

YOU KNOW A PUBLICITY STUNT HAS BACKFIRED WHEN SOMEONE DIES

# CHILL RUN



A THRILLER BY

**RUSSELL BROOKS**

Author of Pandora's Succession

# **Chill Run**

**by Russell Brooks**

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By Russell Brooks

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## Chapter 6

“Oh yes, I’m going to love being punished by you a lot more than the other guy,” said the man. He wore nothing more than a tight leather bikini with a leather mask covering his entire head except for the lower part of his face. The bikini would’ve been more visible had it not been for his protruding hairy gut that hung over it. Eddie looked up at his face, hoping it would prevent him from throwing up. Instead he got a huge grin in return. *What the hell’s going on here? Where’s the woman CEO? What the hell did Jordyn get me into?*

“Please, don’t leave me in suspense. Come on over and punish me.”

*Control yourself, Eddie. Don’t do anything stupid. Just be Simeon Wolf.* He wouldn’t flinch in a situation like this. Remember, it was all about the mission. Sure, he wouldn’t have been so distracted from it, if only he knew who the hell this guy was. He’s obviously someone with a lot of money who chooses to be anonymous. *I’ll be fine as long as he keeps his hands off of me. I’ll make sure that the restraints are real tight on him.*

Eddie walked normally, then slowly—remembering the way that he had practiced with Jordyn and Theo—while lowering the fly of his pants. Eddie’s eyes slipped to the man’s bikini and saw that the flagpole was stretching the leather. *Jesus Christ that was nasty.* He immediately looked back up into the man’s eyes. *Just keep looking into his eyes and nowhere else, and you’ll make it through.*

He pulled out the leather flogger from where he had tucked it, and slapped the palm of his other hand gently as he stopped short, a foot away from the bed. The man got onto his knees and faced him. If he tried to get any closer Eddie’d use the flogger to keep him at bay. But this was already off to a bad start. He’d already forgotten what to do next.

*Just keep your cool. I’m the one in control. Just come up with something.* “So... how uh...how naughty are you today...I mean...how have you been?” *Jesus Christ that was bad. He just blew it.* His ex would’ve fallen off the couch laughing had she been watching him.

“Pretty bad. Very, very bad,” the man answered quickly, as though he were in a rush to be punished.

Eddie walked slowly up to the bed, being mindful of the buffer zone he wanted to keep between himself and the client.

The man fell on his hands and began to crawl towards Eddie like a dog running for a treat.

“No!” Eddie yelled, more out of panic than as an instruction, throwing both his arms up towards the client. The client—visibly startled—backed away immediately.

Eddie breathed a sigh of relief, but was quickly mindful of not making it sound too obvious. From where he was, he stretched out his arm as much as he could, pushing the flogger out to let the tip of it brush the man’s forehead back and forth. The man lifted his head as though to sniff the strands like a dog.

*Come on, think of something.* “Tell me. What naughtiness have you been up to?”

“I’m cheating on my wife,” the man quickly replied.

*Shit, you even tricked a woman into marrying you?* “Is that right? That gets you one lash.” Eddie took a short step forward and gave him a light slap on his arm. “That’s not what I want to hear. I want to hear real naughtiness. It’s time for these.” Eddie took the restraints and dangled them in the air.

“Oh yeah, baby, tie me up.”

*Baby? That ain't right.* “You’ll call me *master*, I’m not your baby. Now turn around.”

“I’m sorry, master. It won’t happen again,” the man turned around. Eddie paused at the sight of his ass—or, more or less, a lack of one—that the leather bikini could not properly cover. Eddie wished that this would end quickly. *How the hell could Jordyn do stuff like this? Shit, there was no way that Corey had any idea what Jordyn really did. Ugghh!*

He’d have to do this quickly. He stepped closer to the client, keeping his eyes on the back of his neck. He then grabbed the collar end of the restraint and clipped it around the man’s neck. A strap extended and had a pair of hand cuffs on the other end. He grabbed the man’s hands roughly, locked them in the cuffs, and stepped back. Now he was officially his prisoner. Eddie pursed his lips as he whipped the man on his ass once. Eddie knew that he’d be in the shower for a full two hours later on, using all the soap in the house that he could find.

“Oh yeah,” said the man.

*That was weak. Should I slap him harder? Wait a minute, I’m Simeon Wolf, torturing a prisoner for information.* “Tell me who you are.” One whip, slightly harder.

“I’m Tony Bevins. Governor Tony Bevins.”

Eddie paused as his mouth fell agape. *Holy shit. A Governor?* “From which state?”

“New Hampshire.”

“Tell me, Governor. Have you been misusing tax dollars?”

“Yes, master. This hotel suite, all courtesy of the citizens of New Hampshire.”

Another slap across his cheeks. “That’s naughty, very, very naughty.” This was obscene. *I’m going to enjoy exposing you, you son-of-a-bitch.* “Are you gay and keeping the truth from your wife?”

“I sure am. She doesn’t suspect a thing. She’s my personal lawn ornament.”

Eddie squeezed the handle and slapped him even harder. The Governor screamed out loud. This one must have hurt him, and his ass was already red from the lashes.

Did Vanessa see him the same way? Is this what she told her fuck-buddy right before he rode her ass—that Eddie was nothing more than her own lawn ornament?

He leaped onto the bed and shoved the Governor face down into the pillows. He then flogged him three times, gritting his teeth. “You cheat on the woman that supports you. You squander tax dollars. What other dirty secrets are you keeping from me?”

Bevins’s voice was muffled. Simeon Wolf grabbed the back of the collar and heaved him up onto his knees while he wrapped the whip around his neck and squeezed. “I asked you a question. What other secrets are you keeping from me?” Everything was garbled. *What the hell, he’s wheezing. Shit, I’m choking him, he can’t breathe.* He wasn’t angry with Bevins, he was angry with himself and taking it out on Bevins. Eddie loosened the whip from around his neck and yanked it off with a snap. He backed off of the bed, falling onto the floor—pushing himself backwards with his hands as though he were trying to get away from a reviled object. He hit the wall until he became aware the Governor was hunched over and coughing, while Eddie breathed loudly with a tremor. *What the hell did I just do? I was hurting this man. I nearly choked him to death.*

“Master, where are you? Please come back. I’ll do anything you want me to...anything.”

“Shut up.”

“Yes master, anything you say.”

“No, I mean it. Shut up!” Eddie then threw the whip to the floor, got up, and stomped away with his hands on his hips. He then sighed and turned to the Governor with one hand to his forehead. “I can’t do this.”

Bevins tried to look over his shoulder, but couldn't turn all the way. "What? What do you mean?"

"You heard me. I can't do this. This ain't me." Eddie walked over to Bevins and undid the handcuffs and the collar restraint. "I'm sorry."

"Sorry about what? What the hell are you talking about?" He was clearly getting annoyed.

Remembering that his cell phone was in the other room, he walked over to the guest phone, picked it up, and dialed Jordyn's number. He waited a few seconds before he heard the voicemail lady speak. *Dammit!* He slammed down the phone, hoping that Jordyn had problems getting through to the press. Why would her phone go to voice mail? She couldn't have turned it off.

"Hey kid," said Bevins as he yanked off his mask, revealing tussled black hair over a round face with bulldog-type hanging cheeks. "You better come straight with me."

"Okay, you want the truth, fine. I'm not a male dominatrix, or master, or whatever I'm supposed to be. I was supposed to get caught with you so I could become famous. You're being set-up. It's just a damn publicity stunt. There, are you satisfied?"

There was silence as Eddie stared at the Governor. He felt relieved getting it out of his system. He just didn't know if that was such a good idea. Bevins stared at him with his mouth closed, it seemed, to hide clenched teeth as his face became red. The man was definitely pissed, and Eddie felt himself drifting backwards.

"You son-of-a-bitch." Bevins lunged at Eddie.

Eddie turned to run, but he felt a hand grab his leg, sending him tumbling to the carpet. He was grabbed and then forced over onto his back as, at least two-hundred-and seventy pounds, pinned his legs—preventing him from kicking. Eddie let out a wail but not much got out as a big palm silenced him.

"You keep quiet, you little bitch," said Bevins in a loud whisper. "So you think you can blackmail me, huh? That's what you're trying to do? You think you can take me on? What's the matter? Did your daddy kick you out of the house because you're a queer, is that it?"

Eddie didn't answer but he felt the wetness damping his eyes as his cries became more muffled.

"You think it's easy for me? Do you think the people would accept me as Governor if they knew that I was into kinky stuff? That I'm a queer? You don't have a clue what goes on, do you, kid?"

Through the tears that slightly clouded his vision, Eddie saw the Governor's facial expression change. He wasn't angry anymore. Now he appeared to be sad. The tear that fell from his right eye onto Eddie's neck came at the precise moment that the Governor took his hand off his mouth, allowing him to gasp for air. Bevins then got up off of him.

Eddie sat up, not bothering to wipe the tears off his face, as he watched the Governor waddle over to the bed and sit down, letting his head drop in his palms.

He couldn't believe this. This is probably the most powerful man he's ever met, and he comes out of the closet to him. And his wife doesn't even know. How could she live with him all this time and not suspect anything?

He then wiped the tears off his face with the back of his hand as he watched Bevins get up and walk over to the dresser. When he opened the doors Eddie saw that it was actually a liquor cabinet. Bevins grabbed a bottle with clear liquid that Eddie assumed was vodka, or white rum, and closed the doors. From inside he also grabbed the ice bucket—which was already

filled—and then walked over to a round table where there were two liquor glasses and a floral vase in the center. He scooped some ice from the bucket into the two glasses and then rested the bucket on the carpet beside his chair. “Hey, kid. Come on over and have a drink with me.”

*This man wants to get me drunk.*

“Look, I ain’t going to rape you if that’s what you’re thinking. So come on over.”

Okay, maybe he was telling the truth. He watched Bevins leave the glass and bottle on the table, disappear into the bathroom, and come back wearing a white bath robe.

*Shit, it’s about time that he covered up.* He looked decent for a change.

Once Bevins was seated, Eddie got up and joined him at the table. Looking at the table, he wondered if guests played cards or dominos. Probably neither. Had he been staying here, he’d be slamming the dominos all night on this table with his friends. Bevins gestured with a hand for Eddie to sit.

“So what’s your name, kid?”

Eddie found it odd, he’d lost his three minutes of power. “Eddie.”

Bevins poured him a glass and then sat down. “Eddie, huh? How old are you?”

“Twenty-four.”

“Don’t bullshit me, son. You look barely over eighteen.”

“I ain’t lying to you. I ain’t got reason to do so. You want me to show you some ID?”

“Nah, don’t worry about it,” said Bevins, shaking his head with a single wave of his hand. He took a gulp, and put the glass back down on the table with a clank while exhaling loudly with an *ahhh*. “I’ll take your word for it. Say, you got one of them island accents. Where are you from?”

“I was born here. My parents are from Barbados.”

“Barbados, huh? I’ve been there a few times. I should’ve known you had Barbadian heritage once I saw that round, bubble ass of yours. I wonder why the hell would your parents leave such a beautiful island to come live up here in the cold? Besides, down there, there isn’t any snow to shovel, no heating bill to worry about. The economy’s just as good down there as it is here.”

“I’ve always wondered the same thing.” Eddie took a sip of his drink, swallowed, and felt the burn in his chest. The fumes rushed up into his throat so fast that he nearly dropped the glass on the table, as his other hand slapped over his mouth, covering his wild coughing. He stood up too fast, clumsily knocking the table and tipping over the flower vase, the bottle, and the drinking glasses. Alcohol spilled all over the table—soaking the flowers—and poured off onto the carpet.

“Damn, son, this is some strong shit you’re drinking,” said Bevins as he caught the liquor bottle before it rolled off of the table. “I’ll go get a towel.” He got up and went to the bathroom. He came out with a towel and stopped in front of the fridge. “We can chase that with a soft drink if you want.”

Eddie nodded as he caught his breath. Bevins opened the door, grabbed a can, closed the door, and then walked back to the table.

“So why are you trying to get famous?” Bevins said as he removed the vase from the table and wiped it. He then poured himself another full glass and a partial glass for Eddie.

Eddie opened the can and drowned out the liquor in his glass with it. “I don’t know why I let my friends talk me into it. I’m a wannabe novelist who’s self-published two books no one wants. We figured that if I was caught doing something newsworthy, then I’d be able to convince

agents or publishers that I could sell my book on name recognition.” He then looked down at his outfit. “I normally wouldn’t be caught dead wearing these clothes. And I’m not even gay.”

That’s when Bevins burst out laughing.

*It ain’t that funny.*

Bevins downed his glass, exhaled loudly with an *aahhhh*, slamming the glass on the table. Eddie was surprised that it didn’t break. He wondered how he inhaled the drink so quickly, while he was only able to sip his.

“You got balls, son. I’ll give you that much.” Bevins then pointed to Eddie’s chest. “What’s that you got around your neck? It looks like a flash drive.”

Eddie looked down and noticed that the tip was partially visible above the front of his collar. He took it out and held it. “Yeah, I like to keep my work close to me at all times.”

Bevins snickered. “That’s an idea I had once. You and I think alike in some ways. It ain’t too late for you.” He then looked away, down to the floor, shaking his head. “Don’t go screwing up your life the way I have.”

The phone call...it suddenly came back to him. Eddie suddenly slapped the heel of his palm to his forehead. “Oh my gosh. I got to get out of here.”

“Why...what’s wrong?” Eddie looked at him. Bevins’ speech was beginning to slur. Come to think of it, he’s drunk. “Listen. The press are on their way to bust us. I need to get out of here.”

Bevins laughed again.

*What’s wrong with you?* “Are you listening to me?”

“Yeah, so what, let them come, I don’t care. Get your fifteen minutes of fame. So you might as well sit back down.”

Eddie got up and walked off. “You’re on your own, I’m out of here.”

“Wait, don’t go yet,” Bevins slurred almost pleadingly, but Eddie picked up the leather restraint and whip.

“Hey kid!” Bevins yelled.

Eddie turned to him. He felt his chest lock up on him as he stared at the Governor, who was waving a drunken finger to Eddie’s vacated chair. He pondered as to whether Bevins would become violent and attack him again. Then again, the man was drunk, he’d probably stumble and fall the moment he stood.

“There’s something I need to tell you. Please, I’m begging you.”

*He’s begging me?* “Why? what’s wrong?”

“I got to come clean. Trust me, kid, I want to change. I mean, I did my part to help us out. But I can’t do this anymore.”

Help *us* out? “I told you I ain’t gay,” Eddie fumed. Why didn’t this guy get it? “What’s this you’re talking about? You can’t do *what* anymore?”

“I can’t live this double life anymore. My marriage is a sham and my wife doesn’t even know about me. I’ve lied to the American people by screwing around with other homos like us at the expense of their tax dollars.”

*How many times I got to tell him that I ain’t...oh whatever, he ain’t even listening.*

“I’m even involved in a scam to bilk millions out of investors up here in Canada and other countries.”

*Oh gosh he’s rambling...wait a minute.* “What did you just say?”

Tears started to roll down Bevin’s face. “I’m a fraud. One my golfing buddies, Serge Lamont, you heard of him?” The Governor looked up at Eddie briefly before waving him off.

“Naw, of course you haven’t. He’s got a fantastic golf swing, but he’s a world class prick. He’s the CEO of an investment firm. It used to be worth billions. He’s got clients up here, down south, even a few hot shots in Europe. I’ve got a stake in it too. The only problem is that client investment portfolios have lost more money than the company’s been reporting.”

Eddie started walking back towards him. Was he hearing right, or was he making this up? “What are you saying?”

“We’ve been robbing people, damn it!” he yelled, causing Eddie to hold his spot. “Investors have lost thousands, some of them millions, of dollars and they don’t even know it. It’s all because Serge, myself, and a few others thought we could funnel some cash into our own pockets over the years without anyone ever finding out. It goes high up.”

“Why are you telling me this?”

“I need a clear conscience, kid. It’ll only be days before clients start asking questions and then federal regulators get involved. We’re in too deep to turn back now. I was going to come clean anyways. You might as well be the first to know. You can find it in Darwin’s grave. In fact you can find it *all* there. You won’t believe the shit that I’ve gone through lately that Serge isn’t even aware of.” Bevins dropped an elbow on the table and held his forehead. He then wiped his face. “So you can add that to your fifteen minutes of fame. I don’t care. You can do whatever you want with it. I ain’t going to be around much longer anyways.”

Eddie faded back a few steps. His hands went up to both sides of his head as though to block out the rush of thoughts that poured in. This was the mother-load, even bigger than what he came here for. Holy shit, the media would eat this up. This could be the story of the decade, and he was smack dab right in the middle of it.

Then it hit him. *Did I hear right? Was that a suicide reference?* Naw, Eddie couldn’t do this. Not this way. He dropped his hands to his side and turned to head back to the adjoining suite when he heard a loud banging at the door. Whoever it was, they appeared to be impatient and had banged over six times in rapid succession. Eddie turned back to Bevins. “I got to hide.” Eddie said this in a whisper. But Bevins was now slouched over the table. Eddie bolted to the second suite, shut the double doors behind him quietly, and locked them. Wait a minute, what was he doing? This was his chance at exposing himself with the Governor in front of the media crew that was gathered out in the hall. Why the hell did he run away for?

From where he was, Eddie heard another set of loud knocks.

“I’m coming, keep your pants on,” came the Governor’s voice.

Eddie quickly packed his suitcase and zipped it shut. He then threw on his jacket, not even bothering to zip it up, wondering what to do next. Bevins was a mess, he couldn’t just go outside and expose himself to the journalists that were waiting—ready to pounce on him. Eddie knew he couldn’t bring down the Governor like this. Okay, the man’s a criminal, but doing it this way? He wasn’t sure anymore. But he was sitting on the biggest fraud confession, maybe in the country’s history. He should be calling the RCMP or the FBI. Shit, this was huge.

He ran to the light switch and turned them off. The room was completely dark, with scarce light coming from the crack between the double doors. He then zipped the suitcase shut, pulled it off the bed and put it on the floor. He then heard voices and stayed still. He turned to the double doors. There was talking in the next room, as though there was a conversation. *Why would the journalists be so quiet? Something wasn’t right.*

He walked quietly to the double door and peaked through the crack that separated them. He saw Bevins talking to someone, no, there were at least two other voices.

“Were you expecting company?” said a man that Eddie couldn’t see. He spoke with a French-Canadian accent.

“You just missed them about ten minutes ago,” Bevins answered.

Bevins kept it up between them, as though he was stalling for time.

The same person then asked Bevins, “So what’s it going to be?”

“I’ve made my decision and I ain’t changing it,” answered Bevins.

*Shit, the Governor was crying again. Whoever was talking to him must be someone that he’s scared of.*

“Is that so?” the same man said, and then walked into Eddie’s field of view as he watched the man put an arm around the Governor’s shoulder. He now saw the visitor’s face. “You know what? That’s not what I wanted to hear. And I know Serge would be very disappointed in you right now.” The man then landed two heavy punches to Bevins’ stomach. Eddie’s hand shot to his mouth immediately. He hoped to God they didn’t hear a sound come from him as he flinched. Bevins fell onto his knees wheezing as though he were in a lot of pain. Eddie then nearly gasped as the visitor withdrew a gun from inside his jacket. He also took out a black cylinder that he twisted on the barrel. *Shit, it’s a silencer!*

There were two loud thuds as the man fired shots into the back of the Governor’s head.

Eddie tightened his grip over his mouth. *Holy shit, they killed him.* He backed away slowly, shaking, even being careful not to breathe too loud as he stared at the double doors, waiting for the assailants to burst through. *Oh my God. What did I get myself into?*

“Should I still lift the prints?” asked the first man’s partner. This one spoke in non-accented English.

“Fait-ca vite.” *Make it fast.* “Je vais verifier l’autre chambre.” *I’m going to check the other room.*

Eddie saw the assailant walk towards him. Eddie dove for the floor without a second thought and quickly scrambled to crawl under the bed when he heard a ringing on the opposite side of the door. It sounded like a mobile phone. Suddenly he remembered that his phone was on top of the bed. *Shit, he could’ve called 9-1-1.* He probably should’ve chanced escaping through the room’s entrance. Then again, they might hear him and shoot him in the back as he ran down the hall.

“Oui,” Eddie heard the assailant say. There was a pause. “C’est qui ca?” *Who is this?* He didn’t hear his partner answer him. The gunman must be answering a phone call.

With the bottom of the box spring scraping against the back of his head as he slid backwards on his stomach. He clenched his teeth, hoping it would minimize his tremors, as he watched the shadow through the crack under the doorway.

“We have to get out of here, and quickly,” Eddie heard the assailant say just as the shadow disappeared from the crack under the door.

“Why, what’s wrong?” said the assailant’s partner.

“Someone just called me telling me that a news crew is coming this way.”

“What? Who was it? How did they know about this?”

“I don’t know. Hurry up with the prints, we need to get out of here.”

“I’m done.”

Eddie pursed his lips as he remained still. In the other room he heard footsteps quickly walking away, followed by the sound of a door closing. He then breathed normally for a bit before he crawled out from under the bed. Eddie followed the light from the double doors and

walked to them. A tightness grabbed his chest as he questioned whether or not he could open the door.

He yanked the door open, looking both sides before glancing at the body on the floor. There was a moment's glance where he saw red splatter around a gaping hole in the back of the man's head. He turned away so quickly that he stumbled to the floor back in the other room. His stomach turned, and he was on all fours, crawling quickly, trying to get back up on both legs. Eddie stood but lost his balance as he fell forward, catching himself on the wall. Once he straightened out he made it to the bathroom where he rushed over to the toilet, lifted the seat, held his head over it and heaved out his last meal.

Damn it, he knew that this was a stupid thing to do. Why'd he let Jordyn and Corey talk him into doing this?

*Christ, why didn't I listen to my father and give up writing? It's brought me nothing but trouble. I lost my girl, my job, maybe my apartment, and now I saw a man get shot. Just because I had to be so damn overzealous over this stupid book that nobody wants to read.*

He raised his head, still on his knees, and reached up to flush the toilet. He was still out of breath for several moments when he remembered the phone. He rushed to the bed to grab it. He dialed nine, then one. He was about to dial the other *one* when it dawned on him...the killers spoke of lifting prints. *His* prints. He was just framed for Bevins's murder. He stuffed the phone in his pocket and ran out the room.

He nearly stumbled as he got in the hallway. When Eddie caught his footing, it was then that he saw a man and a woman several feet away—both much older and lavishly dressed—staring back at him outside the door to their room.

What the hell were they staring at? Eddie looked down. *Shit, my jacket's still open.* He quickly zipped up the fly to his pants—which was still undone—and pulled his jacket across his chest as though it were a blanket, holding it as he rushed past the gray-haired Caucasian man and his wife. He did his best not to let them see his face.

Fuck the elevators—he was taking the stairs, anything that didn't involve waiting.

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The man, after seeing the leather-clad black youngster rush past him and his wife, watched him as he burst through the door to the emergency stairwell.

“Good heavens, you don't see that every day, do you?” said his wife as she unwrapped the mink scarf from around her neck.

“Honey,” the husband said, as he turned towards the end of the hallway. “Go wait in our room.” He then began to walk towards the end of the hall.

“Oh come on. The person in the other room's probably having an affair, what else is new? It's none of our business anyways.”

The husband made a quick glance over his shoulder as he walked faster. “I told you to wait inside. Now do it.” *Leather-clad punks in this hotel? And he looked unusually scared of something.* That's when the man noticed that the door to room 514 was slightly ajar.

“Hello?” he knocked as he pushed the door slowly open. “Is everything o—oh my God.” He stumbled into the hallway until he backed into the wall.

His wife turned to her husband frantically. “Honey, what is it?”

“Call 9-1-1. Call security, just call someone. That kid just killed the man next door.”

**Want to know what happens next?**

**You'll have to wait until December 1, 2011 for the worldwide release.**

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