

CHAPTER 11

EVERY ASPECT OF THIS CASE was beginning to take on a discretely isolated identity. We were given carte blanche to cover any expenses that occurred. That fact, alone, spoke for itself. We set up shop in one of our prominent hotel conference rooms. It was completely dark, except for two small florescent lights that only illuminated the files.

Garrison was sitting across from me, all composed as usual. I really wasn't surprised because he's a tenth degree black belt, a master in kenpo karate. I mean, fine tuned. He was my warrior, but for me, it was kind of weird. We hadn't opened the files, yet I felt a strange force pulling on me. I wanted so badly to pull his coattail, but I didn't want him to think that I was losing it.

We ordered up some food and drinks, turned off our beepers and phone, and hung the "do not disturb" sign on the door. And we parachuted deep into the night into a conundrum that had our blood boiling and our heads spinning.

"This stuff reads like something from the *X-Files* or the *Twilight Zone*," I said.

"Wow! And what about these two police officers, Duncan and Cross?" Garrison asked.

"This had to be their worst nightmare!" I replied.

"Yeah, can you imagine having the power to take a thread of evidence and recreate the whole crime scene? Displaying it through their eyes, like a movie projector, recreating the past. What an awesome power!" Garrison said.

"I can see where that would cause extreme anxiety for anybody who has a skeleton in their closet," I replied.

"Fascinating, so who's going to be the first luck of the draw?" Garrison asked. "Let's see what our little bizarre nuisance caller has to offer, I responded."

If these files were any indication of our journey, we had an extreme trek ahead of us.

The next day, we jump-started our case with the first breathing human element; one young man had made at least a hundred phone calls between the police department and the FBI. That frequency placed him at the top of our list to be interviewed. We met him at a little league baseball park on the west side of town. He was sitting at the top of the bleachers, and made his way down as we neared.

“You FBI?” he asked nervously.

We flashed our badges. “Yes, Special Agent Meadows, my partner, Special Agent Garrison,” I said.

He began pacing and fidgeting.

“What’s your name?” I asked.

“Beamer, Lex,” he replied; “my friends think I’m crazy!”

“Why’s that?” Garrison asked.

“It was weird and freaky. I saw it! It scared me back to reality, man!” he replied.

“What did you see?” I asked.

“I don’t know, it happened so fast,” he replied. “It, ah, it ah, it just appeared out of nowhere, and crashed right there by me. Got a cigarette?”

“We like living, we don’t smoke,” I replied.

It just so happened, Garrison had a lollipop in his pocket. He loves those things. I don’t know which he loves the best, that lollipop, or flipping that quarter up in the air all of the time. A fetish he developed out of frustration. When he was growing up, he didn’t have a measly twenty-five cents to go to the movies. As he worked his way out of poverty into the success of the mainstream, the obsession stuck with him. He said that it keeps him humble, focused, and never lets him forget his roots. So far, it has worked like a charm.

He took the candy out and offered it to him. “How about this?” he asked.

“Anything,” was the reply. He took it, removed the wrapper, and placed it in his mouth.

“Then what happened?” Garrison asked.

He removed the lollipop from his mouth to answer. “This thing opened up. And thousands of little tiny balls that looked like, ah, ah, what’s that bug that lights up at night?”

“Firefly,” I said.

“Yeah, yeah, yeah, that’s it!” he said.

Everything that we had heard up to now sounded so far fetched. The obvious question was staring us straight in the eyes.

“Tell me something?” Garrison asked.

“What?” he questioned.

“Were you drinking or using drugs?” Garrison asked.

“No, man!” he replied. “I was cashing out.”

“Cashing out?” I asked.

“Yeah, my sister took my girlfriend! I was about to...” He took his index finger and placed it up against his head. Then he mimicked pulling the trigger of a gun and blowing his brains out...

We had just left Mr. Beamer and riding along. He had made some wild, bizarre claims and my head was exploding with thoughts. During the interview, I had analyzed him in integral detail. His tone and demeanor exuded with certainty. He wasn't rambling or fabricating answers along the way. All of his answers were stated emphatically. Something had scared the crap out of him. *But, what?* I wondered.

“You think he's credible?” Garrison asked.

“He was extremely nervous,” I replied. “Either he witnessed something, or he deserves an academy award. Let's go see what Dr. Marlowe has up his sleeves!”

We headed over to the Pediatric Hospital, about thirty minutes away, to make our meeting, and walked into Dr. Marlowe's office at exactly 2:00 p.m. on the dot. He seemed impressed with our promptness. We didn't have a clue or know at the time. But, we were about to be trapped in a forest fire. I want you to know, a whole lot of bad things can happen to you. And death doesn't have to be one of them. He was standing by the window, staring out, with both hands behind his back. It seemed like something was weighing heavily on his mind. He looked slightly bald, in his late fifties, stout, and wearing a pair of wire-rim glasses, when we arrived exactly on time to meet with him.

We sat down at his desk, as he uncorked the flames that would mesmerize us.

“This morning, my colleagues and I met with a group of mothers. All traumatized by the experience of their young daughters' horrific pregnancies,” he said.

“What's so unusual about that? Teenage pregnancy seems to be a common theme these days,” I replied.

“But, these are not typical boy-girl pregnancies,” Dr. Marlowe said. “They are unique!”

“What's the distinction?” Garrison asked.

He turned around with a serious overshadowing expression on his face. “Like any other normal night, the girls tucked themselves in. But, they woke up the next

morning carrying a full six-month pregnancy. Each with seven tiny healthy babies; all females!” he exclaimed.

“You mean, overnight?” I asked with vigor.

“Yes,” he replied, “I’m just as shocked as you are!”

Garrison almost hit the ceiling. He jumped up out of his chair.

“C’mon, doc,” Garrison remarked, “you’re kidding, right?”

Before he could respond, the phone rang and interrupted. He answered it, and immediately had to rush out to an OR emergency. But, before leaving, he invited us to a 7:00 p.m. dinner at his home to continue this session. We were now engulfed with the flames of curiosity, eating away at us, like a cancer. It was an invite that we couldn’t refuse.