

EX-MARINE TOUGH GUY'S LIFE

I was chucked out of the Triads for being TOO HARDCORE

A FEARLESS Brit has told how he was KICKED-OUT of the Chinese Triads - for being TOO much of a nutter!

The Chinese crime syndicate are known for hacking opponents to death with meat cleavers in the course of gun-running, drug smuggling and money laundering operations across the world.

New Triad members must also pledge an oath where they accept being 'killed by myriads of swords' if they fail to protect their gangster 'brothers'.

But the tattooed assassins hadn't bargained on ex-Royal Marines Commando Chris Thrall, who ended up as a BODYGUARD for the brutes.

Chris had set up a business in Hong Kong and got swept up in a shadowy world of violence, intimidation and revenge beyond his control.

He's also one of the only Brits to

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EVER enter the society's deadly inner circle.

But things soon turned sour and Chris, 45, says triad members ran scared of his WILD behaviour as he was caught-up in a relentless campaign of fear and intimidation in the notorious Wan Chai district.

How did you end up in Hong Kong?

I'd done enough in the Marines. I'd served in Northern Ireland during the worst years of the Troubles and witnessed some incredible violence. I figured it was time to get out.

By chance, I'd got involved with network marketing business that really took off in Hong Kong. I signed up a businessman over there and he somehow managed to turn over \$100,000 in our first month of trading! I saw this as my opportunity to make a permanent move.

But when I went to Hong Kong a year later, all those profits had fallen to a pitiful low and I wasn't even making enough to pay off my debts.

I found out the people we marketed products for were supplying dodgy goods. Literally, they made car alarms that didn't even work. You couldn't sell them.

My intention had been to make a go of this. I'd sacrificed a glowing career in the armed forces. But here I was, in the hectic, crime-ridden streets of Hong Kong, utterly destitute.

How did you get involved with the Triads?

I'd wasted years of my life in a suit trying to do the business thing and it turned me into a professional liar. I started looking for a job as a nightclub doorman - which was a bit more like what I was used to in the military.

I spoke with a guy from my local gym, a black Londoner called Wilson, who worked on the door in the Wan Chai district at a club called Joe Bananas.

He fixed me up for a job. The punters loved me and there were few fights under my watch but I got sacked for taking two puffs of a customer's cigarette. It was a f**king joke.

I didn't know it then, but losing that job led me straight to the triads.

I'd seen an advert for a DJ required in China. It said, 'Must speak English and must know western dance music.' This was back in the rave era where European club music was huge.

They ended up hiring me! I was 25 years old and blagged my way into one of the most exclusive clubs in southern China. They paid for me to travel across the border and play records and I was off my face on drugs the whole time!

It turns out that club had links to the triads which was brilliant for me because I was earning two grand a month, had my own furnished apartment and the gang could fix me anything that I wanted...girls, drugs, whatever, the Triads had it sorted.

It was insane. And the bodyguard they gave me was China's kung-fu champion! His orders were to protect me because those streets were ruthless. They were executing 18,000 offenders



SOLDIERING ON: Former Marine Chris has written about his time in the Hong Kong triads



IN BRUTAL CHINESE GANGS



RISKY BUSINESS: Chris is patched up after another busy night on the night club door

a year at the time. I was told, "Chris, a Chinese criminal will kill you first and then see if you've got any money."

But eventually you started working for the deadliest triad faction, the 14K.
I quit my job as a DJ, I don't think I was what they were looking for. Pretty soon, I was broke again.

I was wandering the back streets looking for any sign of a job and remembered another expat who worked in one of the Wan Chai clubs. I went down into this grungy downstairs club, and all the symbolism on the walls suggested it was a Chinese-run venture. My mate, it turns out, had bugged off to Thailand, so I was offered the doorman job on the spot.

The manager said: "Stand here tomorrow night, eight o'clock." And that was it. I'd gone from being utterly dejected to landing a well-paid job.

But I didn't realise this club was owned by the 14K - the most vicious, ruthless triads in the world. On my first night, I met an English bloke at the bar, who was working on a new Hong Kong airport. He said, "You're Chris, right? Sit down, I'll tell you a bit about the place... you know they're all triads here, right?"

I was speechless. I'd had a few run-ins with organised crime during my time in the Marines - but to actually be employed by them? No way. He pointed out this massive doorman across the bar. "That's an assassin. Every few weeks he'll disappear to China for a few days and the Triads will smuggle him back into Hong Kong. He'll kill anyone he's told to kill. It's his role in life, he doesn't question it."

That was my first introduction to the triads. I was face-to-face with a contract killer.

Did you know anything about them before?
I didn't really deal with them directly when I was a DJ. I knew they usually came from the most deprived areas. They've got no future, no education, no family. For disenfranchised young people, the Triads seem like a family,

'A dozen Triads brandishing cleavers chopped him to bits'

so they give up school and become low-level criminals. And, as weird as it sounds, I immediately became one of them.

I had no money, no prospects and was living in filthy flat in the most dangerous part of Hong Kong. Life had really kicked me in the teeth. I turned to gangs to seek acceptance and a sense of belonging. That gang happened to be the 14K.

Why do you think they accepted you?

Having a foreign bouncer was a real asset. It was my job to stop situations from escalating to violence because a lot of tourists didn't know the club was triad-owned.

See, you've got a lot of drugged-up British expats in Hong Kong and you really don't want some gobby bank manager picking a fight with one of the triads. Because if that happens, the gang won't stand for it. Someone will just pick up the nearest ashtray and cave the bastard's head in and won't stop until they're dead. We're talking that level of violence.

So my role was to basically tell people, "Mate, this isn't like a British club where the bouncers will slip you around a bit and throw you out into the street. These guys will pummel your head in if you f*ck with them." Usually, they calmed down after that.

What was the most violent thing you saw?

My mate Banksy was a doorman at another club and one night a white transit van pulled up, and a dozen triads poured out the back brandishing meat cleavers. They chopped him to pieces, it was horrendous. And it was all a case of mistaken identity - he'd done nothing wrong.

But this guy was a hard as fuck Essex boy, y'know? So he put up a fight. When he raised his hands to try and protect himself, they hacked his

thumb off so badly it was just hanging by a tendon by the side of his wrist. His face was cut up with two-inch deep gashes all over and it looked like he'd been slammed face-first into a wire net.

But Banksy was so hard he was back working on the door three days later - sewn-up and covered in bloody bandages! Christ. That's called a 'chopping' - it's a revenge attack used by the Triads. You cannot f*ck with these people.

When did things start going wrong?

I started to sense a bad feeling towards me in the club. I was getting to know too much and was asking too many questions about the Triads. They were using strange hand gestures that I didn't understand, and talking about me behind my back.

Also, they realised I was using crystal meth - which is a major taboo in the 14K. I was becoming incredibly paranoid and experiencing psychosis because of the drugs. I thought the whole of Hong Kong was wired up like a giant pinball machine. Everything seemed interrelated, everyone was

out to get me. It was unbearable.

One night, members of the 14K chased me around the city. I gave them the slip by running up the backstairs of a very old building in Wan Chai and hiding out on the roof. It was pitch black and I slipped climbing down a ladder into the stairwell but something broke my fall. It was two dead bodies, a mother and her baby, chopped to pieces in triad revenge style.

The tipping point was when a girl overdosed in the club one night. The boss asked me to throw her into the skip out back - because if word got out people were using drugs in his club it would reflect badly on him. I couldn't do that. I shouted someone to call an ambulance and saved her life but I'd gone against the boss's order, which was unforgivable. And I was about to pay for it.

How did you escape?

I got such a bad name in the club that the 14K stepped up their campaign of intimidation. They staged a murder, which was the most frightening thing that's happened to me.

I was downstairs in the club and suddenly a bunch of guys swarmed around me. These were the meanest f*cking Triads I'd ever seen, all from other nightclubs and restaurants in the area.

They all had blades and I thought I was going to get chopped up. Some of the guys were giggling. "Chris, you're going to get it tonight!"

But I remembered that one of my friends, a Filipino girl, had told me that the triads in Wan Chai were trying to f*ck with my head. I was terrified but knew that these guys were messing around and weren't actually going to kill me. They just wanted to watch me squirm - but I didn't give them the satisfaction.

If anything was going to happen it would have happened then. It didn't. I walked out the front door, effectively booted-out of the Triads, and never looked back.

Chris Thrall's exciting memoir Eating Smoke is available now, published by John Blake.



Drivers 'were taken by aliens near Roswell'

UFO investigators are scratching their heads after two car drivers went missing near alien-hotspot Roswell.

The US Air Force base in New Mexico was, according to conspiracy theorists, the scene of a flying saucer crash in 1947, which was subsequently covered-up by officials. And now the area is home to a new mystery after two men - a passenger and a driver - lost seven hours of their life after being involved in a road accident.

The unidentified fella rolled their motor around 2am on Friday outside Roswell.

Emergency responders and firefighters all arrived at the scene of the crash but failed to find any of the occupants of the car.

It was only seven hours later that the driver called 911 to tell the dispatcher that he was now lying in a field full of DONKEYS, and had zero recollection of the prang.

New Mexico State Police Lt. Emanuel Gutierrez did, though, claim the men had been 'drinking'.

You gotta laugh!

I CAN hear music coming out of my printer - I think the paper's jammin' again.

Maths sir held over sex for good grades

A MATHS teacher has been arrested after bombarding female pupils at his high school with texts, offering them better grades in exchange for SEX.

Marcello Melis, 47, who has been suspended from the school in Cagliari on the Italian island of Sardinia, had asked the girls aged 15-18 for sex for better marks.

Those who agreed were rewarded with higher grades while students who rejected him were reportedly harassed and punished with low grades.

Melis has also been accused of threatening to tell a student's parents that she was gay unless she had sex with him, and allegedly raping a minor in a classroom while another student guarded the door.

Police who raided his flat found two mobiles containing messages, as well as two illegally owned guns.