the money for a sex-change operation. As a youthful Parinya said: 'I've set out to master the most masculine and lethal sport to achieve my goal of total femininity'.

As the fourth of five children of itinerant labourers, Parinya was taught to kick box by his father, who feared that his little boy—who favoured girly scrapbooks and painted nails from an early age, and spent much of his spare time with the village transsexual—would be picked upon. Although Parinya says that 'I don't equate femininity with weakness', Thai kick boxing is a stoically masculine world: women are not allowed to enter a kick boxing ring, let alone fight in one.

Life was hard for Parinya, who became a monk for three years from the age of seven when his mother was jailed for illegally collecting firewood. He then survived for twelve months by wandering through villages begging alms. Throughout his youth, kick boxing was a refuge and a defence mechanism, but Parinya made his public debut aged 12 when he entered a fight in a fair because there was 500 Baht (£7.50) on offer to the winner. By the time he was 16 he had gained local notoriety, winning 20 of his 22 fights, most of them by knockout. Over the next four years he became famous for the flamboyant *coup de grâce* he delivered after each KO, when he would give his defeated opponent a consolation kiss as the audience roared with laughter at the sight of the humiliated loser rubbing away the lipstick. 'The reason I kissed men after a fight is because it was my way of saying sorry,' said a deadpan Parinya.

Parinya made his big-time debut in front of 10,000 screaming homophobes in Bangkok's Lumpini Stadium aged 17. Wearing make-up and pink nail polish, he broke down when asked to strip for the weigh-in to prove he had the usual male accoutrements, although he was eventually allowed to climb aboard the scales wearing just black jockeys. He then promptly went out and pummelled the bejesus out of the over-confident Oven So Boonya—who had made the mistake of mocking Parinya with a camp embrace—for five bloody rounds. The end of the mismatch came when Parinya applied his trademark move, Crushing Medicine, in which he jumped in the air and brought his elbow down onto the head of the unfortunate opponent. Yet that flashy denouement hid the real secret of Parinya's success: an adherence to the balletic rituals of the ancient sport and a daily nine-hour exercise regime which saw him go for a 10km run at dawn, followed by half an hour of rope skipping, drills of alternate slugs and kicks to a sandbag, all rounded-off by 300 sit-ups during which his coaches would pummel his belly to harden his six-pack.

The low point of Parinya's career came in 1999, by which stage hormone therapy was beginning to have such a noticeable effect that he asked to be allowed to wear a bra when he fought. That's when Parinya went to Tokyo and fought Kyoko Inoue, a Japanese female wrestler almost double his size, in a freak-show hybrid brawl in which the kick boxer triumphed. But then triumph was normal for Parinya throughout his five-year career as a professional fighter, a career which ended abruptly in 2000 when he had amassed enough money for an operation in which he had his genitals removed and voicebox modified.

And then he became a she, changing his name to Nong Toom and hanging up the gloves forever. Now one of Thailand's biggest stars, Parinya/Nong was last seen earning a living as a 'boxing cabaret artist' and making *Beautiful Boxer*, a film of his/her life. (Don't laugh, *Iron Ladies*, a movie about

the transvestite volleyball team which won the Thai men's championship in 1996 is still Thailand's biggest grossing film of all time).

JOHN HOPOATE

Finger licking bad

Mad, bad, or just dangerous to tackle? Australian rugby league hardman John Hopoate merits inclusion thanks to his predilection for slipping a rigid digit up opponents' arses on the field of play. It happened four times—thrice against Queensland Cowboys and once against St George-Illawarra—leading to his sacking by Wests Tigers after NRL (National Rugby League) commissioner Jim Hall said that 'in my forty-five years in rugby league, never have I come across a more disgusting act.'

Hopoate, who was caught on film inserting his finger all the way up to the knuckle, thought it was all a bit of a laugh, but then maybe he was just trying to fit in because he was playing against North Queensland Cowboys, an outfit who play in an area of the country Aussies call the Deep North, an agricultural region where men are men and sheep are petrified. Even Hopoate's team-mates thought it was a riot: Tigers coach Terry Lamb was particularly amused after watching the video tape of the St George game. 'Everyone had a big laugh,' said Lamb. 'We thought it was okay because Hoppa's good mates with Craig [Smith, the St George captain and a victim]. We thought it was a gee-up.'

His victims, however, weren't so impressed. 'I couldn't believe it. It felt like he made an attempt to stick his hand up my arse. I shit myself,' said Smith. The Cowboys' captain Peter Jones was also in no doubt that it wasn't funny: 'It wasn't a wedgie. That's when your pants are pulled up your arse. I think I know the difference between a wedgie and someone sticking their finger up my arse.' A third victim, Paul Bowman, said that 'if Hoppa was a man, he wouldn't do this', but Bowman's coach Terry Hall thought it was all a storm in a teacup: 'Things were much worse in my day: I've had blokes grab my family jewels, blokes gouge me, blokes pull my hair. Hoppa hasn't hurt a bloke for Christ's sake.'

One bloke who managed to see the funny side was Ian Roberts, one of Aussie Rugby League's greats, who withdrew from the disciplinary panel citing 'a conflict of interests...with three sweaty men and anal penetration it sounded like a gay party to me'. Roberts was, at that time, the League's only openly gay player.

One other player took Hoppa's example to heart. In 2002, the year after Hoppa's strange behaviour first surfaced, 25-year-old Old Trinity Aussie Rules footballer Glen Hatfield was banned *sine die* for emulating his hero in a match against Melbourne High School Old Boys.

Since Hopoate was banned and then fired by Wests, things haven't got better for the rogue. After finally getting back into the game, he was almost sacked by Manly after he was banned for abusing match officials, after which he was forced to issue a grovelling apology for abusing a ballboy during a match against the New Zealand Warriors in March 2005. He was finally sacked by Manly after he was banned for seventeen weeks for a sickening assault which laid out Cronulla Sharks forward Keith Galloway, almost ending Galloway's playing days and killing the 30-year-old Hoppa's career stone dead.

The botty-botherer is now pursuing a career in boxing but still can't keep out of the news. Acting as a waterboy in a match between his teenage son's Manly Cove side and the Western City Tigers in the Sydney Rugby League's under-13 cup in 2005, he was banned from the touchline for abusing officials. According to officials, Hoppa first swore at the referee and touch judges before inviting all three outside for a 'square-go'.

ARMAND VAQUERIN

One madman, one bullet

French rugby props are famously nutty, but few have taken their madness to such violent extremes. Vaquerin may have been capped twenty-six times between 1971 and 1980, and he may have won more French Cupwinners' medals ('Boucliers') with the all-conquering Beziers team than any man alive, but it's for the manner of the loose-head's departure as much as for what he did while he was here that he will be remembered.

Courageous, generous, and famously popular in his home town, Vaquerin had struggled to adapt to life after his rugby career was brought to a premature end in 1980 by a knee injury he first suffered five years earlier (his absence gave Gerard Cholley his chance and the moving brick outhouse quickly established himself as France's premier No.1).

After his retirement, Vaquerin had thrown himself into other sports, notably hunting and deep-sea diving, and had spent six years in Mexico before coming back to his home town, where he opened a bar called Le Cardiff. A larger-than-life bull-necked bruiser with a shiny pate and Pancho Villa moustache, locals said Vaquerin 'liked to live life at 100 kilometres an hour'.

On 10 July 1993, the 42-year-old son of Spanish immigrants organised a party in a local arena to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of his first cap, won against Romania when he was just 20, making him the youngest prop ever to have played international rugby. Despite the fact that a huge crowd had turned up, Vaquerin, who had only had one aperitif, grew restless and went in search of fun.

He crossed to the wrong side of the tracks and wandered into a famously rough Beziers bar and, despite the protestations of friends, proceeded to pick a row with a fellow drinker. The exact sequence of events isn't clear, but it seems that the poor man accidentally spilt Vaquerin's drink, and then offered to buy him another. When the bull-necked prop refused the offer and suggested that they fight instead, the man understandably refused. This is the point at which, to the astonishment of the whole bar, he pulled out a gun from his car and offered his terrified adversary another option: to play Russian roulette with him. Unsurprisingly, the man simply turned and bolted.

Now in the process of having, er, fun, Vaquerin challenged the worried locals to take up his kind offer and join him in a sociable game of blind man's buff with bullets. But when no one would play with him, he took matters into his own hands. Removing five of the six bullets from the chamber of his Smith and Wesson revolver and uttering the immortal words 'if you bastards won't play with me, I'll play by myself', he did just that. The sixth bullet entered his right temple, killing him instantly. Friends said he died as he had lived, in a desperate pursuit of excess.

START FC

Playing for keeps

Sport's ability to make a difference in the most extreme circumstances was demonstrated by the ultimate pyrrhic victory in the midst of the madness that was the eastern front during the Second World War. In arguably the most savage and one-sided David versus Goliath encounters of all time, a bunch of malnourished Ukrainian footballers in rags and shoes took on the mighty Luftwaffe in what became known as The Death Match. It was the classic Catch 22: lose and they betrayed the nation, win and they would face a firing squad or worse. They won.

The 'they' in question was Start FC, the reassembled ashes of the 1939 Dynamo Kiev side which had been one of the best pre-war outfits in Europe, possibly the greatest of Europe's inter-war sides. When the Nazis overran Kiev during Operation Barbarossa, many of the side were dispatched to slave labour camps; others, such as Lazar Kogen, were summarily executed.

Many Ukrainians initially doubted that the Nazis could be worse than Stalin, who had a man jailed for ten years for being first to sit down after a standing ovation and had another executed for taking down Stalin's portrait to paint the wall behind it. Yet within a fortnight of taking Kiev, the Nazis had slaughtered 33,000 Jews at Babi Yar and the city's inhabitants understood the horrific nature of an occupation which only 20 per cent of Kiev's inhabitants would survive.

The highest-profile member of that Dynamo Kiev team was Nikolai Trusevich. In late 1941 the charismatic goalkeeper had just been released from an internment camp but was close to death from starvation. As the emaciated figure shuffled around looking for food to keep him alive—every cat, dog and rat in the city had already been eaten—he ran into football-mad Losif Kordik whose reward for collaborating with the Nazis was to be given charge of a large bakery. Not only did Kordik give the former Dynamo captain the job which saved his life, but he also ordered him to scour the city and employ any former team-mates he could find.

When the Nazis allowed football to be played in 1942 in an attempt to normalise life, the bakery owner asked Trusevich to form a team from his fellow workers—almost all of whom were Dynamo men—but many worried they would be seen as collaborators. Trusevich argued the opposite case passionately: 'We may not have weapons but we can fight on the football pitch. We will be playing in the colour of our flag. The fascists should know that our colour cannot be defeated.' And so Start FC was born.

Despite their shambolic physical state, Start beat a team of local collaborators 7-2, then dispatched sides representing occupying forces from Hungary and Romania, the latter 11-0. When Start beat a German unit 6-0 and started to become a focus for Ukrainian pride, alarm-bells sounded and the Germans fielded the best team in the Reich, the Luftwaffe's Flakelf. Start's starving Slavs beat the well-fed Aryan Supermensch 5-1.

Apoplectic, the Germans ordered a replay, which took place before a capacity crowd of Ukrainians and Germans, with 200 Wehrmacht dog handlers in attendance. Nobody harboured any illusions about what another Start win would mean. Just before the match an SS officer walked in and announced that he would be the referee, instructing the Start players to give the Nazi salute before the game. Flakelf saluted to loud roars from the German spectators, but when Start instead clapped their fists to their chests and shouted 'Fitzcult Hura'—('physical culture' the traditional greeting before any Soviet sporting event) they had signed their death warrants.

When the Ukrainians led 3-1 at half-time, they were visited by another SS officer. 'You have played very well,' he said. 'And we are very impressed. But you cannot expect to win. I want you to take a moment to think of the consequences.' They did, winning 5-3, with defender Klimenko running almost the whole length of the pitch, through several tackles, to the goal line, but instead of

putting the ball into the goal he stopped it on the line; toying with the Master Race and humiliating them in the process. Then he ran into the goal, turned, and kicked the ball back up the field. That's when the referee blew for full-time, more than fifteen minutes early.

Very few Start players escaped, and most were tortured before being dispatched to the great clubhouse in the sky. On the day when Trusevich was finally killed, two Start teammates in his labour camp had already died of wounds inflicted in the torture chamber when he was instructed to line up. A guard, approaching him from behind, tried to use his rifle butt on the back of Trusevich's head but, defiant and agile to the end, he dodged the blow and leapt at the guard screaming: 'Red sport will never die'. Three guns barked: he was dead before he hit the ground.

DAVID ICKE

The Son of Godhead

Forced to retire from football at 21 ('three sevens, an important number in my view' he said mysteriously) because of premature rheumatoid arthritis, Hereford goalkeeper David Icke went on to become a household name as a soccer TV presenter for twelve years. Then, in 1990, he went mad. Absolutely bonkers, in fact. Declaring that he was 'the son of Godhead', he went on to outline quasi-religious beliefs that were more Ron L Hubbard than Glenn Hoddle.

His epiphany was nothing if not amusing. He went onto *Wogan*, dressed from head to foot in turquoise, and told the genial Irishman that: 'in the 1980s when I was a BBC presenter there was this presence close to me. I thought someone else was there. I went to a psychic and she said I would be world famous and was the Son of God—and there I was, presenting the snooker.' Not surprisingly Wogan was a little sceptical and pointed out that the audience were laughing.

'The best way of removing negativity,' Icke said, 'is to laugh and be joyous, Terry. So I am glad that there has been so much laughter in the audience tonight.'

'They're not laughing with you! They're laughing at you!' replied an incredulous Wogan.

Among Icke's more choice utterances was that he had received 'channelled messages' from both a Chinese mandarin, Wang Yee Lee, and from Socrates. He also reckons that the world had been taken over by 12ft blood-drinking, child-abusing alien lizards (the Queen is one, so was her Mum, and so are George Bush, Tony Blair, Hillary Clinton, Kris Kristofferson, and Boxcar Willie). So convinced is he of this that in the wake of the World Trade Center bombings he published a book called *Alice in Wonderland and the World Trade Center Disaster: Why the official story of 9/11 is a monumental lie* in which he outlined an elaborate conspiracy theory about the events of that day, arguing that it was carefully staged by high-ranking members of the Illuminati (reptilian bloodline), including George Bush, Dick Cheney, and Tony Blair. 'Reptiles run the world. I have had dozens of people telling me they've seen important people turning into reptilian humanoid figures. They have nodules on their head and drink human blood, mainly of blonde-haired, blue-eyed people.' When asked about his claim that the Queen is a lizard who drinks human blood and enjoys child sacrifice, he replied: 'If it's not true take me to court. Let's have it out.'

Other nutty pronouncements include the revelation that the planet earth vibrates at the same velocity as turquoise; that Arran, a small and perfectly respectable island off the west coast of Scotland, would fall off the end of the world and into the sea in 1997; and that the Sahara would blossom once more. Not surprisingly, Arran is still as dry as a temperance meeting and the Sahara's still fairly sandy.

Icke's work has involved a great deal of travel in which he has been 'leaving stones and pieces of wood in different places to help unlock the combination set up by Arthur, Avola, and Merlin and so release the Green Dragon energies to the heart chakras of the planet'. We may not know what he's talking about, but the Muans did—they were our predecessor race, who had thin bodies with 'little hair' and long, white soft gowns, and who 'did away with themselves by getting overawed by the spirits of rocks.'

Icke has grown increasingly potty since 1991, setting up a cult on the Isle of Wight and issuing eye-wateringly amusing edicts. As with all sensible latter-day yogis, most of his followers seem to be young, blonde, and female. So maybe there is a method in his rather extreme form of madness. The turquoise-clad one was last seen presenting *Headfuck*, a late night session of weird film clips and music videos on the Sci-Fi channel while simultaneously pretending not to exist any more. 'David Icke does not exist,' said David Icke. 'My name is just a name for what my infinite consciousness is experiencing.' Quite.

DARRYL HENLEY

Living the American Dream

The LA Rams defensive back was never a man to let the grass grow under his feet—well, not without wanting to sell it on. When he began to get a little fed-up with a career in American football that seemed to be more about the taking part than the winning—‘in six seasons we won just thirty-four games; losing became okay and accepted’—he decided that it was time to set up a second career for the time when his \$600,000 a year salary dried up.

Being the product of an exclusive private Catholic school and UCLA university, Henley knew how to live the American dream, and also needed to prove he was a leader of men. What better way to combine the two, and to liven up life a little, than by setting up an America-wide drug-smuggling ring with himself at its head.

Things started to unravel in 1993 when Henley’s accomplice, a pretty 19-year-old former cheerleader called Tracey Ann Donaho, was arrested by the FBI carrying 12 kilos of cocaine in her luggage. The dealers for whom the coke was destined soon came after Henley, armed with malice aforethought and AK-47s. Rams administrator Jack Faulkner later testified that he saw two ‘short, chunky black males’ with guns and several kilos of bling jewellery chase Henley across the Rams parking lot before their intended mark sped off in his sports car.

‘It was a very, very difficult time,’ Henley said later. ‘I was kidnapped one time in training camp, just thirty minutes before bed check. They forced me into their vehicle. They finally let me go at 12.30 a.m. At practice, I had the whole OJ thing. I had secret police there. Private investigators. I was picked up and taken back and forth in a bulletproof Ford.’

None of that was enough to keep him out of prison though, especially when Donaho started singing. On March 28 1995 in Santa Ana, Henley was convicted for selling 50 pounds of cocaine and was placed in the Metropolitan Detention Center to await sentencing. Henley, though, was nothing if not determined, and displaying his three salient characteristics of charm, stubbornness and extreme nastiness, he befriended warder Rodney Anderson and then used the gullible guard’s cellphone to arrange deliveries of \$1m shipments of heroin from his cell.

Perverting prison warders and peddling drugs obviously didn’t take up enough time, so Henley filled up the rest of his existence by plotting to kill Donaho, who had turned State’s witness against him, and US District Judge Gary L Taylor, the Santa Ana trial judge who had found him guilty.

Unfortunately for Henley, not everybody found him as charming as his pet warder. When his tiresome boasts about being ‘Da Man’ wore thin on fellow inmates, they grassed on him. Predictably for such an inept criminal, the men on the outside with whom he was dealing turned out to be undercover FBI agents who later testified that they set up \$1m of sham drug deals with Henley and the guard, adding that Henley offered then \$100,000 per hit to ‘whack’ Judge Taylor and Donaho. Another outside accomplice, brother Eric, was also arrested and sentenced to five years in jail.

In March 1997, Henley received forty-one years for trafficking and plotting to kill Donaho and Taylor. ‘It is obvious that he [Henley] is even more dangerous in custody than out of custody,’ said judge Idelman at his trial. ‘If there was ever a guy who needed to be locked down twenty-four hours a day, it’s Henley. If the court was sentencing Mr Henley, the sentence would be different, I assure you. The defendant is obviously a complete and hardened criminal, so any speech to him is a waste of time.’

Henley is currently spending his time in an Illinois super-maximum-security prison alongside teflon don John Gotti and the rest of America’s most wanted. He spends twenty-three hours a day in his cell and becomes eligible for parole in 2031, when he reaches 65.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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