



A . R . F O R T E

THE  
DOOR  
IS STILL  
AJAR

THE PREDATOR IS CLOSE.  
THE PREDATOR IS STALKING ITS PREY.

# THE DOOR IS STILL AJAR

A. R. FORTE



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Dedicated to Caroline, Ginger and Rosa.

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# INTRODUCTION

John Blumer is sitting in his Private Investigators office in East London, on a chilly morning in March. As he fumbles through his paper-work and completes details of his last investigation, he is expecting another uneventful day. But Blumer who is rarely surprised by anything at all, after twenty four years as a top criminal murder investigator, serving in The Metropolitan Police is about to undergo a sweeping and terrible sea change that will effect his entire life. A smartly dressed middle aged man enters his office and introduces himself. After a brief exchange the man informs him that he is the Father of Blumer's last murder investigation victim; a young woman of twenty one. This is an extremely sore and uncomfortable subject for Blumer, because he had been unceremoniously and cruelly removed from the case immediately after the dramatic and terrible events that had unfolded. The man produced an old newspaper with a sensational head-line. **THE DOOR IS STILL AJAR!** Blumer knew the head-line all too well. Because that is exactly what he had said in front several Tabloid paper reporters, much to the anger and consternation to his immediate superiors. Leon Boyd, a giant and extremely violent former Circus Strongman had been cornered and trapped in an office block. He had tried to attack a secretary who had been alone and was working late. But the cleaners who were also in the building had raised the alarm and the Police had moved in with great speed and professional planning. All of the doors and fire escape had been fully covered, leaving Boyd with no escape route. Just as one of the cleaners let the Police through the front door with a key, the girl flew out of the window, quickly followed by Boyd. The girl's body had landed at the foot of the building, but

Boyd's massive hulk had been impaled on the railings, which isolated the building from the Street. The public had been horrified and shocked by the dramatic end to the saga of Leon Boyd. This had been his fourth and last victim. But secretly the police had been relieved by his demise. Because they had been getting flack from the press; the main reason being was that Boyd had carried out his three previous murders right under their very noses. To make matters worse for Blumer he had said directly after his unfortunate remark that he thought that Boyd may of had an accomplice. The press took this remark and ran with it. Blumer's Boss had been so angry with him that he demanded that he take back his statement. Blumer wouldn't and he was immediately chastised. And in disgust and anger he took early retirement.

The man then produced another recent news paper and pointed out an article that read that a young girl had been brutally abducted while walking her dog at a sea-side resort. The only witness had informed the Police that the girl had been dragged by somebody, or something with incredible brute strength, up through the dense hedges that lined the path that ran along halfway up the cliff. It was indeed a very similar modus-operandi that Boyd had used in his other dastardly deeds. The man then asked Blumer if he would travel to the sea-side resort to do his own private investigation. The man owned a string of hardware stores and was very affluent. He offered Blumer a deal; all expenses paid and whatever his fee would be. Blumer did not need to contemplate the offer and agreed. As the man left and closed the door Blumer muttered to himself, with a hint of irony. "Yes indeed. THE DOOR IS STILL AJAR."



# CHAPTER 1

## CLACTON ON SEA. JULY 1973.

### THE VISITOR.

The bright Green Ford Escort turned right at the end of Thomas road and slowly negotiated the unpaved and dusty potholed lane that lined the back fence of the infants school. The driver was grumbling and complaining.

“Again! Can’t park outside our own place again. Why do people have to double park and hog two spots so other people can’t park?”

Reg, a big, brawny East London former Dagenham car plant worker was not the type of man many people would risk offending. Despite a striking resemblance to Arthur Mullard, to which his wife Edna and himself found amusing, he had a strict code of conduct not just for himself, but for other people. And woe betide anybody who over-stepped those boundaries. At the end of the lane he sighted an empty spot on Melbourne Road, outside a line of Police houses. He carefully reversed the car into the space and looked at the petrol gauge.

“Nearly empty. First thing Monday morning must fill her up. We ain’t gonna’ have to go anywhere til’ Monday, so I’ll do it then.”

The visitor who was standing just within hearing distance of Reg and Edna as they got out of the car was delighted on hearing this statement in a loud Arthur Mullard like brogue. Reg and Edna did not even notice the visitor as they lifted their bags of groceries from the boot of the car and Reg slammed the boot shut. As they trundled back down the dusty

lane the visitor followed them, from a distance. He only stopped following them on the corner of Thomas Road when they opened the gate of a bungalow four doors along and went up the garden path. Perfect the visitor thought, absolutely perfect. The visitor slowly walked along the road and deftly watched Edna as she opened the door along the side of the bungalow, while Reg held the shopping bags. They both entered and the door slammed shut behind them. The visitor looked around and thought; A pleasant road to live; for a normal human being. But the visitor was so far removed from being anything like a normal human being that a normal human being could die of shock if the visitor revealed to anybody who and what they really were.

Reg switched on the big black and white Bush television and was thinking, 'Just caught Corontion Street'. But just as the familiar tune started playing a shadow crossed the screen of the television. Reg looked to his side, through the front window. But all he saw was a gap between the two rose bushes in the front garden. The visitors reconnaissance was complete and it was time to depart quickly. Very quickly. The movements and speed of the visitor then became precise and very well co-ordinated. A quick visual scan. Nobody about and nobody peeping out of the windows of the police houses. A long, flat brass rod with various size cuttings along one edge, slipped down the drivers seat window of the car. Bingo, the button inside popped up right away. The visitor slipped into the drivers seat and adjusted the seat. A long and delicate pair of hands, with abnormally long fingers then produced what looked like a childs pencil case. But there were no pencils, rubbers, dividers and rulers in the case. Only a set of six skeleton keys lined the inside of the case. Number one did not turn the ignition when slipped in. Neither did number two. Bingo, number three did and the engine started immediately. The visitor then slipped the gears into place and slowly drove

away.

No more than forty seconds had passed and the car had been stolen without a hitch. The visitor turned right at the top of Melbourne Road and casually drove along Coppins Road. At the top of Coppins Road the visitor turned right into Cloes lane and then left at Bockings Elm. The first thing to do was to top up with petrol. Everything was going perfectly and exactly to plan. The visitor had a rendezvous in about an hour; plenty of time to put plan B into action. The visitor looked into the rear view mirror and muttered his favorite Sir Walter Scott quote.

“Oh what a tangled web we weave, when we first practice to deceive!”

It was only eight thirty on Monday morning as Reg walked along the dusty path to collect his car and the summer heat was already making its presence felt. He then felt a sudden surge of adrenaline clasp his solar-plexes. ‘Where’s the car?’ He then sighted it probably about two cars lengths along from where he was sure that he had parked it. ‘Maybe I’d better leave the whiskey alone,’ he thought to himself. He waited for Edna to arrive before he entered the car, because he knew she would take sometime jotting down a shopping list and make sure that their pet Jack Russell dog was fed and watered before she put the lead on him.

When Edna arrived he said to her, “Look Edna. What do you notice about the car?”

“What Reg?”

“I’m sure I parked it further along, more opposite to the lane.”

“You’d better leave the old whiskey alone Reg.”

He then opened the drivers door and planted his big, heavy frame into the drivers seat. He then pulled the passenger seat

forward so that Edna could put her much loved Jack Russell Rupert onto the back seat. But suddenly Rupert became very alarmed and distraught and jumped back out of the car.

“What’s wrong with him. He’s always been mad to get into the car Reg.”

“Dunno’ Edna. Something has disturbed the Little buggger. What’s wrong boy?”

This time Edna pulled the passenger seat forward and tried to sit the now extremely frightened dog onto her lap. But Rupert snapped at her and jumped off of her lap and ran off back towards their bungalow.

“I’d better go and get him Reg. What on earth has got into him?”

“Okay Edna. Stick him back inside and we’ll see if he calms down later.”

It did not take long for Edna to return and she planted herself into the passenger seat and waited for Reg to start the car. The engine fired on the first turn of the ignition key and he glanced down towards the petrol gauge and had to blink twice. The gauge indicated that the tank was completely full.

“Edna, if I’m not going completely bonkers. Then somebody is playing games with us. Look at the gauge. The tank is full to the brim.”

Edna looked accross at the gauge and this time a cold chill ran up her spine. Reg was right.

“Who in their right mind would pinch a car and return it with a full tank Reg?”

Reg turned off the ignition and climbed out of the car. He then carefully checked for damage, or any indication the the car had been broken into. He even looked inside the boot.

Nothing. No damage, no sign of any forced entry, nothing. It had been left just as he had parked it. It must have been used, because the thief had filled the tank up. But for what purpose, what reason. Reg and Edna decided not to bother reporting the bizarre theft of their car to the police. If they could have known what their car had been used for they would have been mortified and and furious. The visitor had only made one mistake. And that was only that they should have left only just enough petrol in the tank as to not draw attention to the fact that somebody had moved the car and after using it and had filled the tank to the brim. Although it was a small mistake, the visitor took stock of it and had been anxious about it. The visitor rarely made mistakes, even small ones. In fact the visitor was so calculating, so self disciplined, so cunning and devious that any clues at all would be very hard to find.

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## CHAPTER 2

### FEBRUARY 1976. SHOREDITCH EAST LONDON.

Seven o'clock on a cold and misty morning, along a Street of old terraced houses. In a cold bedroom an alarm clock bursts into a loud and deafening ring. A hand slips out from under the bedding of an old battered bed. A finger presses the alarm clocks button and a gruff voice grumbles from somewhere under the sheets. A shock of jet black hair emerges and a face, which is as white as the sheets winces at this rude awakening. He slowly sits up and scratches his mop of hair that has the appearance of a toupee planted on top a short back and sides cut. He slips from the bed and quickly slips on a big dressing gown. Now he goes into auto-pilot. He trundles down the creaking stairs and enters the kitchen, puts the kettle on and spoons several heap spoons of Ceylon tea into a big ceramic brown tea pot. He will not even think about leaving the kitchen table until he has savoured a full mug of strong milky tea. He then takes a loaf of bread from a bread bin and cuts off two thick slices and slides them under the toaster of his ancient electric cooker. After soaking the toast in thick dollops of butter, he then proceeds to eat the toast with his mouth open. He has no need to indulge in etiquette, because he is alone, completely alone. Now for the hard part. He lumbers back up the stairs and enters the bathroom. After using the lavatory he then lathers up a shaving brush in a shaving mug and slips his dressing gown off and slips off the jacket of his striped pyjamas. It is cold, bloody cold. He slaps icy cold water over his face and plasters shaving soap all over his face with the shaving brush. He then very carefully shaves off the stubble

from his face and neck. Then he rinses off the soap and inspects his handy-work in the mirror. He then slaps Old Spice aftershave over his faces and winces at the burning sensation. A pair of slate grey eyes that have the colour of an old slate roof that has been rained on for a hundred years looked back at him. But these eyes never shed tears of sadness; only tears of anger and frustration at the terrible and brutal crimes that some people inflict upon others. He glances at the shelf that is situated above the bath through the reflection of the mirror. There is a plastic bottle of sunsilk egg and lemon shampoo that has not been used for weeks and beside it a bottle of Vosene shampoo. Together they have the appearance of a Bride and Groom decoration on a wedding cake. But Audrey had gone two months ago and forgot to take her Sunsilks shampoo with her. His Jolly Jape with Audrey the stripper had been okay, but she could never replace Pamela and he knew it. Now it was time to go to work. He went back to his bedroom and opened the wardrobe door. He only owned three John Collier suits. One dark green, one navy blue and one the same slate grey shade as his eyes. Today he chose the navy blue one. He reminded himself that he need to buy a couple of white shirts; the only four that he had were beginning to show signs of wear. His only luxery were his two pair of brogue shoes; a black pair and a brown pair. He always kept them highly polished and covered them with a yellow duster. The only other ítems in his wardrobe were three scarlet handkerchiefs. But he only wore one of these in a breast pocket for special occasions. Very macabre and horrible special occasions. He trundled back down the stairs and made his way out into the road and turned right into the High Street. It was only eight thirty and he wanted to be present at his office before nine. He was not looking forward to telling his latest clients heart breaking results of his investigation for her. He is a solid, well built man of about five feet ten, but he moves along the

pavement with the grace and panaché of a ballroom dancer. Hopping into the kerb to avoid women with prams and pedestrians making their way to work. His style and countenance is that of an ordinary man; 'A simple Joe Soap.' But that is the last thing that he is. He is a hunter. A hunter of killers. An extremely efficient and fearless hunter of killers. Ladies and Gentlemen meet Mister John Blumer.

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## CHAPTER 3

The first thing that he does when he enters the tiny office is to switch the single light on. He slips his off his gaberdine overcoat and hangs on a peg. He opens the top draw of one of the only two filing cabinets and pulls out a large manilla brown envelope. He puts the envelope on his desk and sits down behind the desk on an old wooden chair. The only other two chairs in the office are for his clients. A matching wooden pair that he had bought from a second hand shop. He then glances up at the clock on the wall and waits. The office is small and sparse and used to been a shoe repair shop before Blumer rented the empty premises. Apart from the table, chairs, filing cabinets, telephone and camera; that was all that he needed for his work. 0905 a knock on the door and a middle aged woman walks in and greets him.

“Good morning Mr Blumer. I believe that you have all the information I need, when we spoke over the phone.”

“Good morning Mrs March. Please take a seat. I think that I have more than enough evidence for you to proceed with the action you need to take for yourself with your solicitor.”

Evonne March sat down opposite him. She was a very attractive woman with auburn hair and green soulful eyes. This was their sixth meeting and he had noticed that her appearance each time indicated to him that the torment and pressure that she was under was taking its toll. Her lipstick had not been so carefully applied and her light green eye shadow was smeared, as if she did her make-up routine as a chore and in a rush. Blumer had rehearsed what he was about to tell her, because he knew that this was going to be very painful for her. He did not like to see another person in pain. He was a

conflicted man. He could track down a murderer, pulling out all stops and using any unorthodox means to justify to the end. Even disobeying orders to nail a suspect. But dealing with a broken woman was very uncomfortable for him.

“Your suspicions about your husbands cheating and lying to you are correct. Does the name Sarah Montigue mean anything to you.?”

“Yes, she is, or was, a friend of mine. Why?”

He then pulled some paper-work and some photographs from the envelope and handed them to her. Watching her lower lip drop open and noticing her eyes well up with tears as she studied the eight photos and read the report and he went on.

“He has been visiting Miss Montigue at her address every Tuesday and Thursday for five weeks. The times he enters her house and leaves her house is written on the back of each photo. The story that he was going to his club in the City was a blatant lie. I followed his every move, from when he left his office until he returned home to your address. I also think I can account for some of the money missing from your joint savings account. Did he give you a necklace as a present recently?”

“No. He has never bought me jewellery. And he is very strict about spending money, unless it’s something that we really need to buy.”

“On the fifteenth of January he entered Mappin And Webb jewellers in the City at sixteen forty and purchased a necklace that he paid for in cash for two hundred and thirty pounds.”

Evonne lent back in the chair and then looked into Blumers face.

“The bitch, the evil ungrateful bitch. I took her in when she filed for divorce from her husband and had to get away from

him, because of his endless affairs and the aggression from him when she confronted him about it. I took the bitch in. Michael protested, because he did not want her living in our house. But I, but I pressurised him day in day out until he finally capitulated. What a bloody fool I was. I cannot believe that he would do this to me. I know where she lives. I'm gonna go round and kill the bitch. How could she do this to me, after all I did for her?"

Blumer waited for her to finish, then went into his pragmatic policeman's mode.

"Mrs March. I would strongly advise you not confront, or even approach Miss Montigue in any way. Hand the report and photos to your solicitor and tell him what you want him to do. For your own good you must, must exercise restraint. If Miss Montigue is as cunning and devious as she appears to be she could hit back at you, if you attack her, or trespass on her property. My business card is attached to the paperwork if your solicitor requires any more information that may be of help Mrs March."

Evonne delved into her handbag and pulled out her purse and Blumer pulled out a Polaroid camera from his desk drawer and placed it on the desk.

"How much was it Mr Blumer? You said you may need possibly two months to build a case. It only took you six weeks and I must pay you for the photos as well."

"The photos are for you Mrs March. I have copies. Eighty five pounds was my fee. If you need copies of the photos I'll have more done from the negatives."

He then patted the camera then looked into her face with his piercing grey eyes and said.

"The camera never lies Mrs March. This baby has served me

very well on several occasions. In particular over the past couple of years, but even when I was still in the Met.”

Evonne, although visibly wounded, handed over the money and tried to vent her feelings. And Blumer listened to her plight with guarded interest.

“Can you believe it Mr Blumer? Michael was so indignant that she should not live with us that we started to row about it. He only gave in when she came round with a black eye, a real shiner that Gerald her husband had given her. I assured Michael that it was only for six months until her parents house, which she had inherited from her parents had been renovated and refurbished. I felt pity for her, even though the other women at work disliked her. When she left for another job, I was the only one who was sorry to see her go. They were bloody well right about her. My womans intuition must be practically non existent. What a bloody fool I was.”

Blumer had seen a lot and had learned a lot over the years. But the peculiar and sometimes bizarre ways that human beings behaved still fascinated his old dogmatic detective’s mind. He then tried to console her a little and probe her thoughts and feelings.

“Some people can be devious and know how to manipulate people. In particular people that feel sympathy for them. And believe me, Mrs March, I’ve seen evil, real evil. Being betrayed and let down by people you trust is a real blow. Did you suspect anything was going on between Miss Montigue and your husband when she was living with you, over the six months? People that are doing bad things sometimes slip up and leave clues. Was there any time, or situation that could have warned you that something was amiss?”

“No, nothing. Michael would let us carry on with our womens talk and things that men are not really interested in.

He preferred to watch the telly and do cross-words. Hah! Hah! Ha! I always thought that he was a bit of a prude and did not like vulgarity and smutty innuendos.”

“Well, I hope that your solicitor can plan your case with what I have provided for you Mrs March. But I would advise you to let him do his work and he will probably advise you as I have done.”

“Thank you Mr Blumer. I hope you don’t get too many cases like mine. You have been very kind and I am sorry for making a fool of myself.”

With that she stood up to leave and they shook hands. When the door closed behind her he sat back down and held his polaroid camera. He then slipped into deep thought and began to reflect. Reflect and ponder the infamy, pain, evidence and incredible drama and horror that this very camera had provided. But the only reward for Blumer was that it had nailed brutal murderers with more deadly precision than a high powered snipers rifle. It was his private deadly weapon against criminals, diabolical criminals.

The Sweet Shop Murders and the Stripper murders had made Blumer famous. By any measure he had strayed out of any Police protocols and procedures to catch firstly The Sweet Shop Killer and then The Stripper Killer. Chief Inspector Dick Taylor, Blumer’s Boss had taken serious risks regarding his own job to protect him and even covered up Blumer’s penchant for going it alone when he had a hunch about a lead. Blumer became like a man possessed, like a pit-bull smelling blood, when he sensed that of all of the suspects under investigation, he would sight a piece of a puzzle, or a slight anomaly that would catch his attention. Blumer liked Dick Taylor, who was very old school and a stickler for rules and regulations. But the nature of these two crimes had been so

sensational, so dramatic that the public were demanding action. And Blumer had single handedly had taken action. The Leon Boyd case however had been his downfall. The Police had been virtually working around the clock to catch Boyd, and so many officers were literally so exhausted and working through sleep deprivation that tempers were becoming strained; including Dick Taylor's. Boyd who had sometimes used the name Charles Cleverly, or William Wiseman when he was moving around the country, working on building sites, after being released from prison had an IQ of a 180. But he also had the heart and soul of a devious and cunning predator. There had been a series of rapes in a red light district in Bradford. The first woman; a pathetic alcoholic prostitute had been too afraid to go to the police. But the second two who had been so badly battered and bruised by the attacks and had been hospitalised had given statements to the police. All the police had was that the suspect was a hulking giant that pounced on his victims without warning. Boyd managed to give the police the slip. But he would strike again three times two months later in London. But this time he had added murder to his CV. And he had gone back to using his real name Leon Boyd. The police could not establish when Boyd had arrived in London, but he had given two red flags that he was in town and that he was on the prowl by two seperate incidents. The first one was when a girl heading home from work in the City. The time had been seventeen thirty and she had been walking briskly to catch the seveteen forty five train from Liverpool Street to Chadwell Heath. Then quite suddenly she had become aware of somebody walking in lock-step behind her. She had tried to walk faster, but a looming shadow of a gigantic man warned her that this man was indeed following her. Luckily as she entered Liverpool Street Station she sighted a Bobby on the his beat, jotting down a report in his notebook. She bolted towards him and had difficulty

articulating her words as she reported in a terrified voice that she was being followed. The Bobby had immediately looked around to check out her complaint, but Boyd had simply vanished. He had then tried to ask commuters who had been hurrying by, if anybody had noticed anything. But nobody had and some had even been irritated about being accosted by a policeman, because they had trains to catch. The policeman had filed his report when he arrived back at the station. But because no actual crime, or assault had taken place the report had been logged and filed away. Two days later a young secretary had been making her way to Paddington station after finishing work, when she became aware of a gigantic man walking parallel to her on the other side of the street. She only became alarmed when he bolted across the Street and fell in lock-step behind her. She had kept her wits about her and had bolted into a dry cleaner's, which was busy with several customers present. She had alerted the staff and two of them had gone out into the street to check out her claim, but Boyd had simply vanished again. They had then flagged down a couple of bobbies who were coming along the street from the opposite direction. The police had moved quickly and had ran along the street to try and intercept a possible would be assailant. Even if Boyd had only trying out dummy-runs for his attack, then he had been extremely confident of his own cunning and prowess to carry them out in public. His sheer size was enough to draw attention to passers-by; let alone his audacity and antics.

Two weeks later a young Bobby on his beat was casually looking at random tax discs in car windows, parked along a street of terraced houses in Whitechapel. One more hour and he would be off duty. As he passed by a Bedford van with the logo Weiss & Glover Office Supplies and Stationary, he noticed a young woman walking briskly towards him. She then did a quick left turn and entered an Indian grocer's shop.

He was tired, dog tired. His eighth month old daughter had been keeping him and his young wife awake, crying and fretting. He had tried to do his wack by attending to their baby and give his wife a break during the night, but the police shift system had wrought havoc with his sleep. He glanced across the Street to an old bombed out terraced house that was becoming hidden by overgrown weeds and bushes in the front garden, and wondered who had lived there many years ago. He looked through the back window of the Bedford van and noticed that it was completely empty. He then checked his watch and decided that it was time to make his way back to the station. A quiet and uneventful shift.

Marian realised that she had forgotten to buy bread and chastised herself for not writing it down on her shopping list. No problem, she would only have shoot out to the Indian shop just around the corner and she would be back within five minutes. As always the aging Indian man was always pleased to see her, because she was a regular customer. She noticed the young Copper checking tax discs in car windows, but felt reassured to see a bobby patrolling the area. It was just after nine and growing dark. The first of the street lights were beginning to flicker on, as she left the shop. Suddenly and without any warning a huge shadow loomed up behind her. Before she could even scream a hand the size of plate covered her mouth. She tried to kick her assailant, but her legs were lashing about in the air. And with sheer horror she realised that there was nobody else was on the street. She then tried to bite the palm of the massive hand, but could not open her mouth, because of the pressure being applied with great force. Just as she was about to pass out, she thought she saw a figure appear out of nowhere. But the giant who had grabbed her simply spun around and carried her away at great speed. No, no this could not be happening to her. If only she had not forgotten to add a loaf of bread on her shopping list.



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## CHAPTER 4

The derelict house had been completely cordoned off and a police forensic team were moving about with a dogged and determined work ethic around the terrible murder scene. By the time Blumer had arrived it was already apparant that this had been the most brutal rape and murder that any officer had ever witnessed. Even the most seasoned and hardened officers could not comprehend how anybody could commit a crime like this to another human being. The head of the overall team Inspector Bill Mulliner, who Blumer knew and respected, had filled him on the crime seen before Blumer entered the house. It indeed had been a ghastly sight. But the first thing Blumer had flagged up as completely odd and incomprehensible; as did the other members of the team was that the killer after carrying out the dastardly deed had moved the body from a room at the back of the house to the front room, where he could have been seen through the broken window from the Street. The womans name was Marian Warren; a housewife of twenty eight years old. Her husband who worked for the Gas Works had reported her missing at eleven o'clock after checking with her family if she had gone to visit one of them. He had finished work at ten o'clock and had become worried, because she had usually left a note to let him know what she was doing. The only two people who had seen her before she had been abducted was a very distaught Indian shop owner, who had served her minutes before. And a Young PC who had sighted her as she entered the shop. The only lead that the Police had was that the PC had been in the process of checking a Bedford van with the logo Weiss & Glover Office Supplies and Stationary when he had seen the woman. That very same afternoon a Mr Arnold Weiss had reported that one of his vans

had been stolen from outside of his depot. The van had been found the next morning parked on a street in Vauxhall. The van had not been damaged and there was no sign of a break in. Whoever had stolen the van had used a key. The police had done a full inspection of the van, checking for finger-prints and any clues, but the van had been carefully cleaned and wiped. Whoever had committed the crime was obviously cold, calculating and extremely violent.

It had only taken Boyd another five days to strike again. This time he had begun to show signs of what could be deemed as a *modus operandi*. The victim had been a young nurse. A man leaving a synagogue along Cranbrook Road, Ilford had sighted her entering the main entrance of Valentine's Park opposite to the synagogue. A bread van that had been slowly passing had stopped about twenty yards along the road, just as the girl had entered the main entrance. The man had not seen anybody exit the van and had simply turned right to make his way home; this had been at roughly ten past nine in the evening. The next morning the badly battered body of the girl was found by a park gardener, among a copse trees in a corner of the park. The police had quickly established that the body had been dumped there after Boyd had carried out the attack in a more isolated copse of trees, further back. That meant that he had had to move the body a full twenty five yards in the open and risk being seen by passers by. The girl had regularly crossed the park to make her way home after finishing her shifts at Barts Hospital. Whether Boyd had been stalking her and had been monitoring her routine, or the attack was opportune was being investigated by the police. The same morning that the body had been found an owner of a small bakery in Forrest Gate had reported that one of his bread vans had been stolen the day before from around the corner of his baker's shop. The van had been found parked outside Gidea Park Train Station that same afternoon. Again, there had been

no sign of a break in and the thief must of used a key, or a skeleton key to steal the van. Again, the forensic team had gone over the van with a fine toothed comb. No fingerprints and no clues had been left at all.

Just as with the Weiss & Glover, van Boyd had gone to extreme lengths to cover his tracks. However a profile had began to emerge about the killer. Despite the audacity and fiendishness of the attacks the police believed that over confidence and vanity could cause the killer to slip up. He had struck twice in the most brazen and daring way, but the next time he would not be so lucky, because a witness would give the police a detailed description of him. A cockney market stall holder would describe him as a giant, with a head the size of 'pumpkin' and a body like a gorrilla. But this had been too late to save the third victim.

Boyd's third victim had been attending a leaving party for a colleague from her place of work. It had been held at the Woodin Shades Pub, near Petticoat Lane. Unfortunately she had got drunk and had started to become quite abusive to some of her other colleagues. The girl who did not usually touch alcohol had shocked everbody present with her antics. When a male colleague had advised her to 'tone it down a bit' she had tried to slap him. Finally, the other members of the party decided that she should be put into a taxi and sent home. But a taxi driver outside of the pub had refused to take her in case she was sick in his cab. By this time the girl had become very abrasive and would not let anybody near her. They eventually managed to take back inside the pub and had tried to sober her up a little.

After a while she had calmed down and had gone to the toilet. A female colleague had followed her shorly afterwards to check on her, but she had not been inside the toilet. The rest of the party assumed that she had gone outside and went to check

where she was, but there was no sign of her. It had been just after nine o'clock and a market stall owner had gone to collect some clothing from his lock-up along Middlesex Street. Just as he had locked the door of the lock-up he had heard a disturbance from inside a rubbish skip compound. He assumed that it was either cats, or rats at play until a gigantic figure loomed up from behind a rubbish skip. The man had become frozen to the spot and had just stood there gawping as Boyd had slipped between two rubbish skips and had ran off at great speed.

It was then that he had noticed the pool of blood seeping from beneath the rubbish skips. He only saw the badly battered body when he had looked behind the skips. He had been given plenty of time to get a very good look at the killer and had given the police a detailed description of him. After an initial investigation the police had a pretty good idea who they were looking for. Leon Boyd; a former circus strongman who had been released from Durham Prison, just over a year before.

The history of Leon Boyd could only be described as a bizarre and macabra pantomime with horrific results. A miner's son from Wales, Leon; even from a young age had showed signs of violence. Discipline and punishment had made him even worse and he had resented anybody including teachers who had tried to coax him into behaving normally. Much to the dismay of his parents; as he grew, so did his unsavoury character. By the time he had turned fifteen he was already six feet six in stature and his frame had begun to literally morph into a muscle bound block of unbelievable power. He had left home at fifteen and had simply drifted from town to town. He had spent some time in Dublin and Limerick. But he had always been on the move and had rarely stayed in one place for more than a couple of months. By the age of twenty one he had finally found a potential vocation as

a circus strongman. He had travelled around the country for a year and although most of the other circus team had feared him he had virtually behaved himself. Not one for social interactions, he had kept himself to himself. Nobody could have been aware of the monstrous fiend that lurked somewhere inside of the heart and soul of him until one night he showed his true colours, but it had very nearly been the death of him. Just after midnight when everybody had turned in for the night and the most of the circus team were trying to get some sleep in their caravans, pandemonium had suddenly erupted.

Firstly, an hysterical woman's scream followed by a deafening roar of lions, coming from the lions' enclosure. The ringmaster and lion tamer had bolted over to the scene and could not believe what had unfolded. When they had realised what had happened they had moved very quickly. A pretty trapeze artist was sprawled on the floor, missing her underwear that had been ripped off. Boyd had been laying semi-conscious just in front of the lions' cage, with a mighty lion trying to get at him with his paw through the bars. Blood had been pouring from the back of Boyd's head, where the lion had caught him with its paw. Boyd had jumped the girl and had dragged her into the lions' enclosure area. But he had backed himself up against the lions' cage and a gigantic lion had managed to rip the back of his head open through the bars. The ring master had managed to stop the loss of blood from the wound with a pillow, while the lion tamer had chained Boyd's arms and legs to an empty cage. The ambulance team had managed to save Boyd's life when they arrived and had rushed him to the nearest hospital under a police escort. He had been given an emergency blood transfusion and had to spend two weeks in hospital. The police officers who had interviewed Boyd when he had been recovering were not buying the cock & bull story that he had concocted. He had

told the police that he had been trying to rescue the girl, who had been looking through the bars of the lions cage and had got too close. And it had been the lion that had ripped her clothing off. The girl had told the police that Boyd had jumped her from behind as she was returning to her caravan and had dragged her into the lions' enclosure. This had been the first warning that Boyd was a very dangerous man.

The judge jury had had no qualms about Boyd's guilt. And the judge had sentenced him to eighteen months in Durham Prison; of which he had only served a year for good behaviour. On his release a complete comedy of errors unfolded that gave Boyd carte-blanche to simply disappear off of the police and public's radar. Firstly his probation officer, who had been carefully monitoring everything Boyd did, got killed in a car accident. Boyd had managed to get a job in a components factory in Leeds and his probation officers had been pleased with the progress that he had been making. Boyd had been attending a course in Wakefield that the owners of the firm had sent him on when a former disgruntled employee had burned the components factory to the ground. Boyd took this as an opportunity to go *incomunicado*, and that is exactly what he did. His new identities would be either Charles Cleverly, or William Wiseman. He took labouring jobs on building sites, mainly around, or on the outskirts of big cities; Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford, Sunderland and Stoke. He had no problem doing hard work and fellow workers on various sites had watched in awe as he had shovelled and mixed cement in big industrial sized cement mixers all day long. Boyd had been hiding his true persona very well.

But it would be only a question of time before the fiend that lurked within him would emerge. The Bradford incident had been a close call and he had been extremely lucky to escape justice. His first stop after Bradford had been Birmingham,

where he took a job on a new housing estate that was being built. When the estate had been nearly completed he had moved on to Manchester, where another vast building project was underway. He had lived frugally and had used cheap boarding houses for lodgings. He had fed himself by gorging himself on cheese, bread, pints of milk and food from take-aways and fish & chip shops. After the Manchester project was nearly completed he had decided to embark on a new career in London. A career that would make his name a name of infamy and horror.

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# CHAPTER 5

**MANCHESTER JULY 1974.**

**(THE PREDATOR IS CLOSE. THE PREDATOR IS  
STALKING ITS PREY.)**

**THE VISITOR.**

It was just after ten thirty in the evening and it was already dark as Gavin walked briskly along the bank of the canal. He was sweating profusely and his stomach had become like a knot of nervous, tangled muscle. Claire should be already waiting for him, hiding behind a small wooden hut, situated just back from the path. Thankfully there was nobody about. He had thought that his dalliance with Claire would only be a fling; a harmless affair that he could break off easily, if his wife had become suspicious. But the best laid plans could go astray, as he was finding out. Although Claire was only eighteen and he was thirty two he had been at first flattered and then besotted by her open attraction to him. Indeed his wife was becoming suspicious. Darts on Tuesday, pool on Thursday; two games that he had never shown much interest in, before their son was born, were now keeping him away from their home for over four hours consecutively. He knew that he had to break it off, but twice he had tried to and had lost his nerve. In short he had fallen for her 'hook line and sinker'. Just as he was about turn off of the path and head for the rear of the hut, thinking Claire would be already waiting for him, he was punched in the face so hard that his entire frame shuddered. He had staggered backwards when the next punch to his stomach lifted him clean off of his feet. The next punch to his temple had concussed him and he had started to

lose consciousness. A former champion amateur boxer in his youth; he had never been hit as hard as this, ever. The next thing he knew he had fallen into the murky water of the canal. He had become completely powerless as his attacker brutally drove him to the bottom of the canal with a boat-hook. His attacker had then held him under the water until until his body went limp. The attacker then threw the boat-hook like a javelin over a fence behind the hut, and then hid behind the back of the hut.

Claire had been a little late this evening and she had already made up her mind that she must finish with Gavin. What on earth was she playing at; getting involved with a married man. Her friend Karen had warned in a candid and frank way. 'Don't get involved with a married man, because it's a recipe for disaster'. Karen had been right and now the excitement of this forbidden love affair was wearing off, she had been deeply regretting ever letting it happen in the first place. No sign of Gavin. He must be waiting behind the hut for her. Just as she had turned off of the path and went round the back of the hut expecting to find Gavin waiting for her she had suddenly felt alarmed. Gavin was not waiting for. Instead the visitor had been waiting patiently for her. Perfect timing.

Two big powerful men were trundling across the building site with their empty wheelbarrows. They were in high spirits, because it looked as though they were going to get their bonuses after all. All thanks to a new labourer that had started working with them from a month ago.

"Come on Malloy. Yah fat old doddering Koot. You'll never get yah bonus at this rate!"

"Shut up Cambell! I can run rings around you, just like I used to do in the ring."

Both men, former prize-fighters, had a repertoire between

them which was so amusing that their fellows labourers and also the bricklayers had named them Tweedle Dee & Tweedle Dum.

The giant that was standing next to the big industrial cement mixer had been already waiting for them to arrive, with a full mix of cement ready for them in the mixer. They had glanced at each other as if to say 'he's done it again'. Before it had taken two men to shovel the sand and cement into the mixer. But they had needed a break consistanly during the day, because of the sheer workload. The man they only knew as William Wiseman did not have that problem. He could shovel sand and cement all day long, with only a break for lunch. William Wiseman was not a friendly man and he had an aura about him that was stifling and intimidating. He was a man of few words and any attempt to befriend him was met with cold indifference. The building project was nearly complete and the team of builders, labourers, plumbers and tilers would move on to a new project. But William Wiseman would not join them. He would move on to another town and would use the name Charles Cleverly.

## **ECCLES MANCHESTER**

### **OCTOBER 1974**

The woman was angry with herself. She had left her keys in the ignition of her Ford Escort and had locked herself out of the car, by pressing the nob down as she had vacated the drivers seat. Only last week her husband had done the same thing and she had to bring the spare key to him from their house. Luckily she had only bought cereals and canned food which she had locked in the boot. She had parked in Tesco's car park and would only have to go over to the payphone just over the road. It had only taken her five minutes to make the

call and her husband had told her that he would be there in about fifteen minutes. When she had returned to where she had parked the car, it was gone. She had looked around and had asked a woman who was piling her shopping into the boot of her own car if she had seen anybody breaking into a yellow Ford Escort, which had been parked close to her own car; the woman had told her that there was no yellow Ford Escort there when she had arrived. Four days later she had received a phone call from the police to inform her that her car had been found on housing estate on the outskirts of Portsmouth. The car had been locked and the key had been left in the ignition. The car had not been damaged in anyway and even the shopping that had been locked in the boot had not been touched. The thief had even been generous enough to leave her a full tank of petrol. The distraught woman had worried that her car may have been stolen to carry out a robbery, or simply used as a get-away vehicle from a robbery, or to ferry stolen goods. But thankfully the police had doubted that any of these reasons were the case and had speculated that the car had either simply been stolen by a joy rider, or the thief had only stolen her car to get down to Portsmouth. But who would steal a car that only had less than a quarter tank of petrol and leave the tank full to the brim.

Gavin and Claire had kept their meeting place by the canal so secret that nobody, including Karen had not known about it. Gavin's body had been found floating in the canal by a dog walker the next day. Claire had simply disappeared without a trace. When the autopsy had established that Gavin had received three very powerful blows, two to his head and one to the stomach that had ruptured his spleen, they had begun to look for a motive and a murderer. He had been held under the water until he had drowned. The boat-hook had literally pierced his chest. All the police could establish was that Gavin's killer was somebody of immense power.

## SOUTHSEA

### NOVEMBER 1974

All three of them were tipsy as they made their way up the stairs of Jo Anna's disco; three young women on a night out. They had decided to try Jo Anna's, because Martha's disco in Portsmouth town centre was becoming notorious for fights among drunken sailors. If they had known what was going to happen inside of Jo Anna's in a couple of hours time they would have avoided Jo Anna's as well. This had become a regular Friday night event for them and they had all been friends since their school days. They would firstly do a round of their favourite pubs; the Apsley, the Auckland Arms, the Palmerston and the Osbourne. All of them were very keen on dancing and having a good time, but there were not many discos around Portsmouth and drunken sailors seemed to be everywhere, frequenting every pub and offending anybody else who was not a sailor with their lewd antics. Christina, Sue and Nadine were all on the look out for blokes; half decent, good looking blokes. But very few drunken sailors could draw their attention, due to the inebriated state they were usually in. There been a crew of about six, or seven sailors inside of Jo Anna's and although there had been larking about and bawdy banter between them; they were not being a nuisance, or encroaching on anybody else's space. They were off of HMS *Achilles* and had been at sea for a couple of weeks. The disco was still relatively empty and the staff had been quite relaxed and had been only keeping a casual eye on the sailors.

All three girls had been dancing close to a big model tree that was situated in the middle of the dance floor, when a crew of submariners entered and they were all drunk. At first they had headed straight for the bar and had ordered pints. The

other crew from the *Achilles* who were standing at the other end of the bar had noticed them, but there had been no animosity towards them. This would change as the night drew on. The first incident that would be the trigger for the coming fray was when one of the crew from the *Achilles* had shouted out ‘Sun Dodger’s. Get out your stinking the place out!’ To which came an angry reply, ‘Fuck off Skimmers. Whats it like being skint all the time?’ This had been always been a sore point for general service sailors, because submariners had always been on a higher rate of pay than them.

The punch up that had suddenly erupted was like something out of a cowboy film. Chairs flew, glasses flew and the two big bouncers who had let them in were now desperately trying to seperate them. Two barmen had grabbed baseball bats from behind the bar and had started to swing them at the sailors’ knees to try and disable them. The next thing that happened was the police and naval patrol had entered and were dragging all of the combatants apart. Nadine had been so shocked and terrified by the fray that she had panicked and had made a beeline for the exit stairs. Sue and Christina had been unfortunate enough to be bundled and pushed into a corner by brawling men, but at least they had not been hurt.

When finally the fray was under control, Sue and Christina had followed Nadine’s route and had headed for the exit stairs. They had assumed that she would be waiting for them outside, but she wasn’t. After looking around for her and asking passers by if they had seen a terrified girl leave the entrance of Jo Anna’s, to which the answers had been no, they had then thought that she may of caught a taxi home. But Nadine had not caught a taxi home. Nadine had simply vanished without a trace. Just like young Claire Gleason had, up country in Manchester, back in July. Was this the beginning of a pattern. If the girls had been abducted, then by whom and for what

reason? And were their disappearances connected. As yet no bodies had been found and the effrontery of the abductor was something to be taken into account. A dour and reserved Detective Inspector had been pondering these very questions. Both incidents had been broadcast on national TV and had been written about in all of the main tabloids and had caught the interest of John Blumer.

## **SADDLEWORTH MOOR**

**MAY 1975**

A Volkswagen van drew up by the side of the narrow road and a burly middle aged man jumped out of the driver's seat and then opened the rear door of the van. A magnificent German Shepherd dog jumped out of the back and charged about excitedly. The man then pulled out two heavy duty plastic buckets from the back of the van and called to the dog.

“Come on Monty. I don't wanna get caught, cause' this might not be legal.”

On a previous outing with his dog he had discovered by chance a small bog of black peat, just over a hill and between an outcrop of rocks. An avid gardener he knew that black peat was very fertile and he had come to take a couple of buckets for his greenhouse. What he did not know was that black peat was also a remarkable preserver of organic matter. As he made his way over the hill and descended down between the rocks Monty suddenly had begun to howl and sniff the air. The man knew something was wrong when Monty's ears suddenly became erect and his howling became very frantic. He had then noticed a woman's shoe; a new shoe near the edge of the bog. Monty had stalked along the edge of the bog and had begun to vigorously dig with his paws into the peat and the man had realised that his trusty dog had found something. He

approached slowly to where the dog had been digging, with his nerves on tenterhooks.

“What’s the matter boy...! What have you found Monty?”

It was then with horror he saw her face. It was the face of a young girl. The body of Claire Gleason had finally been found. After the initial shock of the macabre find he called the dog.

“Come on Monty...! We gotta’ call the police. There’s a phone box in the village!”

## **HAYLING ISLAND**

### **JUNE 1975**

The tides had been abnormally high for the the past couple of months and flotsam had been dumped high up on the beaches and small inlets around the island. The current of the Solent had also become abnormally very volatile also and swimming had been advised against by the local council. A young couple had been walking along the beach and had wandered up toward the edge of the Golf course.

They had just sat down on an upturned and rotting wooden boat when the young man noticed to his horror a half decomposed body of a woman in the reeds behind them. The body of Nadine Barber had been found.

Both the Manchester and Hampshire police had exchanged information and the unbelievable results of the autopsies performed on both woman. Both of the bodies had been found completely naked, but there was no sign of sexual assault on either of them. Both women had bruising on the sole of their right foot. Their bodies had been drained of about three pints of blood. There had been a deep puncture wound, just below



the rib cage in both bodies, about the size of a pen and no other forms of violation. The police now knew that they were dealing with a serial killer, an extremely cunning serial killer.

It was now time to reopen the case of Lisa Noonan, who had disappeared somewhere around Clacton Essex and Point Clear in July 1973. Now the police had two bodies as evidence, they would pull out all stops to catch the killer. The problem that they had now was that they absolutely no leads to go on. No witnesses, nobody had been seen acting suspicious around the immediate vicinities of their disappearances, nothing. The stolen car from Eccles, which had turned up in Portsmouth was now of interest.

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## CHAPTER 6

Blumer was brought back from his thoughts and reflections by the by a knock on the door of his office. A slim young man dressed in a bright violet coloured suit walked in and greeted him.

“Good morning John, glad to find you here. I knew you were probably here, because you was wasn’t at home. Got some very good news for you old boy.”

Blumer had to suppress a laugh when he saw Tristan’s regalia. The trousers were so tight that he looked like Max Wall just about to go on stage. His hair had obviously been permed, and his purple, patent winkle-picker shoes must have been difficult to walk in. Tristan; Blumer’s publishers agent was one of the very few people who could actually make him laugh, even when he was trying to be serious. But Blumer was also painfully aware that he had met Pamela through Tristan, when she had worked for him as a typist and an unofficial secretary when they had worked together at Loomers & Braddocks Publishers. Tristan indeed was a very talented man. He had his own true crime magazine called *Scene Of The Crime*, which was quite popular with true crime buffs. But in his own way he had a similar, relentless and dogged determination about him to see a task through to the end. He was also brutally honest.

“Mornin’ Tristan, like the suit. Anybody can see you comin’ from a mile off. Well lets hear some good news. I could use some, the way things have been goin’ lateley.”

Tristan sat down in front of Blumer, adjusted his scarlet cravat, crossed his legs and smiled.

“Loomers & Braddocks want to publish your book now. The edited and re-done version, which Aubrey worked on. Aubrey told me that some of the chapters in the original script were too much like a policeman’s report log. So, how do you like that? *Behind The Crime* can finally be published. You deserve it John. There’s stuff in there that the public never could have known about. It just needed to be expressed in a more readable and digestive format.”

Blumer leaned back in his chair and took some time to digest what Tristan had just told him.

“Well I’ll be... you did it Tristan, you actually pulled it off. There’s things in there that could of got me trouble, if I had wriiten it while I still in the Met. Thing is opinions, speculations and gut instict sure don’t tally with hard evidence, meticulous research and endless investigations into a suspect. Even if we were pretty sure the perpatrator was guilty. I stepped outa’ line one too many times and boy did it cost me. I put my neck out when maybe I shoulda’ kept stumm.”

Tristan pulled out a rolled up contract from inside of his jacket pocket and slipped off the rubber band and laid in it on the desk in front of Blumer for him to sign. Blumer only glanced over the contract and signed along the dotted line at the bottom.

“Price of fame, John. You knew that you would rub some people up the wrong way with your way of doing things. By the way how’s your lady friend? I’m sure She’ll be glad when she hears the good news.”

“She’s gone Tristan. She left a few weeks ago. I was expecting it anyway. It was only a mutual arrangement til’ she found somewhere to live. And I knew it and she knew it. Unlike Pamela who only left me a good-bye John note under my favourite tea-pot. Such is life.”

Tristan raised his eyebrows, smiled and with an air of caution said, "I had lunch with Pamela last week. She's had her own problems. Never thought she would do it, but she finally threw Damion out. Turns out Sir Galahad turned out to be more like Sir Lancelot. Liked to use his lance for jousting with too many women, from what she told me. The last straw was when she caught him in bed with a woman using his lance. She should have dumped him when his true colours became blatantly obvious; but I suppose she thought he might change. We go back a long way, as you know John. I couldn't ask for a better friend."

Tristan waited patiently for Blumer's reaction, because he was well aware that John Blumer rarely gave much away. Even if he was confronted by the 'sensational' or melodramatic.

"Oh well, maybe she could have paid me to investigate Sir Lancelot. Bit of a come down, but I'm gettin' pretty good at investigating marital monkey business. I know you mean well Tristan, but Pamela was just a bit too quick to burn her boats. She knew that we were up to our necks with the sweetshop killer and then the stripper killer. And then as bad luck would have it the Leon Boyd case was dropped on us like a bomb. A copper's job is not a nine to five job. We have to put in the hours when a serious crime happens and we're lookin' for leads. Friction and desperation can take over when a bloke is on the job for eighteen hours a day. And we are being scrutinized, criticized and hounded by the press if we can't catch the bastard like a cricket ball. It's never, ever as simple as that. Sometimes I'm glad I'm out of it completely."

"I think you've addressed some of that in your book. That is why I was interested in pitching it to Loomers & Braddock. I would have tried to pitch it with another publishers if they had turned it down. Sometimes it's best to step back and look at

things, John. I think that three of the most terrible murder cases that happened almost in concert deserve to be looked at through the eyes of somebody who was actually in the middle of them. The public at least deserve to know that.”

Blumer quietly contemplated what Tristan had said and realised that he had a point. Anger and bitterness had clouded Blumer's judgement and Tristan had a deft way of expressing his own opinions without insulting, or offending an already wounded person.

“Yeah you're right Tristan. But I'm afraid I can't feel much sympathy for Pamela. It wasn't perfect, but why couldn't she just have it out? Why just leave me in the lurch?”

“She misses you, John. I suspected it, but I really found out when Aubrey dropped a clanger and mentioned something which he shouldn't have, when we were having lunch. I have warned him about his lack of diplomacy when he drinks too much. I wanted to slap his bloody face. He mentioned that you had taken in a stripper as a lodger. Nudge, nudge, nod's as good as a wink. The silly bitch just let it slip out. I had to hang back from coshing him over the head with a sauce bottle. Well Pamela nearly fell out of her chair and her jaw dropped and nearly bounced off the table. She then ran to the toilet, so we didn't see her cry.”

Well Aubrey may drink too much, but he bloody well doesn't hang fire with his opinions. I only took Audrey in cause' she got sacked from the strip club she was workin' in. And I only found out she had a temper when I passed a remark, when she mentioned something.”

“Well what was that John? I thought that you were a master at diplomacy.”

“Well she said that the owner of the club had sacked her because she was sporting a rather large posterior, which had

been visibly expanding. And all I said was what he really meant was you've got a fat bum. She hit the fackin' roof and tried to slap me around the face."

"Bloody hell, John. You and Aubrey would make a good double act. You should both apply for a diplomatic post at the foreign office. You could cause an international incident between you."

With that they both burst out laughing, and Blumers realised that this was the first time he had laughed for years.

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## CHAPTER 7

It had been an eventful day and Blumer had felt buoyed by the visit from Tristan. Well, if Pamela got so emotional about him living with a stripper that was her problem. But deep down inside he knew that it was partly his fault. On the way home he stopped of at a fish & chip shop and ate at a table inside. He didn't fancy washing plates tonight. When he got home he opened the fridge and pulled out a bottle of Ben Truman. Only four left. He would have to stock up. Fortunately he had given up the whiskey a few months ago, because too much of it was making him too lethargic and brooding. He opened the bottle and planted himself down in his ancient, but comfortable armchair and began to reflect on his book and the effect it may have, if it sells very well. He had written it in a way that did not imply that he was 'blowing his own trumpet'. The press had done that. And it had cost him dearly. If he had not single handedly solved the sweetshop case and the stripper case, both killers would have almost certainly struck again. The Leon Boyd case was a completely different scenario and it had sat with him like a nagging pain in his stomach. Seeing the monstrous brute Leon Boyd impaled through the base of his back, with his gigantic body doubled back over the railings had not been the end of the matter for Blumer. Boyd was guilty without any doubt. But there had been a few anomalies, albiet obscure ones that Blumer had noted and taken stock of.

As a young teenager Blumer had never much interest, or ambition in anything at all. That would change in a dramatic way when he was still only eighteen years old. It had happened while he was doing his national service in the Army. He had had only less than three months to serve and was looking forward to getting outside. There had been really

lively party at a dance hall in the centre of Aldershot that had got out of hand. His regiment were in there celebrating just coming back from a hard exercise and were letting off steam. There was too many drunken soldiers and only a few local girls who had come. Things got really out of hand when Murray, a big, bawdy soldier from Wandsworth had started baring his backside in front of a table of several disgusted girls. But when he gave them a full frontal; that was time for the staff to step in. The table with the girls had decided to leave anyway. Murray was told by the manager of the dance hall to either leave right away, or he would call the police. Murray had staggered out after the girls with his trousers below his bum-cleavage. Everybody was too drunk to even notice Murray following the girls out. But somebody from another regiment had. Blumer had drank a lot of beer, like the rest and after about half an hour he had decided to make his way back to barracks. Luckily for him Dalton who was also under the influence had decided to go with them. They both had an alibi for what was about to unfold. The next morning they were not woken by reveille, but by several Police officers, a plain clothes detective, followed by highly alarmed RSM and CO bursting into the barrack room. After a lot of questioning, that would be a one on one interview later on with the Detective; It turned out that Murray was under lock and key at the police station under suspicion of rape and murder. This is where Blumer had learnt his first lesson in 'never jump to conclusions until the evidence you have is damning'. And he would learn this from listening to DC Lawrence's final summery of the case with the regiments CO.

All of them had been questioned by DC Lawrence and Blumer was one of the last to be interviewed. He had told the DC the same story as Dalton. But the inspector kept grilling him anyway. 'Had he seen Murray leave after the girls; had anybody else left, shortly after Murray?' To which the answer



was a simple no. But then just as the inspector was about to let him go, something completely surprising happened. Three loud raps on the CO's door and a young PC entered. Blumer would remember every word that he had said loud and clear. 'I think we've got a witness sir.' The DC raised his eyebrows and simply said, 'Good, at last.'

It turned out that a lady cleaner who had been watching from a first floor window opposite the dance hall had indeed seen the girls leave, and then saw Murray stagger out with his trousers hanging low. But this is where the crucial piece of evidence swung right back in Murray's favour. The cleaner had told the police that another man had followed Murray out and had been watching his every move. And the cleaner had a very good description of the man. The girls had chatted for a while and then had departed. Four had turned left and were followed by Murray. But one of them had turned right and the man who had been observing Murray had suddenly lost interest in Murray and had followed the girl. Murray had been found in an alley by dustmen at five o'clock in the morning sound asleep. And the body of the girl was found twenty minutes later by the same dustmen in an alley very close to where Murray had been found.

The police now knew that they were looking for a man of about six feet, with ginger hair and a heavy jaw. The cleaner had even noticed that he had an ugly scare that crossed his upper and lower lips. The police had then interviewed the staff of the dance floor and sure enough a barmaid remembered serving a man of that very description, but she had not seen him leave, due to the pandamonium that was going on. The cleaner had identified the man straight away in a line-up and the whole regiment breathed a sigh of relief when the man confessed to the crime under careful scrutiny by DC Lawrence.

On the morning that DC Lawrence held the last meeting with the CO, Blumer had had the good fortune to be working from the CO's office as a runner and messenger, due to all of the high drama that the regiment had undergone. Blumer would remember the exchange between DC Lawrence and the CO word for word. It would be indelibly stamped on his subconscious mind for the rest of his life. 'When were you sure that Murray wasn't guilty, inspector?' 'I wasn't, but I did not think there was hardly enough evidence against him. It comes down to a process of elimination, deduction and the evidence has to be damning against the perpetrator. Circumstantial evidence is simply not enough in a case like this. We owe a lot to the witness. And of course the perpetrator confessed to the crime.'

What would happen next would hit Blumer like a sledge hammer. When Murray had been released and returned to barracks the rest of the boys had turned out to greet him. But Murray was in no mood for consolation. He simply stood there and said, with tears rolling down his cheeks. 'You BASTARDS! You all thought I did it, didn't you? Not one of you even doubted for one minute that I might be innocent. Not one of you.'

Blumer had become perplexed and felt a terrible pang of guilt in his solar-plexus. Because he knew that Murray had been right. What if Murray had been convicted of a crime that he did not commit? A long prison sentence and a terrible cross to bear for the rest of his life. There was no more doubt in Blumer's mind about what he wanted to do now. His calling had been signed and stamped in his mind. He wanted to follow in the footsteps of somebody like DC Inspector Mike Lawrence. There would be no reluctance to join the police. He would start right at the bottom and doggedly work his way up. One of the most ingenious and dedicated murder investigators

that there would ever be had been born.

As soon as he left the army he had joined the a police acadamy and had passed all of the training with flying colours. A bobby on the beat would be his first excursion into police work around London.

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## CHAPTER 8

The visit from Tristan had done him good and he would be interested to hear readers reaction to his stance on the sweetshop murders and the stripper murders. The sweet shop killer was when Blumer had first met the notorious East London gang boss Harry Parkes. Because the second victim had been Harry Parkes's ten year old nephew. Parkes had come to visit him at the station without any bodyguards. And much to Blumer's surprise he found Parkes quite congenial and very grateful to Blumer. He was also angry and confused as how could anybody could even contemplate doing something so heinous. Blumer had given Parkes a brief rundown of how he had nailed Stewert Briggs for the murders. Parkes had listened intently; looking intrigued and galvanized at the same time. The police had eliminated the prime suspect Ian Cummings, a serial child molester, because he had an alibi and witnesses. He had been in a AirFix model shop in Edmunton; exactly at the same time as the sweetshop owner had served Stephen, Parkes's nephew. When the first victim had disappeared Cummings had been at home with his mother. Cummings had just completed a two year sentence in Wandsworth Prison for molesting two eight year old boys and was taking a low profile. He had suffered two years in Wandsworth, being battered and beaten up. And he did not want any more of that. Blumer had doubted that Cummings had done the murders anyway, because whoever had strangled the boys must have had big and very strong hands. Cummings hands were delicate and slim; like a pianist, or a muscians.

At the time Blumer had nailed Briggs, the police had gone through the motions of hauling in any known sex offenders, comparing fingerprints and endless interviews with anybody

who lived in the immediate area. All the police had was a large handprint on a dustbin lid, complete with thumb and fingerprints. None of the fingerprints that the police had matched the prints that were found on the dustbin lid. Blumer had gone down by himself to the first scene of the crime with his polaroid camera in hand. The boy's body had been found in an alley that ran between two terraced houses. There had been a lot of junk in the alley; broken prams, a rusty old bike and discarded old beds. The sweetshop owner had already been interviewed and he had known the boy well. He even remembered the time that the boy had entered the shop. But the boy had been alone and nobody else had entered the shop while he was in there. Blumer negotiated the junk through the alley and started taking a few snaps, until he came to the spot where the body was found. He quickly established that the boy must of been carried over the junk, because none of it had been disturbed. But the dead give away was that the grass underneath the junk was all yellow. Green grass and tall weeds were growing undisturbed through the junk and all around it. He had then established by walking slowly that to get to the sweetshop from the boy's house, which was only about two hundred yards away, and just around the corner that it would have taken about two minutes either way. Whoever had abducted and killed him must live close and be familiar with the boy's movements.

The body had been sighted by an elderly lady who had seen it when she had opened her kitchen window that looked out into the alley. The murder was more than likely planned and premeditated. So near and yet so far. Blumer had not taken much notice of the tall, thin young man as he passed by with his hands plunged deep inside of the pockets of his over-sized donkey jacket. But the the second time that he would see him; not only would he take notice, he would think that possibly the police may have their first suspect. The only thing now was

for Blumer to establish his identity and find out where he lived, without him being aware that he was on Blumer's radar.

The scene of the second murder had been only four streets away and as with the first scene the body had been found in an alley by a tramp who had been rummaging around in the dustbins. The tramp had seen the body further back in the alley, at the foot of the dustbin that had the hand print on the lid of it. There was no doubt that it was the same handprint as the handprint that had throttled the boys, because those hands had literally crushed the boy's gullets and the fingers had caused severe bruising to the backs of their necks. The second boy had been into a nearby sweetshop by himself and the owner had stipulated that he had not seen anybody else about. The only indicator that the police had to go on was that the boys had entered the shops at about the same time; seventeen thirty.

It had been drizzling as Blumer had parked his car, just along the road from the second murder scene. Luckily the rain had stopped and the windscreen wipers had cast off the remaining rain from windscreen. He had just picked up his polaroid camera from the passenger seat and was about to climb out of the car when he saw a figure walking towards him. Blumer had become perplexed as the figure stopped right in front of the alley and looked along it. He then produced a packet of cigarettes and a lighter from the pockets of his donkey jacket. Blumer immediately took stock of the man's hands. Big, chunky hands of a man who probably did hard labour. He had thin bandy legs and a narrow thin face, with high cheek bones. The DA haircut that he had, must have been groomed with a great deal of care and attention. It was definitely the same man who had passed him the previous day, close to the first murder scene.

Blumer picked up his camera Snap, Snap, Snap in slow

succession. Three photos of a cold, callous killer. The man then walked on and turned into another street without even noticing Blumer sitting in his car. Blumer had simply patted his camera and said to himself, 'I think we may be on to something'. The next evening Blumer had parked his car further back along the road at about the same time; seventeen twenty. And sure enough the same man came walking along the street. He only had glanced along the alley this time, before turning into the side street. Blumer quickly got out of the car and started to follow the man. Fortunately he was only strolling along and Blumer could follow him from a safe distance, without being noticed by him. He then turned into another street and about eight doors along turned into a terraced house. Blumer had waited for a couple of minutes and then walked by the house and deftly noted the address, 8 King George Road. At a glance he had noticed that all of the curtains were drawn across all of the windows. Blumer decided that he must use a crafty ploy and use it quickly.

When he went home that evening he had already worked out his ploy and would use it the next morning. And the ploy would work far better than he could have expected. He took a large envelope and wrote on it Mrs E Murdoch, 6 King George Road on it, and then applied a stamp to it. The next morning he had knocked on the door of 6 King George Road at just after ten o'clock, holding the envelope. An elderly lady had answered the door and Blumer had said, 'Sorry to disturb you Madam. I only live a couple streets away and this was delivered yesterday. Rather than give it back to the post office I thought I may as well drop it off to you as I'm passing. Mr E Murdoch I presume?'

The woman looked puzzled and then said, 'No that's not me, my name is Mrs Agnes Osbourne. Thanks anyway she said. Blumer then said casually, 'No problem I'll give back to the

post office. Could it be for next door?’

The woman replied, ‘No, that’s Stewert and Sue and their name is Briggs. There’s nobody there anyway. He works at Sheers and Gould building supplies and she works in Woolworths.’

Blumer could barely believe his luck. Sheers and Gould was only in Mile End and was within walking distance from where he was and he could get there there within fifteen minutes. ‘Thank you Madam, sorry to to disturb you.’

His next ploy would be to go to Sheers and Gould and ask about buying guttering. But he did not even have to enter the gates to go to the office, because he immediately saw Stewart Briggs driving a fork-lift truck in the yard. His DA haircut must be his pride and joy, because it had been vey well groomed. He pulled up the truck in front of a pallet of bricks and pulled levers and clutches with big, strong, chunky hands.

An hour later he informed Dick Taylor that a man by the name of Stewart Briggs of 8 King George Road may be a person of interest. Taylor had known John Blumer for many years and he knew that man never made statements, unless he really thought that he was onto something.

Briggs had been picked up by the police as he was about to enter his front door. He was immediatly taken to the station and finger printed. The prints had matched the prints on the dustbin lid and the dead boy’s throats. He was read his rights and was charged under suspicion of first degree murder. His young wife Sue did not have a clue about Brigg’s murderous altar ego and had to be counselled by a police woman, because she had a complete breakdown when Briggs was arrested.

Dick Taylor could barely hide his delight about Briggs being charged, because just like Blumer he knew all to well that Briggs would have more than likely struck again. They both



could never know a particular criminal mind. But they both knew criminal profiling and certain patterns of modus operandi that a killer might use and leave behind, like a trail. And they both knew that serial killers would usually carry out their darstardly deeds until they were either caught, or killed. At the time of their meeting, Harry Parkes had told Blumer that if he ever needed help in any way, about anything, to look him up. Blumer had not taken much stock of this offer. After all, what could a well seasoned murder investigator and a top gangland boss ever have in common? Blumer could never have known that he would need Harry Parkes later on. Because Blumer would have to go underground as a private investigator, if he stood even a dog's chance of catching a killer that defied profiling, defied any motive and worst of all defied description. He would have to rely on Harry Parkes in the near future. But he did not know it.

Blumer had tried to take a low profile after the sweetshop killer was caught and charged before he could strike again. But the press wanted to know the details of the case and how Briggs had been bagged so quickly. Blumer's name was mentioned as the prime mover and the officer who had finally nailed Briggs. This did not sit well with him, because the press had no idea of the sheer groundwork that had to be done by the police to catch a cunning and devious killer. They only wanted sensational and spectacular headlines to grab their readers' interest. But worse still for Blumer was yet to come, regarding the press.

The stripper killer had struck twice and the killer had had a very pronounced modus-operandi. The naked bodies of two strippers had been found within ten days of each other. One on Clapham Common and one Hampstead Heath. They had both been viscerously tortured and finally garroted. Domestic murders and robberies that had gone horribly wrong, ending in

murder, could never grab the public's attention like these two separate terrible murders. John Blumer was about to become famous and he did not know it. The press had got his name and would literally run with it. His name would be on the front pages of all major tabloids. The two women had come from completely different backgrounds; Katherine Colby had been a professional stripper for years. She had worked for a lot of strip clubs; two were partly owned by Harry Parkes. Lisa Calhoun had only worked as a stripper to pay her rent and clear her debts and she worked as a stripper under duress. The police had interviewed the staff at the clubs where they had worked and terrified strippers that had worked at the clubs. The police had quickly established that they had not known each other, because Lisa Calhoun had only worked for one club that catered for a clientele that were more affluent.

Katherine Colby had worked a circuit of six clubs; two of which were in Soho. The police had also established that both of them had been targeted and their murders had been planned beforehand. The perpetrator may or even know them, or befriend them. The only thing that they had in common was that they both had lived alone and they had been basically private in their general routines. The perpetrator may well know this.

The chances that their abductions, torture and finally their murders were unlikely to have been random were put to one side. Dick Taylor had quickly put together a team. Plain clothes officers had been detailed off to frequent strip clubs and try to establish if they could notice anything, or anybody acting strangely when any of the shows were in full swing. Another team were had been detailed off to interview known sex offenders and their whereabouts at the time of the murders.

A man named Hammond name had cropped up, because he had a reputation beating women up. And also any of his

girlfriends. He also had had a habit of frequenting strip clubs. But he had been dismissed as a suspect, because he was just coming to the end of a sentence in Wormwood Scrubs for beating up his last girlfriend; a prostitute. Blumer had gone to both of the woman's flats with a team of forensics to try to find any fingerprints, or try to find anything that may lead them to the perpetrator. There had been a marked difference as to how the girls had lived. Katherine Colby's flat had been cramped, untidy. Unwashed pots, pans and dishes had been left in the kitchen sink. Stinking rubbish and rotten fruit had been left in a rubbish bin. Dirty washing had been left strewn on the bathroom floor. The bedroom and living room had not been cleaned, or tidied for possibly weeks. It looked as though Katherine Colby rarely had visitors. The team had spent four hours examining the flat, but could not find anything that could draw their attention to anything that could be deemed as suspect. Blumer and the team had found Lisa Calhoun's flat the complete opposite and it became apparent that Lisa Calhoun had been quite sophisticated. An expensive stereo unit, a collection of classical records, a comfortable sofa with two matching arm chairs, a polished glass coffee table. She had kept her flat in an immaculate condition. The bathroom, kitchen and bedrooms were spotless and there had not been a speck of dust anywhere. She also had kept a bureau of classical books. And she must have loved Shakespeare because she had his complete works on display.

It was when Blumer had been looking at her book display that he had noticed a book that had been lying in front of the other books. Anton Chejov. He had opened the book and immediately noticed that it was a library book. And the name and address of the library had been stamped on the inside cover. Lisa Calhoun may have been a solitary woman, but she did visit at least one library. Blumer had got his first lead.

It had been a chilly November morning when Blumer had walked through the doors of the library. The woman who had approached him had been pleasant and charming when asking him if she could help him. He had asked her where classical books could be found and she had told him on the first floor. There were only a few people milling about, as Blumer climbed the stairs to the first floor. He had begun meandering around, looking at the books when he saw him. In the corner of the room a small, birdlike man was sitting at a desk and writing on a pad. As Blumer walked over he noticed that the mans face was full of terrible acne and his glasses were so big that they could barely perch on his nose and ears. He had only noticed Blumer when he had stopped in front of his desk.

Blumer would remember their conversation word for word. ‘Can I help you, Sir?’ ‘Yes, can you show me where the Tolstoy and Anton Chejov books are?’ ‘Yes right at the end, top shelf of the right hand bureau.’

Blumer then pulled out the Anton Chejov book that he had taken from Lisa Calhoun’s flat and placed it on the table. ‘I’ve come to return this. The lady who booked it out is no longer with us.’ Bingo, a slight twitch crossed his lower lip.

Blumer then produced his ID and Bingo, the man cringed slightly. ‘My name is Detective Inspector Blumer of the Met. I’m am trying to trace anybody who may have known a Miss Lisa Calhoun and establish anybody who may have known her and at the time of her abduction and murder, before her body was found on Hampstead Heath.’ The man had quickly composed himself and his reaction was just a little bit too staged, bordering on theatrical for Blumer.

‘Yes, I knew Lisa. She would come here every week, or so to take a book, or two.’

‘When was the last time she visited here?’

‘About two days before she drew that book’.

Blumer looked at the date on the book and sure enough the dates matched. ‘Did you hear what had happened to her?’

‘I did, I did, such a terrible thing.’

‘Did you know that she worked as a stripper in the evenings?’ Bingo, the man had to think and digest what Blumer had said.

‘No, no. She told me that she worked as a hostess at a club. I did not know that she worked as a stripper.’

‘So you knew her quite well then?’

‘We both shared an interest in Anton Chejov and would sometimes discuss his work, that’s all really.’

‘Can I have your name and address sir, just for our records? You are probably one of the last people who had seen her alive. I doubt if we will require anymore information from you.’

Then for Blumer a dead give-away happened. The man visibly relaxed and said, ‘Yes, my name is Hugh Porter. My address is 26 Lime Kilnes Road, Bethnal Green.’

‘Thank you for your help, Sir, hope you appreciate that we have to trace any last movements of a murder victim.’

‘Yes of course, of course glad to be of help.’ As Blumer had walked down the stairs and back out into the street he had already began contemplating a ploy. He would pay a visit to 26 Lime Kilnes Road while Hugh Porter was at work.

Chief Inspector Dick Taylor may have been a stickler for rules and regulations, but he also had another side which Blumer had always liked and respected. He could lambast a young PC for not following procedures. He could shout at a team of investigators for not keeping him up to date with a

serious case. But he also had a trait which Blumer secretly called his 'mother duck complex'. Dick Taylor really cared about the welfare of his staff. If he could be deemed as a conflicted man, then he was a conflicted man in a good sense. But with the stripper murders Blumer had sailed dangerously close to the wind with him. Breaking and entry without a search warrant, was just asking for trouble. And people above Dick Taylor had begun to ask questions, and he did not buy Blumer's cock-and-bull story that he had found Hugh Porter's front door open and had gone in looking for him, for one moment.

From the moment Blumer had spoken to Porter he could sense that he was onto something. The very next morning he had gone to Porter's address to take note of what time he went to work; he also had his polaroid camera with him. He had been just in time. Five minutes after Blumer had parked his car opposite the house, Porter had come out of the front door and shut it behind him. Blumer picked up the camera from the front seat. Just as he turned around Blumer snapped him and it was a good shot. Porter had not seen him and appeared to have been in a hurry.

After Porter had gone Blumer had got out of his car and walked up to the the front door of the house. Perfect, only a basic Yale lock. He should have no problem picking it, or using his other improvised tool. He then went around to the back alley that ran along the line of terraced houses and went through the back gate. Perfect, no nosy neighbours looking out of windows. All of the windows were shut and the back door was locked. As he climbed back into his car and drove off; he already had his plan ready for the next day. At twenty past nine Porter did the same routine as he did the day before and Blumer had waited five minutes before he moved. He made his way to the front door and rang the doorbell. No dogs

barked and nobody came to the door. He then pulled a plyable strip of plastic, with a slight lip on the end and slipped it through the bolt and the door jar. The lip hooked around the end of the bolt and he carefully pulled it. Bingo, the door opened.

He had to move fast. First he checked all of the downstairs rooms; living room, kitchen and backroom. He then went upstairs and checked the bathroom and toilet and two bedrooms. It was then that he had noticed a door to a room that would have faced the back of the house and the door had a hasp and padlock on it. He pulled at the padlock and it had not been fully snapped shut. He pulled the padlock open and opened the door. When he entered the room he had to stop and try to gather his thoughts, because what he was seeing mortified him. He was looking at what could easily pass as a medieval torture chamber. There were chains on the walls and various implements and gadgets that could only be used for sadistic torture. There was even a stretching rack in the middle of the room, with a wheel rigged to it. On a table stood a large plastic bottle with a big packet of cotton wool beside it. He opened the bottle and sniffed it; morphine. With trembling hands he pulled his camera from his jacket pocket and started taking snaps. It had been difficult for Blumer to digest the sheer horror at what he was looking at, but when he did he muttered 'Gotcha! you bastard. You sadistic murdering bastard'.

An hour later when he went to see Dick Taylor in his office, Taylor immediately noticed that Blumer was visibly shaken and told him to sit down. Blumer had almost blurted out 'Hugh Porter of 26 Lime Kilns Road. My God, Dick, I can't believe what I saw around there. Back room, upstairs.' He then pulled the photos from his jacket pocket and put them on Taylor's desk. Taylor visibly gagged and his face went white

when he studied the photos and just like Blumer he had difficulty digesting the full horror of what he was looking at. Taylor, despite his shock had moved fast.

A warrant for Porter's arrest was immediately actioned. A team of detectives, forensic staff and PC's were detailed off to go straight to 26 Lime Kilns Road. He had given Blumer a direct order not to go with the team. He had never seen Blumer traumatized like this. Indeed, Blumer himself had been thinking that maybe perhaps his time as a murder detective was coming to the end of its tether after this.

The detectives had nabbed Porter while he was still at work. The other team had descended onto the house in force. The police had quickly established Porter's modus-operandi. Katherine Colby had lived close to Clapham Common and Lisa Calhoun had lived close to Hampstead Heath. A big old Volvo car was found locked in Porter's garage. Rope, cotton wool and a half empty bottle of morphine was found in the boot. He must have followed them as they left the clubs where they had been working, rendered them unconscious with morphine. And then dumped them in the back of his car. Then after carrying out his dastardly deeds with them, had dumped their bodies. Mug shots had been taken of Porter and then distributed around the clubs for the staff to ID him. And sure enough he had been seen in the club where Lisa Calhoun had worked and three where Katherine Colby had worked.

The only peculiarity about him was that he had appeared to have paid very little interest in the strip shows. With all of the damning evidence against him Porter had been read his rights and charged with first degree murder. After Stewart Briggs had been tried and convicted Blumer had adopted a peculiar habit. A plastic packet of expensive red silk handkerchiefs that Pamela had bought him for his birthday, that he had never opened had given an him an idea. He would wear one in his



top pocket, every time that he had caught a killer. The thought that an expensive handkerchief planted in the top pocket of an off-the-peg John Collier suit may appear a little odd had not even occurred to him. He would do the same when, when Hugh Porter had been finally been tried and convicted. Pamela had found this amusing at the time. Just like she had found his penchant for wearing expensive brogue shoes with an off-the-peg John Collier suit amusing. She had quietly thought that there may be a hint of vanity behind this, although she never voiced her opinion. Yes indeed Blumer was proud of catching cold blooded serial killers before they could strike again. It was like wearing a badge of honour.

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## CHAPTER 9

### HAMBURG GERMANY

**JANUARY 1975.**

The team of builders, labourers and plumbers gladly left the Ferry after a very stormy trip from Harwich. A lot of them knew each other from working on various building projects. When this job had cropped up in Hamburg all present had jumped at the chance, because they could earn big money. To them it was just another building project anyway; it did not matter much to any of them whether it was in Germany, or the UK. The giant they only knew as Charles Cleverly had joined them right at the last minute, before they left Harwich. None of them had worked with him before and none of them had ever met him. This had suited Leon Boyd very well; he did not need friends. All he needed was to earn big money for a few months.

**DUSSELDORF GERMANY. MARCH 1975.**

**THE VISITOR.**

**(THE PREDATOR IS CLOSE.**

**THE PREDATOR IS STALKING ITS PREY).**

The Visitor is well hidden in a thick copse of trees that is only about ten yards from one of the paths that line the park. The girl should be passing by within the next ten minutes or so. The visitor had been stalking the girl for over week and had a very good idea about her routine. She would return the dog to the old lady, who lived by the edge of the park, after taking it

for a walk. She would then pass by the copse of trees, on her way home. The visitor hated dogs. Human beings could easily be dodged and duped, but dogs couldn't. The last time the girl had passed with the dog, the damn thing had barked and growled towards the copse, because it could sense, or smell that the visitor was hiding in there. And sure enough here she comes. Damn; a young couple are coming the other way and will pass the girl just as she passes where the visitor is lurking. Never mind tomorrow she will probably pass at the same time. The one thing that the visitor has in abundance was patience, incredible patience. The visitor watched the girl as she passed. She was beautiful, stunningly beautiful. But that mattered very little, because the girl had something that the visitor not only wanted, but needed.

## **HAMBURG GERMANY**

### **SEPTEMBER 1975**

The crew of labourers and builders piled onto the ferry. They were all in high spirits and most of them had been drinking. They had finished the contract a month early and had been paid very well, plus a bonus. Mainly thanks to the giant they only knew as Charles Cleverly. The man could shovel sand and cement into cement mixers all day without tiring. It had been pointless for anybody to try and befriend him, because he would only offer a blunt rebuff. And at dinner times he would usually have his nose stuck in a bible. While some of them had visited the red light district and various pubs, Charles Cleverly would always stay in the hostel. But he would disappear on Friday evenings and turn up again late on Sunday. Nobody would dare ask him where he had been, and assumed that he may of gone off on religious meetings. Boyd had been carefully building an image. When they had docked at

Harwich, Boyd would discard the names Charles Cleverly and William Wiseman and move to London and go back to being Leon Boyd.

He now had enough money to move about as he pleased. If he could have known the fate that awaited him in London as Leon Boyd, he would have never gone there. But fate moves in strange ways. Even men as fiendish and diabolical as Leon Boyd could meet their nemesis. And Boyd would meet his own nemesis in the most bizarre and peculiar way.

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## CHAPTER 10

### SHOREDITCH. EAST LONDON. FEBRUARY 1976.

When Blumer entered his office the next day he had felt optimistic. He had not only been buoyed by the visit from Tristan and the news that *Behind The Crime* was about to be published, but there was something else. He thought for a while and then it had dawned on him what it was; Evonne March. Yes he could actually feel deep empathy for someone who was suffering a terrible injustice, that had nothing to do with a murder investigation. As for the news of Pamela's demise he had felt quite indifferent, for some reason. Things were looking up for him. If he made some money from the sale of his book; the first thing he would do was have his house renovated. It was then that there was a knock on the door and a smartly dressed man in his mid fifties entered.

“Good morning Mister Blumer. So glad I found you Do you remeber me by any chance?”

Blumer did indeed remember him. He had been the father of Leon Boyd's last victim Susan Marshall, who Boyd had reputedly thrown from the fifth floor office window, before reputedly throwing himself out.

“Yes of course. You're the father of Susan Marshall. What can I do for you?”

Then man then produced two news papers one old and one new and laid them out on Blumer's desk and Blumer immediately recognised the headline on the old one. THE DOOR IS STILL AJAR.

“Mister Blumer please hear me out. I know that you were very shabbily treated when you were removed from my daughters murder case. And I know that you were convinced that this monster Boyd had an accomplice. And you were forthright with your opinion.”

Blumer thought for a while and decided to correct the man.

“No. I said that Leon Boyd may of had an accomplice and there may be a couple of anomalies however little that should be looked at before the case was closed.”

“Do you still maintain that stance? Boyd was guilty without doubt. But how could have anybody exited the building when all of the door were locked and covered by the police.”

“That is a mystery. But how could Boyd have got inside the building in the first place? The girl on the reception told the police that she had only left the reception for ten minutes to go to the toilet. How could a man of Boyd’s size hide in the building anyway. George Enright the caretaker had checked all of the offices, before he locked the front door. And how could Boyd have known that your daughter was working late, as she usually did on Friday nights. Unless he had been watching her every move for weeks. The cleaners had started work at six o’clock after George Enright had secured the building. Boyd was a very clever and devious man. And he moved very quickly when he targeted a victim. But this case had been different from the rest.”

The man then pointed to an article in the new newspaper and Blumer carefully read it. A girl had recently been abducted while taken her dog for a walk at Clacton on Sea. An elderly man who saw what happened, because he was walking his own dog along the same path, about fifty yards behind her, had said that somebody, or something with immense strength had pulled the girl from the path and had dragged her up through

the dense bushes that ran up the side of the cliff. The small dog had run off in terror. The old man had not caught sight of the abductor because the abductor had been covered by the bushes and it had all happened so quickly.

Boyd was dead alright, because Blumer had seen his gigantic carcass impaled through his back on the pointed railings. Then it had occurred to Blumer could Boyd have been working with somebody that had the similar immense strength as him. The way that Boyd had avoided the police and witnesses had been a mystery. It would have been extremely difficult for man of that size by any measure to not get noticed. The man carried on talking.

“Susan was all I had, Mister Blumer. Could you please go down to Clacton and look into this case yourself. I’ll pay you plus expenses. If I can do one thing to help bring bastards like this to justice, then at least I’ve done something.”

Blumer felt a sudden pang of empathy for this man. He must be desperate.

“I’ll take on the case Mister Marshall. But I’ve got two cases to investigate, before I can help you and they could take sometime. I can only hope that I can find a clue, or lead to go by. But I can’t guarantee I will find anything. I’ll phone you when I’ve wound these two up and we can take it from there I’m a man of my word and that’s all I can offer you.”

“Thank you Mister Blumer, that would be fine. The girls name was Sian Ellis and she lived at an address in Wellsley Road. I’ve been in contact with her landlady, a widow, Mrs Edith Burns. She was very distraught as you can imagine. I have also been in contact with the only witness, Mr Henry Baker of Penfold Road. He sounded like a pleasant chap and was very helpful.”

“Well as soon as I wind up these two cases I’ll give you a call. My sentiments are the same as yours Mister Marshall. That’s why stuck to chasing these bastards for so many years. The only real reward for for me at the end of the day was to catch them and bring them to justice. My only conditions are that I work alone and only you and I, plus this Mister Baker and Mrs Burns, know what I’m up to. The fewer people the know the better. I have my reasons for this.”

The two investigations had taken longer than Blumer had anticipated and after completing them and giving the results to his clients he had felt dog tired. The first one was a Supermarket Manager had suspected that the staff who worked in the warehouse on the night shift were stealing goods. He had been correct, but it was only the supervisor. The goods would be delivered during the day by lorry and the daytime supervisor would check the stock and sign the inventories. The night stores staff would start their shift at twenty three hundred and really work hard; transferring goods from the warehouse to the supermarket and stack the shelves. The supervisor would roll up his sleeves and join in the hard work with the other two workers. They would usually finish the work about an hour early and the supervisor would let the other two go home an hour early. This is when he would bring his car from around the corner, open the warehouse doors and put a few boxes of goods into the boot of his car, then lock up the warehouse and drive home. Blumer had photographed him doing this for several nights, to establish exactly how he had operated and so there was no grey areas that could be disputed.

The second case had been another marital problem. A woman had hired him to spy on her husband. She suspected that he may have had a secret paramour that he may be meeting, when he went away on one of his weekly business trips. She had been correct. Her husband would stop off at an



address close to their own home to visit his paramour. She had been shocked and bewildered to learn that his paramour had been a man. Tristan had been highly amused by this, Blumer had not. What a come down for a top murder detective.

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## CHAPTER 11

Blumer had given himself a two days break, after completing the two cases before telephoning Mister Marshall. It had been nearly six weeks since their meeting and he had wondered if the man would be still interested in pursuing the case; a case which would be extremely difficult to hook onto, with no apparant leads to go on. To his surprise Mister Marshall had been as determined and resolute as ever; a good sign. He had told Tristan about the case and Tristan had shared the same opinion as him. It would indeed be very difficult to hook up onto a case with no apparant leads. But Blumer being Blumer would take on any case anyway. And like a blood-hound that had sniffed blood, all he would need would be one lead and he would pursue a case to the bitter end. If Tristan could have forseen just what Blumer was letting himself in for, he probably would have strongly advised him against taking on the case in the first place.

When he got off of the train the first thing he noticed was the sign on the platform read Walton-On-The-Naze. He could have sworn that he had boarded the train to Clacton. He approached a uniformed station guard and asked.

“Excuse me, I thought this was the Clacton train?”

“You got on the wrong end of the train Sir. The train is split in half at Thorpe. The front half goes on to Clacton, the rear half goes on to Walton.”

Oh well, a good start he thought. He caught a taxi from outside the station. Spring was now in full bloom and the drive across Holland marshes was pleasant. Mr Marshall had booked him into a Bed & Breakfast in Carnarvan Road and the land

lady had been expecting him. The first thing that he did was drop off his suitcase in his room and then he decided to take a look around the town. The town was clean, spacious and very pleasant. But the thing that engulfed Blumer mostly was the fresh air, that drifted in off of the North Sea. He felt more awake and aware than he had been for a long time. The first thing that he would do in the morning would be firstly to visit the only witness, Mister Henry Baker of Penfold Road, and then the girl's landlady at Wellesley Road. That night he had visited a couple of pubs, the Marine and then the Imperial. He had only drank a couple of pints in each pub; after all he was on business, not pleasure.

The next day he found that Penfold Road was quite close and when he rang the doorbell of Henry Baker's house a dog barked. An elderly man opened the door and immediately knew who he was. A beautiful border collie was standing next to him looking up at Blumer with soulful eyes. Blumer was the first to speak.

“Good morning, my name is John Blumer. I am looking for Mister Henry Baker.”

The man although elderly immediately gave Blumer the impression of being alert and spritely.

“Good morning Mister Blumer, you've found him. Mister Marshall has told me all about you. And I must say I really have been looking forward to meeting you. Poor chap was very apprehensive the last time that he spoke to me over the phone. I know all about the terrible thing that happened to his daughter. To be honest with you, I still can't believe what I saw that day. The police interviewed me several times and I was beginning to think that they thought I may be a bit of a Walter Mitty character. That's the one thing I'm not. I did twenty four years in the Royal Navy and fifteen in the

merchant marines. I know what I saw and so did Bonnie.”

He then looked down at the dog, who appeared to know exactly what he had said.

“You won’t have that problem with me Mister Baker. Please tell me everything you saw.”

“I’ll do better than that Mister Blumer, I’ll take you there. That’s all I can do.”

The scene of the abduction had only been a ten minute walk away. They passed the pier and climbed some steps that led up to a path that ran halfway up along the steep cliff, which was thick with bushes and fauna. After walking along the path for about half a mile the man suddenly stopped.

“I didn’t bring Bonnie with us, Mister Blumer, because she frets and becomes distraught every time we pass this place now. Before this happened, this was our favourite walk. The girl had been walking about fifty yards in front of us, with her little dog. It was just before seven in the morning and I had seen her about the same time, several times with her dog. I wasn’t paying much attention and without any warning somebody, or something must have grabbed her and pulled her from the path. Her dog bolted and I could not believe what happened next. I ran forward, but Bonnie would not move. So I had to leave her. Although hidden by the bushes whoever had hold of her had not just dragged her up through the bushes, but had swept her up with incredible speed. I could see the tops of the bushes moving like a wave and then nothing. The girl had only screamed once and then silence. Please believe me Mister Blumer. I did not imagine what I saw. My God, what on earth was that Mister Blumer. What was that?”

“I believe you Mister Baker. What day was it and can you remember the exact time?”

“Sunday morning and about ten minutes to seven, give or take a few minutes.”

They walked forward to the exact point of the abduction and Blumer immediately noticed that the bush that the abductor had been hiding behind was situated slightly forward from the rest. But more interestingly there was a gap between the bushes that ran up to the top of the cliff. The abductor had known exactly where he was going to strike. Police tape was still draped all around the area, so Blumer decided to try something out a few feet along. Mister Baker interrupted his thoughts.

“I’ve gotta’ go now Mister Blumer. I need to take Bonnie for a walk, but nowhere near here. If you need anything else, just let me know. I feel a lot better for meeting you and I hope I’ve been able to help.”

“Thank for your time you Mister Baker. And I’ll let you know if anything turns up.”

After Mister Baker left Blumer entered the bushes slightly further along and began to climb up the cliff. And after clambering and negotiating the dense bushes, made his way to the top of the cliff; and it was hard work. When he had reached the top he had established that the cliff was of about a forty five degree angle and the fencing at the top was about four feet high. The fence had not been broken at the top, so the abductor had easily lifted the girl over the top of it. Blumer although puffed out felt a surge of adrenaline in his solar-plexus; the plot thickens.

The path that ran along the cliff-top was wide and to Blumers surprise the greensward was very wide and so was the road. He crossed the greensward and then the road. The closest road that led into Marina Parade was Lancaster Gardens. Lancaster Gardens was lined with expensive houses

that where set back from the road and had walls, trees and hedges that slightly obscured them. A very quiet residential area, with hardly any people, or traffic. The abductor could have easily parked a vehicle here and caried the girl to the vehicle. Without doubt the abduction was very well planned and executed. Ten minutes to seven on Sunday morning, there would have been nobody about. But what had struck Blumer the hardest was the sheer audacity of it.

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## CHAPTER 12

Mister Marshall had also been in contact with the cafeteria where the girl had worked and had told the Manageress that Blumer would pay them a visit. The Picador cafe was situated directly across the road from the main bus station. Blumer took note of this and wondered if many people using the buses, also used the cafeteria as a stop off place, while waiting for a bus. It was just after ten o'clock in the morning when he entered the café and he approached a middle aged woman dressed in a blue uniform, who was in the process of clearing tables.

“Excuse me, Madam. I would like to speak to the manageress.”

The woman looked at him and judging by her lack of surprise, she must have assumed who he was. She had pleasing smile and a cordial manner.

“That’s me. And I think I know who you may be. I’ve been very eager to meet you Mr Blumer. And please call me Shirley.”

“Well Shirley I hope I’m not inconveniencing you. You know that I have come to ask you a few questions about Sian Ellis. I believe Mister Marshall has given you the details of my visit.”

She then spoke to a waitress who was also clearing tables and the to another one who was serving some customers. Luckily the cafeteria was relatively empty.

“Linda, Melanie. Take over for a while I have do something. Please sit down Mister Blumer.”

Blumer sat down at a table and the manageress sat down opposite to him.

“Would you like a tea, or coffee.”

“No thank you. I’m trying to establish the last movements of Sian, before she was abducted. Is there anything that you can remember that was out of the ordinary; for example, had she been getting undue attention from a customer? Or did anybody unfamiliar start frequenting here that you had any reason to be suspicious of?”

“No, nothing. I know most of the regulars and they know I would not tolerate any nonsense. I try to look after my staff. Poor Sian. Who on earth could have abducted her and why? She had been working on the Saturday. She had been her usual self; bright and breezy and quite happy. I can’t believe what has happened, Mister Blumer. Neither can Linda and Melanie. And all of them would have come straight to me if they had any problems. We work like a team.”

Blumer thanked the manageress for her help and left. The last visit Blumer instinctively knew would be the hardest one. And when he rang the doorbell in Wellesly Road he was feeling a mix of trepidation and anxiety. An elderly lady answered the door. She was very smart and was somebody who obviously paid great attention to her personal appearance. Blumer introduced himself, but just like the manageress of the cafeteria she had been expecting him. Another smartly attired woman appeared behind her and Blumer introduced himself.

“Good afternoon. My name is John Blumer and I would like to speak with Mrs Burns.”

“Good afternoon Mister Blumer. I’m Edith Burns and this is my sister Delia. Mister Marshall has told me all about you. I must say I really have been anxious to meet you. Mister



Marsall told me that he had given you as much information as he could about Sian. I can only tell you what I know. Poor Sian, she was like a daughter to me. What can I tell you?"

"As much as you can Mrs Burns. And please take your time, I'm in no rush."

"Well, she had been living here just over a year. She was from Swansea and had no family. She had been brought up in childrens homes. And she would not talk too much about that. She always paid her rent early and worked hard for her money. She knew that I had a fondness for dogs and she bought me a yorkshire terrier for my birthday. She loved that dog as well and gladly took her on early morning walks. Beatrice was pampered by both of us. I know that she was happy in her job and she became attached to Shirley the manageress, and the other girls at work. Come with me and I'll show you her room."

When they climbed the stairs and entered the room Blumer knew he was in a room of a typical young girl. There was a big poster of David Cassidy on the wall, with a red heart drawn at the bottom, with the names Sian and David written inside. There were two pairs of platform shoes in the bottom of the open wardrobe. One pair had a broken heal. There was a wide brimmed floral hat. A few pairs of brightly coloured trousers. Several short skirts and an assortment of perfumes, eye shadows and lip-sticks on the dressing table. The bed was neatly made with a gigantic teddy bear propped up against the headboard. It was all too much for Mrs Burns and she broke down and wept openly.

"Mister Blumer. Please tell me that she has only been abducted and will be found alive and well. Please tell us you are going to find her and bring her home to us."

Delia took her sisters arm and led her from the room. When

Delia returned she spoke to him in a pained and emotional voice.

“She loved that girl, Mister Blumer. She could not have children of her own. Sian came into her life like bright sunshine. I’ve never seen my sister so happy over the past year. If there’s any chance of you finding out what happened to her, I’ll be very grateful to you.”

Delia then left the room to attend Edith. Blumer looked around the room. The poster of David Cassidy, with the heart at the bottom. The broken platform shoe. The floral hat. The dressing table, with the assortment of young womens make-up. It was then that he had his moment of self actualization, his apiphany, his eureka moment. He was looking at the world of a young girl, who had been cheated out of her life, before she had even the chance to find her feet. John Blumer now knew exactly who was. He now knew why he did what he did. There were no grey areas now. He had been born to track down evil, twisted killers. He looked around the room once again and muttered ‘Just give me a lead Sian. Just give me a hook’.

He would get his lead, his hook the next day. And he knew from the bottom of his heart that he had been right all along. Leon Boyd did have an accomplice. And that accomplice was close by. And that accomplice had some attachment to this town. But he would have to go back and go over the final moments of Leon Boyd’s life. He had to try to interview the head cleaner Brenda Horton, the cleaner Pat Thackery and hopefully the other two cleaners, Modesta Pons and Hilda Goddard. He had been thrown off the case before he had a chance to interview Modesta Pons and Hilda Goddard. But from what he knew, all of their statements matched very accurately, by what the detectives who had interviewed Pons and Goddard had told him. Leon Boyd seemed to have the

ability to appear out of nowhere, before he attacked. He had been seen in Dirty Dick's, which was just across the road from Woodin Shades; when finally a witness had seen him at the scene of his last but one crime. He must of somehow sighted, or was alerted about the drunken girl leaving Woodin Shades. But how did he know how and when to target her? Because he had been working in concert with an inelligent and patient accomplice.

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## CHAPTER 13

Blumer had been due to catch the train back to London the next day. He had to tell Mister Marshall that he had not found any clues to hint at anything about the disappearance of Sian Ellis. He had decided to take a walk along the pier and get some fresh air. He took a casual stroll to the end of the pier. It was early in the season and there were few people about. It was on the way back that he noticed it and he had to stop dead in his tracks. Across the water about a mile away stood a solitary Martello Tower. And he immediately knew where he had seen it before. He kept walking slowly, without taking his eyes off of the Martello Tower. Then he stopped abruptly and muttered to himself, 'Here, just here'. He then did a quick search of his memory. 'Yes, yes, yes,' he said out loud.

When he had been walking around the building where Leon Boyd and Susan Marshall had met there demise, he had come down from all five floors, checking each emergency fire exit door on every floor. Every one had opened with ease, when the bar was pushed. Only the ground floor door was difficult to open. The bar was stiff and the springs on the door were a lot stronger than the others. And when the door was released it would slam shut, with force. He had just released the ground floor door emergency fire fire exit door, when he saw it. Amongst the rubbish around the foot the door, under some sweet paper wrappings, empty cigarette packets and screwed up old newspapers was a post card. He had picked it out from the rubbish and had looked at it. It was an old postcard taken in black and white. And it was the same scene that he was now looking at. The same Martello tower. The back was yellow with age and the name Claude was written in faded blue ink on it. And that was all.

He kept walking and then he noticed at the foot of the Steel Stella a plaque. He read the inscription on the plaque and felt as though he had been punched in the solar-plexus. IN MEMORY OF CLAUDE KINSKI. A GOOD AND NOBLE MAN 1969. Blumer had finally got his first clue and he almost capered around on the spot. He composed himself and muttered, ‘You bastard, you’ve come home. Did you deliberately leave a clue, or what?’ He had kept the postcard and he had never even thought why. And then it came to him with great clarity. The postcard had a slight crease down the middle. It had been used to keep the fire door ajar. Somebody had let Leon Boyd in through that door. And that same person must have somehow left the fifth floor exit door ajar, where Susan Marshall had been working. Why had he not taken stock of this at the time. He had to get back to London and report to Mister Marshall about his findings. But first he must find out who Claude was and what had happened to him. He went around to the people who were operating the Steel Stella. They were youngsters and probably didn’t know. One of them pointed out an older man that was taking tickets at the Helter Skelter and told him.

“Ask old Tom over there, on the Helter Skelter. He’s worked here for years.”

Blumer walked over to the man and introduced himself and the man immediately became visibly alert by Blumer’s question.

“I have noticed the plaque on the Steel Stella. Who was Claude. If you don’t mind me asking?”

“Course not. Claude was one of the nicest geezers that I’ve ever met in my life. He used to work on the maintainance on the Stella, until the terrible accident. He was working late, right at the top and must of slipped, or tripped. His safety

harness just snapped. All I can tell you that it was blowing a real hooley that day, gale force and he should not have been up there. But he was so conscientious that he wanted to catch up with some repairs that had been put off for a few days, due to the high winds. He must have cleared the railings and fell into the sea. His body was found the next day, washed up on the beach, in front of the Martello Tower. His boss Eddie had told him and Albert not to go up there under any circumstances until the wind dropped.”

“Is Eddie still about and who was Albert? Anyway I can get in contact with them?”

“Sure, Eddie retired a few years ago, but I still have a few pints with him at the weekend, down the Osborne. He still lives up Arnold Road. Albert was the other bloke, who worked with Claude. He’s dead. Died a few years ago, cause’ he was a helpless alcoholic. And for some reason he hated Claude. I dunno’ why.”

“Do you have Eddie’s phone number, by any chance?”

“No, but he’s in the phone book. Edward Buckley, Arnold Road.”

Blumer thanked him and tried to find the nearest phone box. He found one in the town centre and thumbed through the phone book until he found the telephone number of Edward Buckley. He had already thought up a ploy and he hoped that Mister Buckley would take the bait. The phone rang several times before it was answered.

“Hello Eddie Buckley. Can I help you?”

“Good morning Mister Buckley, perhaps you can. My name is John Blumer. I’m a private investigator and I believe you used to be the boss of Claude Kinski, when he worked on the pier. I’ve been hired by a Mister Richard Marshall. It’s only a

case of an old friend that he had lost contact with. I'm afraid I'm going to have to tell Mister Marshall about the death of Mister Kinski. Mister Marshall is a businessman and it's only recently that he has retired completely."

Buckley thought for a while, to give himself time to digest what Blumer had said.

"Who told you about me? I don't get many phone calls these days."

"Tom, on the pier. He told me that you were the only one who had the most details of what happened to Mister Kinski. He was very helpful."

"Old Tom, I think he loved Claude as much as I did. Tell you what. Meet me at the Osborne Hotel about seven tonight. And I'll tell you about a bloke that was a diamond, as far as people go."

When Blumer entered the Osborne's bar just before seven, Eddie Buckley was already waiting for him at the bar, alone. Blumer guessed correctly who he was and approached him.

"Mister Buckley I presume?"

Although quite elderly himself, Eddie Buckley had the appearance of a man who had worked hard all of his life. His frame was slim, but strong. His hands were gnarled and strong, when he shook Blumer's hand.

"Glad to meet you Mister Blumer. Would you like a pint?"

"The drinks are on me, and please call me John."

He ordered two pints of Ben Truman and they went to sit down at a table. Eddie was the first to speak. And he had an air of melancholy of about him as he did so.

"Well what would Mister Marshall like to know about Claude, other than he's dead?"

“Please give me your opinion, as somebody who had been close to him.”

“He was an all round decent geezer. Great big bloke, six foot and fifteen stone.”

“Did he ever speak about his past to you at all?”

“Very rarely. He was Polish and he and his wife Eva were displaced persons at the end of the war, when the allies were fighting the Germans. All I can tell you is that he loved this country, but towards the end he had become dispondant and depressed.”

“Why was that?”

“For many reasons. One of them I could do something about. His private stuff he kept to himself. But I knew some of it from my wife, who was on friendly terms with Eva. But I had enough to contend with anyway. Albert, my other worker hated Claude, only because he was a displaced person. Albert had been in the army and had seen and a lot of action during the Normandy landings. He had been in the front line, in all the carnage and bloodshed. He had been badly concussed by a shell that had exploded close by, killing most of his mates.

“Albert drank too much and I had come close to firing him a couple of times. I told him that he must not drink while he’s working, under any circumstances. But when he was sober he did work very hard. The sarcastic remarks from Albert hurt Claude, but he took them well. Claude’s pain and suffering were more to do with Eva and their son Freddy. Eva died a few years ago.

“Freddy got into criminal activities and ended up in prison. He got involved with a petty crook called Hammond and they committed a series of burglaries that ended in disaster. My wife gave me the address of their neighbour, Mrs Burgess. Mrs



Burgess became very close with them and she would know a lot more than my wife would. You know women can go places with other women where men can't. Claude would spend a lot of time at work. I think because he dreaded going home and he would do any overtime that I could give him. The day he got killed I was off and I had forbade him and Albert to even think of going up there. My wife tells me that the main cause of friction between Claude and Eva was there son Freddy. He simply would not work and ponced off of them. I think Freddy was only six years old when they came to England.

“The final straw for Claude was when the police arrived at their house looking for Freddy. I believe the last job they did Hammond got caught and he grassed Freddy up, probably hoping he'd get a lighter sentence. What a disgusting character Hammond was. Eva told my wife that Hammond was also a bloody pervert. I only saw him once when he had the gall to come and ask Claude where Freddy was. Probably something to do with an upcoming job he had planned. He was a big horrible looking bastard, with a face like a pig. An arrogant, loud mouthed and bombastic thug. I took an instant disliking to him.”

“Do you think that Claude may have committed suicide?”

“No chance. When he fell he still had his harness hooked onto the frame of the Stella. What is still a bloody mystery to me was, there were fifty two links in the chains of the harnesses we used. There were twenty two on the half that was around Claudes's body and only twenty on the half that was still hooked onto the Stella. That means that ten of the links must have completely shattered. And the links of those harnesses are extremely strong.

“I'll give you Mrs Burgess's address in Jaywick. My wife told me that she still lives there. I think Mrs Burgess's son

knew Freddy quite well. I know that Hammond never came back here after he came out of prison. I heard he went back to London. He was not from around here. Freddy was never heard of, or seen again. Neither of them would have shown their faces around here again. The last burglary they tried was a complete balls-up. They tried to rob a leather goods shop in the town. There was a safe in the back and they had managed to wrench the door off with a crowbar. The owner of the shop lived upstairs and and caught 'em. Hammond must have smashed his face in. The poor bloke's face was in the newspapers. They caught Hammond, but Freddy escaped.”

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## CHAPTER 14

When Blumer arrived back in London; the first thing he did was to contact Richard Marshall and give him a complete and detailed report of his findings. The next thing he planned to do was to contact Mrs Alice Burgess and interview her. He also needed to find out the whereabouts of Dennis Hammond and his movements. He already knew that Hammond had been in the clear involving ‘the stripper murders’, because he was still in prison, when they were committed. He also wanted to find Freddy Kinski. Marshall had come to Blumer’s office and had listened to Blumer’s findings with guarded interest. They agreed that Blumer should travel down to Clacton again and try to glean as much information about this bizarre relationship between Dennis Hammond and the son of Eva Kinski Freddy. Blumer had not given Marshall too much hope that they would catch the killer of Sian Ellis. But Deep down inside the hunter in Blumer had been awakened and alerted. All he needed was another lead, or hook that would lead to another lead and hook. He would get his next lead and hook when he travelled down to an address in Seaway Jaywick Sands. And then all hell would break loose and he would become completely galvanized and focused on catching a killer that would push him beyond any boundries that he had known and experienced before.

Marshall had been extremely anxious for Blumer to pay a visiter to Alice Burgess. He had openly asked Blumer if Hammond may be a prime suspect. Blumer had simply told him that his main task concerning Hammond was to find out his whereabouts and movements recently. Freddy Kinski would be his second target and he must try to stay off of both of their radars and not let them find out he was looking for

them.

The night before Blumer was due to travel down to Clacton he had been sitting at home in his armchair, thinking, brooding and waying up scenarios and speculating about the relationship between Hammond and Kinski. Were they just partners in crime, or was there another aspect to their criminal relationship that had never been brought to light. It was then for some reason something suddenly occurred to him. He stood up from his armchair and went over to his bookshelf. The book that he was looking for was on the top shelf. It was a book that Pamela had bought him for his birthday. He pulled it out, sat down and studied the index list, until he found what he was looking for. He had read the whole book before and had not given it a second thought. But once he had studied and digested the contents of the piece he began to ponder the unthinkable. Claire Gleason, Nadine Barber, possibly Lisa Noonan and now possibly Sian Ellis. He read the whole piece again and slipped a piece of paper in the book as a marker, before returning it to the book shelf. Could people like that really exist?

This time that Blumer boarded the train to Clacton he made sure that he got on the half that went to Clacton and not Walton. He had remained in contact with Eddie Buckley by phone and Buckley's wife had arranged a meeting with Mrs Burgess with him. Buckley had given him directions to Seaway and as Blumer got off the bus at The Shel Drake pub he knew that the address was only a short walk away. When he got off of the bus, he turned right and made his way along Seaway. He noticed that the bungalows along the road were more like chalets, or holiday homes. Some were kept quite smart, others were quite delapidated and it was blatantly obvious that not the best of building materials had been used in their construction. As he approached the bungalow he was

looking for, he noticed a young man sitting on the banister of the porch, eyeing him inquisitively. The man had a well brycreemed DA and he was wearing a baggy, sailor styled shirt, tied at the middle. His Levis were so faded that they were nearly white. Blumer was the first to speak and the mans eyes lit up with delight.

“Good afternoon. My name is John Blumer. I would like to speak to Mrs Alice Burgess. I believe she has been expecting me.”

“You bet she has, or rather we bet she has. MUM, MUM! Guess who we who’s come to pay us a visit. The famous John Blumer.”

A woman appeared on the porch that looked like a cross between Widow Twankey and an antediluvian relic from a bygone era.

“Ah, at last. Eddie has told me all about you Mister Blumer. Dean and myself knew a lot about you anyway. We do read the newspapers, you know. Never thought we would have such an illustrious guest to our humble abode.”

“Blumer laughed despite himself. And thought, ‘I think I’m going to like Alice Burgess’.

“There’s nothing illustrious about me Mrs Burgess. A private detective’s life can be boring.”

“From all that I’ve read about you, there is nothing boring about you, Mister Blumer. I’m so glad you caught the stripper murderer by the way, because I used to be one you know; a stripper not a murderer, of course. Eddie told me that you would like to know as much as possible about what I know about Claude and Eva. I got to know Eva very well and she told me her most of her deepest, darkest secrets. Things that Claude, or whatever his real name was never knew.”

Blumer's interest immediately peeked. And he asked with guarded interest. "Well, if Claude's real was not Claude, do you know what other aliases he may have used?"

"And neither Claude or Eve were Polish. They were Rumanian. His second name was Avram and hers was Bucar. His first name was really Costin and hers was Stefana. I know what you may be thinking. That they may have changed there names, because they may have been trying to hide a criminal past. But nothing could be further from the truth. They had burned their boats and bridges. They were trying to put behind them a terrible and tragic past. It could take me a long time for me to tell you what I know. But now they are both dead, I would sincerely like to tell somebody a story that almost, yes almost beggars belief."

"Mrs Burgess, please start at the beginning and I will try not to interrupt."

"They originally came from a small village, not far from the Black Sea. From what Stefana told me the village and the people were still living in the dark ages. Poverty, superstition and the sheer hardship of just surviving from day to day was rife. The Infant mortality rate was really high for a small village and the people grew old well before their time. Costin, I'll call him Claude from now on wanted to get away and start a new life somewhere else. He had a friend who had made such a move and had found a job in Poland, working in a foundry. He had made contact with Claude and Claude had decided to join his friend in Poland. The only problem was he and Stefana had grown up together and they had fallen in love. Well it was love for Claude. Sefana, I'll call her Eva from now on, was a rather opportine and crafty young lady. She told me this herself. She also had the good fortune of being incredibly beautiful. I think she was a gipsy; big chestnut brown eyes, raven, shiny black hair and without putting too finer a point on

it she was extremely voluptuous. They both had planned that Claude would join his friend in Poland, because his friend had also found him a job in the same foundry. And when Claude had got himself established, he would send Eva enough money for her to join him.”

“This is where the fairy tale took a twist. A rather sinister twist. Claude was now earning money, decent money and he had developed a taste for vodka. This is where Eva pulled a trick on him. She probably had very little choice, with the predicament that she had got herself into. Only it was not entirely her fault. To Claude’s joy she got a message to him that she was pregnant. And she had only just found out; three months after Claude had left for Poland. What she failed to tell him was that he was not the father. Claude, although earning decent money was spending more than he should have done on vodka.

About a mile outside the village was a chateau, or mansion that had been shut and boarded up for years. Then one day, completely out of the blue, all the chains came off of the gates, the boards were removed from the windows and somebody moved in. Eva did not elaborate on this person. All she would tell me that he was an aristocrat and was of a high class standing. Now we are talking about a place that we simply don’t understand, Mister Blumer. The village was still in the medieval dark ages. Superstition, evil spirits and things that we would think are nonsense were very serious to these simple people. The village priest forbade anybody to go anywhere near there. The whole village, every man woman and child, obeyed him, apart from Eva. She thought that there could be a chance of work to be had up there. And she openly admitted to me that she had deeply resented living in dire poverty and abject misery. She hated it. She was hoping that she may find a job as a maid, or cook, she didn’t care.

Well this aristocrat, or count, whatever his title was, quickly became her lover and she got pregnant by him. The whole village was mortified. She became shunned and was publicly humiliated, by everybody. Only the priest had felt pity for her. To make matters worse, this bastard abandoned her right away when she became pregnant and she became nigh on destitute. The rumour that she had brought a curse upon the village was now flying around and she was now in serious danger. The old priest knew that he must get her away from the village by any means, because pandemonium was erupting and he had no control of it. Through various contacts through the priesthood that he knew in Hungary and Czechoslovakia and Poland he managed to get her up to be with Claude in Poland. The priesthood even paid a brigand good money to get her to Claude. The old priest was not only complicit in this subterfuge, he and his fellow priests planned and organized it. Right, or wrong, he probably saved her life and she knew.

By the time Eva reached Claude she was six months pregnant. And her pregnancy was a very difficult one. She suspected that she may be bearing twins and she had been right. Claude had not been expecting her and he was caught with his trousers down, so to speak. Because he had taken up with a local girl and of course he had failed to tell the girl about Eva. The girl dumped him, because of his deceit. So Eva and Claude were brought together again in bizarre and very traumatic circumstances. To make matters worse, Eva's pregnancy was not going well at all. She knew that she must be bearing twins, but it was as if they were fighting each other, inside of her womb and this was causing her terrible pain.

When the twins were finally born, they had come out of her nearly two weeks overdue. And Eva very nearly died giving birth to them. The twin boys Waltar and Freddy were so small, weak and frail that it was touch and go if they could survive.



Eva literally had to breast feed them until they were nearly two years old and this drained the life out of her. But the woman of the village came to her aid, bringing her milk, eggs, cheese and butter and making sure that she was well sustained, while she had each baby nigh on permanently suckling on each breast.

By now Claude was becoming suspicious. Walter and Freddy had bright green eyes and their skin was so white that it was close to being albino. He had thought that they may have been very small, because it may of had something to do with being twins. But as they grew it became blatantly obvious they they were not his. Their hair was auburn and their frames were light and painfully thin.

Claude was a great big, heavy framed man and naturally very strong. His hair was black and his eyes were dark brown. Eva was also very dark, like a gipsy. He had questioned her about who real the father was and she did something that by any measure was dispicable. She told Claude that she had been raped and had been too terrified to tell anybody. She had only told the old priest what had happened. That is why he had got her away from the village. Claude believed her and accepted that he would bring up two boys that were not really his.

Then disaster struck again. War broke out and Germany invaded Poland. The village where they were living was in the worse possibly place. When the Germans eventually overran the village, a form of martial law was imposed and everything and everybody was strictly monitered. Fortunately for the villagers, the commanding officer was a strict disciplinarian and the men under him were subject to strict rules and regulations. Walter and Freddy were only two years old when the Germans took over the village. The war raged on for fours years, with the German army sweeping up through Poland to engage the Russian army, far to the east.

Walter and Freddy would have been only six years old when the massive Russian counter-attacked. The panic and sheer terror erupted in the village. News that the Russian army were now running amok as they moved into Poland; pushing back the German army, but taking terrible casualties. It was a recipe for disaster. The Russian army were ransacking, plundering, raping and murdering entire villages in their wake. The village sat on the eastern bank of a fast flowing river. Then late in the evening on cold december night, the German army occupying village frantically gathered all of their arms and equipment together and crossed to the western side of the river. The Russian army had arrived in force. The German army were retreating, hoping to surrender to the British and American troops that had now caught the depleted German troops in trap with the Russians.

The men of the village made a quick decision. Their only hope was to get the whole village across to the western bank of the river, before the Russians moved in; but it all went horribly wrong. The only place that the river could be crossed safely was by a bridge that the Germans had blown up in their wake. For some inexplicable reason, some of the villagers went down to the where the bridge had been destroyed, and another bunch I believe only twenty or so, went through a copse of wood, where the river narrowed and could be crossed, with difficulty. Eva Claude and Freddy were in the bunch that tried to cross the river where it was more narrow and shallow. Somehow Walter was in the bunch that had made it to where the bridge had been. He had been having special tuition, because he was having some learning difficulties and was being tutored at the time by a woman that lived at the other end of the village.

What happened next was a massacre. The river was high and running very rapidly and was freezing cold. The group that

Claude, Eva and Freddy were in was covered by a the copse of trees. And they all managed to reach the other side of the river safely, but the other group could not ford the river where the bridge had been, because it was too deep. Claude, Eva and Freddy saw what happened to them. When the Russian soldiers arrived, most of the bunch plunged into the river and tried to swim to the other side. Others were shot, machine gunned and bayoneted on the bank. Nobody got to the other side. The Germans had set up a couple of machine gun nests on the western bank, as a rear guard action to stem the Russian advance. It had been sheer carnage. They were all swept away by the current, riddled with bullet holes. The Russians were even throwing grenades into the water. The bunch that Claude, Eva and Freddy were in, ran through the woods in the pitch dark.

They ran all night and then a miracle happened. In the early hours of the morning they were found by a company of British soldiers that had moved forward and had captured the German soldiers. They were cold tired, destitute and so traumatized that they had trouble communicating to British soldiers what had happened. The British soldiers were very good to them.

Claude, Eva and Freddy were registered as displaced persons and were eventually transported to England. They settled down here and Claude found work. They loved this country Mister Blumer and they had found freedom and safety. But all was not well. Freddy was not doing well at school and he got caught playing truant a couple of times. Then when Freddy grew into puberty he became awkward, abrasive and downright nasty. Eva was over protective with him. She had already lost his twin under terrible circumstances and would jump to his defence, when Claude would try to discipline him. And serious friction between Claude and Eva began to smoulder, like a fire ready to flare up. Freddy had turned into a

nasty little bastard.

Then Dennis Hammond entered into an already explosive situation. Now Claude had a petty crook influencing Freddy. He had met Freddy in the Sun-Spot amusements, along the front. Hammond had been a gangland runner, messenger and general dogs body for the Ashton Brother's and sometimes Benny Goldberg. My brother knew the Ashton brother's and told me that Hammond had been dropped by them, for talking too much. I think he had got himself into some serious trouble and only came down here to hide out. This was confirmed when another low life crook turned up here looking for him. He had a Bedford van full of stolen goods. Televisions, radio's and a couple of fridges. He had the gall to call himself a travelling salesman, that moved around the country. The truth was he was only a fence, that trafficked and delivered stolen goods. Apparently he had conned some other people in the criminal fraternity and he needed somewhere to hide out. I thought Hammond was revolting, but Jack Dawes, or the Jac-Daw I called him was downright disgusting and he looked like an even bigger pervert than Hammond the way he leered at Eva and myself. They had a confrontation right outside their house. Hammond was here looking for Freddy. The Jack-Daw pulled up in his van and jumped out. He had been sleeping in the van and he stank. Hammond was not pleased to see him and told him so.

This is where it all got very disturbing. Jack Dawes told Hammond he needed a place to stay for a while and could he put him up. Hammond refused, but Dawes laughed in his face and told him that he had been talking to Danny Garcia and Danny Garcia had told him all about him mouthing off about the gold bullion heist, they both knew about and then threatened him. 'If certain people find out what you've been bragging about it, you're a dead man'. He poked Hammond in

the chest and Hammond started trembling with fear. We didn't know it the time, but Hammond and Freddy had all ready carried out several burglaries, in Walton, Frinton and Clacton and there was no way that he wanted the Jack-Daw around. Their little criminal enterprise was just taking off very nicely, thank you. Hammond had got himself a job working for a local painter and decorator. By day he could site potential targets for robbery and by night him and Freddy would carry them out. Freddy was only about five foot four and built like a racing-snake. He could climb up ladders and slip through windows and move through a house while the owners where asleep in bed easily.

Freddy was only seventeen when they started and thay had got away with it for three years. Well, Hammond begrudgingly put Jack Dawes up for about six weeks, until the Jack-Daw managed to sell off the stolen goods, but Hammond was extremely unhappy about it. He must of told Freddy why he was putting up with this unexpected hindrence to their business. And for some reason Freddy suffered in silence. Hammond had a rented place along Brooklands, Hillman Avenue. And that is where the Jack-Daw stayed before moving on. In the end what Hammond and Freddy did in the end was not just disgusting, but completely stupid. When they broke into the leather goods shop, they disturbed the owner and he came down. The small safe at the back had been wrenched open by a massive industrial crowbar. In a panic Hammond must have beaten the poor bloke up. He smashed his face in. It made the front pages of the newspapers. The photos of the poor bloke's face were apalling. Hammond had his works van parked around the corner.

But it wouldn't start, when he tried to drive off. Freddy legged it and got away. A woman who lived in an upstairs flat opposite the shop saw Hammond exit the front door of the

shop, but not Freddy and she called the police. Hammond was still sitting in the van, trying to start it when the police nabbed him. The bastard grassed Freddy up and said he had no idea how the poor man got his injuries. I think he may have been thinking of getting a lighter sentence, if he roped Freddy in. The police arrested Freddy at the house and poor Claude was devastated. They both got three years. They both denied any knowledge of the other burgluries. Would you believe there was at the very least twenty that the police knew of? There was no way that they could ever come back here again.

I heard that Hammond went back to London, when he done his time and Freddy was never heard of again. Eva tried to contact Hammond in desperation, but their criminal partnership had finished for good. Hardly surprising, when Hammond had informed on Freddy, hoping to save his own skin. Then two and a half years later Claude got killed. Eva had lost eveything, but she still hoped Freddy was still alive.

Then a few months before she died, she received a letter telling her that Freddy had been killed. It had no return address and the writing and grammer was obviously written by somebody that was barely literate. The gist of the letter was that Freddy had been framed up by somebody who had known the team that had carried out the gold bullion heist at the warehouse in Heathrow airport a few years ago and knew how they had got away with it and Freddy had been talking too much. Of course Hammond immediately came to mind.

No body was ever found and the assumption that gangland had probably disposed of it was never seriously followed up. Eva did not believe it and would not accept it. She only lived another year, or so after that and died a broken women. She told me all of this just before she died; like a last will and testament, or maybe a confession. I know the whole story may sound like a melodrama that some over imaginative

playwright would make up. I thought that we'd been displaced when our house was bombed during the blitz and my husband was killed during the Normandy landings and I was pregnant with Dean at the time was a bad enough story. But by comparison to our story, their's was one of never ending tragedy. That is the story of Costin and Stefana."

She then looked over to the bungalow next door which had the curtains drawn and said, "She gave me the keys to her house and told me that if Freddy ever returned to give them to him. It was probably better for her that she still believed that he was still alive somewhere."

It only after his mother had finished speaking that Dean said something that grabbed Blumer's interest.

"One thing Mum forgot to mention was, that about two weeks after Freddy was carted off to prison something very suspicious happened. A brand, new big Bush TV set, a new washing machine and fridge were delivered to their house and they had new kitchen units fitted. I say suspicious, because Claude did not earn very good money on the pier and Eva only did a little part time cleaning for the Martello caravan site."

"Do you think they may of bought them off this Jack Dawes Character?" said Blumer.

"No chance. They would never have had any dealings with a character like the Jack Daw. They must have aquired money from somewhere. They didn't do the pools or gamble."

"How long was Jack Dawes around here and do you think he had gained much knowledge about the outlay of the area? You said he had a van that he was using."

"He would have been around for about six weeks. Yeah, he would have gained some knowledge, because he had to sell off a van full of stolen goods, before he moved on. Hammond was

glad to see the back of him. And I differ with Mum with my opinion. I don't think that Freddy was led astray by Hammond; it was an accident waiting to happen and Freddy seized the moment. Hammond was a big headed braggart and a pervert. But like a lot of arrogant people, he was stupid. He could never have planned and done all of those burglaries alone. He had a sharp, patient brain planning everything they did. Freddy.”

By the time Blumer arrived back in London, he had already jotted down a list of people that he wanted to see. Harry Parkes was one of them. But that could wait. He had the names, addresses and phone numbers of the two friends that had been on holiday at Point Clear with Lisa Noonan and he wanted to interview them seperately. He may need Harry Parkes's knowledge of underworld business. Even bums like Dennis Hammond and this Jack-Daw character would be monitered by Parkes's network of spies and underground intelligence system. And it would save him a lot of time and energy having to find them himself. His first stop would be an address in Bow, a Miss Sharon Spanka, and then another address in Mile End, a Miss Helen Nesbitt. He had already telephoned both of them and had told them the nature of his business.

The address in Bow was in a row of terraced houses, similar to his own. He rang the doorbell and waited. When the door opened he was slightly taken aback; Sharon Spanka was strikingly beautiful. And she was also heavily pregnant. Blumer was the first to speak.

“Good afternoon madam, I'm John Blumer. I would like to speak to a Miss Sharon Spanka, I believe that she's been expecting me.”

Sharon Spanka had big blue sanpaku eyes, that where



startlingly penetrating. And she used them as a means of expressing herself. And searching other people's eyes, which she did now with Blumer. And for some reason he felt slightly awkward about this.

“Hello Mister Blumer. That's me, or was me. I'm now Mrs Sharon Walters, as from last week. Who needs a name like Spanka anyway. It's German you know. Please come in Mister Blumer.”

She then blinked her eyes and rolled them. Indicating that she was joking. She asked him if he would like a cup of tea, or coffee and asked him to sit down. He was alone with a heavily pregnant woman, who appeared to be mocking him.

“No thank you, I want to interview Miss Nesbitt before I go home. I'm a bit pressed for time. All I really want is to ask you, as far back as you can remember the last time that you were with Lisa Noonan and can you remember anything unusual that could indicate the nature of her disappearance? As I told you, I'm investigating the disappearance of a Miss Sian Ellis for a client, who has gone missing in Clacton recently.”

“Her abduction, Mr Blumer. That's all there is to it. Lisa was abducted and probably murdered and I would give anything, includin' me house to see the bastard brought to justice.”

Blumer took stock of her frank and brutally honest opinion and pressed on carefully.

“Please start from the beginning, Sharon. I know this must be terrible for you.”

“Well, it was me who organized and booked the holiday at the Point Clear caravan site. I thought it was a good idea at the time, cause' Lisa and Helen had fallen out over a bloke.”

She gave a flip of her hand and screwed her nose up, before

rolling her sanpaku eyes. “You know what girls are like.”

No, Blumer did not know what girls are like. Otherwise he would not have lost Pamela.

Lisa had this ridiculous idea that Helen was better lookin’ than her and all the blokes would be after her all the time. Helen knew this and would play on it. You know what girls are like.”

“Well was Helen better looking than Lisa. In your opinion of course?”

“No, that was the problem. This bloody obsession was inside of Lisa’s head. They both took up with complete and utter moron that called himself clever Trevor. And he played one against the other. Well, he was so clever he ended up in Wormwood Scrubs for pinching cars and selling ‘em. I couldn’t stand him. A complete and utter wanker. On top of that they both told me that he had borrowed money off of both of them, before he got banged up. The silly cows, I could have banged their heads together.”

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. You should have told Lisa that.”

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. I like that. I’ll have to remember that one.”

Blumer suddenly felt a pang of guilt for using one of Pamela’s favourite sayings.

“Me Mum always told me never get involved with a fly-by-night. Get a bloke that ain’t shy of hard work. That’s why I married Paul. He does a bit of plumin’, electrics, plasterin’, artexin’ and paintin’. Aw-gawd, he’ll have a go at anythin’. Even scaffoldin’ and dumper drivin’.”

She then went into a more sombre mode and Blumer could sense her pain and anguish.

“If I’d not booked the holiday, then it would never had happened. We went to school together and we’d always been friends. I hated seeing them acting so silly and childish. I saw it as a chance for us to get back to bein’ just as we’d always been. It had worked out better than I had hoped. Lisa had caught a bus to Clacton, to take a look around the town and visit the pier. I think she may have have met somebody, because she did the same the next day. This was three days before we were due to go back. We had all been out late and had been in the Ferry-Boat Inn on the caravan site. She had gone back to the caravan a bit earlier than us, because she wanted to catch the bus early. Helen and me didn’t get back til’ about half past two. And were both well sozzled.

“I heard her leave about ten o’clock the next morning, because she was banging about and making a lot of noise before she left. She never came back. Both me and Helen think she may have met a bloke, either on the way to Clacton, or in Clacton the day before and could have arranged to meet him. And she possibly didn’t tell us, cause’ she still nursed this lunatic suspicion about Helen. We didn’t worry too much, but when it got to about eight o’clock in the evening we started gettin’ worried. Cor blimey, we she have gone with her. We should have called the police then, instead we waited til’ ten o’clock. I blame myself.”

“Don’t blame yourself Sharon, under any circumstances. After all these years workng for the Met and as a private investigator I’ve seen and experienced things that still boggle my mind. Nobody can predict what can happen to them each day. We live in a dangereous world.”

She rolled her sanpaku eyes in acknowledgement and smiled. Blumer wondered why a beautiful, unkept and pregnant young woman, should feel so relaxed; alone in the company of a man.

“Me Mum was so excited when I told her you wanted to interview me. She couldn’t come cause’ she’s workin’. She told me all about how you caught the ‘sweetshop’ killer and ‘stripper killer’. And I know all about the Leon Boyd case. Cor blimey, it was on the front page of every paper.”

She then chuckled and flipped her hand again.

“Aw-gawd, is she gonna’ be jealous. She is a fan of yours you know.”

If Blumer had been a woman there was a good chance he may have blushed.

“Tell your Mum it was all team work. There’s a lot of unsung hero’s involved in a murder case. The public only see the spectacular and terrible results when we catch a murderer. The sheer amount legwork, endless and sometimes fruitless leads are something the public would never know about, or be aware of. And there’s nothing glamorous about being a murder detective.”

“Gawd, I can’t wait to tell her. She’s gonna’ come flyin’ around here a soon as she finishes work. And she’s gonna’ be thrilled to bits, when I tell her what you said.”

The house in Mile End where Helen Nesbitt lived was another nondescript terraced house and as Blumer rang the doorbell he hoped that Helen could remember anything that Sharon had forgotten. When the door opened he was faced with a slim girl with chestnut brown eyes and a pleasant heart shaped face. This time it was the girl who spoke first.

“Mister Blumer, I’ve been expecting you. Sharon phoned to say you were on the way round. I hope she told you everything. Cause’ this thing with Lisa and me was stupid and now I feel embarrassed by the whole nonsense of it all. Please come in.”

“Glad you were expecting me Miss Nesbitt. All I’m really after was there anything prior to Lisa’s disappearance that could arouse your suspicion if something was out of the ordinary.”

“No, nothing. She wanted to go to Clacton and see the town and the pier. We would stay up late and were content to stay on the caravan site and laze about all day.”

She then virtually told Blumer the same story that Sharon Spanka had told him, but with one thing added. The first day that she had caught the bus to Clacton; the bus driver had remembered a girl of Lisa’s description boarding the bus, at the entrance of the caravan site at ten fifteen. A girl of the same description had boarded the bus at half past four in the afternoon in the Clacton bus station. This was confirmed by the driver who had taken over the route. And he he had remembered that the bus in the afternoon was nearly fully and she had sat down next to a woman and they had chatted for a while. The driver must have had a good memory, because he described the woman of about five feet ten and was wearing pink balloon style trousers, middle aged and quite busty. And she had left the bus at St Osyth, the girl had got off the bus at the entrance of the caravan site at about five o’clock.

The next day neither of them had remembered the girl boarding the bus. They had both been interviewed by the police and their accounts had corroborated. This led Blumer to think that Lisa Noonan may have been picked up at the entrance of the caravan site the next day by somebody who she had met the previous day. Somebody that she had trusted enough to get in a car with. Could she have met him in Clacton the previous day? Her suspicion of Helen, concerning her complex about her being more attractive than her still may have quietly been smouldering away inside of her. And if she had met a handsome young man, she wanted to keep it secret

from Helen. The plot was thickening.

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## CHAPTER 15

Blumer sat in his office in Shoreditch, contemplating his next move. He had to find the whereabouts of Dennis Hammond first and then Jack Dawes. It was highly unlikely that Lisa Noonan would have met up with either one of these two characters as revolting as these two creeps. At the time of her disappearance Hammond had been released from prison eight months before. He had been familiar with the town and may have even had the audacity to go back there, judging by his completely arrogant, cavalier and preposterous disregard about what other people thought of him. Stupid men do stupid things, when vanity and false ego kicks in. And from what Alice Burgess had told him, the Jack-Daw was of the same mold. It was quite feasible that one of them may have noticed her alone and had stalked her.

Blumer was now convinced that Dawes had targeted Hammond as an escape route from his criminal shenanigans, because he had serious dirt on him. And if it was anything to do with the Heathrow gold bullion heist and Dawes had found out that Hammond had been bragging about what he knew. Then indeed if Dawes' threat that, 'If certain people found out what you've been bragging about' judging by underworld protocol, Hammond would indeed be a dead man walking. And who was Danny Garcia. If he had known both Hammond and Dawes, he may know things about them that could be of interest to Blumer. He must also trace this Danny Garcia, but that would have to be put on hold. This would be the first time that Blumer had called on an underworld boss for anything and Harry Parkes had been surprised and thoroughly delighted to receive a phone call from him requesting a private meeting. They had arranged to meet at Harry's office in East

Ham at ten o'clock the following morning.

Dave Sobel, one of Harry Parkes's board of directors, met Blumer at a side door of one of Parkes's clubs, The Western Belle. Blumer noticed how smartly dressed in a very expensive suit Dave Sobel was and thought that business must be booming. He led Blumer up a narrow set of rickety stairs and Sobel knocked on the door at the top of the stairs. A man's loud voice said, "Come in."

Blumer entered the office and was immediately impressed by the decor. A plush oxblood leather sofa, with two matching armchairs. A green deep-pile carpet and a constable print on the wall. He thought about his own shabby office and wondered if he was in the wrong business. Harry Parkes was sitting behind a big oak desk thumbing through a pile of papers. Harry was delighted to see him. "Hello John. Long time no see. What can I do for you?"

"Hello Harry. I've come to ask you if you can do me a couple favours I need."

"Okay John, I'll see what I can do."

"I want to interview two blokes that you might know, Dennis Hammond and Jack Dawes. Do you know either of them by any chance?"

"Hammond yes, Dawes no. I gave Hammond a job as a doorman of one of my clubs. I had to sack him. He couldn't keep his hands off the strippers. A complete tosser. Why do you wanna' find 'em John. What have they been up to?"

"I'm in the middle of a private murder investigation and I think these two may have some useful information on somebody I'm looking for."

"No problem John, I'll put word out and I'll get back to you. Do you think that they were in on this murder? If so I'll put



Dave Sobel, Billy Reeves and Frankie Allen out to find ‘em right away.”

I dunno’, but I think they may know somebody who could be a suspect. Does the name Danny Garcia mean anything to you, by any chance?”

Harry chuckled and said, “Oh Danny boy. Sure I know Danny. Or rather I knew him. He used to do a bit of work for me; debt collectin’, deliverin’ stuff and just a runner, that’s all. Couldn’t let him know too much, cause’ of his big mouth, especially when he’d been drinkin’. Not a bad boy, but bloody stupid.”

“Do you know where I can find him by any chance, I’d like to talk with him?”

“No, but you can go and see Carol, his ex bird. She only lives around the corner. They’re not together now. But I still think he contacts her sometimes, when he wants somethin. I’ll give her a tinkle and let her know that you wanna’ find Danny. I don’t know what she can tell you.”

When Blumer rang on Carol Lock’s front doorbell, he waited a while and assumed that nobody was in. He was just about to walk away, when the door opened. Carol Locke, although quite young looked haggard and unkept. She wore no make up and her hair was matted and tangled. Blumer was the first to speak.

“Good afternoon. My name is John Blumer. Miss Locke, I presume. Harry Parkes told me that you’d be expecting me.”

“Hello Mister Blumer, please come in. Would you like a cup of tea?”

When he entered the flat he immediately knew that he’d entered into a home of somebody that had thrown in the towel with life. There were a stack of unwashed pots, pans, plates

and dishes in the sink. The carpet was old and threadbare. And the furniture was chipped, battered and old. Also the flat looked as though it had not been cleaned in weeks.

“No thanks Miss Locke. All I want is to ask you if you are in contact with Danny Garcia. I would really like to talk with him in person.”

“I don’t see him now, but sometimes he phones me. Two weeks ago, he phoned me from Clacton. He and Erma, his latest girlfriend have set up shop there in Jaywick, close by. They’ve got a food vending van. They were up in Skegness, but business wasn’t too good, so they moved down to Jaywick. I think him and Erma are okay together. She’s welcome to him.”

“He may have information on two men that I’m looking for, Dennis Hammond and Jack Dawes. Would you know them by any chance?”

Carol Locke’s lower jaw dropped in revulsion at the mention of their names and Blumer immediately knew that she was familiar with them.

“Oh, those two disgusting bastards. I’ll never forgive Danny getting involved with them. I knew Hammoned first, because Danny brought him back to the flat. He must have met him around one of the pubs, or in a bookies. The way he used to leer it me made me wanna’ vommit. He brought Dawes around here later on and Dawes was just as bad as Hammond. I think they had something on Danny and they were trying to use him for something. I don’t know what. It was a pity, because Danny had met an older bloke who had started working for Harry Parkes.

“Leonard took Danny under his wing and Danny actually started behaving himself. He started giving me money. He cut down on drinking, gambling and pot smoking, which I’m sure

he got off of Hammond, or Dawes. Things were looking up. I could buy clothes, make up and generally improve my lot, until those two filthy bastards turned up here. Danny didn't deserve anything, Mister Blumer. Harry Parkes took him on shortly after he got sacked, just after the Heathrow gold bullion robbery, which I found strange. He had found a job in a general maintenance team that worked around the airport and out-buildings. He volunteered to work nights, because he told me that most of the other blokes were married. Well that was the cock & bull story he gave me. But then he started going sick and turning up late.

“They gave him a few chances, but had to sack him in the end. If it wasn't for Harry taking him on we would have been back to square one again. I loved Leonard though. He was a bit of a Dandy and was always smartly dressed and very dapper. And he actually treated me with respect. He used to make me laugh, with his ad-libbing, humour and joking. But he died in a terrible fire. He was living upstairs in a house that Harry Parkes and Benny Goldberg co-owned. I think that the downstairs was used for storing stolen goods, ready for fencing. Fridges, televisions, washing machines, stereos, everything. They must have trusted Leonard, because he was liked a store manager. Taking care of the stock, looking out for the ingoing and outgoing stock. Signing receipts, bookkeeping and generally keeping house. I think Leonard took Danny under his wing, because he felt sorry for him. Danny did not deserve a friend like Leonard, but how can you reason with somebody who's ego is bigger than his capabilities? Danny was devastated when Leonard died and he went into a depression.

“After Leonard died, Hammond and Dawes started turning up to see Danny more frequently. Which for me was a nightmare. Between me and you, I think that Danny had been

doing something like reconnaissance work, or spying around the airport and reporting back to whoever was planning the robbery. He told me that when the heist was done; that he was not surprised, because the shift that were guarding the bullion at three o'clock in the morning were a bunch of drunken bums, that were too busy playing cards and hitting the whiskey to guard the bullion. How did he know that? I didn't ask him too much, but I'm sure he knew a lot more than he told me. As I said before, until these two bastards turned up Danny was doing okay. Dave Sobel, or Billy Reeves would come around carrying a briefcase and give Danny instructions. He would dress up smartly and catch a train to one of the other big cities, usually Manchester, or Liverpool.

“When he was sent away, Dave, or Billy would give me an envelope, with a ten pound note in it. Both of them behaved like perfect gentlemen with me. The complete opposite of Hammond and Dawes. But something happened between Hammond and Dawes and they had a big dust up. I can remember it well. I'd had enough of Danny by now and the day I threw him out, Dawes turned up, just as I kicked Danny out.

“What happened next nearly gave me a heart attack. Hammond turned up and was absolutely furious with Dawes and they nearly came to blows. The gist of what I heard was that Dawes was doing some runs over to the continent, with his van for Benny Goldberg. Amsterdam, Hamberg and Dusseldorf. I think that they had been smuggling swiss watches, stolen gold jewellery and diamond necklaces for Benny Goldberg. Apparantly Hammond was meant to go on the next run with him, but Dawes had dumped him for another bloke and Hammond was not taking it laying down. This was the last that I saw of them and my God I was glad. That was the end of it for me. Harry looks out for me sometimes, but as

far as I'm concerned I'd rather be completely alone that suffer that endless shit. No more, no more."

Blumer listened with guarded interest. The police had believed that the gold bullion heist, could have been an inside job. Or somebody had information on the movements of the gold. The sheer audacity and speed of the heist was something that must have been well planed in advance. To hijack the Securicor van that was on its way to the warehouse to pick up the gold. Then to gain access by using another van, with the Securicor logo on the sides was a stroke of genius. Then to tie up the guards who were meant to be guarding the gold and break open the safe with oxyacetylene cutting gear and sledge hammers, must have been done with military precision. The raiders had even known where the keys that opened the cage that guarded vault were. One of the guards were stupid enough to carry them on his belt. The gold was never traced. The police believed that it had been already shipped to the the continent via either Harwich, or Dover, before an investigation could have even begun to trace it. The bogus van must have been burned, or crushed in a junk yard. One theory was that a consortium of underworld characters had planned the robbery. And an outside crew were used to do the hard work. Needless to say, Harry Parkes, Benny Goldberg and the Ashton brothhers all had alibis and witnesses to their whereabouts, at the time that the heist was being done. Danny Garcia could have easily befriended the people that were guarding the warehouse. And possibly one of the guards had given him information, crucial to architects of the heist. The police had established that an eleven man crew had taken part in it. The Securicor van had been disabled, by throwing tacks on the road, as it approached along a narrow road, bursting all four tires. Then five masked men, with sawed off shot guns had trapped the three Securicor guards in the van, by blocking all of the doors. And a six man team armed with sawed of

shotguns, had carried out the actual robbery. Luckily nobody had been shot, or killed. Carol had already anticipated Blumers next question and answered it without any doubt.

“Do you think Hammond and Dawes had some hold over Danny, regarding what he may have known about the the heist. Could they have been blackmailing him, or bullying him?”

“Possibly. But that would have been only part of it. I think Danny may have had dirt on both of them as well. Serious dirt. They were like a pair of baying hyenas. And now I remember Danny saying something to them that made them back off. I didn't get the gist of what it was. But they became more subdued after that. It was like a vicious circle of the amount of shit that they had on each other. On top of it all, I think that the fire that killed Leonard had been started deleberately. It was just too quick and too explosive. I think it was arson and the target was Leonard. Peter, the next door neighbour thinks the same as I do. Whoever wanted Leonard dead, did a bloody good job, because his body was burned to a husk. But it's all done and dusted now. All I want is a quiet life, Mister. But at the end of the day I blame Danny for all of my woes.”

“Why would anybody want to kill this Leonard in such a terrible way, if he was the charming character that you say he was?”

“I don't know, but Peter has his own opinions about it and he was absolutely furious when it happened. Him and Leonard became pals and I think that Peter may be a bit of a bloody old woman, and used to watch the comings and goings of the house next door. He could have even been watching out for Harry Parkes also. Like a spy, or a paid lookout possibly.”

“I would like to speak with Peter, if you don't mind telling me where he lives.”

“A couple roads along. Queen Elizabeth Road. You can't

miss it. That house next door is completely burned to the ground. I'd better warn you, he's a bit of a funny bugger. If you don't mind me asking. Why are you so keen to speak with Danny, I'm curious? Has he got himself in trouble again with his big mouth? Or is he well out of his depth again with somebody?"

"No, I don't mind you asking Miss Locke. I am conducting a private murder investigation and Danny may have inadvertently crossed paths with somebody who may, or may not be involved in it. I'm trying to establish the movements of a very crafty and devious killer that uses other people in their subterfuge, without them even being aware of it."

"You don't think Danny could be involved in actually murdering somebody, Mister Blumer, do you? Danny's a big baby. A silly little boy, that never grew up. He couldn't hurt anybody though."

"Exactly, Miss Locke. Danny would be a perfect foil, or dupe, that could be easily manipulated by somebody who had ulterior motives, or was using him in some crafty subterfuge."

## CHAPTER 16

As Blumer rang the doorbell of Peter Parnell's house, he was taking stock of the completely burned out wreck of the house next door. All that was left was the black and charred brickwork. When the fire had erupted, it must have been an inferno. The door opened and he was confronted by an overweight, bald-headed man in his early sixties, who did not appear to be glad to see him. Blumer was the first to speak.

"Good afternoon. My name is John Blumer and I would like to speak with Mister Peter Parnell, if he's home please."

The man glared at him and said in a blatantly rude and hostile manner, "Are you 'old bill'? 'cause if you are, I don't know nuffin', I ain't seen nuffin' and I know nuffin'."

"No, I used to be 'old bill', but now I'm just a private investigator, working for a client."

"Then what do you want with me then, if you don't mind me askin'?"

"Miss Carol Locke advised me to speak with you, because you had become quite friendly with the unfortunate gentleman Leonard, who lived next door, she told me."

The man's manner immediately changed into a more friendly and congenial tone. "Oh Leonard, he was lovely geezer. What do you want to know about him?"

"Miss Locke thinks that the fire that killed him may have been arson and you agree with her."

"Carol Locke. Poor little cow. I don't think it was arson, it was arson. If it wasn't, then I'm a bloody Chinaman. If there had not been an eight foot gap in our houses, my house



woulda' gone up in smoke as well. Thankfully the fire brigade managed to douse the fire, with four fire hoses going at full blast. There was no chance of get him out. It went up like a bomb."

"Can you tell me why you are so sure it was arson, in your own words?"

"Yeah, sure. Two nights before the fire all the stuff that was stashed in the ground floor was moved out. I know cause' two vans turned up to carry it off. And the next night about two in the morning, four big geezers turned up in a van and carried a heavy wooden crate out. It was so heavy that the back suspension on the van dropped by four inches. The night before the fire, I went around to have a couple of scotches with Leonard in his flat upstairs. There was a dodgy paraffin heater in the hallway, that was old and leaky. And would you believe, there was a five gallon plastic container filled with paraffin kept under the stairs. But the paraffin heater was out. The whole front room and hallway was filled with broken cardboard boxes and styrofoam.

There were about six or seven plastic rubbish bags in the hallway, filled with styrofoam pellets. There was plastic bubble wrap everywhere. The bubble wrap was the type used for wrapping glass and porcelain. I never knew that glass and porcelain were stashed around there. All the gear that was usually stored in the house had been moved out. The front room was usually stacked up with washing machines, fridges, televisions, the lot. The place was rigged up like a bloody potential bonfire, cause' all the packagin' from the gear was everywhere.

"Somebody must have torched it, because it went up like a bomb. The first thing to collapse were the wooden stairs, then the roof caved in when the rafters burned. But the whole thing

stank to high heaven anyway. Leonard had a secret lady friend, called Contance, who would come and visit him sometimes. When I asked him about her, he only laughed and told me to mind my own business. He said that she was married and they had to keep it very discreet, because her husband would have killed the both of them, if he found out. Now get this. Three nights after the fire, I got out of bed to open my bedroom window and I see Contsance standing under a street light, looking at the burned out house. I put me dressing gown on to go down and speak with her, but she was gone. I'm sure it was Constance, cause' she always dressed in expensive clothes and always had a big leather, or suede bag around her shoulder. I had not seen that little shit Danny Garcia, for about three weeks. He stopped coming around to see Leonard, soon after Leonard took up with this Constance. Leonard was good to that little rat. He picked him up by the scruff of the neck and made him treat Carol better. He used to make me laugh. He reminded me of Tommy Trinder, with his Trilby hats. And he always dressed like a right dandy, in Savile Row suits and bow ties. He was a lovely geezer and some bastard burned him alive. But I don't know and probably will never know why."

Blumer went to his fridge and pulled out a bottle of Ben Truman and picked up a dimple mug from the kitchen, Then went to the living room and sat down in his armchair. From what he had learned from Carol Locke, Danny had arrived at Jaywick about two weeks after Sian Ellis had disappeared. The reason that they had left Skegness was because business was not very good, or that is what Danny had told her. But why come to a place like Jaywick; a small and isolated seaside resort. Could he be on the run from somebody and was trying to keep them off of his back? He would find out the reason the next day when Harry Parkes phoned him when he had just opened his office and sat down at his desk.

He now knew where to find Danny Garcia and could hopefully catch him now. Unless of course he and his lady friend had to move on again. According to both Carol Locke and Peter Parnell, Leonard's body had been burned to a husk and was literally cooked on his bed springs from the burning foam of his mattress. It was highly unlikely that Harry Parkes would have torched a property that was registered under his name. But it may have been very convenient for him that it happened. Possibly the house was being staked out by the police lieu of a raid and Leonard had warned him. And who was the mysterious Constance that Peter Parnell had spoken about. And why had Danny Garcia stopped visiting Leonard about three weeks before the fire? The whole incident stank to high heaven. The heavy wooden crate that was carried out of the house in the early hours may well have been containing gold from the heist from Heathrow airport. He thought that Leonard had almost certainly, been the reason for the fire. But why would anybody want to kill him in such a grotesque and completely over the top way.

Harry Parkes had not made a big issue out of the fire. Simply because he did not want to draw too much attention to it, for his own reasons. There must be some terrible secret held between Hammond, Dawes and Danny Garcia.

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## CHAPTER 17

No sooner had Blumer opened his office and sat down at his desk the phoned rang. He picked up the receiver and said, “Good morning, Blumer private investigations. John Blumer speaking. Can I help you?”

“No, but I can help you John. I’ve traced your friends Hammond and this Dawes geezer. They got off a train from Clacton at half past eight last night, pissed out of their heads. Dave Sobel followed Hammond to an address in Bethnal Green and Billy Reeves followed Dawes to an address in Whitechapel. The place where Hammond lives is a right carsey. And the place where this Dawes geezer lives is an even bigger carsey. Now before you go any further John. I’m a man of my word and it was you that nailed that murderin’ bastard Stewart Briggs. I owe you and I told you that if you ever need anythin’ come and ask me. If you are going to confront these two tossers, do you need back up?”

“Thanks Harry, but no. I need a break for a couple of days, but a least I now know where I can find ‘em. But I may need two favours from you later and they are both tall orders. Before I confront these two I need to speak to Danny Garcia. I know from Carol Locke that him and his lady friend have set up shop in Jaywick. Now I’m wondering if they moved there, because Hammond and Dawes had tracked them to Skegness. They may have dirt on him that they are using against him. Or they could be blackmailing him, or trying to.”

“No doubt that Carol told you about what happened to old Leonard that worked for me. I know Leonard had taken Danny under his wing and had straightened him out. If its about the fire, then I doubt very much if Danny did it. Him and Leonard

were real close. If these two dick-heads torched the house, cause' I'm sure it wasn't an accident, then why would they do it?"

"No Harry. I don't think they did it. But what I'm really think is that there was a vicious circle of dirt that they all had on each other. Danny has been trying to burn his boats with these two characters and they won't leave him alone. In your opinion, is Danny Garcia by any measure a dangerous man. Could he have been up to some dodgy business that you didn't know about."

"Danny, Nah! He'es just a silly boy that drinks too much, gambles too much and from what Carol tells me, now smokes too much pot. I think Leonard had cut him down to size regardin' his big mouth. But when he did work for me he was obedient and reliable. His ambitions though were well above his station. He had dilusions of grandeur. He fancied himself to be like Dave Sobel, Billy Reeves, or Frankie Allen. He was just a useful runner and messenger, that's all."

Blumer pondered his next move. He already knew from Alice Burgess that both Hammond and Dawes had a connection Clacton. Hammond had lived there and Dawes had stayed with him for six weeks. Lisa Noonan had disappeared at around the same time that this gruesome-twosome, were fraternizing with each other. Even though it was under sufferance from Hammonds perspective. He had the old postcard of the Martello Tower in front of him on the desk. The crease down the middle of it indicated that it had been used to keep the fire door ajar. Did the owner of the card leave it like some kind of cryptic clue, or a message. 'I was here eveybody. Catch me if you can.' He had interviewed Brenda Horton and Pat Thackery, but he was removed from the case before he had a chance to interview Modesta Pons and Hilda Goddard. From what he had gathered, all of their accounts of

what happened that day had tallied very well. Blumer was sure that Boyd had entered the building by the fire door. But who left the fire door ajar.

Before he travelled down to Clacton again he must try to interview Brenda Horton again. Maybe she could remember something she had forgotten, because of all of the pandamonium and shocking events of that day. He was getting tired now and if he was to move forward he needed a piece more of the puzzle. He would get that piece the next day from Brenda Horton. Only a small piece, but then it would lead into another piece that would put him back on track.

Brenda Horton was sitting at her desk when he entered her office. She was now a manager of Clean & Shine cleaning services and directed the cleaning contracts that had to be done from her desk. When she saw him she stood up and walked over to greet him. Brenda was one of those lucky woman that it was not easy to put an age to. Although she was over fifty, she could easily pass as thirty. If she told somebody that she was thirty, they would believe her. She appeared to be pleased to see him again and greeted him with a handshake and smile.

“Hello Mister Blumer. Thanks for phoning me in advance. I’ve been busy lately, but today I’ve managed to clear up any paperwork that needed to be done. What can I do for you?”

“Good to see you again Brenda. And I’m glad it’s not under the same terrible circumstances as before. All I’m asking from you is your own account of what happened that day again.”

“Of course, how could I ever forget. It was just another Friday evening. George Enright the caretaker, let us through the main door at six thirty as usual. Although I was their supervisor, we worked more like a team. We went down to the basement and I handed the girls all of the cleaning gear they

needed from our cleaners cupboard. They all knew their routine. Modesta would start on the second floor Pat would do the third floor and Hilda would do the first floor. Then Pat, Modesta and myself would go to the fourth floor, which was always the worse, because it was used for food and drinks for the staff on Friday afternoons. We would pile all of the dirty glasses and plates down to Hilda on the first floor, because that was where the kitchen was. And we would clean the fourth floor between the three of us. Hilda didn't object to doing the glasses and plates, because she suffered with arthritis in her feet and ankles and could not move about as fast as us, pushing hoovers and moving desks and chairs about. I had just settled down with George for ten minutes to fill in our pools coupons. The next thing I know Pat Thackery bursts into the room in hysterics. Shouting that the girl working up in the fifth floor office is being attacked. George and myself went for the main stairs and I told Pat Thackery to go straight to the reception desk and phone the police. We couldn't use the lift because George had isolated the power in the lift motor room, because one of Pat's jobs was cleaning the inside of the lift and it was on the fifth floor. When we got to the first floor landing Hilda Goddard came out of the office and I told her to go back inside and lock the door. When we got to the second floor landing George collapsed. Luckily Modesta Pons had worked for the St Johns Ambulance came out from the office and realised that George was having a heart attack. I left Modesta to administer heart resuscitation on George and told Pat, who was now coming up the stairs to phone an ambulance. When I got to the fifth floor I could hear the girl screaming and a man's garbled voice inside the office. I tried the door but it was locked. There is a small, half moon shaped locking pad on the inside, but from the outside the door can only be opened by an allen key. Pat had now joined me and I told her to go and get the allen key from the keyboard in the

basement. My only hope now was to try and trap the bastard inside, until the police arrived. But I forgot that he could use the fire escape. When Pat arrived back with the allen key. I told her to put it in the hole and hold it as tight as she possibly could, while I tried to jam a broomstick under the door handle. We could hear crashing about inside and the man shouted something.

Then it all went quiet. Pat had already opened the front door, so the police could get in the building. When they arrived they told us to stand back and they went in. You know the rest of what happened after that. How Boyd got into the building is a complete mystery. George Enright is an ex Coldstream guard and he was a stickler for securing the building thoroughly. He is lucky to be alive, because the heart massage that Modesta gave him saved his life, until the ambulance people arrived and took over. How Boyd knew that the girl was alone on the fifth floor is a complete mystery. He could not have entered through the ground floor, because that's used as a filing room, for old files and records and it's always locked. What is ironic we were all in The Woodin Shades the same friday night that Boyd attacked and killed the girl before.”

Blumer attention was suddenly alerted by this news. But he tried to remain calm and impassive. “Really. Please tell me what you saw. I believe she was with a group of fellow workers.”

“That's right. On Friday night after work the four of us all used to stop off at the Woodin Shades, for a few drinks. That night there was a party of office workers celebrating at the other end of the pub. There was some sort of disturbance, because one of the girls was drunk and was becoming quite abusive. A couple of the other girls and a bloke tried to calm



her down, but she only got worse. This particular night we'd had a bit more to drink than usual, because it was Modesta's birthday. Hilda was well gone and twittering away like a polly parrott. We were not trying to pay too much attention to the party. But it turned into a bit of a fracas. Hilda had gone to the toilet and was in there for a long time. So Pat went see if she was okay and found her being sick. We decided to put Hilda in a taxi, after she had finished being sick and send her home.

“By the time we got Hilda into a taxi she had sobered up a bit. The drunken girl had also been in the toilet when Pat was attending to Hilda But I noticed that when she came out of the toilet that she slipped out of the door, without any of the others in the party noticing her. Well, you know how she was found. Tell me this Mister Blumer. If the market stall owner got a real good look at Boyd. Then how come the police didn't nab him sooner. Boyd was definately not in The Woodin Shades that night, because I would have noticed him, the bloody size of him. And I did not see him hanging about outside. And another thing. How comes Boyd knew how and when to strike. It is if he had, he had. What's the words I'm looking for an adviser, or scout, or something. Surely he just not just have been around by sheer happanstance.”

“The word you are looking for Brenda is an accomplice, a crafty and devious accomplice.”

“That's it, an accomplice. How the bloody hell did he kill three or four girls before and simply appear out of nowhere. Nobody could miss seeing a bloke the size of him. He was a giant.”

“Do you know what happened to Pat Thackery, Hilda Goddard and Modesta Pons?”

Yes. Pat went back to Ireland with her husband and three daughters. She was from Limerick originally. Modesta Pons

now looks after the elderly and Hilda's former land lady told me that Hilda had gone back to Carlisle, where she had come from. And she told me that she had received a letter from a family member advising her that Hilda had died. I wasn't surprised to hear that, because she had completely gone to peices after seeing Boyd impaled on those railing spikes and the girls body on the floor. She even lost her hair and had to wear a wig. I think that she had something similar to alopecia. From what her old land lady told me, she had a nervous breakdown. And rarely went out in the end. I'll never forget that day as long as I live."

"Do you know where her old landlady lives, because I would like to have a chat with her?"

Yes. She lives at 21 East Park Road in Manor Park. I know that, because I went around there to visit Hilda a couple of times. Her name is Mrs Beryl Pound. She is quite elderly, but still very much alert and can probably tell you more about Hilda's demise than I can."

Blumer rang the front doorbell of 21 East Park Road in Manor Park. It was a pleasant, detached Victorian house that had been turned into bedsits. He could hear classical music playing inside and he was surprised when the door opened quite abruptly. Beryl Pound, although quite elderly was a woman who obviously took great care of her appearance. Her clothing and jewellery must have been all of very expensive choices.

"Good morning sir. If you've come about the room that I had for let. I rented it out yesterday."

"No Madam I would like to speak with Mrs Beryl Pound. My name is John Blumer. I'm a private investigator, working for a client. I only have a few question for her."

Although quite surprised, she tried to maintain an air of

aloofness and said, "I'm Beryl Pound. How can I help you Mister Blumer?"

"I believe a lady named Hilda Goddard lived here for a while. Brenda Horton, her former supervisor gave me your address. Can you tell me anything about her Mrs Pound? I'll come straight to the point. I was one of the investigators in the Leon Boyd case. Did Hilda tell you anything about what happened that day, that may have not come to light when she was interviewed by the police. Anything at all."

"Oh Brenda. She came to visit Hilda a couple of times. A charming and compassionate lady. No she never spoke about what happened that dreadful day. I think that she was too traumatized by what happened. I watched the poor dear slowly go to pieces. Her hair started falling out terribly and she had to wear a wig. Her arthritis would sometimes flare up so badly that she could barely walk. Before that terrible event, she was one of the most happiest people that one could meet. In truth I was glad when she went back to Carlise to be with family. I received a letter a few weeks after she went back to Carlisle from a family member, letting me know that she died from a stroke. I could not reply to the letter, because the sender forgot to write a return address. I was sad to hear that she had died, but I wasn't surprised. She really needed taking care of. She was haunted by terrible nightmares about those ghastly events of what happened that day. From what Brenda told me she was the only one of the four of them who had actually seen Boyd impaled on the railings and the girl's body badly broken on the ground. Hilda had lived here for just over a year. She had the box room, at the back of the house. I need to call the decorators in to wallpaper and paint the room. I had to throw the bed out, because it was too filthy to use again. In truth, her personal hygiene became a lot to be desired before she left. I also need to bag up and dump the very few things that she left

behind. Even a second hand shop wouldn't want it. That's all I can tell about her really Mister Blumer."

"Would you mind if I take a look inside of her room Mrs Pound?"

"Oh course not. But there's not much in there. Oh, just one more thing, now I remember. She would sometimes cry out in her sleep, 'leave me alone now. I don't, I don't belong to you'."

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## CHAPTER 18

Blumer was wandering around the supermarket with a shopping trolley. He had been meaning to stock up with food and drink for a while, but this case had consumed so much of his time that he had forgotten about it. He was piling some packages of Ben Truman and McEwens Export into the trolley, when he became aware of somebody watching him. It was Pamela.

“Good morning John. I can see you are stocking up with some liquid lunch.”

This was one thing he did like about Pamela. Her blazé and sarcastic sense of humour. “Morning Pamela, nice to see you again. How’s things with you these days?”

“Could be a lot better, but I’m just ticking over okay. I’m doing a bit of typing for Tristan again.”

“Glad to hear that. He came to visit me at my office recently. Had a good old chin-wag with him.”

“Like two bloody women, with the latest, idle gossip, hot gossip, malicious gossip, I dare say”.

This is one thing he did not like about her; her cruel, spiteful and nasty snipes. But he did not try to hit back. The last thing he wanted at the moment was an argument.

“It was only a social visit really. Tristan was the only one to stand by me when things went bad.”

“Well, he probably told you that we all had lunch together, Tristan, Aubrey and myself.”

“He did. And he told me that Aubrey got drunk and started blabbering his mouth off.”

“You can say that again. I dare say that he told you that I had finished with Damian, and the reasons why. He pushed his luck too far, so I had to dump him.”

Now he sensed a sarcastic jibe of his own and he used it like an impervious, passing comment.

“He did mention something about Sir Galahad turning out to be Sir Lancelot, that liked to try out his lance on any woman that he could. Maybe he should of used it for pole-vault instead?”

Pamela chuckled despite herself. But she was not going to let him get away with it. “Aubrey did mention your lady friend John. I hope she’s behaving herself and looking after you?”

“She’s gone Pamela. She left a few weeks ago. Oh well, it was good while it lasted.”

“My God John, a stripper, a bloody stripper. How could you stoop so low John?”

“I dare say the chuckle brothers told you all about her then. To cut a long story short, she needed somewhere to stay for a while and I was up for a jolly-jape at the time anyway. That’s all there is to it. I don’t see why you should be offended Pamela. It was you that left me. I only found out when I picked up my favorite tea pot and found your dear John note underneath it.”

“I can’t be angry with you John, because you just don’t get it. You’re not even a male chauvinist pig. It was me who took care of all of the bills. It was me who had to traipse around the supermarkets by myself, looking for bargains. It was me who was always stuck in a queue at the bank, trying to sort out some problem with our account. It was me who always made sure that there was food on the table. It was me who had to do all of the washing, ironing and cleaning. A woman’s work is

never done alright. But it would help if the man of the house did his wack. You were never there John. I can't be angry with you John, because you just don't get it."

Blumer's sleep that night was filled with strange dreams and images. Pamela's brutally honest opinion of him had hit him like a sledgehammer. He knew that everything she said was true. He was a lonely man. His whole life, every fibre of his being was geared up and honed for catching killers. It was his calling, his spiritual duty and everything else in his life simply had to take second place. How could a man even begin to explain this; not to just Pamela, but to any woman? It was in the early hours of the morning when his slumber became more easy and relaxed. The strange images and and lucid dreams were still swimming around inside of his subconscious, when suddenly one image jumped out and was stuck right in his face.

He suddenly woke up and nearly jumped out of bed and shouted, "Eureka! Well I'll be damned. How on earth could I miss a clue as blatant as that?"

He was now back on track. A massive, central piece of the puzzle had slipped into place. All he needed to do now was to ask Peter Parnell a couple of more questions. He had a hunch that another piece of the puzzle may then slip into place. Then he would go and visit Harry Parkes again. Harry had been very helpful so far, but what he would ask him for now was really going to make him wonder what was going on and what he would be up to next.

When Blumer rang on Peter Parnell's doorbell this time. He could barely suppress his excitement when Peter opened the the door. "Good morning Peter. Sorry to disturb you again. I'll be quick. I only have a couple of questions."

"Good morning John. No problem at all. Let's hear 'em

then. Hope I can help you.”

When he left Peter Parnell, he went straight to the nearest phone box to try and arrange a meeting with Harry Parkes, as soon as possible. He could not go down to Clacton to catch Danny Garcia, until he had in his possession what wanted from Harry Parkes. He then went into a menswear shop and bought himself a navy blue blazer, three polo shirts and two pairs of boating shoes; a blue pair and a beige pair. When he looked in the mirror he looked like somebody out of The Prisoner series. But he was no prisoner and he was not going on holiday.

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## CHAPTER 19

### **BETHNAL GREEN. 0120 IN THE MORNING.**

An angry landlord jumped out of bed and threw his bedroom window open. Two prostitutes were having a very loud shouting match in the street and he he'd had enough.

“Hey you two. Shut the fuck up, or I'll call the police right now. Now move on!”

They looked up at him, muttered something between themselves and walked away, in opposite directions. He noticed a thug that he only knew as Hammond stagger by, blind drunk and disappear along a narrow dark alley. Just as he had climbed back into bed he was rocked by an explosive BANG BANG. When the police found Hammond, halfway along the ally, he was stone dead. Somebody had blasted him under his rib-cage with both barrels of a double barrelled sawed off shotgun and had jammed a dirty sock in his mouth. The only person who had witnessed Hammond enter the ally was the landlord, when he had threatened to call the police, regarding the two fueding prostitutes. Neither of the prostitutes came forward and they had already departed when Hammond had staggered into the ally. There were also injuries to Hammond's back. He had been thrown against the wall with great force, before being blasted.

### **WHITECHAPEL**

#### **0145. THE NEXT MORNING**

Dawes was laying in bed thumbing through an old porno'

magazine, when he heard a very faint knock on his door. He was not really alarmed, because he thought that it could be Doreen; a pathetic, alcoholic prostitute, that sometimes serviced him. He got out of bed and opened the door. But it wasn't Doreen; it was a blond woman carrying a big floral patterned shoulder bag, who he did not know. He did not have time to see the double-barrelled, twelve-bore, sawed-off shotgun, before he got blasted by both barrels, under his rib-cage. When the police arrived, they found Dawes's naked body, with a dirty sock jammed in his mouth and a broomstick rammed up his anus. The police believed that both killings had been planned and had been carefully and viciously executed. The killer appeared to be setting a brutal example.

When Blumer walked into Harry Parkes's office the next day, Harry was eager to talk to him.

"Good morning John. We cannot go on meeting like this. I take it that you know what happened to your friends Hammond and Dawes. Who would do something to a couple of nice chaps like them? They must have done something really bad to get shot like in a bloody duck-shoot."

"First of all, they were no friends of mine Harry. But two bums like that must have made a lot of enemies in their sordid careers. I think they were killed because they knew something."

"Well I can assure you that it wasn't me, or Benny Goldberg who did it. They would have simply disappeared. Nobody would have ever seen 'em again"

"I know Harry, I know. But get this. Whoever killed them wanted it to look like a gangland killing. The whole thing was too staged, too dramatic, too spectacular and showy. Whoever killed them was trying to remove attention from himself. He is one clever and cunning bastard."

Whatever you've got yourself into John, don't you think you'd be better off contactin' your friends in the Met. You could be way out of your depth, with somebody that kills like that."

"No chance. If he even gets an inkling that he is about to staked out, he will simply escape again. He's always one jump ahead. I think he's gettting desperate and cleaning house. He's taking out anybody that could implicate him in not just one murder, but several."

"I don't wanna' pry John. Is this personal. Could it be to do with the Leon Boyd case? If you're allowin' your judgment to be blinded by revenge and bitterness, or a sense of injustice. Then you could be makin' a serious mistake, John."

"It's personal alright. But this is a challenge that I've never known before. I actually think that he could even be mocking me. Something is driving me on, but I don't know what it is."

"Try to stand back and think about what you're doin' John. You could be in serious danger."

"Are you still in contact with the old gangland armourer, Alfie Smethhurst?"

"No, he retired a few years ago. But what would you want with him anyway? Unless you intend to go on a duck-shoot of your own John. I can phone his son Raymond, if you like. I think that Raymond knows a liitle bit about tools of the trade, so to speak. He's taken over from Alfie."

"I'm asking for two big favours from you Harry. I want a Browning, with a thirteen round magazine. And I want about thirty, or forty nine mil' parabellum dum-dum bullets. Do you think you could get them for me Harry?"

Harry could not hide his amazement, and sounded

flabbergasted when he said, “Dum-dum bullets. What the bloody hell do you need dum-dum bullets for John.? You ain’t goin’ on no duck-shoot. You only want dum-dum bullets, if you really wanna’ rip somebody up!”

“I might need to. I can’t afford to give this bastard a chance. If I have to face him down, then one mistake, or miscalculation, then it could be curtains for me.”

“Okay John. I’ll phone Raymond and I’ll let you know. But this is strictly between me and you.”

“Thanks Harry. And could you put a twenty four hour guard on Carol Locke. And tell him not to make sure that he let’s nobody near her. She could be in serious danger. He will also need to be tooled up. She could easily end up like Hammond and Dawes, if she knows too much.”

“Oh, Come on John. Who would wanna’ kill a poor little cow like Carol Locke?”

“Somebody who is getting desperate and burning all of their boats and bridges. Somebody who can and will kill anybody that gets in their way. Without any remorse, or pity.”

“I’m a man of my word John. If it was not for you Stewart Briggs would have probably got away with killing my nephew and that other kid. And he may well have killed again. I know that you single handedly caught the bastard. I owe you, but I think I also owe you some advice. If you think you know who you’re after, then why the bloody hell don’t you tell the police?”

“That’s the problem. I don’t know who, or rather what I’m after. All I’ve got is a jumbled up mess of clues. You know why I was thrown off the Leon Boyd case. I only said that Boyd may have had an accomplice. I did not say that he certainly did have one. I said at the time that there were a few

anomalies that should have been looked into, before the case was closed. The whole bloody shebang was done and dusted just a little bit too quickly for me. And everybody who I have interviewed recently has inadvertantly provided me with a piece of a puzzle. I'm now sure that Boyd did have an accomplice. And by hook, or by crook I want to prove I was right all along. Call it what you like Harry, vanity, false ego, or grim determination. I want to be exonerated. My dignity was taken away from me in a very public way. And I'm sure this bastard knows it."

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## CHAPTER 20

Two days later Blumer boarded the Clacton train. He was sporting his new ragalia. A navy blue blazer, navy blue boating shoes and a white Fred Perry polo shirt. Harry had managed to provide him with the Browning and dum-dum bullets, but if had been under sufferance. Harry had been honest with his opinions. He had told him before he left that he was behaving like a man possessed, rather than a dogged and reason driven murder detective. In the Met he had been boxed in by rules, regulations, protocols and measured procedures. Now he was a free agent and he was free to do things that he alone deemed to be right.

When he phoned Richard Marshall and told him about how he was about to proceed, Marshall had wanted to know what he had found out. He had told him to hold on. He was about to go in and try to force somebody to come out into the open. But he had to smoke him out. Whoever had given Hammond and Dawes the business end of a sawn-off shotgun, had achieved exactly what they had wanted. It had been splashed out in the main tabloids. 'IS GANGLAND CLEANING HOUSE'. 'GANGLAND KILLS TWO, WITH SHOT GUNS BLASTS'. 'GANGLAND DELIVERS A SOCK IN THE JAW TO TWO AS A WARNING – referring to the dirty socks that were jammed into Hammond's and Dawes's mouths.

Richard Marshall had already booked Blumer into a room at Jaywick. It was close to a pub called The Never Say Die. He had told Marshall that he needed to be as close as possible to where Danny Garcia's food vending van was situated. He had also told Marshall that he would be out of contact with him for a few days, because he had a lot to do. Three carriages along a

middle-aged woman was making three teenage girls laugh, with her impersonations of Frankie Howard and Ena Sharples. The Browning and bullets were concealed in a compartment inside of Blumer's suitcase. The investigation was about to go into overdrive and take off like a rocket.

Meanwhile Danny Garcia had just left a phone booth in Jaywick, near the Sheldrake pub. He had phoned Carol Locke in desperation, asking her to take him back. Carol had told him an emphatic no. If things were going bad between him and Erma, then that was his problem, she didn't want to know. Erma had told him to shut down early and she would meet him at the chalet that they were renting along Avis Avenue, Brooklands. He could not do a bunk, because Erma controlled all of their money. And she completely owned him anyway, with what she knew about him.

Blumer got out of the taxi, outside the Never Say Die and paid the taxi driver. The address was easy to find. It was a large chalet that looked out over the sea. Blumer rang the doorbell. The door opened and he was confronted by a rough looking man, who's nose was flattened across his face, like a boxers nose. The man looked him up and down like a drill-sergeant and said, "Who are you and what do you want?"

"Good afternoon. My name's John Blumer. I would like to speak to a Mister David Norris. I believe that Mister Marshall has phoned him to book a room for me."

The man's manner changed immediately and he became more friendly. "Ah Mister Blumer, I've been expecting you. Mister Marshall has told me that you will require a room for a few days. I've only got a small room for you, if that's okay. You can also used the phone in the hall, if you need to. He also asked me to try to help you, if you need anything."

Blumer thought that Marshall must have paid this bloke up

front well, because he became openly friendly with him now. It's amazing how some people can dance to the tune of money.

“That'll be fine. I only really somewhere to sleep for a few days. I won't need much else.”

“Come in, I'll show you the room.”

The room was indeed quite small. All it had was a single bed, a single table and chair and a broken wardrobe, with one door hanging off, but it would do for his purposes. The first thing he did was open his suitcase, put his few clothes in the wardrobe and take out the gun from the compartment inside the suitcase and loaded the dum-dum bullets into the magazine. Later on he would go and find out where Danny Garcia was and monitor his and this mysterious Erma's movements. But they must not know that he is watching them under any circumstances.

At the same time as Blumer was loading his gun. Erma was in their rented chalet in Avis Avenue, contemplating what to do next. Danny had lost his nerve. She had suspected that he had been in contact with Carol Locke. She had intercepted a letter for Danny from her, opened it, read the contents and then tore it up. Danny had started losing his nerve when Hammond and Dawes had turned up at Skegness. When they had turned up here, he then began to panic. Luckily she had managed to dodge them twice. Erma knew that Danny was stupid, but not that stupid.

The first thing Blumer did that evening was to go into The Never Say Die. He went over to the bar and ordered a pint of Ben Truman. He looked like a tourist that had stopped off for a quick pint. The beer tasted good and the few people who were in there were not paying any attention to him. That was exactly what he wanted. When he finished his pint he walked out into Broadway, the main road and turned left. When he had



visited Alice Burgess he had not been any further than Seaway. Brooklands was a strange place and as he walked along the narrow road that ran parallel with the sea wall, he read the names of all of the side lanes that ran off of it, named after famous car brands Swift, Talbot, Wolseley, Sunbeam, Hillma, Morris, Bentley, Austen, Alvis, Humber, Riley, Essex, Vauxhall, Fiat Avenues. This patch of Jaywick was a conglomeration of chalets. Some were very well kept and maintained, but some were rather shabby and built with prefabricated material. They had obviously been designed for holiday letting and were not really suitable for full time accommodation.

When he had reached the end of Brooklands he sighted the food vending van, situated in an area set back where the road led down to the caravan site. Serving two customers was a thin, dark haired young man, who must be the elusive Danny Garcia. There was no real access for traffic past this point, only down to the caravan site. Blumer muttered to himself, 'At last Danny I've found you. Now where is Erma?' He walked along the top of the sea wall and noticed that the caravan site was at about at sea level. He carried on walking until he reached the adjoining caravan site and turned back.

When he reached the food vending van, he noticed Danny was shutting up shop. Perfect, he would hang back and follow him and see where he went and what he did. Danny slowly walked along Brooklands, looking forward all of the time. This allowed Blumer to close the gap between them.

Danny then turned left into Brooklands Gardens and went into a pub called The Mermaid. Blumer waited five minutes then entered himself. The bar was packed solid with people, enjoying themselves, talking, laughing and joking. He could not see Danny, so he must have gone to the upstairs bar. Blumer climbed the stairs and entered the upstairs bar. It was

not as busy as the downstairs bar and he could see Danny right away standing at the far end of the bar, talking to a barmaid who obviously knew him. He ordered himself a pint of McEwens Export and went to sit at a table in the far corner.

Danny's attention was completely focused on the barmaid, who was talking and laughing with him. Perfect, he had not even noticed Blumer entering the bar. Danny certainly liked his beer, because Blumer noticed that he gulped down three pints in about twenty minutes. Eventually he said goodnight to the barmaid and headed for the stairs. Blumer, using some people as cover slipped away, without the barmaid seeing him. Fortunately Danny had stopped to greet a couple and Blumer made a ploy to enter The Brooklands Social Club opposite to The Mermaid. He waited for Danny to finish talking with the couple and then began to follow him again. At the end of Brooklands Danny turned left went into The Shel Drake. Again Blumer waited for five minutes before he entered the pub.

Danny was already finishing his first pint and ordering another one when Blumer entered. This time he took up position at the far end of the bar and used the people lining the bar as cover, then ordered a pint of Worthington E. Again Danny drank another three pints in quick succession and Blumer wondered if he was either drowning his sorrows, or he was a fully fledged drunkard. Danny Garcia was not a bad looking boy, with olive skin, jet black hair and fine chiselled features. But as an aspiring criminal he had fallen short, from what Blumer had learned about him.

It was just then that Blumer realised that he was being watched. He was being watched by a huge bear-like man, of over six feet. He tried to act as if he had not noticed the man, but the man started walking towards him. This was the last thing that he needed; to get into a punch up with a man mountain. He turned to face the man, as to make sure he was

not going to get a surprise attack.

The man simply looked at Blumer up and down, as if he was examining a piece of art work, then winked his left eye and said with a friendly Irish accent, “Well I’ll be. Please forgive me for intruding. But are you Detective Inspector John Blumer?”

This was the one thing that he did not want; to have his cover blown before he had even started. “I used to be. But I’ve retired from the Met now and run my own private investigation agency.”

“Well may I shake your hand Mister Blumer. Please let me buy you a pint.”

Blumer glanced over to try to sight Danny, but he had already left. He would have to try the same routine tomorrow and hope that he could follow Danny without any interruptions.

“The name’s Pat Malloy. And I never thought I’d get the honour of meeting one of the team that finally got that murderin’ monster Leon Boyd. Ba’Jesus the bastard got what he deserved.”

Blumer’s interest was instantly drawn to this statement and he wanted to know more.

“I’ll have a pint of Worthington E, Pat. What are you having, I’m paying?”

“I’ll have the same John. If you don’t mind me callin’, you John?”

They went to sit down at a table and Blumer realised that he had to ask Pat Malloy to keep his knowledge that he was in town at secret. And he would be better off telling Malloy that he was currently incognito and was in the middle of a private investigation and needed to move about undercover. Hopfully

this huge, jovial Irishman would understand.

“Well Pat, How comes you’re so familiar with the infamous Leon Boyd case? I know that the terrible events that led up to his demise made the front page of every newspaper, but I thought that was old news now. I for one could never forget that day, because it nearly cost me my job.”

“I know what happened to you John and it was a disgrace the way you were treated. Well, I worked with Leon Boyd, when we were workin’ on a building project outside Manchester. He was going by the name of William Wiseman then and ba’ Jesus I’ve never met a man as big and strong as him before. Even when I was doin’ the prize-fightin’ cuircuit, have I ever encountered anybody like him. The devil could work like a trojan all day, shovellin’ sand and cement into a massive industrial cement mixer. My old sparring partner Cambell admitted to me that Leon Boyd was the only man who he had ever feared in his life. I think he was a freak a nature. He was not an easy man either. He didn’t like to entertain any of the other workers and was not easy to approach.

“When the project finished and we all went away on another project, he did not come with us. But the one thing I did remember about him and it only came back to me like as slap in the face later. After he had raped and killed all of those poor gals, and ended up skewered on those railings. At the time I didn’t pay much attention to him, but I should have.”

“What was that Pat?”

Well, we were sitting in the site’s canteen and I was telling Cambell about a terrible thing that happened to me when I was workin’ on a site outside Bradford. A couple of local prostitutes had been badly battered. And a dustman had seen a massive man leave the building where they lived. Well I was

staying in digs close by and the police were looking for this man. Well I've never felt so insulted and afraid in my life. Because I was taken in and had to stand in a police line-up."

"Of all of the rotten bad luck, out of the eight of us, I was by far the biggest and tallest man in the line up. Ba'Jesus I'd wished I could have shrank six inches and lost four stone in weight, in five seconds flat. I didn't know it at the time, but one of the prostitutes and the dustman were lookin' at the line through the glass panel and both of them told the police that the man was far bigger than any of us and he was definitely not in the line-up and we were all dismissed. Now get this. Boyd had been eavesdropping on what I was saying to Cambell. And bearing in mind that he hardly ever spoke and was very hard to approach, he quite abruptly interrupted and said, 'When were you in Bradford Malloy?' Although I was a bit taken aback, I didn't really attach much importance to his manner. I should have done, because look what he went on to do. So I said to him, 'Last year'. 'Why's that do you know Bradford then?' And he said in a very bombastic manner, 'No, never been there in my life.' What would have happened if the dustman and prossy' had identified me and I got banged up in prison for years. How could I have ever faced my family in Ireland again? I'm sure Leon Boyd had been in Bradford then. That's why he was so interested in what I was sayin' to Cambell. That's the reason he suddenly interrupted me."

Blumer's mind was instantly cast back to his army days, as a young soldier. And the image of Murrey trembling in the middle of the barrack room shouting 'YOU BASTARDS!, you all thought I did it, didn't you?' flashed into his mind. He then realised that Malloy could be a friend and ally.

"That's one of the reasons I do what I do Pat. Not only do I want to catch murderers and see them tried by a court and banged up. I want to eliminate the innocent and people that

have become victims of circumstances. Who may have just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Or have been wrongly identified, or even framed up. That can happen also.”

“Well if you need me John, I come in here most nights for a few pints. I rent a chalet for the summer months along Humber Avenue, along Brooklands. You’re welcome to look me up.”

Blumer now had an opening to ask Malloy for the only favour that he needed. “Listen Pat. At the moment I’m carrying out a private investigation for a client. It’s very important that the person who I’m investigating is unaware that I’m about. I cannot afford to risk him finding out that I am watching his movements. Otherwise he could escape. I don’t want that.”

“That’s fine by me John. Let me buy you another pint, before they shout last orders.”

When Blumer went back to the chalet that night, he pondered his next move. He must find out where Danny Garcia and his lady friend were living. He had not seen any sign of Erma and he wondered if things could have turned bad between them and she had left. But he also thought that possibly Erma could have been the real target of Hammond and Dawes. And outlandish and ridiculous as this other possibility was, he simply could not dismiss it outright.

He picked out the postcard from his suitcase and examined it. Lisa Noonan had disappeared from close by to here. Sian Ellis had disappeared in Clacton, which was also close by. Hammond and Dawes were probably quite capable of abducting them both. When the history of Leon Boyd was carefully studied, he had been working on building sites, around Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham and the Midlands; under the false names of William Wiseman or

Charles Cleverly. And from what Malloy had told him, he may well of done a dummy run around Bradford, but that could only be speculation. There was no record, or any evidence that he could have been visiting this area. After he had been released fom Durham prison, he had managed to stay incomunicado and had stayed off the police's radar. The fake names he used, suggests a penchant for vanity.

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# CHAPTER 21

## THE VISITOR.

### ‘THE PREDATOR IS CLOSE.

### THE PREDATOR IS STALKING ITS PREY’.

The visitor had honed in on the two drunken girls as they had entered Brooklands. It was after three o'clock in the morning and they were heading back to the Seawick caravan site where they were staying. The reason that they had got so drunk was because they had been to a disco in Clacton called The Palace. Although they had not been scrounging drinks, several young men had insisted on buying them drinks, hoping for a chance to get off with them. They had walked back along the promenade and then along the sea wall that led to Jaywick. The visitor had followed them from a safe distance and was delighted when they passed Brooklands and began to walk along the sea wall to the caravan site. Perfect, absolutely perfect. Because it was pitch dark and there was nobody about. The visitor could see in the dark, because his eyes were sharper than a cats eyes. This attack would be opportune, because the visitor was desperate. He had been losing strength day by day and he needed a quick and decisive abduction and kill, without any hitches. If he could pull this one off, then it would be time to move on again. But this time Danny wouldn't be joining him. From what he had heard from Danny, Carol Locke had told him that she had been interviewed by a private investigator named John Blumer. A name that the visitor knew all too well. Now he was only about twenty feet from the girls and was stalking them along the path that ran below the sea wall, parallel with it. He was now in his snatch and kill mode. The car was already parked where the road



panned out into a gravelled area, near where the sea wall that sectioned the adjoining road to where the caravan site was situated. The visitor was now so close that he could hear everything that the girls were saying.

“Come on Sandra, let’s go for a swim. There’s nobody about. Come on.”

“Okay Karen, but don’t go out too far, cause if somethin’ happens we could get into trouble.”

They then dropped down over the sea wall, stripped off naked and ran into the sea. The visitor bolted up the sea wall and peered over it. The girls were splashing about in the shallows, giggling and shoving each other about. The sight of two beautiful young girls prancing about stark naked in the shallows would be pleasing to the eye for any normal young man. But the visitor was so far removed from being normal, that a normal human mind could not even begin to process the monstrous needs of him. It was not sex, or even lust that the visitor felt. What the girls had was not something he wanted but needed; needed desperately. After the girls had splashed about for about fifteen minutes, they got bored and went back to sit on the sand and let the breeze dry them off, before putting their clothes back on. After about half an hour of chatting and laughing about the good time that they had, letting all of those amorous young men buy them drinks, they both laid down on the sand and drifted off to sleep. They were both laying either side of a small, rotting, old rowing boat and he decided to go for the girl on the right hand side of the boat. He waited another ten minutes and then with incredible speed he pounced. Long fingers, with vice like strength clammed the girl’s mouth shut and she was carried away without the other girl even being disturbed. It was just before seven o’clock when Karen woke up. She stood up intending to wake Sandra up. But when she looked over the other side of the boat Sandra

wasn't there. Cold fear stabbed deep inside of her solar-plexus and her heart felt as though it was trying to burst out off her chest. In a blind panic she began to run around shouting: "SANDRA! SANDRA!...WHERE ARE YOU?.. SANDRA, DON'T PLAY GAMES WITH ME..WHERE ARE YOU?.. SANDRAAAAHAH!.. WHERE ARE YOU?...PLEASE GOD NO!..."

When the police arrived Karen was so distraught that she could barely articulate her words, when they had tried to take a statement from her. A search was immediately put into action and police officer went to the caravan site, to check that the girl had not returned to the caravan that the girls were staying in. She had not and nobody on the caravan site had seen her. No body had been found in the sea, or washed up on the beach. Only a shoe that the girl had been wearing, was the only item that was left as evidence. The officer in charge decided to call in the dog handling team.

Half an hour later a dog handler with a magnificent German Shepherd arrived at the scene. The dog became extremely excited and a deep growl rumbled deep down in its throat, when the shoe was put under its nose. It then snarled and saliva spluttered from its mouth. Then its lips curled back revealing sharp incisor teeth. The dog handler looked perplexed and anxious. It then started pulling strongly on its lead and looking to the right hand side of the party of officers, along the beach.

"He's onto something Sir. I've never seen him as disturbed as this before."

"Okay Thompson, get ready. Let him lead and we'll follow."

"Right Bomber, let's go and find the girl. Good boy Bomber. let' get goin' boy."

The dog barked loudly in acknowledgement to his masters

orders. He then let the dog off the lead and it ran off at great speed along the beach, with six police officers in hot pursuit. About six hundred yard along the beach, it did a sudden right turn and bolted up and over the sea wall. When the officers had finally caught up with the dog, they found him scratching with his paws at an area gravel, a few yards back from the sea wall; close to where the road met the entrance of the caravan site. The dog handler cautiously approached to where the dog was pawing and sniffing around in the gravel. Then he knelt down beside the dog and examined the gravel.

“Here Sir. She was put into a vehicle right here. Look where the tire tracks have churned up the gravel, where the driver has done a really fast three point turn. The gravel has been churned up until it joins the road. Indicating that the driver drove off at great speed. And as you can see the tire tracks are recent, because of the way they cross the other tire tracks.”

When Blumer heard the news he immediately knew that it was another abduction. And a new scenario was taking shape inside of his head. Why had the abductor struck twice in the same area. Could he have done this one out of desperation, or necessity, because he had to. Now Hammond and Dawes were completely out of the picture. Possibly they had both received the business end of shotgun, because they had found out who the abductor was and they had to be eliminated. Tonight he would try to follow Danny Garcia again and hopefully finally see this mysterious Erma, unless she had left him of course. The scenario that Blumer had thought simply too outlandish and ridiculous had now climbed a few steps up of the ladder of credibility. But then again according to Carol Locke, Danny and Erma had moved from Skegness to Clacton about three weeks after Sian Ellis had disappeared. Hammond and Dawes had gone to extreme lengths to track them from Skegness, then to here. They must have had very good reasons why.

Whatever Danny Garcia knew, must have been of extreme importance to these two scumbags. Danny had stopped visiting Leonard about three weeks before the house was torched. Everything had been moved out and no incoming goods were delivered to the house in lieu of being shipped out again. Up until the fire, the house had been a beehive of activity, regarding the fencing business. The house had been rigged up like a potential bonfire, according to Peter Parnell. Harry Parkes had not made a big deal about a property that he owned, burning down.

A heavy wooden crate had been moved out of the house in the early hours, just before the fire; which could have been from the gold bullion heist. Had Leonard warned Harry Parkes of an imminent police raid, pending warrants. Could Leonard have shared the secret with Danny about the gold bullion being hidden in the house, which was very unlikely. And if so had Danny let it slip while fraternizing with Hammond and Dawes. Surely nobody could be that stupid?

None of these clues had added up until Blumer had visited Beryl Pound and then Peter Parnell for a second time. He needed a few more pieces of the puzzle to slip into place, but now he thought he knew who the killer was. It had been a long, hard ordeal, but he would now try to bring the killer out into the open. By hook, or by crook he would smoke him out and finally confront him.

## CHAPTER 22

Police tape was rigged around the area of the sea wall where the girl had been abducted. Unfortunately the high tide had reached the sea wall and had covered the place where the girl had been laying. Blumer was standing on the path that ran parallel with the sea wall below. It would have been very dark here at night and the abductor could have easily stalked the girls from the path, while keeping a sharp eye on them, as they walked along the sea wall, above him. He then walked on to the area where she had been put into the car. Only somebody of immense strength could have carried her for about six hundred yards along the beach, then lifted her over the sea wall. And then carried her for about another six hundred yards to where the car was parked.

Now it was time to walk back and stake out Danny Garcia again and see where he would go after he shut up shop this evening. Blumer took a position as close to the food vending van as he dared. This night Danny had been busy and people had been queuing up to be served. Still no sign of Erma and Blumer thought he may now know the reason why. At just before nine thirty, when he had no more customers to serve, Danny shut up shop again. Blumer followed him again, from a safe distance. Again he went straight into The Mermaid and Blumer waited five minutes before he entered himself. Danny was not in the downstairs bar, so Blumer climbed the stairs to the upstairs bar. Danny was talking with the same barmaid again and by her manner and openly friendly attitude towards him, she appeared to be rather fond of him.

Blumer ordered a pint of Bass and went to sit at a table where he could watch Danny closely. Again Danny gulped

down three pints within about twenty minutes, bid the barmaid goodnight and headed for the stairs. Blumer followed him and slipped behind a group of people, so the barmaid had not seen him leave again. This time Danny had a headstart on him and Blumer had to up his pace to narrow the gap between them. He thought that he knew where Danny was going. And sure enough, when he had reached the end of Brooklands he entered the The Sheldrake. Blumer followed the same procedure as before and waited five minutes before he entered himself. This time Danny was laughing and joking with a group of men, who appeared to be highly amused by what he was saying to them. Blumer went to the bar and ordered a pint of Worthington E. Suddenly Danny was right next to him and squeezed himself between Blumer and another man that was standing at the bar. He grinned at the other man and said.

“Excuse me, Gov. Can just slip in and get meself’ a pint?”

The man let him pass and Blumer moved along the bar slightly, so Danny had no reason to ask him to move. When he had ordered his pint, he went back to talk with the same group of men. Blumer looked around the pub to see if Pat Malloy was in, but couldn't see him. He then went to sit down at a table at the far end of the pub. He watched Danny go to the bar another three times to order a pint. And this time he stayed until closing time and he was visibly drunk. Now Blumer had to be very careful. If Danny discovered that he was being followed, then Blumer's game plan would go completely off the rails.

When Danny left the pub, when time was called; Blumer finished his pint and slipped out of the door at the far end. Danny was in the phone box outside dialling a number, with the receiver of the phone held to his ear. Danny's olive coloured skin had appeared to change into white from the light above him in the booth. Blumer slipped into a the shadows of

the public toilet and tried to observe Danny's body language. He noticed that his right hand that was holding the receiver was shaking and as he slotted coins into the machine his left hand was visibly trembling. His left cheek was twitching and he was moving about from one foot to another. Who was he phoning this time of night; Carol Locke, the barmaid who appeared to have a crush on him, or even Erma. He doubted it would have been the barmaid. And Carol Locke had told him in no uncertain terms that their relationship was over for good. Unless he had managed to persuade her to change her mind. No, Blumer was looking at a frightened man. Danny Garcia's body language spoke for itself.

After about fifteen minutes Danny finished the the phone call and dithered slowly along Brooklands. Blumer had slipped around the other side of the toilets, so Danny would not notice him. This time he gave Danny plenty of leeway and kept as much in the shadows as he could. But Danny did not look back, even once. Danny then turned into Avis Avenue and Blumer realised he was about to find out where he was living. Danny walked right to the end of the lane and turned into a chalet that was right a the end. Blumer followed but very nearly come unstuck. Just as Danny had slipped the key into the door, he suddenly turned around. Luckily he turned to his left and walked right to the end of the lane, which was very dark. If he had turned right, he would almost certainly had seen Blumer.

Blumer ducked behind a wall of a chalet and tried to see what Danny was doing. He first heard a car door slam, then the thud of the boot as Danny slammed it. Then he went back to the chalet, carrying two plastic bags and then opened the front door of the chalet and went inside. Blumer waited for five minutes, then slowly made his way to the end of the lane. Parked out of sight along the side of the chalet, in the long

grass, was a Hillman Avenger. A very big piece of the puzzle had just slipped into place. This explained something that had so far mystified him. How on earth had he not taken this into consideration.

The lights were on in the chalet, but both of the front curtains were drawn. Blumer decided not to push his luck any further tonight and stealthily crept away. When he went to his chalet; the first thing he did was clean the barrel of the Browning with a linseed soaked cloth, by pulling a rod through the barrel. He then lubricated the magazine and dum-dum bullets with linseed oil. He could not risk the gun to jamming, if he had to use it. It could mean either kill, or be killed. He then knelt down beside the bed and prayed. He had not prayed for many years. And this prayer came from the bottom of his troubled heart. ‘Lord Jesus. Please protect me against evil, please deliver me from evil’.

He was about to leave the chalet when the landlord appeared from the kitchen area.

“Good morning Mister Blumer, glad I caught you. Somebody phoned about eight o’clock and wanted to speak with you. He didn’t leave his name and it was definitely not Mister Marshall. He said he would phone about the same time tonight. He sounded quite angry, I can tell you.”

Blumer’s heart raced and the cold clasp of fear grabbed the base of his spine. He knows that I’m here. How on earth would he know that I’m here. Perhaps Carol Locke had mentioned his name to Danny and he put two and two together. And he must know that I’m looking for Danny.

“Thank you Mister Norris. I think I know who it is. And I think I know why he’s angry. If he does phone again could you pass on this message. I know who you are at last.”

“Okay Mister Blumer, no problem. Are you in some sort of



trouble, or somethin' if you don't mind me askin'? If so, maybe I can help you."

"Thank you Mister Norris, but this is something that have to deal with my self. I asked for it."

That night Blumer waited by the phone anxiously expecting the phone call. He waited for over an hour, but the phone didn't ring. He thought to himself, 'If you want to play mind games, or you're trying to test my nerves, then that's fine by me'. He had no need to follow Danny Garcia now, he didn't need to. Instead he headed for The Sheldrake and hoped that he would bump into Pat Malloy. He may need to ask the congenial Irish giant for a favour. Hopefully he could force his devious and sly opponant out into the open, without getting anybody else involved. When he walked through the doors of The Sheldrake he saw Pat Malloy standing at the bar, chatting to the barman. When he saw Blumer he shouted over to him, "Good evening John. What are you havin'?"

"Thank's Pat, I'll have a pint of Bass."

They then went down to sit at a table, holding their pints.

"Well John. How's things with you. Had any luck with bloke you're trying to find."

"Better than that. He knows that I'm after him and he ain't gonna' do a runner. I actually think that the bastard wants to have it out with me even. But I'm well prepared for him Pat."

"Well if you need any help John, just let me know. Maybe you can make me famous like you."

Blumer chuckled and despite all of the potential danger that he was in replied.

"In the next couple of days I may ask you for a favour Pat. I've just got to try and goad and provoke this bastard to call me out for a confrontation. And it could turn out to get very

nasty.”

“No problem, John. From what I gather from you this blokes sounds like a mean bastard.”

“Mean bastard. He’s a lot worse than that Pat. I wonder if he’s even bloody human.”

For the rest of the evening they talked, laughed and joked. It turned out that when Malloy was working around the building sites in England; the love of his life had dumped him for a local copper back in Ireland. And to add insult to injury, they had run off with all of his savings, which he had been sending home. His old sparring partner Cambell had been killed on a building site where he working, in Liverpool; when a scaffold loaded with bricks and cement collapsed on him. Jaywick was the place he came to stay, just to get away from it all. He loved it here and for the three months that he rented the chalet along Humber Avenue, he could relax and just enjoy himself. But this summer would be different for Pat Malloy. The events that were about to unfold, would be indelibly stamped in his mind for the rest of his life. Blumer had been expecting Malloy to ask this question and wondered why he had not mentioned it before.

“What do you think of that gal going missing near the caravan site. I don’t want to ask you too many questions, or pry John. Another gal disappeared in Clacton recently. You’re really after a killer John, aren’t you. That’s the real reason you’re here, isn’t it. But how did you know that he would strike again here John? How the bloody hell did you know?”

“I didn’t Pat. I didn’t. Call it what you like, Pat. I would call it serendipity in reverse, Pat.”

Blumer had noticed that Danny Garcia had not been into The Sheldrake that night and thought that he had possibly decided to give it a miss this night. Danny had served his

purpose and Blumer wondered if Danny had been warned about Blumer's presence here now and had been told to take a low profile. He now knew what he was going to do next. He was going to let the killer know that he knew where he was hiding out. But he was going to do it in a very subtle and dastardly way. His game plan was to play on his opponent's anger and probable frustration. If his opponent wanted to play psychological warfare, by leaving a message that he would phone him and then had not done so, then he had provoked the wrong reaction in Blumer.

Blumer knew that his next move would either force an extreme response from his opponent and force him to come out in the open to attack him, or he would try to get away.

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## CHAPTER 23

### **‘THE PRADATOR IS WOUNDED. THE PREDATOR IS DESPERATE’.**

Right in front of the Martello Tower; the same one that Blumer had an old postcard of; at one o'clock in the morning, two people were struggling in the sea. Unfortunately one of them could not even begin to overpower the other one. Because the other one; although he, or she had lost a lot of strength; was still far too powerful for Danny Garcia. Finally Danny was brought to bear by the sheer strength of his opponant. His death had to look like a drowning. Long fingers that could have been those of a pianist, or a violinist were clasped around Danny's shoulders, with a vice like grip, pressing him down, under the water. Finally Danny's body went limp and Erma let it drift away. Erma was now in a situation of fight, or flight. John Blumer was here and probably would have a good idea who he was looking for now. How he had managed to fit the pieces of the puzzle together was a mystery. He must have used his dogged, determined detective's mind, to pull in every single clue, pull out every single stop and follow every single lead, to bring him here. When Danny's body would be discovered floating in the sea, or washed up on the beach; the only person who would think that his death had not been an accident would be Blumer.

At exactly the same time Erma was in the process of drowning Danny Garcia, Blumer was creeping along Austin Avenue, that ran parellel with Avis Avenue. He dare not approach the chalet along Avis Avenue, because Danny, or Erma may see him. At the end of Austin Avenue he climbed underneath the fencing and by the light of a pen-light torch

made his way along the edge of a stream that ran along the back of the line of Avenues. When he reached the back of Avis Avenue, he crawled through some long grass and reeds and slipped under the fencing that ran along the back of the chalet. Perfect, the Hillman Avenger was still there. He then pulled out a penknife from his blazer pocket and went around the car, puncturing all four tires.

He peeped around the side of the chalet to see if there was any sign of movement. The curtains were still drawn, but all the lights were out. They were either asleep in bed, or there was nobody home. He then tip-toed past the front of the chalet and then briskly walked away. He had done what he had intended to do and now all he had to do was wait.

When he arrived back at his chalet, undressed and climbed into bed, he thought about all of the people who he had interviewed that had finally brought him here. All of them in their own small way had helped him build a picture. When it would finally be rolled out, it would look like a macabre tapestry of death, murder and deceit.

Blumer now believed that the killer had not simply killed out of a perverted lust. Or some Jack the Ripper type fixation for needing to murder woman. This killer was completely different. This killer had killed young women out of sheer necessity. This killer had killed, because he had to, simply to survive. This killer literally beggered belief.

The body of Danny Garcia had been found washed up on the beach about four hundred yards away from the Martello Tower. Death by misadventure, was suspected by the amount of alcohol in his blood and of course Blumer had thought otherwise. Danny had either served his purpose and was of no further use to the killer, or he had become a liability. The killer was merciless; Blumer was already very well aware of that.

The afternoon that Danny's body was found he had gone to Danny's chalet and knocked on the door. There was no reply, so he tried the front door handle and the door opened. As he had suspected there was no one home. The only two rooms were in a disgusting state. There was a bed in either room that indicated that Danny and whoever Erma was, were not in a loving relationship anyway. Clothes were strewn all over the place and the small bathroom and toilet at the back of the chalet was so filthy that Blumer had to gag. He found a set of car keys on the kitchen table and went outside to take a look at the car. He opened all of the doors of the Hillman Avenger and then opened the boot. There was a suitcase inside. He opened the suitcase and it was full of women's clothes, a make-up bag and three wigs; one black, one blond and one auburn. He thought to himself, 'you were going to kill Danny and try to do a bunk, because you had already packed your case, but I grounded you and you must be furious about it'. Tonight he would go to the Sheldrake to see Pat Malloy. Now he anticipated that the killer would try to kill him out of desperation. He may need the big Irishman to do the favour he had mentioned, because the killer may try to set a trap for him. He was right.

It was just after nine o'clock in the morning when the landlord knocked on the door of Blumer's room. He climbed out of bed, slipped a bathrobe on and opened the door.

"Morning Mister Blumer. There's somebody on the phone for you."

"Good morning. Thank's Mister Norris, I think I know who it is."

When he got to the phone and lifted the receiver to his ear, he nearly dropped it.

"YOU BASTARD BLUMER! How did you find me?"

Bingo. This was exactly the response that he was hoping for. Now this was an opening to goad, tantalize and provoke another angry response.

“Quite simple really. You left a whole string of clues. All I had to do was connect the dots and take stock of all what learned from all of the people who have had the misfortune of meeting you. When all the pieces of the puzzle fitted into place, it was so simple that a child could do it.”

“If you’re so clever Blumer, then why haven’t got the police onto me then. Maybe because you couldn’t prove anything. Maybe you’d get laughed at and humiliated. Is that why?”

“No, no, no. You’ve got it wrong. I suspected you from about halfway through my investigation. But now I know it was you. I could easily prove it. But that’s not what I want. I want you, you murdering, callous bastard. You belong to me and me alone, because I own you, you’re mine.”

Bingo. This made the caller on the other end of the line go berserk.

“YOU OWN ME. WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE BLUMER? I could have killed you as soon as I knew that you had arrived here. But I couldn’t let you talk with Danny. Because he may well have given the game away. I couldn’t take him with me, because he had completely lost his nerve.”

“So you murdered him. You simply eliminated him. Just like you do with anybody else who gets in your way, or are of no further use to you. You’re play-book is not too hard to follow, judging by the nature of your character, or lack of it. You’re a bit of a tosser really, aren’t you.”

“Really. Who do you think you are Blumer? John Blumer, mister big shot murder investigator, who always gets his man. Who prances around with polaroid camera like, some luvvy

darling photograher, taking snaps. Who got slung off his greatest murder case, because he was out-foxed by somebody who was more clever than him. What a loser, what a bum, what a dumbell.”

“Well, I’m here now, aren’t I? You can’t be that clever, because among all of your subterfuge you left glaring evidence, blatent clues that you had panicked and had ran off like the rat that you really are. Oh, by the way, nice cars Hillman Avengers. But they can’t go very far when all four tyres have been punctured. By the way, I didn’t know that you were a fan of mine, regarding my polaroid camera. How touching to have a such a loyal and dedicated fan.”

“Hah! Hah! Hah! I’m no fan of yours Blumer. I hate your guts. I’ve never laughed so much when you were slung off the Leon Boyd case. I wa so chuffed, I could have died with laughter.”

“But you didn’t die with laughter. You ran off, like the disgusting little coward that you really are. What sort of coward attacks and kills helpless women by disguising themselves as a woman. You must be so hideously ugly that you could never approach any woman dressed as a man. They probably would have just laughed at you, or spewed up. How does that one grab you?”

“It’s far more complicated than that, Blumer. If I was not so drained and weak, I’d come there and rip you to pieces. I’d tear your head clean off and parade up and down Broadway with it.”

This piece of news planted another piece of the puzzle into a corner of the big picture. He had been disabled, or wounded somehow. He had not been functioning at his full capacity. He was not firing on all cylinders. Something had stymied and stifled his strength. But what was it?



“Well you’re welcome to try. I’m not afraid you. I’ll meet you any time, any place that you want. And don’t worry, I didn’t bring my polaroid camera here with me. I don’t need photo’s of you. All I want is to meet you. My hatred for you is mutual and there’s nothing that would please me more than to beat the shit out of a little scumbag like you.”

“Hah! Hah! Hah! You really are a cockey bastard, Blumer, aren’t you. I’ve killed a man far bigger than you before. To kill you would be like crushing a mouse. I could kill you with one hand.”

“I know you have, I know you have. And he was the first person that you killed, wasn’t he?”

There was a pause for a few seconds as if the caller was digesting what he had just heard.

“Who do you think it was, then. Come on who was it then, mister big-shot detective?”

“Well, I don’t know the reason why you killed him. But I’m pretty sure I know how you did it. And I’m pretty sure that’s the reason why you had to move on so quickly. You couldn’t afford to be seen in town by anybody that may recognize you. Of course I would like to know why you killed him. He must of been just another person that got in your way. So you just killed him.”

There was another pause. Then the caller’s tone became more calm, collective and measured. “Well if it’s the same person we’re talking about, the thieving bastard deserved it, believe me.”

“You must have been very angry with him to kill him so viciously and still make it look like an accident. Did he betray you so badly, that you wrecked somebody else’s life as well?”

The caller chuckled. And his tone changed from calm and

collective to an almost friendly one. Blumer took note. Three different mood swings; anger, arrogance and casual friendliness.

“You got it, mate. I made them both of them pay. The stupid bastards must have thought that I would forgive and forget. They signed and stamped their own death warrants when they betrayed me. One I killed outright, the other one I wanted to die in pain, anguish and suffering.”

“So you don’t only kill out of necessity then. You can also kill out of anger, revenge, or just a sheer sense of getting even with people who have treated you with disrespect.”

“Partly. But what they did to me seriously hampered my career prospects, so to speak. I’ve got to hand it to you though John, you’re as cool as a cucumber. Nothing phases you does it? To just doggedly carry on, when all odds are stacked against you. How the fuck do you do it?”

This was a dramatic change in the caller’s manner. This was the first time that he had called him John. This indicated to Blumer that he was dealing with a psychopath that could change his personality, just like a quick change artist. And not just a cold, calculating killer. Somebody who harboured more than one personality inside of him. And he used each one to suit his immediate situation. This is where Blumer had to use his next words with extreme caution.

“Well now that we’ve established a bit of a repertoire after all. Why don’t we meet up? I’ll come alone of course. I don’t really think it would be a good idea for me to be seen talking to man like you. And I’m sure I’m not your cup of tea anyway. I would like tell you everything that I know about you. And maybe you can fill me in on all of the rest.”

It worked like magic. He had an element of hubris and vanity about him. Perfect.

“Well, you sure have got a lot of bottle John. As long as you’re by yourself, I’ll meet you. But you do realise that only one of us will be walking away. I’ve got nothing left to lose anyway. But if you do bring anybody else I will know anyway. It’s gotta’ be on my terms though, otherwise, no dice. You’ll be the only person to ever learn the full truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I’m tired of running and having to hide every single aspect of my life.”

“Okay, where do you want to meet me then, and what time?”

“You know where the last girl disappeared. I’ll meet you at midnight tonight. Just about there. A very fitting place for us to have a rendezvous don’t you think. It will just be you and me alone. I think you’ll be thoroughly entertained by me. I can assure you. Hah! HahHah! Hah!”

Just as Blumer had thought. He was trying to lead him into a trap. It would be pitch dark and there would be nobody about. He probably intended to drown to him, just like he had done with Danny Garcia. Drag him into the sea and then drown him. Boy was he in for a surprise. Hopefully Pat Malloy would be in the Sheldrake tonight. He may well have to call the police.

“Okay, that’s fine by me. But why can’t we just meet in The Sheldrake or Mermaid instead?”

“Come on John. Do you really think I’m that stupid? You’ve asked for a showdown and you’ve got one. And after we’ve cleared a few matters up, only one of us will be walking away.”

“Well, where the last girl disappeared it is then; at midnight. On top of the sea wall.”

## CHAPTER 24

### **‘THE HUNTER HAS BECOME THE HUNTED. THE PREDATOR HAS BECOME THE PREY’.**

Blumer took all of the dum-dum bullets out of the magazine. He polished all of them with a cloth and loaded them back into the magazine, one by one. He then cleaned the barrel of the Browning by pulling a linseed oil soaked rag through the barrel with a rod. He then put the gun into a shoulder holster and fitted the holster under his left armpit. Although he had already done this before, he was still concerned that the gun might jam, if he had to use it. He dressed himself, putting on a beige coloured pair of trousers, a light blue polo shirt and a navy blue pair of boating shoes. He then slipped on the navy blue blazer and checked that the gun was well concealed. When he left the chalet, he looked just another holiday maker about to do a round of the pubs. He headed straight for the Sheldrake, hoping to find Pat Malloy in there. Luckily he was; and Blumer breathed a sigh of relief when he saw him. It was now time to ask Malloy for that favour.

“Evening Pat, whatya’ having? The drinks are on me tonight.”

“Good evening John, I’ll have a pint of Worthington E. What’s new, are you celebratin’ or somethin’? You’re lookin’ pleased with yourself. Have you met a lady friend, or somethin’?”

Blumer chuckled. Although his nerves were on tenter-hooks now, he did not want to show Malloy that he was afraid. So he made light of the situation, as he went to the bar and said, “No

Pat. Not a lady friend. Just somebody that I've been longing to meet for a very long time. Two pints of Worthington E, please!"

Malloy had caught the cryptic message in Blumer's remark. And he immediately thought he knew who Blumer was talking about.

"Could it be the same somebody that may have murdered those two gals, John?"

"No Pat. Only a potential witness. Somebody who I may be able to garner some information from. Just following up on a lead and hope it can lead to a result."

Malloy was not having it and he decided to press Blumer more forcefully. "If it's the same bastard who murdered those two gals and may have possibly drowned that lad the other night, don't you think you're taking a terrible risk, John? Why not call the police?"

Blumer then went into a more sombre and pensive mode. And Malloy listened intently. "Please listen and try to understand Pat. This thing is personal. This is a bitter and cruel vendetta that only I can have the satisfaction of at least trying to put rest. This thing is nothing like any other murder case that I've dealt with. I want this bastard and I'm prepared to risk everything to finally either kill him, or bring him in alive and kicking. And I very much doubt that I'll bring him in alive and kicking. I never approached the Met, or any other police authority. Because not only did he kill those girls, he insulted me and humiliated me on a very deep level. I cannot go to my grave until I have at least tried to right this terrible wrong. It's as if something is guiding me and won't allow me to rest for one moment until I finally get the bastard."

Malloy listened with interest and took stock of this other side of Blumer that he was slightly wary of. Nobody liked

there dignity being taken away. To throw all caution to the wind could be very dangerous, or even deadly. But Malloy deftly and cautiously voiced his own opinion.

“Somethin’ I learned in the ring John, the hard way. Try keep a level head even, when you’re hurt and angry. Try to ride the punches til’ you see an openin’. Then strike back hard and fast.”

Blumer had been expecting the big Irishman to try and talk him out of he was about to do. “I’ve been riding the punches for too many years, Pat. Now I’m going to confront the bastard in person. But I don’t think he’s even a person. All I want from you is one thing Pat. I’m meeting him at midnight near where he abducted the last girl. Please call the police at one o’clock and tell them that I told you that I had gone to interview a witness on his own terms, because he may have vital information on the girls disappearance. Under no circumstances tell them that I think he’s the killer. Tell them that you are concerned, because I was meant to meet you afterwards and you are suspicious that I may have been duped into walking into a trap. If you never see me again, or I wind up dead, then it’s been good to meet you Pat.”

Malloy thought for a while, then finished his pint in one gulp and said, “Alright John. But you’re riskin’ your life and the bastard may escape to kill again.”

Blumer left Malloy at The Shedrake at half past eleven. His nerves had calmed down now and he had gathered his thoughts. He knew that if he was attacked it would be quick, vicious and brutal. But he had come prepared and hoped to take his opponant by surprise. He walked along the sea wall, looking left, right and over the sea wall. It was high tide and the waves were lapping up against the sea wall. The only substantial light was from the full moon. If it wasn’t for that, it

would be quite dark. There was nobody about and it was, quiet apart from the soft lapping of the waves against the sea wall. Then he saw him and wondered where he came from. Just further along the wall, where it turned a corner, before running parallel again, a figure skipped up onto the top of the wall. The figure walked forward a few paces, then stopped to look at him. Blumer climbed onto the top of the sea wall, because he did not want to give his opponent the advantage of attacking him from a higher position. When Blumer was about thirty yards in front of his opponent he stopped. It was Blumer who was the first one to speak.

“Hello, Freddy. At last we meet. Mister Freddy Kinski in person.”

Freddy chuckled and Blumer noticed that he had his right hand hidden behind his back.

Hello John, pleased to meet you. And by the light of the the silvery moon. Would you care to dance. Hah! Hah! Hah!”

“That depends on who I would be really dancing with. Leonard, Hilda Goddard, Constance, Erma, or any other disguise that you’ve used in the past.”

“Take your pick. They’ve all served me very well in the past, as you know. But what I’m really here for John, is I wanna’ know how you tracked me here, when I dodged everybody else.

“By a process of elimination Freddy. It all started when you left a few clues, or anomalies rather, when you threw the girl and then Leon Boyd out of that window, on that fateful day.”

“Go on John, I’m intrigued. But I’ll fill you in anyway, if you miss something.”

“Did you know that a jackal can lift over six times its body weight. Although it’s extremely rare, possibly millions to one,

some people can be born with it. And you were not only born with it wasn't you Freddy, you were also born with another more sinister genetic disorder as well."

"What makes you say that John? Enlighten me."

"My ex-wife bought me a book a few years ago, for my birthday. I only read it once, because the subject matter didn't really interest me. I thought that it was the stuff of folklore, or legend, passed down by simple people, who lived off the land. Recently I re-read two chapters in it. Only then did I even begin to contemplate that people like that really ever existed. But now I know they do. And you are one of them Freddy aren't you? You need human blood, preferably human blood that has a very big dose of adrenaline running through their veins. And you need it like a heroin addict needs heroin, or cocaine, don't you Freddy?"

Freddy chuckled again and interrupted. "It's far worse than that John. I need it just to stay alive; just to carry on living. If I don't get it, then I start to go weak and become ill. But you probably have already realised that anyway."

"When did you team up with Leon Boyd, Freddy? Because it was a perfect marriage made in hell. The very sight of that monster must have made the adrenaline almost burst through the veins of those poor terrified girls, before you both did your dastardly deeds on them."

"I would have been Leon's first victim when he came to London. I had just taken on the disguise of Hilda Goddard. The poor arthritic cleaning lady and had been working for a cleaning company for a few weeks. I was really laying it on when I noticed him following me. So I started hobbling along and walked into a dark alley. You should have seen his face when I body slammed him, against a brick wall. I realised right away that we were a perfect match. The only snag for



Leon was that anybody could see him coming from a mile off. The very sight of him was terrifying for any woman. So we agreed, or rather I pressed him into a partnership. It was so easy for me to approach girls dressed as a woman. Leon was thoroughly delighted with my proposition. But the main reason I used the disguise of Hilda Goddard and joined a cleaning company was so that I could move around the many offices that we cleaned, looking for potential prey, or victims.”

Blumer although mortified and sick with disgust interrupted Freddy and said, “That’s how Boyd could appear out of nowhere wasn’t it. Using a stolen vehicle, with you as the driver. Usually a stolen commercial vehicle, because a commercial vehicle would not attract too much attention from the public. You would cruise around looking for a potential victim. When you saw one alone, you would order Boyd to grab the girl and you would take her to a derelict building, or a quiet area of a park. But you both screwed up the the attack on Susan Marshall attack and I now know that it was Boyd who completely bungled it. So you threw him out of the window, after the girl. You were in effect destroying any evidence that could implicate you.”

Freddy snapped his long fingers and chuckled with delight. “You got it John. But tell me how you you think I got away with it, so craftily.”

“You, Brenda, Horton, Pat Thackery and Modesta Pons worked as a team. You knew that Susan Marshall worked late on Friday evenings on that fifth floor office. And this is how you you let Leon Boyd into the building. You had gone to the fifth floor earlier and seen Susan Marshall at her desk. And somehow you managed to slip a folded pamphlet into the fifth floor fire door without her noticing it. Then you went back to the first floor, where you had been detailed off to clean the first floor office. Then you slipped down the fire escape

stairs, before leaving the first floor ajar. You then opened the ground floor fire door and left it ajar with an old postcard.

Now clear this up for me Freddy. Did you leave the postcard of the Martello Tower as a clue, or a calling card, to hint that you had been there. Why didn't you use an old cigarette packet, or a screwed up newspaper? Why on earth did you leave such a blatant clue?"

Now Freddy could not conceal his excitement and said, "So you found that postcard then. Nothing like that John. I had to move very fast and get back to the first floor, but I forgot to bring anything from the first floor to jam the door ajar with. Pat Thackery had cleaned all the rubbish from that area the previous day. I always kept that postcard on me, like a souvenir. It reminded me of better days before my life went horribly wrong. Leon hadn't arrived, so I couldn't just wait for him holding the door. Go on John. What do you think happened next? You're doing pretty good so far."

"Boyd had intended to kidnap Susan Marshall and escape with her down the fire escape and probably bundle her into a stolen vehicle that you had put into place. But it all went horribly wrong Freddy, didn't it. When Susan Marshall saw Boyd approaching her, she tipped over the heavy desk that she was sitting at and it fell onto his right foot, breaking it. When Boyd had not passed back down the fire stairs with the girl, you realised that something unforeseen had happened. So you bolted up the fire stairs to see what had gone wrong. Luckily for you Boyd had left the fire door ajar with a pamphlet, otherwise you may not have got in. You quickly assessed the situation. The girl was in hysterics and Boyd was trying to subdue her, before she could escape. But now Susan Marshall had seen you and you were scuppered. Every muscle, every ligament, every bone in your body can work like a machine with the power of hydraulic pistons. The arthritis was a

complete and crafty way to disguise your real strength. Pat Thackery had heard the pandemonium going off on the fifth floor and had gone to alert Brenda Horton. You had to move very fast now.

So first you threw the girl out of the window, then concussed Boyd with a blow and threw him out of the window with such force, that he was propelled eight feet, before dropping onto the railings. You then bolted down the fire stairs and made a ploy to come out of the first floor office, onto the main stairs landing, as Brenda Horton and Pat Thackery were climbing the stairs. Nobody would ever had known that poor little Hilda Goddard was really Freddy Kinski, that preyed on woman like ravenous predator. I got thrown off the case before I could probe around a bit deeper. There were two things that stood out. For Boyd to climb up onto the windowsill, with a broken foot and throw himself eight foot outwards would have been very difficult. The girl had dropped straight down the side of the building. The second thing was, when I saw Boyd impaled on the railings, I noticed his eye left was completely closed over and black. That told me that he had been in a punch up a couple of days before. If he was killed as soon as he hit the railings, then there would have been no black, swollen eye. But who in their right mind would dare get into a fist fight with Leon Boyd. Only somebody of unbelievable brute strength. He could have still been semi-concussed still when he went if for the attack. Did you have a dust up, or disagreement with him over something and you sucker punched him?”

“So far, so good John. You’re right I was furious with him. Leon started to get very careless.”

“Could it have been over the girl that he killed a week before, when she left The Woodin Shades? Because I know from what Brenda Horton told me that you, Pat Thackery,

Modesta Pons and her were in there that night celebrating. How the hell had he known about the girl, unless somebody had alerted him? How did you manage to pass the message to him? Because you managed to tell him about the completely drunken girl alone somehow, didn't you Freddy?"

"That was our first mistake. I was supposed to meet Leon in Dirty Dick's, after we finished celebrating in Woodin Shades, to discuss how we were going to plan our abduction of Susan Marshall the following Friday. I saw the opportunity to target the girl because I bumped into her in the ladies' toilet, but Pat Thackery came in looking for me. It could have worked if Leon had followed my instructions, but he didn't. That's why I was furious with him. I feigned being paralytic drunk, so the others would put me in a taxi home. When they were putting me in a taxi, I sighted the girl going berserk and shouting at a couple of her colleagues. When the taxi drove off, I told the driver to stop, because I'd forgotten something and paid him up front to cover the fare. When I got back the girl was still arguing with her colleagues outside. I bolted down the stairs in Dirty Dick's to find Leon. I told him to come outside, but stay out of sight, around the corner in Brick Lane. When I went back, I saw the girl walk out the pub by herself. Then she suddenly walked off along Brick Lane. I crossed the road and followed her.

"Suddenly a market stall owner that was just leaving his lock-up appeared. Leon had already jumped the girl and had pulled her into the rubbish compound and the market stall owner heard the rumpus. I couldn't afford to let the market stall owner see me, so I shot off in the other direction. I had told Leon not to jump the girl until I had arrived and took charge of the situation. He had started getting reckless and over becoming overconfident. When I met him later on, he had the audacity to blame me for him being seen. I was so angry

that punched him in the eye and he had been dithering about for days, because I also damaged his cheekbone.”

Blumer listened with guarded interest, because it was like listening to a script from a bizarre horror story. It almost beggared belief that a five feet five man could flatten a giant like Boyd. “How come nobody has ever suspected that you’re really a man?”

Freddy burst out laughing in a chilling, shrill and high pitched woman’s voice. And with the same voice he made Blumers’ blood run cold when he said, “Because I can easily change my voice up and down in different pitches, John. Hah! Hah! Hah!”

“I only found out only recently that you were Woodin Shades that night fom Brenda Horton, when I interviewed her. Of course she didn’t have an inkling that poor little Hilda Goddard was really a rapacious and viscious vampire named Freddy Kinski. But you probably don’t even know your real name, do you Freddy? And when I interviewed your old landlady Beryl Pound, I started to deduce who you really were. And the second interview I had with Peter Parnell confirmed that and put me back on track. But why did you have to change your disguise again and pose as a smart, dapper, elegant and charming man.”

Freddy roared with laughter, this time in a man’s baritone voice. He was thoroughly enjoying this. “Oh’ Leonard. Pity you never met him, before the poor bugger got burned alive in a fire.”

Blumer interrupted. This was one thing that Blumer had a dire need to know. “He didn’t die in that house fire, but somedody else did. Somebody about the same height and weight as him. Where did you pick up that poor little bastard Freddy?”

“I didn’t pick him up, but a charming, glamorous lady named Constance did and brought him back to the house. How thoughtful of her, don’t you think?”

“You bastard. You picked up that boy, disguised as Constance, brought him back to the house. Then you murdered him, put him in the bed and torched the house. I suspected that when I found an auburn, bouffant style wig in your room at Beryl Pound’s house. Among a few other items that were so telling about how you can appear to change your height and even bust size, when you feel the need to go underground and move about disguised as a woman. But you hadn’t got careless, that’s not your style. You had to kill off Hilda Goddard quickly. But why?”

“That’s quite simple, if you understand how my genetics and DNA can fluctuate. After Leon and myself failed to abduct the girl in Woodin’ Shades and then Susan Marshall, I started growing weak. I needed blood quickly, but I had trouble leaving my room at Beryl Pound’s house. On top of that Brenda Horton came to visit me twice and that was a massive inconvenience, because the DNA of my true father kept tripping in and it was difficult for me to maintain my disguise as Hilda Goddard. So out of sheer desperation I left my room in the early hours, broke into a hospital and did what I had to do, on an elderly woman who was on life support machine. Then I went back to my room.

“Now I had regained some strength, I had to bury the ghost of Hilda Goddard and move on. I travelled up to Carlise and sent a letter to Beryl Pound, saying that Hilda Goddard had died. So as far as Beryl Pound, Brenda Horton, Pat Thackery, Modesta Pons or anybody else was concerned, Hilda Goddard was dead and buried. Usually my mother’s DNA can control, regulate and tick over in my genetics and I can be almost human for months on end. But when my father’s DNA storms

in and demands human blood, then I'm no longer in control of who or what I am. The period when I was operating with Leon Boyd is when my father's DNA kept tripping in. It was like some terrible chemical reaction happened from the moment when I body slammed Leon against that brick wall. It was if my father's DNA was telling him, 'Hello. Nice to meet you now let's get some adrenaline super charged blood'."

Blumer interrupted again, because he wanted to establish why Freddy had adopted the persona of Leonard. An why he kept an altar ego, in the persona of the charming Constance. "Why did you need to pose as Leonard and also maintain the other disguise as Constance?"

"Quite simple, John. It's how I move about at night. When everybody thought that Leonard was in bed fast asleep, Constance could be prowling around at leisure. That's how Constance picked up that destitute boy at Charring Cross station, took him home, cooked him a meal. And then strangled him in his sleep and then torched the house. It was such a pity to kill off Leonard, because he was doing rather well; looking after the house for Harry Parkes."

Blumer interrupted Freddy again and he bombarded him this time questions and answers. "You killed off Leonard, because Hammond and Dawes turned up and they knew who you really were. And they probably would have told Harry Parkes and blown your cover. But where did Danny Garcia come into this and how on did you get out of it, without Harry Parkes finding out?"

Freddy chuckled, because he had anticipated that Blumer would ask him that question. "It's so simple to use stupid people, John. Thank's to Danny's big mouth, I found out that Dawes had been doing some runs over to the continent for Benny Goldberg, smuggling Swiss watches and stolen

jewellery. I met Danny when he came to visit me at the house, passing messages and delivering receipts and collecting cash for Harry. I decided to befriend him as a potential dupe, in case I might need one. Well, he was a good choice, because I would need him very badly.

“I think Danny had met Hammond in a bookie’s or a pub and had introduced him to Dawes. From Danny I learned that Dawes had been using some Benny Goldberg’s money that he was supposed exchange for the goods to buy herion. He had been not only short-changing Benny Goldberg, he had done the one thing that would have got him killed. Benny Goldberg’s only son had been a herion addict and had died of a heroin overdose. Benny had his son’s supplier dismembered and thrown into the Thames. Benny Goldberg hates drugs. On top of it all Hammond and Danny had been peddling the herion for Dawes. Can you imagine what Benny Goldberg would have done to them if he found out? Hammond and Dawes thought that they were going to bully me into giving them some of the gear that was stored at the house. But I had all three of them by the balls with what I knew about them. And had the pleasure of telling them. The only problem was that I had to move on again, because it was too risky to maintain my disguise as Leonard. But I had to get Danny onboard with my game plan. Carol Locke had really had enough of Danny when he brought Hammond and then Dawes home. That had been the last straw. Once again I used this to my advantage. Firstly I told Danny that I would tell Carol Locke about his herion peddling with Hammond. Then I told Dawes that I would be coming with him on his next trip to the continent, whether he liked it or not. Hammond was furious, because Dawes had promised him that he would take him to Dusseldorf with him.”

Blumer listened in disbelief. Carol Locke had already told



him about this. But it was obvious that it was that she did not know that it was the man who she only knew as Leonard was going on the trip with Dawes. From now on Blumer could predict most of the rest of the story.

“Dusseldorf. That’s were you abducted the girl Claudia Roth, I think her name was. Am I right?”

“Bully for you John, right again. Now tell me what else that you think you’ve deducted about me. And I’ll put you right, or fill you in on your mistakes.”

Right. In your old room at Beryl Pound’s house I found some of your regalia that you used in your abductions, apart from the wigs. In the wardrobe were two pairs of long balloon style trousers that were about six inches longer than your leg length. A pair of six inch platform shoes. With a pair of the trousers on and the shoes you could appear to be six inches taller than your true height. Two bras that had been padded with cotton wool. An assortment of differnt coloured lipsticks and eyeliner in a plastic bag. One of the bus drivers who had last seen Lisa Noonan remembered her chatting and laughing with a busty woman of about five feet ten. That was you Freddy wasn’t it? And I bet that you were using your best woman’s voice when you spoke to her. Those are the tools of your disgusting trade aren’t they Freddy. That’s how you get away with it. If any of those woman had even suspected that you were a man they would have raised the alarm. Nobody’s attention would be drawn to two women having a friendly chat.”

Freddy chuckled again on hearing this and realised that it was time to try and set his trap. “What other girls, John. How do you know that there was any other girls?”

“How about Claire Gleason, Manchester. How about Nadine Barber, Southsea. The puncture wounds under their rib-cages

were just a decoy. You wouldn't have dared to draw their blood from their necks, because you may have left punture wounds. But there is a main artery under the instep of the right foot called the posterior tibial. You must have some element in your blood chemistry that make the punture wounds heal over after you've finished drinking their blood. How long have you been doing this and when did you start? Because it's about to finish now."

"I was aware of my strength from a very early age, but there is some latent instint that warns me not to show it, or apply it. I knew also that from a very early age that Claude was not my true father. But that was the least of my problems, because the strength was only one small aspect of my father's DNA. When all boys were growing into puberty, I didn't. This mortified Claude, because he thought that something must be wrong with me. Boy was he right. When I was nearly seventeen my true father's DNA kicked in like an electric current; like a magnetic field. I started to crave human blood badly. And as you already know, the blood of terrified woman.

"All I can tell you is my father's DNA is from an ancient race, which are nothing like human beings. A race that had lived a parallel existance beside human beings. Originating from areas which are now Romania, Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia. In medieval times we could service by preying on simple peasants. But the race started to deplete and could have become exstinct; but for some of our seed being planted into human beings. And that's exactly what my true father did to my mother. When I'm cruising along with my mother's DNA at the helm, I can live almost normally. Just I did when I was disguised as Leonard. But when my father's DNA trips in and my genetics and every fibre of my being snaps into auto pilot. Then you know what what happens."

Blumer butted in, to voice his own opinion into this ghastly

and tragic drama. “So effectively you are two people living in the same body that you have no control of.”

“No John. I have the DNA and genetics of a beautiful woman, that can be invaded by the DNA and genetics of diabolical monster that is only conditioned to kill, just to survive. I can wander through the heart, soul and spirit of a normal human being, then be violated by something so monstrous that a normal human being could not even begin to comprehend it. My human side has to guard and disguise it. Because it when it does appear it is so invasive and overpowering, there is nothing, nothing I can do to stop it. My father’s DNA oversees my human side; always there in the background. But like any predator, will only pounce when they need to.”

Blumer thought for a while and then fired off his next questions, that were really accusations. “Now I know how you abducted Sian Ellis. I never even thought of it before. When Hammond and Dawes appeared at Skegness, they would have seen through your disguise as Erma. Of course they thought that you had been burned to a husk in a house fire. You had to get away quickly. So you drove down to here and left Danny to deal with Hammond and Dawes, while you set up shop here. Danny came down three weeks later. You abducted Sian Ellis while Danny was still up in Skegness with your vending van. How the bloody hell I didn’t think of that before, I’ll never know. But it was Danny they really wanted anyway. So when they turned up here, you had no alternative but to take them out. So you caught the train to London and traced where they were living. And disguised as a woman, you gave them the business end of a sawed off shotgun. You sure don’t play games Freddy, with people who get in your way. But why were they so mad to get their hands on Danny Garcia?”

“Very, very simple. When Hammond and Dawes sussed me

out, I had to fake my own death, just like I did with Hilda Goddard. Nobody comes looking for a dead person. Hammond in particular suspected that there had been a lot more stashed in the house than fridges, televisions and washing machines. Because of Danny's relationship with me, he thought Danny knew about it. The stupid bastards thought that now I was dead, they could bully and threaten him to find out what it was and where it had been moved to. Danny didn't know anything, because I couldn't trust him with his big mouth. I should have tracked down and killed Hammond years ago.

“I told Harry Parkes that the police had been staking the house out and that a raid looked imminent. A team, consisting of Harry Parkes's boys and Benny Goldberg's boys were ordered to get everything out of there right away. They bunged me two thousand quid for being on the ball and warning them. I had already told Danny to take a low profile, because after I did what I had to do, we would be going into business. I had Danny by the balls. I knew he had been a plant with the Heathrow bullion heist. The stupid bastard told me everything about it. I had that over him; and the secret that he had been peddling heroin threw Dawes, with money that he had skimmed off of Benny Goldberg. Can you imagine what they would have done to him.”

The whole dreadful saga had finally taken shape; the complete and unbridged horror story had fallen into place. But Blumer still had a couple of more questions to ask. “Why did you kill Claude, Freddy?”

“What makes you think that I killed Claude? Why would I kill such a noble and honest man?”

“You tell me. I know that you killed him and I know how you did it, but I don't know why.”

“Well then. How did I do it then John?”

“Similar to the way you killed Leon Boyd. You threw him with such force from the top of the Steel Stella, that the chain links of his safety line shattered seven of the links”.

Freddy roared with laughter and Blumer thought that his eyes were deceiving, when pair of small fangs darted from where Freddy’s incisors were housed in his mouth. They looked more like big syringe needles. Was Freddy’s father’s DNA tripping in. He answered Blumer’s question.

“He betrayed me, John. I was released from prison early and I had came home to collect what belonged to me. They were both at work, but I knew that they always left a spare key to the front door, under a flower pot. When I entered the house I was amazed to find that the house had a brand new washing machine, fridge and cooker. Also a big Bush television. I had come to collect the money, gold jewellery and diamond rings that I had hidden under a floorboard, in the wardrobe of my room, but it was gone. Eleven hundred pounds and hundreds of pounds worth of jewellery. It was the money that I had stashed before Hammond and me got nicked. It was my booty to try and start a new life in London. So those two people who everybody loved and admired, had used my money to buy a fridge, washing machine, cooker and TV. Well you know what I did to Claude and I don’t regret it. I had to start from scratch, with nothing. But John all this is not the main reason I am here meeting with you. I have come to say goodbye.”

He then pulled a ten inch meat knife from behind his back and Blumer quickly pulled the Browning from its shoulder holster. Blumer now realised that he would have to use it.

“You thought that you’d set a trap for me Freddy. But as you see, I came prepared.”

I did set a trap for you John and you’ve walked right into it.

You really came here to kill me John, didn't you. I knocked you clean out of your paradigm. Everybody has got a latent killer in them, deep down inside. And I really provoked, teased and tantalized your latent killer, didn't I John? Even the battered housewife that stabs her brutal husband to death in the end, after suffering years of abuse harbours a latent killer. You've walked into my trap just perfectly."

He then began to slowly walking forward and Blumer levelled the gun at him and said, "This is a Browning, Freddy. Deadly at fifty four yards and it's loaded with thirteen well oiled dum-dum bullets. I could fire off three rounds, before you got anywhere near me."

Freddy burst out laughing. And carried on walking towards him. "That's exactly what I want John. Because you see I am dying John. I am dying slowly, painfully and mercilessly. The hunter has become the hunted. The predator has become the prey."

"What are you talking about Freddy? Don't try to bluff me, because I'll shoot you right now."

"I'm not bluffing you John. When I came down here from Skegness, my father's DNA tripped in so violently that I needed adrenaline shot blood badly. I sighted Sian Ellis when I was cruising around in my car. I followed her movements for a couple of days, then pounced. I thought that It would be just like all the rest, but it wasn't. Sian Ellis was of a very rare blood group, AB Negative. I did not know that my blood and DNA cannot absorb and assimilate AB Negative blood. Her spirit and her essence has been torturing me to death. I am going to die, but she has this message for you before I die and she leaves me. The day that you stood in her room promising her that you would catch me, she was with you. She has been with you of all the way through your investigation. She has

been guiding you and protecting you. In desperation I abducted the girl Sandra Woodward, hoping her blood would counterbalance Sian Ellis's AB Negative blood; it didn't. The girls Sandra Woodward, Lisa Noonan and Sian Ellis are buried in the middle of a wood called Hartley Woods, only about five miles from here. The German girl Claudia Roth is buried in the main cemetery, behind a hedge, with an obelisk with the name Herman Scheider 1907 -1969 inscribed on it. The obelisk is over seven feet tall and made of dark pink granite. You already know about Claire Gleason and Nadine Barber. I had intended to try to force you to shoot me, because I knew that you would bring a gun, when you knew what you were facing. But I've changed my mind John. You've been a very worthy opponent John. You never give up John do you? However much frustration anger, bewilderment and confusion you're suffering. You never ever give up."

"NEVER! NEVER! As long as God is my witness NEVER!"

At the very moment that Blumer had shouted this; Tristan was watching with delight as the first copies of *Behind The Crime*, by John Blumer, started rolling off the press.

Freddy kept slowly walking forward and Blumer carefully stepped backwards, with the gun trained on Freddy's chest. If Freddy made a sudden move forward Blumer would have to shoot.

"Yes John, I've changed my mind. I won't spring my trap now. Can you imagine the furore, the headlines, the outrage. John Blumer former Detective Inspector of the Met, guns down a man in cold blood. That was the trap I set for you John. When you pump those dum-dum bullets into me, I will

die with my mother's DNA and genetics and no trace of my father. And you will be arrested for first degree murder. But no John, no. The victory, is yours John, because you won. You were the only person who could have caught me. You were a very worthy opponent."

With that Freddy plunged the knife into his own chest, to the hilt. It took Blumer a few seconds to register what Freddy had done. He then moved forward, making sure that he didn't fall off the sea wall into the sea. Freddy's green eyes were shining in the dark; just like a cat's eyes. They fluttered a few times, then closed. He then sat down and lay back on the sea wall. His bandy legs fell either side of the wall. His chest heaved up and down for a few seconds. Then he died.

Blumer had to think fast. He ejected the magazine from the Browning and emptied all of the bullets out, then threw all the bullets into the sea. Then he threw the gun and the magazine as hard and far out as he could into the sea. He undid the shoulder holster, drew a razor sharp pen knife out of his pocket and cut it to pieces. He threw the pieces of the leather holster into the sea as well. If and when the gun, magazine and bullets were found, there would be no fingerprints on them and no evidence that they had belonged to him.

With tears in his eyes he walked over to Freddy's body and gently picked him up. He turned around and slowly began walking back along the top of the sea wall. Freddy's face looked like the face of a sleeping child. The compulsion to pick Freddy's body up had been automatic. Maybe the spirit of Sian Ellis was still guiding him, even though Freddy Kinski was dead. The white headlights of a police car appeared. The blue light on top of the car was illuminating the reeds and bulrushes that lined the lower path of the sea wall. The light of the moon cast a strange and surreal image of Blumer carrying Freddy's body, with the knife sticking out of his chest.



The police car jarred to a halt and two police officers jumped out. Pat Malloy lumbered out of the back door of the car and he followed the two police officers, who looking at the image of Blumer and Freddy in disbelief.

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## CHAPTER 25

When all of the bodies of the girls had been discovered, recovered and identified, the whole investigation concluded that Blumer's account of the bizarre life and career of the cold calculating murderer Freddy Kinski had been true. Blumer had to suffer the humiliation of being cross examined, time and time again. But it finally became apparent that the Judge and the lawyer that had been selected to represent the deceased were only going through the motions. When the body of Claudia Roth was found exactly where Blumer had told the police where it would be; and in turn they British police had informed the German authorities, Blumer had been virtually exonerated then.

Blumer's story that he had received a phone call informing him that a potential witness wanted a private meeting with him had not really held water. Pat Malloy's alibi that he had called the police only when Blumer had not returned from the alleged meeting with the witness, also sounded suspect. The police had concluded that Blumer had gone to meet Freddy Kinski alone, because he thought that he could be meeting with the actual killer, rather than a witness. The judge had informed Blumer in no uncertain terms that his actions had been reckless and extremely dangerous. The forensic team that had investigated the scene and the autopsy team that had examined Freddy Kinski's body concluded that he had plunged the knife into his own chest. And Blumer had been completely cleared of any suspicion that he had stabbed Freddy. But as far as Blumer was concerned he had done what he had set out to do, with all of the odds stacked against him. This complicated jigsaw puzzle had been doggedly put together piece by piece by his own grim determination to get

the job done. Tristan who had attended the court hearings every day, had looked positively ill, sitting in the front row of the benches. And when the hearing finally closed and Blumer had been finally dismissed by the Judge, he had visibly sighed with relief and rushed to the stand to shake Blumer's hand.

When John Blumer walked out from Bow Street Magistrates court, he was wearing his bottle green John Collier suit, with a matching green tie. He had brought a new white shirt for the occasion and his black brogues had been highly polished. In the top pocket of his jacket he wore a red handkerchief. His own private emblem, that he had solved another murder investigation. But he was not prepared for the reception that was waiting for him outside.

The roar of approval and clapping was deafening. Blumer was completely taken aback. Photographers and newspaper reporters surrounded him, bombarding him with questions about the case. Tristan, whose permed hairstyle had looked as though it had turned into an electrocuted bouffant, was trying to pull Blumer through the crowd of newsmen and photographers and shouting at them. "Mister Blumer will give a statement to the press later. Please gentlemen, Mister Blumer is very tired and needs to be left alone. This has been a terrible ordeal for Mister Blumer. He will be available to speak freely with the press later. Gentlemen please."

When Blumer finally broke through the gaggle of reporters, they were all waiting for him, Sharon Spanka was standing across the road, with a pram. And a tall young man who Blumer presumed to be Paul was standing next to her. Her sanpaku eyes were fixed on him, gazing at him in awe. Helen Nesbitt was standing next to Sharon Spanka and Blumer could clearly see tears running down her cheeks. Brenda Horton was

standing next to both of them, with her mouth wide open in disbelief. Much to his surprise Evonne March was standing next to Brenda Horton, waving enthusiastically at him. All of her reserved and proud demeanour that he had experienced when he had conducted an investigation for her had apparently been put aside for the day. Richard Marshall was not present, because he had collapsed in court the previous day. The sheer gravity and horror of the case had been simply too much for him.

Then he saw Pamela, standing apart from the rest of the gathering. He waved at the rest of the gathering and crossed the road to where Pamela was standing. She looked into his slate grey eyes and then at the red handkerchief in the top pocket of his jacket. She then smiled and said, "I've come to see a man named John Blumer. Do you know him by any chance?"

Blumer chuckled. He noticed a warmth in Pamela's demeanour that he'd never noticed before. "Why's that. Would you like to meet him?"

"Well, you've done it again, John. You've done it again. But what would a nice girl like me see in a man like you anyway?"

"Well, I dunno' Pamela. Because I just don't get. I Just don't get it".