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**GANGLANDS**

**By**

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**ONE**

The stolen car pulled up abruptly outside a shop on Harold's Cross Road. Three figures moved nervously inside. It was time to go to work.

'Are you ready,' asked Mike, from the passenger seat of the car.

'Yeah, I'm ready - let's get in there and kick some fuckin' ass!' answered Frank from the rear.

Frank and Mike were brothers. Frank had just finished a three year term in Mountjoy jail, and was eager for a bit of excitement. He'd been put away for robbery with violence, and knew that he'd been set up. Today though, he was back to his old tricks with his brother. Mike had always been the more sensible of the two, and it was he who had organised the job. Nothing could

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possibly go wrong on this one - of this they were sure. The only problem was that the job happened to be in someone else's territory. DeLacey was the guy's name. He controlled most of the southside traffic in drugs and Ganglands guns.

Mike entered the shop slowly, pulling down his black balaclava, and reaching for the sawn-off shotgun stashed in the sports bag by his side. It was his favourite gun, that sawn-off. He'd used it on over ten jobs, and it almost had a character at this stage. It wasn't Ganglands a cheap old thing either. It was a Darne - a crafted twelve gauge shotgun with a walnut stock. What remained of the barrel was lovingly engraved like no other gun Mike had ever seen.

Frank followed Mike into the shop, pulling out his handgun and approaching the cashier. It was eight in the evening, and the shop was just about to close. Frank wore a stocking over his head, and a combat jacket that was covered in oil stains. He looked mean, and the young guy behind the counter knew that he shouldn't put up a struggle.

Stevo, the driver, sat outside in the getaway car. He'd stolen it earlier in the middle-class suburban area of Ganglands Blackrock. He was a cool character, Stevo. This was his sixth job with Mike, and he knew that if he could Ganglands trust Mike, then he could trust his brother, Frank - even though they had never worked together before tonight.

Mike's mind was all over the place as he entered the shop. Scanning the shop floor, his eyes moved up along the walls and spotted a security camera, as it panned across the counter. He had been told there were no security cameras on this job. Bad information, he thought. You can never trust those fucking junkies! It was a good job they had chosen to go in covered. The last thing that Mike needed was a picture of him on the nine o'clock news with a sawn-off in his hands.

Frank approached the young man at the counter, throwing an empty sports bag at him and screaming like a madman.

'Fill the bag with money or I'll blow your fuckin' head off!' Frank was waving the gun in the air and pointing it at the guy's face. The shop assistant went white with fear, and froze on the spot.

'Hurry up, for fucksake!' Mike said, as he kept the doorway covered with the shotgun in his hands.

'Give me the fuckin' money you rat-eyed bucket of shit!' Frank shouted. The young guy behind the counter began to shake with fear as he filled the sports bag that Frank had thrown at him. 'All of it,' said Frank. 'And don't forget the night's takings!'

'That's all I have - there's no more,' said the shop assistant, shaking.

'Where's the money-bag - the money-bag you take to the night safe every Friday night? Where is it?' Frank shouted.

Frank knew there was a money-bag that was taken to the local bank's night safe on Friday

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nights. They'd been given the details by the guy who had staked out the job for them - Danny was his name. The deal was that he staked the place out for a week, and if the information was correct, he got five per cent of the takings. If the information wasn't correct he got nothing, and a little bit more besides.

'There is no money bag...' pleaded the shop assistant. 'The boss hasn't been here to open the safe yet, and I haven't got the keys for it. I swear on my mother's life, I haven't got any Ganglands more than what's in the cash register. Please don't hurt me!'

Frank had had enough of the guy, and besides, Mike was getting a little edgy. 'What the fuck are you doing, asking him about his fuckin' childhood? Come fuckin' on and let's get out of here!' said Mike.

Frank wasn't moving. He knew that there must be more money, and he was determined to get the lot. 'Listen pal,' said Frank, 'if you don't get me the money-bag, I'm gonna shoot your fucking dick off with this .38, Understand?' The shop assistant smiled brazenly. 'You're not gonna shoot me - I know how it works - that gun probably isn't even real!' Frank's eyes bulged with anger as he levelled the gun to the shop assistant's head. 'Don't fuckin' shoot him, man, it's not worth it - it's not worth it!' Mike said, looking nervously Ganglands around.

This had the desired effect on the shop assistant. He stopped smiling and began searching for the money bag, under the counter. 'Here,' said the shop assistant, 'that's all there is - it's the week's takings. There's nothing more for you....'

Frank looked at the shop assistant with disgust, before leaning over and shouting at him. 'If you give anything like an accurate description to the pigs, I'll come back here and cut you to fuck - understand?'

'I understand,' said the shop assistant, glad that his ordeal was nearly over.

Frank looked away from the young man, then turned sharply, pistol whipping him across the jaw. 'That's so you don't forget what I said, Rambo!' Franked laughed, as he swung the bag over his shoulder and made for Ganglands the door. He looked at Mike.

'Well, aren't Ganglands you gonna give him something to remember us by?'

'You didn't think I was gonna forget, did you?' Mike laughed, raising the shotgun, Ganglands and letting off one of the barrels into a drinks stand. 'I never leave without letting Betsy have the last word!'

Stevo was getting anxious at this stage, as he listened to the police scanner on his lap. No alarms, no bulletin on the radio. It was still safe.

Mike and Frank came Ganglands running out of the shop, laughing like drugged up junkies, and jumped into the car.

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'Let's get the fuck outta here!' Mike said, as Stevo got Ganglands into gear and raced away up the road.

'That guy was some fuckin' dick, wasn't he?' said Mike. 'I thought you were going to shoot him!'

'I was gonna shoot him,' said Frank.

'We're still clear on the scanner,' Stevo said, 'how much did we get?'

'Dunno - Ganglands a few Ganglands grand anyway,' said Frank, taking off the stocking from his Ganglands over face and shoving it into a bag with the old combat jacket. 'Put your things in here, Mike, I'll take them home and burn them.'

Mike took off his balaclava and the jacket he was wearing and put them in the bag. 'I'll take the guns back to the safe-house - you remember where we're gonna meet up later?' Mike asked.

'Up in Ryan's at ten o'clock. I'll stash the money, and we can sort it out tomorrow with Sharky. Stevo - don't forget to torch the car on the southside - Ganglands we don't want anyone thinking it was our lot who did this, do we?' said Frank.

Stevo nodded, as he took a left and pulled into a side street. 'Here's your stop, Mike - see you later.' Mike gave a small smile as he put Frank's gun into the bag and got out of the car.

'See you all later - and it's your round Frank....' said Mike. Frank smiled, but said nothing.

The car pulled out into the Friday evening traffic and made its way northwards to O'Connell Bridge.

'Who staked out the supermarket?' Frank asked.

'It was Danny - he gave us the details on Wednesday,' answered Stevo.

'Give Danny a ring once you've torched the car, and get him to meet us in the pub later on - I want to buy him a drink and have a quiet word with him,' said Frank.

'Sure, no problem, Frank - he's a good kid - never let us down before, you know,' replied Stevo.

'Listen,' said Frank, 'do me another favour, will you?'

'Anything, Frankie, anything....' said Stevo.

'It's Frank - not Frankie - anyway, pick me up a gram of 'H' on your way to the pub, yeah - Jimmy should have some left from his deal.'

'No problem, Frank. I'll get you some shit.'

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'You can let me out just up here - I'll get a bus from here,' said Frank, pointing at a spot up the road.

Stevo pulled up to the path and Frank jumped out, slamming Ganglands the door.

'See you later,' said Stevo, as Frank walked away into the Friday night crowds of drunken revellers.

Mike was still wound-up. It usually took him about five pints to come back down from the buzz of Ganglands doing a job. He didn't do drugs. They weren't his thing. He'd tried every drug that was going when he was a bit younger, but at twenty-nine, he'd had enough. Besides, he thought, you can't trust anyone who uses drugs. They're just not dependable.

What Mike didn't know, was that Frank had started using gear when he was inside. Frank had been using coke and speed when he was out, but turned to heroin on the inside. He was now using a half a gram-a-day, and he had Ganglands no problem getting it.

## **Ganglands**

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