



**ALEKSANDAR MACURA**

---

**THE  
ADVENTURES  
OF ALEX Z**

ALEX **Z**  
*A deadly beginning*

CRACK! The knife, which had been sharpened to perfection, cut through the table like paper. “YOU DARE CHALLENGE ME!?” I exclaimed. Everyone inside, the vast meeting place seemed cramped. The temperature was rising, not only because of the 30 people inhabiting the room, but because of the tense atmosphere. “You know exactly what I’m demanding, so step down or face me.” His voice was calm but stern and he had a burning desire to prove himself, especially after his dad turned to the other side. Even though I had tried to delay the inevitable bloodshed, the time was still not right, however, it would never be.

A FEW HOURS LATER...

Jumping from the stolen helicopter (sorry authorities), I spun around, midair and revealed my semiautomatic pistol from under my first of the three pieces of clothing that I now own: a black leather jacket, as always, stolen. I should probably introduce you to my challenger before I kill him. Brandon is: an athletic 11 year old (I am older, HA);

a first grade Dan (not officially though); he usually wears that torn red hoodie and has jet black hair with a dragon like claw scratched through it. Overall, he's your ultimate bad boy. Is that a sufficient description? Good, it's killing time.

MILES AWAY...

In the subzero room, where the only thing you'll hear is the faint echo of the uneven steps, there were 6 feet, but only a single thought burning in their sinister minds. "Have we come to an agreement?" It wasn't really a question rather a statement. The silent but loud response was worth a 100 words. "From the torture we put up with, we have reached a conclusion... kill Alex Z!"

BACK AT THE BATTLEFIELD...

BANG! CH CH! BANG! Furiously, the bullets got launched by the S.A.P. "Trigger, fire, reload, trigger, fire, reload." I repeated in my own head. During this vicious "death cycle", I knew that I'd run out of 0.5mm bullets before I could deliver the final blow. I began to plan my next move - whatever it was - it had to be the right one. Flourishing in the absence of sound, it was the perfect time to strike. Skilfully as in the matrix, I dodged one life-threatening bullet after another whilst releasing a barrage of cover projectiles. CRUNCH! A bullet embedded itself in my recently dislocated shoulder. Fortunately, it wasn't fatal. Adrenaline masking the pain, I hastily got to my feet and dashed behind the brick house. My sit-

uation: I had a permanent shield located in front of me, however, "front" was the key word there! If I moved from the spot... I was dead.

Moments after my rushed conclusion, I realised that I DID have somewhere to go; left or right or staying there. I was finished. Backwards or downwards? Sealed. But up, what was the issue? Using my three years of invaluable training I called upon my strength and undertook probably the coolest combat move of all time (in my opinion) - I sprinted towards the wall, used the momentum from that to glide up the vertical surface, kick off that and roll to cover on top of the house. With the luck of the Gods, my opponent was unaware of my location. I intended to use that to my advantage.

In my time I had done many "impossible" things, although not being unachievable, what I did next was still pretty damn hard. Just like many of my runaway gang members, I was capable of shooting a gun and doing EVERY martial art. Although unlike them, I could shoot a Glock17 blindfolded 10 yards away, just by using my sense of hearing. Knowing it was my only chance of survival, the trigger got pulled once and, instantly, silver spewed out of it like a ball out of a cannon. Astounded by the lack of difficulty of the shot, I saw the microscopic bullet find itself jamming the helicopter's rotors. WHOOSH! Here we go!

AT A NEARBY LOCATION...

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAH!” Screamed the boy, praying that he wouldn’t get shot. Next, the boy turned his back on his armed attackers. Desperate to at least knock the boy unconscious, an assassin threw his gun. Miss. Feet propelling the frantic boy, he hoped that he would eventually outrun his attackers, all hope was lost when his lungs were urging him to take a breath. He had no choice. Clang. Clang. CLANG. CLANG! They were catching up! Terror-stricken, the boy dashed once again for his unfortunately twisted life.

CONTINUING THE FIGHT...

With the helicopter making its way towards me, I braced my knees for the dangerous stunt I was about pull; 3 2 1 NOW! Kicking off the roof, I landed on my buckling legs and leaped of the back rotors, then I broke my fall by ducking and rolling on the instant of the impact. Out of the blue, a Sikorsky HH-60 (a military helicopter, yes, I knew stuff), wearing a machine gun, fired a deadly hail of bullets. I wish I could tell you that I did some cool acrobatic move and disabled the machine gun in one incredible swipe but alas, the truth contradicted. Curse you truth! Being a hundred percent honest, I only straight up ran. With Brandon in pursuit of me and my awesomeness, and the Heli of my tail, I zoomed as fast as a bullet in a futile attempt. Five seconds. That was how long it took them to catch up. Standing out in

the open, I was a sitting duck. I waited for the bullets to blow me smithereens... nothing! Bizarrely, Brandon threw himself on me like a violent pancake (I’m hungry), while I disarmed him with a flying kick and greeted him with a fighting stance. Dimly aware of the trained gun, I unleashed a hail of jabs, crosses and hooks; maintaining the pressure. When I heard the deafening BOOM! BOOM! Of the machine gun, I violently twisted both my opponent’s and my own body weight to fall at the exact same time. While the bullet embedded itself into Brandon’s gut, my attackers knew one thing only: one of us was faking, the other was dead.

Get ready. You have a second to do this. I prepared myself. I intentionally twitched, subconsciously signalling for them to fire, and I nudged the lifeless Brandon to do body cover, whilst I slipped into the FREEZING water. Vision blurry, I could barely make out the figure practically on top of me. Whipping out my spare hand gun, I placed the nozzle just out of the water. One bullet. Another life. If you thought that I was some sort of a psychopath, I would defend myself by saying that it was my only way to survive. If anyone attacked me and intentionally wanted to kill me, they met a certain fate. Back to the action. Doggy-paddling up, I pulled the trigger; I felt a pang of guilt, dead. Soaked, I pulled myself up onto the pavement and shook myself breeze-dry,

subsequently, I ran off with another horrible and traumatising experience in my life. Calmed, I advanced at a moderate pace as I have to always keep moving. Around the corner, there was an ominous corridor with two exits: forward and left. Sensing that this was the best ambush point, my pace quickened. Almost up to the left exit, a short boy (compared to me), with blond hair (me too!) and a horrified expression on his face (“Is everything alright?”), emerged out of there whilst I ran into him. NO, this was not a fancy way of saying I stumbled upon him, I physically crashed into him head-to-chest. He was like short, but I was getting distracted. I was the first to regain my bearings: “Dude, what’s wrong?”

“Th...Th...ey are f...following me.” The boy whimpered. Yes, I know he was scared and well... he was just a boy, however number around 3 survival rule – don’t trust anybody. “Who are you?”

“J... John” he (again) whimpered. Basically, first I consoled him, then he opened up a little more. Here’s the gist of it: he was being bullseyed by a gang of five people and been on the run for a year now. Knowing that even I couldn’t take on five big, bulky dudes in unarmed combat, what we needed was some dangerous equipment. Fortunately, I knew exactly where to obtain some.

AFTER THE UNEXPECTED MEETING...

Operation Improvise, probably the best “plan” ever made which was to say, it was not a plan at all. Semi-confidently strolling into the weapons store, I gazed around the room hoping that I would find something that could support me. Striped blue and white walls, brightly lit floor, several posters... most frequent buyers... that would work. Reaching the counter – “three smoke grenades; a four foot rope; vision goggles; and two packs of tungsten core titanium bullets. For my dad.” I added.

“Who is your father?” the saleswoman asked.

“Christian Goldman.” I read off the wall somewhat confidently. As expected, she asked for proof... I asked her to let me call him and she pointed towards the ancient phone booth. I had to make this authentic; I actually had to call someone, fortunately I gave “John” (I still smell something fishy about him) a phone. Inserting a single cent, John picked up. “Hullo.”

“Yes... um... Dad! The person behind the counter doesn’t believe that you are my father! Can you tell her?” I asked a little too loudly for a common conversation.

“Excuse me?”

Acting like a child who has previously been scolded, I said timidly “I lost it... sorry father.” While everyone else was chortling, I snatched the equipment, made a humble guess for the price and made my getaway. So I’ll admit Op-

eration. Improvise is not a hundred percent on-the-spot. Now time to take down some John-attackers. Scene: one dead end, six walls similar to the one where I fought Brandon... Brandon, dead because of me, as well as no ceiling. In addition, the concrete floor was as black as asphalt. First, I looped a grenade over my head tempting the men to look in that direction, then a bullet jumped from my gun. Another life lost due to me. Four to go. Having sent an attacker into endless sleep, I rolled to the other side whilst they cautiously searched their dead colleague, I tossed John the other end of the rope. "PST!" I whispered the shouted word. Attention switched, one of the assailants approached the extended rope. Hurry up! Currently, I was holding the gun with my right hand and the rope with the left. BANG! Another one. Swift as unknown's death, I let the rope go. Creeping around the back, I heard footsteps making their way to John (A.K.A their death), so I threw a smoke grenade in between them making one man isolated from his "work friends". I had a single bullet left in my gun's chamber. Equipped with vision goggles, my smoking hot aim was its usual perfect and with the black vapour dissipating, I stood facing the final obstacle. His inky black eyes glinted menacingly in the harsh sunlight. You messed with the wrong 12 year old. "Do you actually think you can win this fight?"

"Your gun is empty." He replied. That voice. Those eyes. They remind me of someone. "Brandon." I breathed, "You're his dad!" I let the realisation sink in, "you betrayed him! Why did you suddenly switch sides?"

"Your entire life is built on lies and betrayal. You know nothing, these are matters for adults." Calm but stern. I was disgusted with him. A war cry erupted within me, I charged like an unfed and tortured bull. And every bullet was an Olympic hurdle. However I reached the end and when I did the palm of my hand connected with his jaw. I couldn't have entire family's blood on my hands: that was just not me.

"John?" I asked, "Can I tell you something?"

"Sure, anything." He said, grateful for avenging him.

"Do you want to know how I got this backpack?" His narrowing eyes told me that he'd only just realised it.

FOUR YEARS AGO...

Alexander McAndrew lived in a two-storey house with a spacious living room, a fully equipped kitchen, three bedrooms (mum and dad never slept together, he snored) a fun-loving dog and amazing parents – even if Gregory McAndrew always went on business trips. Observing the living-room's family photographs, a high pitched scream rang out from the centre of the house. The kitchen. Frantic footprints clapped around

the house, up and down the stairs. Suddenly McAndrew's mum turned at the corner to face her son. Her face looked like she was the victim of holding up the sky and her eyes stung with regret. "My son. My beautiful little boy!" She said, crying. "Listen, there is a bomb. You have to escape! Here, take this..." Natalie exclaimed, briefly interrupted by the rattle of the trash can. She was dreading every word she said, shoving a golden backpack into her son's hands. "I have taught you how to look after yourself... run, never let them catch you!" With a painfully strong hug, Alex took his mother's advice and ran, tears streaming down his chin. Still running, Alexander's childhood exploded with a deafening blast. He was torn apart brick by brick. Sadness gripped threateningly at his heart. Mum, dad, we didn't even say goodbye properly... Alex dashed away from the rubble of memories. He turned his back on the past. He gave himself a new name. "I AM ALEX Z!!!"

BACK AT THE PRESENT...

Like every time I lay eyes on my mother's gift, I violently tug at the zipper. Nothing. Nothing for two years. I gave my John a large small bit of food and casually turned and strolled. As obediently as a puppy on a leash, John followed. Picking up the pace, I dashed forward to get closer to my (and I guess our) destination. It was time to get out of this hazardous country. I threw an

end of the rope as well a pack of bullets to shut the window in order to snap and lock the rope in place. Convinced that it was safe, I scaled the vertical surface with great ease. Then, I slotted myself inside the compound and clutched the rope while John climbed with moderate skill. We were inside.

Careful not to make a sound, we delicately walked across the brightly lit corridor. Another John meeting place was before me. Hopefully nobody emerged from the left this time. We crept across the corridor and past the "authorised personnel only" sign and a vent opening. As it was the only way to advance, we turned left only to be greeted with the sound of approaching footprints. The vent! We frantically doubled back in the nick of time; the guard walked past. Cautiously, I opened the shaft and wrapped my arms around his thick neck to take him down. He didn't try to kill us but he would have if he'd noticed us. So he was unconscious. Making our way to my goal (John had no idea of where we were going), "where are we going?" John whispered. He was very good at this. How? "You are very good at this." I meant this as both a question and slight praise. "I guess it's because I have done this a lot in my time." He replied. I knew from the look on his face that he did not want to elaborate the issue. However, I was eager to get to know him before he became the co-pilot on my stolen helicop-



ter. Yes, we were stealing a helicopter. I figured you should know since it was sitting in front of us while six guards were trying to arrest us. At the speed of light, I loaded my gun and took two thirds of the guards out. Translation: there were now 4 lifeless bodies lying on the metal floor. Miraculously, John took out one of them so there was only one left. Why was always one left there? The final guard talked into his mike; reinforcements would soon arrive. Having zero time to chitchat, I launched myself onto the obstacle trying to kick his groin but he blocked me using his knee. Then, I jumped and twisted so I was in a horizontal position and whacked him with my left leg on the side of the head. The man regained his bearings FAST, he lashed out at me using his whip. Beaten, hurting and bruised, I could not give up I launched my fist into his solar plexus. I'd be astonished if he could hang on to his lunch after that! Sense of humour, good; I was not badly injured. Trained to almost-perfection, the guard still wouldn't back down. To conclude this ferocious battle I spun 'round to face the wall and I dashed straight at it. Preparing to strike with his whip, the guard chased me. As I was Alex Z – and super awesome, I leaped as I propelled myself up the wall stepping three times before crashing down on the guard's head with my elbow. Bleeding. Not exactly what I expected... Tired, I made a gesture to John to enter the helicopter. Inside,

he assured me that he knew how to drive so I ate a plain croissant and drifted off to much needed sleep.

THREE HOURS LATER...

I rose from my fitful slumber due to the metal touching metal sound and using my clever deductive reasoning skills, I concluded that, because we had not crashed and burned, John was a very good driver so someone or several people were attacking us. "Good you're awake. How do we get that guy down there? Eventually he's going to get lucky." He was right, the shooter might, by a slim chance, hit us. On the other hand, John had huge bags under his eyes, I made a compromise: "I will jump and take care of him while you land somewhere safe and rest." I jumped. I declared war on peace. I laughed at fear. I stuffed myself before hunger. I was and would be a legend of my time. I couldn't die at that moment. I WAS ALEX Z!