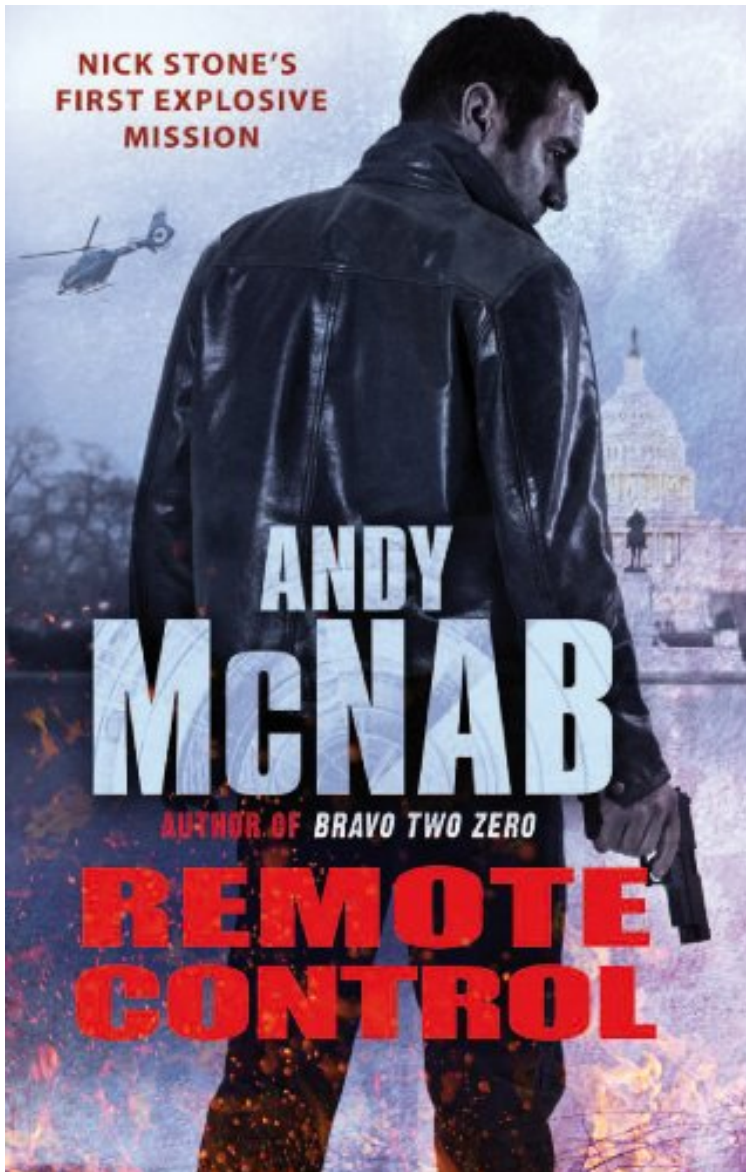


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Remote Control: (Nick Stone Thriller 1)



Par Andy McNab

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurNick Stone's first explosive mission.Tough, resourceful, ruthless - as an SAS trooper, Nick Stone was one of the best. Now he's back on the streets. After a botched mission, the Regiment no longer want his services. But British Intelligence does - as a deniable operator. It's the dirtiest job in a very, very dirty world.In Washington DC, it's about to get dirtier still. On the apparently routine tail of two terrorists, he discovers the bodies of an ex-SAS officer and his family. Soon he's on the run with the lone survivor of the bloodbath - a seven year old girl. And whilst she can identify the killers, only Stone can keep them at bay - and solve a mystery whose genesis takes him back to the most notorious SAS mission in recent history...Remote Control is the first of Andy McNab's blistering Nick Stone thrillers - bestsellers whose

landscape is so compellingly close to the truth that they had to be vetted by the Ministry of Defence, and could only be published as fiction... 'Nick Stone is one of the great all-action characters of recent times' Daily Mirror

Extrait I dialed another number, and Kev answered. His voice was wary, until he recognized mine. "Nick! How's it going?" He sounded really happy to hear me. "Not too bad. I'm in Washington." "What are you doing? Nah, I don't want to know! You coming to see us?" "If you're not busy. I'm leaving tonight, back to the UK. It'll be a quick stop and hello, OK?" "Any chance of you getting your ass up here right away? I've just got the ball rolling on something, but I'd be interested to know what you think. You'll really like this one!" "No problem, mate. I'll hire a car at the hotel and head straight over." "Marsha will want to go into cordon bleu overdrive. I'll tell her when she gets back with the kids. Have a meal with us, then you can go on to the airport. You won't believe the stuff I've got here. Your friends over the water are busy." "I can't wait." "Nick, there's one other thing." "What's that, mate?" "You owe your goddaughter a birthday present--you forgot again, dickhead."

DRIVING WEST ALONG the freeway, I kept wondering what Kev could want to talk to me about. Friends over the water? Kev had no connection with PIRA that I knew of. He was in the DEA, not the CIA or any antiterrorist department. Besides, I knew that his job was far more administrative than fieldwork now. I guessed he probably just needed some background information. I thought again about Slack Pat and made a mental note to ask Kev if he had a contact address for the assless one. I got on the interstate. Tyson's Corner was the junction I had to get off at--well, not really; I wanted the one before but I could never remember it. The moment I left the freeway I was in leafy suburbia. Large houses lined the road, and just about every one seemed to have a seven-seat minivan in the drive and a basketball hoop fixed over the garage. I followed my nose to Kev's subdivision and turned into their road, Hunting Bear Path. I continued on for about a quarter of a mile until I reached a small parade of shops arranged in an open square with parking spaces, mainly little delis and boutiques specializing in candles and soap. I bought candy for Aida and Kelly that I knew Marsha wouldn't let them have, and a couple of other presents. Facing the shops was a stretch of vacant ground that looked as if it had been earmarked as the next phase of the development. On and around the churned-up ground were trailers, big stockpiles of girders and other building materials, and two or three bulldozers. Far up on the right-hand side among the sprawling houses I could just about make out the rear of Kev and Marsha's "deluxe colonial." As I drove closer I could see their Ford Windstar, the thing she threw the kids into to go screaming to school. It had a big furry Garfield stuck to the rear window. I couldn't see Kev's company car, a Caprice Classic that bristled with antennae. They were so ugly only government agents used them. Kev normally kept his in the garage, safely out of sight of predators. I was looking forward to seeing the Browns again even though I knew that by the end of the day I'd be more exhausted than the kids. I got to the driveway and turned in. There was nobody waiting. The houses were quite a distance apart, so I didn't see any neighbors, either, but I wasn't surprised--D.C.'s bedroom suburbs were quite dead during weekdays. I braced myself; on past form, I'd get ambushed as soon as the car pulled up. The kids would jump out at me, with Marsha and Kev close behind. I always made it look as if I didn't like it, but actually I did. The kids would know I had presents. I'd bought a little Tweety-Pie watch for Aida, and Kelly's was the Goosebumps kids' horror books numbers thirty-one to forty--I knew she already had the first thirty. I wouldn't say anything to Aida about forgetting her birthday; hopefully she'd have forgotten. I got out of the car and walked toward the front door. Still no ambush. So far, so good. The front door was open about two inches. I thought, here we go, what they want me to do is walk into the hallway like Inspector Clouseau, and there's going to be a Kato-type ambush. I pushed the door wide open and called out, "Hello? Hello? Anyone home?" Any minute now the kids would be attacking a leg each. But nothing happened. Maybe they had a new plan and were all hidden away somewhere in the house, waiting, trying to muffle their giggles. Inside the front door there was a little corridor that opened up into a large rectangular hallway with doors leading off to the different downstairs rooms. In the kitchen to my right I heard the sound of a female voice singing a station jingle. Still no kids. I started tiptoeing toward the noise in the kitchen. In a loud stage whisper I said, "Well, well, well--I'll have to leave ... seeing as nobody's here ... What a shame, because I've got two presents for two little girls ..." To my left was the door to the living room, open about a foot or so. I didn't look in as I walked past, but I saw something in my peripheral vision that at first didn't register. Or maybe it did; maybe my brain processed the information and rejected it as too horrible to be true. It took a second for it to sink in, and when it did my whole body stiffened. I turned my head slowly, trying to make sense of what was in front of me. It was Kev. He was lying on his side on the floor, and his head had been battered to shit by a baseball bat. I knew that, because I could see it on the floor beside him. It was one he'd shown off to me on his last visit, a nice light aluminum one. He'd shaken his head and laughed

when he said the local rednecks called them Alabama lie detectors. I was still rooted to the spot. I thought: Fucking hell, he's dead--or should be, looking at the state of him. What about Marsha and the kids? Was the killer still in the house? I had to get a weapon. There was nothing I could do about Kev at the moment. I didn't even think of him, just that I needed one of his pistols. I knew where all five of them were concealed in the house, always above child level, and always loaded and ready, a magazine on the weapon and a round in the chamber. All Marsha or Kev had to do was pick up one of the weapons and blast anyone who was pissed off at Kev--and there were more than a few of those in the drug community. I thought, Fuck, they've got him at last. Very slowly, I put the presents on the floor. I wanted to listen for any creaking of floors, any movement at all around the house. The living room was large and rectangular; against one wall was a fireplace. On either side of it were alcoves with bookshelves, and I knew that on the second shelf up, on the right, was the world's biggest, fattest thesaurus, and on top of that, tucked well back out of view, just above head level but close enough to reach up for, was a big fat gun. It was positioned so that as you picked it up it would be in the correct position to fire. I ran. I didn't even look to see if there was anyone else in the room. Without a weapon, it wouldn't have made much difference. I reached the bookcase, put my hand up, and took hold of the pistol, spun around, and went straight down onto my knees in the aim position. It was a Heckler Koch USP 9mm, a fantastic weapon. This one even had a laser sight under the barrel--where the beam hits, so does the round. I took a series of deep breaths. Once I'd calmed myself, I looked down and "checked chamber." I got the topslide and pulled it back a bit. I could see the brass casing in position. Now what was I going to do? I had my car outside; if that got reported and traced, there'd be all kinds of drama. I was still under my alias cover; if I got discovered, that meant the job got discovered, and then I'd be in a world of shit. I had a quick look at Kev, just in case I could see breathing. No chance. His brains were hanging out, his face was pulped. He was dead, and whoever had done it was so blas they'd just thrown the baseball bat down and left it there. There was blood all over the glass coffee table and the thick shag pile carpet. Some was even splattered on the patio windows. But strangely, apart from that, there wasn't much sign of a struggle. 4 I HAD TO MAKE sure Marsha and the kids weren't still here, tied up in another room or held down by some fucker with a gun to their heads. I was going to have to clear the house. If only room clearing were as easy as Don Johnson made it look in *Miami Vice*: run up to the door, get right up against the doorframe, jump out into the middle of it, pistol poised, and win the day. A doorway naturally draws fire, so if you stand in one, you're presenting yourself as a target. If there's a guy waiting for you there with a shotgun, you're dead. The first room I had to clear was the kitchen; it was the nearest, plus there was sound there. I was on the opposite side of the living room from the kitchen door. I started to move along the outside wall of the room. I stepped over Kev, not bothering to look at him. The pistol was out in front of me; it had to be ready to fire as soon as I saw a target. Where your eyes go, the pistol goes. I mentally divided the room into sections. The first was from the couch halfway across the living room, a distance of about twenty feet; I got there and froze by a big TV stereo setup, which gave me a bit of cover while I cleared the door that led back to the hallway. It was still open. There was nothing in the hallway. As I moved through, I closed the door behind me. I approached the one to the kitchen. The handle was on the right-hand side; I couldn't see the hinges, so it had to open inward. I moved across to the hinged side and listened. Just above the sound of my breath and that of...*Revue de presse* "It's a corker" (Independent) "An enjoyably gritty thriller" (The Scotsman) "Proceeds with a testosterone surge" (Daily Telegraph)