

MURDER SQUAD DETECTIVES JOSEPH LIND and MARJORY HENDRICKS

**A
PLACE
FOR
EVERYTHING**



A
Crime
Novella
by

PETER C BYRNES

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AND
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CHAPTER ONE

"Joe? Mar? Don't get comfortable," was the instruction as we walked passed the Boss's Office.

Detective Superintendent Robert Clifford Church, aka 'Abbey', appeared at his Office door as we strolled back into the Murder Squad Room after a half an hour of swimming lanes down in the Sub-Basement Gym.

Both of us smelling strongly of chlorine.

An early morning practise that both Mar and I liked to participate in before commencing a new day.

This, plus another in the afternoon before we knocked off for the day. A 10K run either late that night or just on sunrise was our normal daily exercise regime. It was how-ever, taking on a new impetus as the selection criteria for the National Police Force Games was commencing in a couple of months.

Both Marge and I hoped for selection.

This was a three-year cyclic event. Rumours were that another once every three-year event was in the pipeline as well. The Police versus the Fire Brigade.

Held intra-State only. Possibly nationally depending on the success or otherwise of the intra-state fixture.

We knew that competition would be fierce to obtain a position in the limited numbers on offer.

There were several persons whom we trained with, who were exceptional in both marathon running and swimming events. Two new recruits within the Murder Squad Room were also showing extreme promise.

The Games early next year, being held in Western Australia. The individual States were meeting all travel and accommodation costs out of the Law Enforcement revenue budget. The whole thing keenly supported by the Police hierarchy, unions, and each of the State Governments.

The use of the Gym for at least an hour a day had been authorised and encouraged by the Police Hierarchy, the staff, and the Union. Half an hour inside rostered time in the morning and at knock off time. This extended to forty-five minutes by the time that you had a rub down, a shower and a change of clothes. One and a half hours taken out of the normal ten-

hour shift! Back to an almost eight-hour day. We could use the Sub-Basement amenities for any length of time in own time.

This arrangement in place long before the National Games event was even considered.

There were too many belt-busting, middle aged Coppers seen patrolling the streets.

A bad Press moment for sure!

Of course, there were now complaints of too many young, buffed Cops about. The Force accused of permitting Officers Gym time paid for by the long-suffering Taxpayer!

The Cop Force would never win!

The only downside was the smell of Chlorine often wafting through the Office area!

"Grab a coffee each and one for me from the Coffee Cafe, then make yourselves cosy in my Office, will you? And....." He turned back into his Office. ".....and two on skim, thanks. For our Visitors. Ta."

CHAPTER TWO

We settled into comfortable chairs around a low Coffee Table in Abbey's Office. The fact that we had not adjourned to one of the small Conference or Meeting Rooms on our floor not lost on me. This was supposed to be an informal little chat... with the two most formidable females from the DPP's Office.

This was not a friendly little chat, no matter how hard the Boss placed a veneer over it!

The look on Mar's face seemed to indicate that she too, was of the same opinion.

The set jaw, the steely eyes and the slight smirk frozen on her face...half way to a grimace if you knew the girl.

Jennifer Cartwright, the Chief Deputy Prosecutor from the DPP's Office already settled into one of the chairs. All business-like in a severe, dark grey pants suit and pale silk blouse.

Jennifer Stevenson sat beside her in a more relaxed manner.

Again, a modest Business Suit though the tight skirt caused the hem to rise every time that she endeavoured to cross her legs. Good looking legs sheathed in black stockings. High heel, killer shoes apparently, by the way that Mar looked at them.

We knew Stevenson from previous dealings at DPP Conferences.
She was the caged lion let loose on the more involved and sensational Court cases.

Both visitors had a yellow pad and pencil at the ready. A mobile phone on 'record' on the Coffee Table between us.

Abbey was into it straight away after I returned from the Plaza Coffee Jar with the refreshments that included half a dozen cupcakes and an assortment of iced mini-donuts.

"Thanks for that, Joe...." He took a slurp of his coffee. Obviously the first of the day the way he exhaled. "Right! Remember the Gwyneth Salisbury murder?"

We both nodded our heads.

It wasn't that long ago.

A rather straight forward murder investigation of a married woman who had been having an affair with her husband's former close friend and former Business Partner. This Lover and former close friend had killed her when she wanted to end the affair. Forensic and fingerprint evidence was the thing that convicted the Lover. He constantly shouted his innocence, even in Court. It was not an unknown reaction, but it failed to impress the Judge or Jury. It was perhaps only 3 months ago when he was sentenced to 12 years' prison with a non-parole period of ten years nine months. This considered in the upper range of convicted time for such a crime. The Sentencing Judge not impressed with the lack of remorse and the continual baying of innocence by the accused when all evidence was stacked heavily against him.

"Right....Okay. I want you to go through all the intricacies of the case for me. And both ladies here. From your first involvement in the Case."

"Can we get our Case Note-books to jog our memories, Boss?" Mar asked.

"Go through it from memory first. If you think that you need the Case Book for some detail, we'll think about that then. OK?"

"What's this all about, Boss?"

Abbey glanced at the DPP Solicitors.

"Let me say first up... There is no evidence that would reflect badly on yourselves. Both of you have done an exemplary job on the investigation of the murder of the Salisbury woman. The DPP wanted an informal revue of the case, that's all....." Jennifer Stevenson stated matter-of-factly. Not looking at either of us, instead peering down at the Pad that she had balanced on her knee.

If the truth be bubbles, then we'd have been knee deep in soapy water or hovering towards the ceiling on a bed of soapy foam by now, I thought as I looked across at the two women!

I glanced at Marge.

She raised her eye-brows.

A funny, slight smirk on her lips.

CHAPTER THREE

As Lead Detectives in any Murder investigation the World over, there are cases that tend to stay with you throughout time. Some are immediately deleted from the mind after the final verdict declared by the Court; some tend to dribble information from the old grey matter over time until all the details too, are lost; while there are those few that seem to never lose their detail, no matter how the passing years unfold.

The Gwyneth Salisbury murder, or more correctly the Gwyneth Kasprowicz murder, as she preferred to be known as, was one of those murders that would stay with us for-evermore.

Why?

That at times is hard to fathom. To explain.

The manner of death, the participants.... victim, perpetrator, and those effected by the crime all have something to do with it... even an intense dislike of the Perp or some-one left behind. The circumstances, even the social standing of those involved, all play a part.

I'm not too sure why I could re-play the events as they unfolded in that case, but with the occasional input from my partner, D2 Marjory Hendricks, we began to relate the case to Jennifer Stevenson as she took shorthand notes in pencil on a Legal Pad, allowing the smart phone to pick up every verbal nuance and repartee between Marge and I.

After a brief, few moments to collect our thoughts, we began the narration....

CHAPTER FOUR

"What do you think Mar? There's an age division in it also. Like the Masters' Games...you

know? So, we'd be competing with people around our own age group. Not some Adonis straight from the Academy at twenty-two years of age having represented his State in League or Union. That's why he was selected for the Cop Force in the first place, I reckon!" I nodded my head towards a young Officer who was powering up the lane away from us. I had tried and failed to keep pace with him. My ego bruised by the event!

"What? You think that we've a chance for the Games?" She asked as the power swimmer did a tumble-turn and began another lap.

"Yeah! We do a little bit more work. A free trip with biscuits to WA for ten days. The selection events aren't for another twelve months, I think. Plenty of time to get into trim. Into being competitive...or thereabouts. It'll help us adhere to a more rigorous training regime. Why not? We're close to the times required for our age group in Freestyle...for 100 and 200... and Breaststroke... and our 800 and marathon running times are within cooe... C'mon Mar. Let's give it a shot. Even if we fail selection for our age group, the added training can't do us any harm... we could get the Personal Trainer down in the Gym to look over our regime and give us some hints on how best to improve our times... strengthen us up a bit... our core muscles. Our swimming style, perhaps. It'll do us good if nothing else. What do you think?"

"Mmm..."

We climbed from the pool and headed towards the showers. A quick rub-down and a Lift ride back up to the Squad Room floor.

"Don't settle guys. We've just had a call-out. You two are next in line. A body. Possible homicide. Castle Hill. Forensics. Morgue team. Crime Scene guys on the way. The LAC Uniforms are on site."

Guy 'Hendo' Henderson who was our illustrious and hardworking Clerical body, handed us the initial Crime scene card and a new Case Note-Book each. He would have already begun a Murder Book on the case to be placed on the edge of my desk as the Lead Detective. A large, white, 4-ringed Binder that would stay there until the close of the Case. It would be added to as the Case progressed with up to ten Volumes not uncommon on any Murder Investigation. Hopefully within acceptable time parameters. Since the Uniforms were relieved of the clerical duties so important in the day to day running of the Office, we had been lucky to secure 'Hendo' as our Clerical head.

The most important and indispensable bod in the place.

As we headed up from the sixth Sub-basement level in our Unmarked, I programmed the Castle Hill address into the GPS. What-ever did we do before the advent of these machines? Usually I guess, find the most direct route to our required destination by a Gregorys Street Directory!

In those days with said Directory, we'd never reach our destination via Darwin as has happened to one or two of our colleagues... or directed to an open paddock miles from nowhere by the ever-reliable GPS directions!

CHAPTER FIVE

A lovely, leafy area.

Flowering Gum Close was a small, narrow street with expensive, Architectural designed houses on the high side of the street and a dramatic drop-off and bushland on the other. A small creek dropped over gibber stones some fifty metres below the opposite kerb-line of the street.

About 30 residences in total in the length of the road before it swung away from the bushland setting.

"You'd think they would've learnt by now, wouldn't you? What? This area is no more than ten, maybe fifteen years old. Prime bushfire territory with a fire-storm coming up that drop-off and incinerating all those houses on the opposite side of the street. The high side... if the wind and temperature are right... a real fire storm. It's happens so many times..."

I shook my head in disbelief.

If I, as a lowly paid Public Servant could see it, why then had the experts in Council who had approved the Development, not been able to.... too many bulging brown paper bags, I suspected.

"You're a laugh a minute, Joe Lind. Just what we need as we're about to look at a bloody corpse more than likely...visions of a fire-storm erupting up the valley walls and burning us to a bloody crisp!"

We were forced to park some houses away from Number 24. The crime-scene address. The narrow street clogged with an assortment of Police vehicles. Both Marked and Unmarked. Wagons. Vans. The lot. A steady increase in the number of Media vehicles further exacerbated the situation. The usual gang of gawkers added to the appearance of the annual street party!

We flashed our ID cards as we bent under the Crime Scene tape and wandered down towards the house at the centre of every-one's attention. We signed into the Log and were directed up a steep driveway through a cavernous double garage into the house. The Front Door and Porch areas taped off. Several Forensics personnel were on all fours looking for trace. The brilliant high-gloss white door was a grey smudge canvas painted by some drug

fuelled artist. So, it appeared to me and my vivid imagination.

The rather impatient tones of a Pommy accent greeted us. The voice straight from 'The Manor Born'.

"I presume that you are the two Murder Squad Detectives whom we've been waiting patiently for. Your appearance a tad late. It seems to be an innate problem of your breed. The New Scotland Yard Murder boys also seemed to be the last on site. If you wouldn't mind, we need to remove the body....."

I turned to see a slightly rotund figure about Mar's height requiring assistance to free himself from his dirt and blood stained scrubs. Perhaps late forties. Maybe early fifties. A cherubic face that had that youthful, cheeky lad look. The look didn't seem to go with the tone of voice though.

"You're the new Chief Forensic Pathologist...from London, I believe?" I held out my hand. "Detective Grade 3 Joseph Lind. Pleased to meet you. This is my partner Detective Grade 2 Marjory Hendricks..."

He looked at me with a somewhat aloof expression. Glanced at my outstretched hand, cast his eyes quickly to Marge before turning to his white garbed Assistant. Caramine Lees.

"I've finished here." He explained. "I need to be back at the Morgue to begin my load of Autopsies for the day. Can you get this report typed up by COB to-night? Arrange for the body removal as soon as these people have quickly scanned the scene. I repeat. Quickly. Thank You. Make sure those Crime Scene notes typed out for my signature before the end of the day. Hear me? That is all."

He strolled down the drive-way away from us without so much as 'how's ya father' or a welcoming or farewell hand shake. I wiped my hand down the side of my pants, thinking perhaps that I had some highly infectious disease swarming over them. Bugs that only he could see, perhaps.

I turned to Caramine Lees who was his 'Second' on the case.

"That was.....?" I asked. My arm waving towards the receding figure.

She nodded her glumly. Raised her eye-brows.

"Yes. Harold George Wilcox...Professor...with quite a few Initials after his name. He came to replace our beloved leader, Bernie Ford who is now residing in Belgium working with the International Court of Justice on criminal matters... umm... as you can imagine... Dominique was somewhat disappointed at losing her position to such a... well... I know she was only acting in the job until the applicants sorted, but she was a bloody shoe-in for the job as far as

we were all concerned at the Office... she's taken an acting Chief Forensic Pathologist position in Perth to piss the hierarchy off around these parts, for not giving her the posting! So, my rapid rise to fame... it's only been a week, but I'm already having problems just surviving in his presence... the pompous, little twerp!"

"C'mon Carmy...don't lose it on me yet, OK.? It'll settle down. He will learn to adopt to the more relaxed approach of us eventually... OK? What're we got?" I asked, as I once again struggled into a set of 'scrubs'. Making me look like a giant maggot or witchetty grub as far as I thought. A cameo appearance on a Wiggles Show. Mar wiggled into her scrubs as though she was slipping into her favourite outfit.

Go figure!

"The victim, Gwyneth Salisbury nee Kasprowicz. DOB 11/2/1970. Married to Professor Brian John Salisbury for about 6 years. The Professor born in 1960. December 10. His second marriage. No children of either union. The woman died from blunt force trauma to the back of the skull. Massive damage. The object a heavy granite and glass piece dropped close to the body. Plenty of usable prints. Time of death between 1 to 3 AM this morning. The body discovered by the House-keeper. A Mrs. Candice Holgate. Been the House-keeper for Professor Salisbury for more than ten years. She found the body at 9:55 AM this morning when she arrived to begin her chores. She has her own front door key. She does the cleaning and other chores twice a week. Tuesday and Friday. Immediately called it in. The Husband is out on the rear veranda. The House-keeper in the kitchen...anything else?"

The woman was nervous. Her first case as Assistant.

"You've done well, Carmy. Extra well. We'll look at the body. Give us ten. Then you can organise for its removal. OK?"

Carmy and I had an easy-going relationship with no strings.

When she had an itch, she'd ring me to scratch it.

We'd do a nice restaurant and then spend the night together. Or the week-end if the scratch persisted. Three times in the last 18 months. It wasn't a hot to trot association. But it worked for both of us. The need fell either side of my involvement with Penelope Catt. And I needed some loving after Penny's slow slide to eventual death.

CHAPTER SIX

The Vic was sprawled on the timber floor of the Lounge Room. Close to the doorway that

led out into the Vestibule and then to the front door. The stairs to the first floor began in this area also. I immediately thought that she was fleeing in that direction. Towards what she had hoped would have been safety.

Blood pooled on the lightness of the Blackbutt hardwood timber flooring.

I taken with the floor boards. They looked very cool. Lovely, in fact. It was what I would like in my own home. Impressed with the whole house in fact, after I walked slowly from room to room as was my want at every Murder scene that I attended. Mar's habit also.

Mar could never understand how I could be so easily directed away from the crime scene by external objects, yet still retain that photographic imprint of the scene so indelibly burnt in my brain. Down to the most minute detail.

Her nose broken.

Either from the fall or beforehand.

I was unsure.

The back of her head staved in.

Blood clotting already through her matted hair.

This month a dirty blond. Perhaps next month a dark auburn judging by the plethora of photographs of her and her husband on walls and flat surfaces within this spacious Vestibule area. All in distant lands. Snow-capped mountains. Tropical lagoons. Restaurants. Standing regally beside her husband as he accepted another award of some kind.

Glass or silver.

The usual choice of Award medallions these days.

The Deceased quite beautiful in a classical sense. Statuesque. Regal even. Gorgeous clothes or even holiday shorts looked good on her. A somewhat cold, practised smile that didn't reach her eyes. Though several earlier photographs of her younger self showed a readier smile. An open and honest one. One to cheer the world.

She now lay in an almost casual position. As though she had suddenly felt tired and lowered herself to the floor. Stretched out to show the curves of her body. The negligee and matching wrap almost unruffled as though some-one had taken a moment to straighten the attire out.

"Notice that?" Mar asked as she knelt beside the body.

"Yeah...her nightie...nice and neat...as though some-one had taken the time to stretch out any folds or wrinkles in the fabric."

"Yeah...it could, I suppose drop like that. One in a million chance, though. Expensive. Silk. I'll tell that pompous bastard not to cut it from the body. I'll take it home." She gave a cut-off giggle. Looked closely at the body. "A couple of teeth knocked crooked. Maybe from the fall. Maybe beforehand. That's some blow to the head. She would have fallen with some force, I reckon. Expensive slipper shoes. One could guess and say that this gear is 'Lover' material...not for the husband of some 10 years, I would have thought..."

"I don't know...I'm more prone to G-strings and baby doll outfits to impress the sexy lover..."

"I don't know whether they'd look sexy on your physique.... the hairy chest would be a turn-off!"

I gave her a look. I didn't have that much hair anywhere! I could almost classify myself as naturally buffed, if I wanted to be honest. It had been a 'stir' from my mates at School when I was growing up. Very little hair.

"You'd be surprised!" I muttered. Flouncing my body back and forth."

She shook her head, trying hard not to laugh.

"There you go. A male thing. Those things are bloody uncomfortable. Let me tell you! What she has on is more suitable to her age and bearing, I would imagine. Sophisticated but alluring...sitting opposite her lover showing a little. Not too much..."

"You seem to know a lot about seduction and the art of allure...Christ, Mar. There you go again. With no evidence to even suggest it, you have the poor women having an affair already! What's in front of us says 'Home Invasion' that went terribly wrong..."

"Then what's been stolen, Joe? Anything? That Laptop on the Dining Room table? Top of the range. At least three, three and a half thou? Brand new too. The watch perhaps, that's sitting near the mammoth flat screen TV? Another Laptop sitting on the Kitchen Bench? On charge. C'mon Joe. You suggesting that they broke in, and discovered by the woman of the house, bash her to death and fled without taking anything of value that is within eye view of them from this room...no! No way..."

The object used in the homicide was now in a clear plastic Evidence Bag. Neatly sealed. Double initialled and placed back as close as possible to its original position beside the body. Mar picked it up to take a closer look.

"Bloody hell! No way a woman could have done the crime...this thing weighs a tonne! Anyone know of its original position in the house?"

One of the white clad figures still crawling the rooms and hallways of the house indicated a stepped series of thick timber square shelves that stuck out from the short side wall at the entryway from the Hall into the Lounge. These shelving sections had no visible vertical supports. Each square accommodated a series of small wooden or stone sculptures. Some native. Some more modern sculptures. The weapon of choice was a granite cube. Highly polished with a solid tube of glass that seemed to penetrate right through the cube. The glass pipe then turned back on itself like a Question Mark to anchor centrally onto another thick square base of polished granite on which the granite cube seemed to hover over. A sort of cubist raindrop. A corner of the suspended cube almost touching the base. I thought that it was sensational. And expensive! I couldn't understand why the glass pipe had not broken until Mar indicated that she thought that it may be Perspex and not glass. Still, the trauma to the victim's skull would indicate quite a collision of the object with her head.

"She was either walking towards the door to open it, asking who-ever to leave...or heading towards the stairs wanting to escape...no one hear anything? Neighbours?" I asked one of the Uniforms standing towards the rear of the room.

"No Sir. We've done an initial trawl around the neighbourhood. Not a sound Sir, though more than half the houses were unoccupied with residents off at work, Sir. It will need a re-visit. To-night, Sir?"

"Yeah. We'll give it a go to-night. If we need some help, we'll be in touch."

I sounded a bit officious. A bit curt, even to my ears.

"Sorry Constable. I didn't mean to sound so off-putting. OK?"

He nodded his head, though I knew that my name would be indelible scorched into his brain as an arse-hole.

So be it!

You can't please every-one!

Mar and I wandered through the Primary Crime Scene Room in a well-rehearsed pattern. People watching us would not see this as a choreographed pattern but a ridiculous and often infuriating series of stops and intense observations of seemingly trivial and unimportant objects.

"Carmy?" I called after her. "We're finished with our inspection of the body. You can arrange its removal."

We wandered out into the Kitchen where the House-Keeper sat hunched over at a small rough pine Kitchen Table setting.

"Mrs. Holgate?"

She looked up at Mar with red-rimmed eyes. Nodded her head.

"Every-one calls me Candy..." She murmured with a quavering voice.

"You found the body?"

She nodded her head again.

"I drop me two off at Kindy and come straight here. Usually gone by two thirty to pick them up. Tuesday and Friday, I do Gwen's place. Here. Mondays, I do the Crofts in Number 14 up the road and Wednesdays Number 10 next door to them but one. The Millerts. Thursday is my day off and every second week-end is mine cause the Ex has the two kids...I usually go around the back and come in through the Kitchen door...but there was some stuff on the driveway... Junk Mail... and the local Rag... on the door-step, so I picked that stuff up and came in through the front door..."

"It was locked?"

"No...no it wasn't. It was closed though. There's a dead bolt...and a locking latch. Both the same key. I have a key for the back and front. The same key. I usually go around the back..."

"Yes. You saw Mrs. Salisbury right away? Lying there?"

"Yes. I didn't enter...I froze when I opened the door and saw her from the open door through the Hallway. Lying there. All that blood around her head. Pooled on the floor. I just sat on that bench seat out on the front veranda. Just a-ways from the front door. Got my breath back. Rang Triple O. Then Mr. Salisbury...Gwen uses her maiden name actually. Gwyneth Kasprowicz. She would rarely use Brian's surname...something to do with professional propriety or some such. Neither one wanted to bask in the glory of each of their partner's fame...a bit of professional jealousy I always thought. They were leading Researchers in the sphere that they worked in... silly really. Don't you think?"

"How long have you worked for the couple?"

"Oh...I have been Brian's House-keeper well before he married Gwen...he was a bit of a pig. Typical male. Untidy. Didn't think it necessary to change the bed linen from month to month. Dirty clothes dropped where he took them off...his mind on other things, was always his excuse..."

"How long.....?"

"Oh...when he moved in here. Twelve years I guess. Even before I married. He married Gwen around six years ago, now. About ten years after his first wife died. Tragically. Drowned. In New Zealand. On their delayed honeymoon. About a year after they were married. He bought this house from his late wife's Insurance pay-out, so he told me once..."

"Were the two of them happy together..."

"I hardly saw them together...because of the time that I arrived and left here...very rarely...but they seemed happy...there was some chatter down the road that she may have had a lover at one time. I don't pay attention to such matters. If any-one should know, you'd think it would be me. I'm going through the house and their things with a fine-tooth comb twice a week...I'd have known. Don't you think?"

CHAPTER SEVEN

Brian Salisbury didn't seem to hear us.

He didn't seem to notice as I sat opposite him at a small outdoor setting on the rear veranda deck. He was looking straight through me. I called his name twice before he seemed to come into focus.

"Yes. Sorry. Do you think she suffered? Has anyone offered you a coffee? A bite to eat? Is Candy still here? I'll get her to rustle up a coffee..."

He stood unsteadily.

"Mr Salisbury. Brian. Arrh....Professor? Candice is not here. We asked her to go home. To see her Doctor...we've transported her in an Unmarked Police vehicle to her address. A Constable is driving her car back to her place. She was very upset."

He slumped back into the steel lace seat that seemed icy cold. Unsure what he should do next.

"Is there any-one who we can get to come over for you?"

He looked around. Confused.

"No. Not really." He sprang to his feet. "Do something, Brian. Actions. I'll make a coffee for you...Candy would have gotten a shock seeing Gwen like that. They seemed to get on well together...since we Gwen and I married. She's done the house-keeping from the time that I had the house built..." He looked around him at the house. "Twelve years about. Six since I married. Do you think that Gwen suffered? I'd hate that. If she suffered. Who would do such a thing...I'll get that coffee for you. I have to do something constructive." He gave a cut off harrumph. "Making coffee isn't that constructive now, really. Is it?"

He made no effort to move.

Mar placed a hand on his shoulder and guided him back into a slumped position on the chair.

"I'll get us a coffee, OK?" She offered.

"Yes...that'll be fine. Two sugars. There are some chocolate biscuits in the fridge. Plenty of sugar. That's what I need right now..."

"Are you diabetic?" I asked. Concern lacing my words.

"What? Who, me? No. Why do you ask?"

The guy was in shock. He was all over the place. I needed to go steady. For about half an hour, we talked about the area. Beautiful. Quiet. Full of like-minded people. An occasional street picnic. A shared BBQ up and down the street organised about four, maybe six times a year. Everyone knew everybody but not in a prying manner. He was proud of being one of the first to take up residence here. Initially, it had been planned as a gated community of like professionals. That squashed by Council, though there was still only one way in and the same way out. Professional people with children and teens who respected one another were the happy residents. No hassles. The kids great. Each resident had a very low carbon footprint with enough solar panels per residence to power the entire suburb. This street had no street lights as such but a series of individual bollard lights in each front yard that went off and on as one progressed up or down the street. This was to minimise any effect on the bushland animals opposite. Even the decking material he noted, as though he had just seen it for the first time, made purely from recycled milk containers and soft drink bottles. He seemed unduly proud of that fact. What it had to do with the price of eggs, is anyone's business!

"Did you consider that you had a good marriage?"

"A good marriage..." He seemed to hunt around for words. Not entirely sure of the question. "What is considered a 'good' marriage, one might ask. Was I happy...was I in love with my wife. Is that what you are trying to ask? Was it a good marriage compared to whose? To what?"

He passed a hand through a luxurious mane of grey hair. A soft grey. Long without being unruly. Stylishly cut though the slash of a receding hairline evident on either side of his scalp. His complexion was pale though the signs were there that he had been an outdoors person once. Classic English features that were a little too horsey, though the over-all appearance was handsomeness. Spoilt somewhat by big ears partially covered by the grey hair. Tall. Thin build. The Gym now got the attention from the man when-ever time allowed. When-ever he was able. He may be a typical forgetful Professor I thought to myself, but he still finds time to take care of himself. A sliver of vanity ran through the man.

When he had stood from the chair and returned to the seated position by Marge, he seemed to unfurl then furl himself into the chair. There was that coiled energy that seemed to radiate itself.

"I guess...." I answered, waiting patiently for him to answer the question.

I felt that he was parrying every question. Looking for some way to convey a truthfulness that complied with his possible narrow interpretation of the subject. It was clear that his work, his research, his standing as a successful businessman meant more to him than a happy marriage. I was sure that Mar had the same feeling by the look on her face. She really didn't like this man!

"Yes. Oh, yes." He added suddenly. As though he had just discovered the Fountain of Eternal Truth! "She was a one in a million. Intelligent. Sophisticated. Funny. Could put an entire roomful of people at ease, which was never my strong point...I guess in a lot of ways, she was like my first wife. I doubly blessed to find two women of content. Me? Go figure...we couldn't have children of our own...or more correctly, we could but chose not to. It seems that both of us had an abnormal gene that when combined, could cause malformation in our progeny...very rare...very sad from Gwen's point of view, I guess...though we never spoke of the subject. My fault, I guess."

He seemed perversely proud of this.

"Yes...so we decided against it, though we both at times have wished otherwise...but that's how it goes...I especially, am getting rather too old to sire children at fifty-two...yes...you could call me...what is it? My wife was only forty-four..."

"Have you any thoughts on why she would be murdered?"

"Who? Me!? No... no. Not at all. I would have thought that it more than likely a home invasion gone bad...This is a good area with high paying professionals as residents. You know? Good quality stuff in their houses...no?"

He looked from Mar to I.

His eyes looking as though he was looking through blurry glasses. Not really seeing us in focus.

"Is there anything missing?"

He looked around. That out of focus look on his face.

"I haven't looked. Candy would know. Have you asked her. She'd know better than I, really. Especially about Gwen's jewellery and personal stuff...ask her. She'd know better than I."

"Where were you last night around one to about three this morning?"

He looked at Mar bug-eyed. Out of focus again.

"Um...I...um...am attending a symposium on the latest medical advances in synthetic skins, three 'D' printing of human parts, DNA insertion into 3 'D' printing procedures and break-through medical machinery and apparatus...that's my speciality...a symposium that has attracted the world's finest in this aspect of medical research. In Newcastle. At HUMRI facilities. We're staying on Campus at Newcastle University. Gwen was with me last week for her speciality...then came home on Friday to go to work to pick up some of the time that she had lost...I've been there the entire time...for just over the two weeks of the Symposium. I am part of the organising Committee. The thing was winding up to-day with an outing on Sydney Harbour to-morrow before all the guests go their separate ways next Saturday. It has been very successful...up until this morning...if you have finished...if you don't mind...can I retire to my brother's place. He lives in Kirribilli. Views of the Harbour. I'll be able to watch my fellow members enjoy their Harbour Cruise. The first time for most of them. On the Harbour. They'll have to do without my farewell speech...that's maybe a blessing in disguise, don't you think? Is that OK?"

A figure emerged from around the corner of the house. Walking briskly into the back yard.

"Briney? You OK? They made me come around the back...not through the front door." As though this was an insult and below his standing in life. The Tradesman's entrance...now really!

"My brother. Scott. The police. Have you finished?"

"For the moment, though we would like your mobile number. Your brother's address and phone number. Ditto your place of work. Address. Phone numbers. I will ask you to stay in town. If you need to travel outside the city or away from your brother's place of residence or away from your place of work, could you contact us first...OK?"

I handed him both Mar and my calling cards.

"You are placing restrictions on me?"

"You suspect my brother? That's unbelievable, Detectives."

"This is a murder investigation. Until further notice, everyone known to the victim is a suspect. That's standard procedure. We do not suspect your brother but suspect every-one. OK? I know that sounds a little brutal, but that is the way it works. We concentrate on immediate family first, as statistically, that is where the guilty party is...then we spiral outwards to include friends, work associates and then others. Usually, by that time, we have a Person of Interest showing up in our investigation."

The man again rose unsteadily, curling himself out of the chair. He nodded once. His farewell. He allowed his brother to lead him away.

We finished off our coffees, sitting in the sun for some moments.

"What do you think?" I asked Marge as I made some notes in my Murder Note-book.

"It always came back to him.... just about every question.... there was a physical presence that showed concerned about his wife, but.... the emotional and mental processes revolved around him.... notice that?"

I nodded my head in agreement. I didn't like the man, but that was no reason to arrest the guy.

CHAPTER EIGHT

We trawled the near neighbourhood without much success.

This was a precinct of professional people.

It was now close to mid-day with most of the homes vacant until knock-off time. Or until school was out.

Those who were home were either "Stay at Home" Mums or retired persons. There was a mixed mood about being re-interviewed and asked the same questions. Little if anything of substance was obtained.

We would need to do the trawl again starting from around six to-night.

Another long day beckoned.

We wandered back to the house as the Forensic team were packing up.

"Any good?" I asked, not expecting a crumb.

"Yes, actually...." Caramine Lees looked up as she slipped out of her scrubs. Tossing them into the bio-mat tub located in the double garage. This drum would remain for as long as crime scene tape encircled the place keeping unauthorised persons out of the premises. She followed up with her two pair of latex gloves. A beautiful arc into the drum.

"Nice shot." I commented.

"Mmm...sorry...after seeing that beautiful woman in the condition she was in, I've lost the itch...um...it would appear that prints on the murder weapon match some found on the edge of the Kitchen table, the right kitchen cold water tap, the low Entertainment module in the Lounge. Both sides of the TV and a full palm print on the front door as though he was forcing it open...as though some-one was on the other side trying to keep it closed...plus upstairs in the Master Bedroom's attached Ensuite taps, and shower...and on the bed head...a good hand print. All of which belong to the same person. We'll check for sure in the Lab and run them through the National Data base. Let you know how we go. Any hits. OK?"

"All this points to the home invasion gone wrong theory...or the Lover theory...prints on the TV about to pick it up...something happened. Reached for that heavy object on the adjacent shelf. In reaching for it, if he was standing near the TV...almost I reckon...maybe a step or two...grabs the thing...I like it actually...I betcha its worth a motza...swings it into the back of Mrs. Salisbury nee Kasprovicz's skull as she struggles towards the front door...does that sound right to you?"

Both Mar and Carmy nodded their heads agreeing with the scenario. Mar then looked up at me. I knew the look. She had serious doubts.

So did I!

Again, we probed every drawer. Every cupboard and hanging space.

A Uniformed Constable obliged us by getting some late lunches for us. Several Constables were still combing the back and front yards even though the Forensics personnel had crawled through the entire areas.

Nothing!

We booted up the Desktop computer in the Study along with three Laptops that were lying about. One in the Kitchen on charge and one in the Lounge which I would love to have owned. A Forensic Computer expert worked on the four while we continued our examination of the house.

The man of the house whisked away by his brother.

When asked, he felt that he could not supply the Passwords to his computer and accounts without a Court Order. There were very confidential and important specifications and prototype designs that every one of his competitors would give an arm and a leg for. He claimed that he knew none of his wife's passwords.

"Joe? Both the missus and Professor were super security conscious..."

Both Mar and I walked quickly into the Study. All the Computers were booted up.

All in a line.

"I'd say that this is Mrs. Kasprowicz's personal laptop. The desktop one, both husband and wife used it though each of them had their own sealed component. This one is Mr. Salisbury's. He was into some very heavy scientific analysis...I'd say that this was his work's computer. Rather easy to get into the first level...his work material. There is a second level of hidden files that I can't open at this stage. This other one...which was in a cupboard upstairs....in Salisbury's Walk-in Dressing side, was an old computer that has a lot of stuff on it that is all password controlled with at least two gate-ways..."

He'd lost both of us at the first gateway!

"The three laptops and the desktop have multiple levels...and I'd say with an educated guess, I'd say that mural has all their Passwords in full view."

We both looked up at the framed mural above the large Desk. It was not something that I would have hanging in my Study of choice, that's for sure. It was a series of letters and numbers. All random. Sixteen wide by sixteen down. Outside the formed square along the top, there was a row of letters 'A' through to 'P'. Above that again, there was the numbers '1' through '16'. This repeated down the left-hand side.

It was double-dutch to me.

"Most Password control sites have an allowance for a maximum of sixteen spaces. A combination of letters and numbers recommended along with upper and lower case for the letters. If the entire sixteen spaces are utilised by a 'Customer', which is extremely rare by the way, the chances of the site being invaded is almost impossible."

He gestured towards the large mural as though this was a Rembrandt or something. A smile of sheer satisfaction on his face.

"Sixteen by sixteen made up of random numbers and letters.... with a further calibration of the line of consecutive numbers and one of letters on the upper and left hand side adding further to the combination configuration.... but if you knew the key, then you were looking at each of your accounts...if not, then you're snookered. I'll take a photo of the mural...no... I'll take the whole thing into the Lab. With the computers. The rest of the staff will be enthralled...simple. So easy. Yet so bloody hard. Almost unbreakable. We could be looking at some time before we enter any of these computers..."

The look on both Mar and my faces must have indicated to him that he did not have two persons here who were computer savvy. Or enthralled by the intricacies involved. Anything requiring skills above normal typing, we passed onto our brilliant Clerical head, Guy 'Hendo' Henderson. His expertise often called upon when even Microsoft 'Word' seemed to foil us!

Like so many of these 'clever' computer arse-holes, our man decided that he should educate us. Either that or he intended, by his very wisdom, to show us mere mortals how talented he was in the ways of all things computers.

"The letters first...you go across the letters spelling out your name perhaps. A guess on my part but you start from somewhere. That will indicate the row that you should commence with...or the numbers. Your birthday. Your favourite set of numbers. Your mother's birthday. Same thing. Or the numbers represent the number of accounts that are available. Both he and the missus had sixteen accounts. That's not chance, one would think. But the row you start in, you can either go backwards, forwards, down or both ways diagonally. The combinations then start to grow. You could start on row one with the first letter or number, next row two down, then three down etc. until you make up the entire combination of sixteen...it's there, staring you in the face. Brilliant..."

It seemed a lot of trouble to me. I said as much.

"Do you have password control on your work computer?" He asked stonily.

"Arrh...yeah. Yes, I have. And on my Laptop at home. My son often uses it. He has his own password..."

"Do you have a dog? A cat? A Goldfish?"

"Yeah. A dog....."

"That's your password, right? Or the name of your son. Or your wife. No?" A look of sheer pleasure on his face. "Second level security is the birth date of your son. Right?"

I had this urge to smack the condescending look from his face. Instead, as I walked from the room I threw back what I thought was a clever closing line.

"And your Password is your mother's maiden name. Right?"

I didn't hear his reply.

"Jeezus, Joe. You sure can rub people..."

I gave a mock look of innocence.

"One of these days, Joe. One of these days, I'm going to place my service pistol up your arse and pull the trigger...."

I held up my hands in surrender. I was starting to learn when to capitulate!

Finally!

CHAPTER NINE

We obtained approval from the Boss to extend our day and claim overtime instead of 'Time off in Lieu' which was the normal practise at present.

There appeared to be some political pressure hanging over this one for a quick result. The Boss especially, appeared to be on tender hooks as though bombarded from on high. When asked, he denied any such pressure. As the Boss, he was the one who made the decision on whether such pressure be transferred to his underlings. He was the type of Boss who would do everything in his power to ensure that his troops worked in an environment clear of such shenanigans. All homicide enquiries, to a certain extent, had that type of pressure hanging over them. The hierarchy were not immune to the social, political, or media pressures applied. This one, however, seemed a little different. We did not know why, but speculated about family ties. Brotherhood or Club associates.

We really were none the wiser!

We went for an early Dinner at the local RSL Club. A well-known suburban Club that I had belonged to in my early days.

We arrived back at the street just after five thirty and began the neighbourhood trawl once again. Even going to the same houses where some-one had been home at our earlier knock. Hoping to snag another member of the family for their input. That really put noses out of joint at some of the now triple visited residences inside eight hours.

It was the sixth house that we entered that bought us luck.

Three houses up the incline of the street from Number 24, which was the Salisbury's residence. The crime-scene dwelling.

There was shuffling. A scrapping sound and then a slow movement of the door as it swung open. A very wide front door. A lad in his late teens, early twenties stood unsteadily at the door. Both legs in callipers up to his hip line. Boyish good looks. An intelligent face. Alert eyes. A friendly smile. A head of hair that seemed to flounce about at the smallest of movement. Wide, well-muscled shoulders. The torso thinning to a very narrow hip line then these thin, long legs that looked as though movement or strength had vacated them. He stood on walking sticks that fitted up to the elbow joint.

"Do you mind if I sit?" He indicated a motorised buggy behind him. As he struggled to the

machine, he kept up the commentary. "You're the Police. About Mrs. Salisbury's murder...she preferred Gwen Kasprowicz. That was her maiden name. There was some professional jealousy I always thought...and the work that both she and the Professor were doing was innovative stuff. World class. Top notch..."

He lowered himself awkwardly into the buggy and back-tracked. Gesturing for us to enter and follow him. To close the door behind us as we entered. He neatly reversed into a doorway to do a three point turn before proceeding at speed into the dimness of the interior of the house.

We followed.

"Mum? Mum? The Police are here. I'll take them into my place. Can you organise some coffee and a couple of biscuits...for me.?" He laughed. "Please!"

We were led into a very sunny and airy Studio Apartment that sat over the triple garage at the front of the property. Joined to the main house by the roofline only and a breeze-way. The Studio-apartment was almost on the street boundary line. I wondered how they had managed that. To obtain approval through Council when initial Plans were submitted for approval. A large window line overlooked the street. Large skylights were fully open even though it was starting to get chilly with the sun sinking low. One large room. A double bed in the far corner. A small Kitchenette. There had to be some type of Bathroom and Walk-in Robe affair behind the Kitchenette. A large desk adjacent to the bed that had an array of computer components. A large circular table with perhaps ten chairs positioned around it centred in the large room. One huge light fitting at its centre from a ceiling drop of some six metres. A collection of mismatched sofas and settees. The effect looked good. A little arty, but something that I could live with. A large, low table centrally located within this melange. Directly behind the settee, that looked straight out of the window, and between it and the large central table, were three easels set up. Directly below two of the large skylights. Paintings unfinished. A flat piece of thick timber supported on two high stools overflowing with the paraphernalia of an Artist. Haphazard. No order. A mish-mash of 'things'.

Enough room between all these pieces, all these separate areas for either a wheel chair or the buggy to gain access through.

Large artworks littered the walls with seemingly no thought, rhyme, reason, or pattern to the collection. No planned order, but there was an ordered balance in the chaos. It looked good. Somehow proportionate. Proper. I said as much. Every available wall space. Even sections of the large windows as though wall space was at a premium. By the looks, it was! Excellent crayon and pencil drawings. Vivid colours. Splinters and globs of modern art. Landscapes in oils that were so real one felt that you could step with Alice through that Looking Glass.

I absolutely amazed at the seemingly random display. Almost jealous of the youth's ability. I had often wished that I could draw or paint at a level that would permit other people to ogle and wow at.

"You...arrh...these are?"

"It's rather deflating, really. People only see the callipers. Nothing else and immediately draw a conclusion. That I'm a bloody imbecile. Some type of useless twit within the Autism spectrum. I would have thought in your line of work, such untimely and too quick a supposition would be a hindrance..." This stated strongly with a hint of anger. He had been here before and it hurt.

Those prophetic words I would not understand properly until this Case was finally closed.

I went to apologise for my oafishness.

"Don't make it worse..." He said with a smile. "That just makes it more uncomfortable...yes...I am the Artist...please sit!"

He indicated the low settee that faced the window out onto the street. Across the road, the ground fell away sharply to again rise, not as steeply, as a heavily timbered hillside. The youth swaggered from the buggy to sit in a wheelchair.

"This is my usual mode of transport around the house...did you know that there is a colony of Koalas over the road? Only established in the last five years or so. The local Nature Lovers have been over there planting trees by the thousand for over umpteen years. Species preferred by the Koalas. We hope to treble the numbers inside ten years.... the State Government have proclaimed it as a Nature Reserve and provided a complete boundary fence. Cat and dog proof. No rabbits. Rats. Over 3,000 hectares of native bush that is slowly being rid of foxes, cats, and dogs. All forms of weed or noxious plants. Two springs that mean permanent water...we are building a series of natural looking weirs.... may be better described as cascades made from rock found nearby." He laughed at the words. "Rock weirs, I suppose maybe a better description...We're going to stock small fish and invertebrates in them for a Platypus population. Beautiful, eh? I'm proudly the Secretary of the group who have been instrumental in driving this proposal...we meet here once a month...have done so for almost five years now. Mum started it off and left it to me to fix up the idea...gives me something to do apart from my drawings. My paintings...one day we'll have walking trails through and around. Picnic spots. All wheelchair friendly of course...at least three metres wide made of concrete or bitumen. For people like me. Walkers. Bike riders. This neighbourhood, the entire district...and Council of course, is mightily involved...the sale of my paintings helps greatly...now...to terminate the small talk...poor Gwen..."

A woman bought a tray into the room.

"Hi. I'm Toby's mother. Suzanne Grieves. My husband is the Deputy Mayor. I'm his daytime Secretary and his night-time cook and back scratcher. Please. Help yourselves.... I should stay, I think, if this is about poor Gwen?"

She sat to the side of us. Busied herself with the coffee things and a plate of nibblies even though she had instructed us to serve ourselves.

"We knocked earlier..."

"Yes...I was at work...my husband doesn't get home until late usually. Um...Toby was here." She turned to her son.

"Mum. C'mon. You know what I'm like. Especially if I'm painting...or in the Gym downstairs...what time? Around two? I would have been doing laps out the back. Wouldn't have heard the chimes even if they were Big Ben dimensions. Sorry. How can we help?"

"You knew Mrs. Salisbury? Gwyneth Salisbury? And her husband Brian Salisbury?"

"Yeah...even though she was passed the expiry date for a young bloke like me..." That boyish, cheeky grin again. "...she was still a sort. I was doing a Portrait of her. Regal proportions. A great face. A strong nose. Beautiful for her age and possibly going to grow more beautiful as she aged.... very rare, one would think..."

"Toby, mind your manners. Young man..."

"Yes Mum. Sorry..." He gave us an expression trying hard to be sheepish. It failed and showed a cheeky, young man to boot.

"She was sitting for you?"

"A few times...but that was it...time. I had a series of photos of her...they'd do for a while until I wanted that personal detail and light not possible in photos.... we talked quite a bit on the three occasions that she did sit for me...she was having an affair..."

"Toby. Enough!" Shouted his mother.

"Why do you say that, Toby...do you mind if we call you Toby?"

"Nah....Mr. Grieves is my father...um...She never told me that, but I could tell...when she met with him, she would shine...I'm up and down all day. All night. You get to know who wanders about. Their regimental adherence to some type of time regime...day or night. Who walks their dog. What time of the day or night. Once. Twice a day. Who walks the neighbourhood. Who trots. Who runs. Who goes with whom. The midnight semi-prowler. You know what I mean. I'm still kinda leashed by my impediments...though I'm bloody

lucky to be where I am. I could be a lot worse...Mr. Salisbury catches a Cab when he goes away. Normally he gets chauffeur driven to work. Clockwork. No matter, that's when you see the silver-grey car park in front of our place. No other time. Just when Mr. Salisbury catches a Cab out...to fly OS or interstate...now...I'm not suspicious or a sticky-beak neighbour, but you'd have to be brain dead not to notice the schedule of events..."

"What make of vehicle?"

"I'm not a car person...they're all the same to me...um...I did a painting of it. I took a photo of it. Several angles so that I could paint it. You won't be able to tell the make and model of it in my painting as it's mixed up in a surreal sense with the breaking of trust the main object of the painting, but I'm sure that I still have the photographs. I'll get them for you. I don't need them anymore...would you like to see the painting? I call it 'Deceit'."

He wheeled himself over to a pile of paintings leaning against the far wall. Scrummaged through them.

"Mum?"

His mother ran over to help as he opened a drawer in a metal, six-drawer filing cabinet. Its sides splattered with paint.

"Here we are..." He proclaimed with an air of success, as his mother swung a large painting around to show us. It was perhaps 2 metres long by around 120 centimetres high. Mar gave a gasp. She walked slowly towards it.

A woman's body lay diagonally across the canvass. Naked. Blood from a head wound. An object resembling a silver vehicle lay in the blood pool. Broken. In parts. Several items of luggage with wings flew from her vagina. A male figure was running trying to catch the wayward luggage as it headed towards a plane while another figure was running in the opposite direction pulling up his pants as he did so. The background a montage of suburbia and bush. Of broken hearts. Arrows. Spears. Bullets. Broken crockery.

"When...um...when did you paint this?" Mar asked as she walked slowly towards the painting. The image clearly affected her.

"The date is on the back...maybe about a year ago, about."

"How long do you recall the parking of the silver vehicle?"

She took the photos from his outstretched hand. Rifled quickly through them.

"Oh...bloody hell...almost for-ever. It was at least 6 months before I painted that, that I realised what was going on...so I guess perhaps around two...two and a half years ago, now. Not every time that Mr. Salisbury went away...as though there was a break...but it always

started up again. Always."

"Did Mrs. Salisbury ever see that painting on the occasions that she came here? I understand that she was part of the team for the Nature Reserve. True?"

"She never saw that painting. I'd hate to think what her reaction would have been...and I couldn't hurt her that way..."

He turned a painting around that leant with the pile of others against the wall. It was an unfinished painting of Gwyneth. A bust portrait. What was there was beautiful. He had captured the sophistication of the woman. Her regal bearing that sometimes showed through in several of the photos at her residence. I felt that bearing that she exhibited in this portrait only existed in the photographs of an earlier time.

"Um...I guess that I will never get to finish this now...I needed to get the morning light on her cheeks. Reflected in her eyes. On her breast...a real pity as I enjoyed her company...and she seemed to enjoy the sitting. She liked how it was coming together.... such a pity, as she had an inner beauty that shone through at certain times, as I said before."

His mother squirmed, though decided to stay silent.

CHAPTER TEN

We finished trawling the entire street and the one behind that ran parallel.

Re-visited the Crime Scene house.

Again.

The Salisbury's held in high regard by all living within the precinct boundaries. Very good neighbours. A credit to the neighbourhood. The Professor with two other partners, the proprietors of an extremely successful business in designing and supplying specialised medical equipment and implements. Now dealing in the sharp edge experimentation with '3D' Printer development of body parts, bones, gristle, tissue, and skin. World renown. Cutting edge stuff. The firm's original four-person partnership dissolved around the time of Professor Salisbury's first wife's accidental demise.

There appeared to be an acrimonious separation of the partnership at the time.

Two former partners now sworn enemies, which was a shame as word was, they used to be very close. Their friendship going back even before University days.

Gossip abounded as to the reason for this sad falling out.

We needed to extract that history in detail. Fact from fiction.

Another interview with the Professor. Maybe at his place of work where he may be more comfortable.

Mrs. Salisbury aka Gwyneth Kasprovicz was a Research Fellow with HUMRI with several world-breaking medical solutions and remedies to her name. There was even talk of qualification onto a future Australian Scientific and Medical Research Institute Award which often led to higher recognition. Rewards and Awards. She was extremely popular. Well liked. Not snotty at all. Tried to attend the neighbourhood Running Regime every second night. Sometimes failing. Was always in favour of local street BBQ events and was a leading light in the set-up of the Sir Joseph Banks Nature Reserve Foundation. As the bushland across the street was apparently known. She also supported the local kids' sports days and was a brilliant Coach of the Under 14's girls' netball team.

As far as every-one knew, the marriage was healthy.

The Professor less keen than his wife to participate in local matters.

When he did, it was if his mind was elsewhere.

Only two other persons hinted at a possible Affair. Even then, if it was true, then there was an understanding and non-questioning manner in regards to the rumour.

True liberal upper middle class aspirations!

We sat in a Pizza Joint in the middle of the Shopping Strip around a kilometre from the murder address. Having a cup of coffee and winding down before we headed for home. Wanting to talk over the day's events in detail to get a handle on the case.

"What do you think Mar?"

"First thing to-morrow morning, we do a search on the Owner of that silver-grey vehicle...get a handle on him...I'd say we may even have a Prelim Report on Forensic evidence especially if those fingerprints bring up a match. We'll wait and see if anything comes from the Autopsy and what else the Lab guys may have turned up. Hopefully, the Computer geeks should have over-ridden all those locks and gateways stuff and got into the cheese. The good old dirty porn. Any DNA and trace will be a while yet. What do you think?"

"That it's not a Home Invasion gone wrong. That's a given!"

"Huh? Weren't you betting money on that very scenario a little while back...like,

this morning?"

I smiled. I'll catch her out one of these days.

"Um...I won't rule it out entirely, although I'm with you on it. I'd like to know more on the Lover if indeed it is so...we'll need to get more information on that. Perhaps the Computers will spit out something in that regard...we'll have to chase them up. Get them off their backsides. Let's go I've had it. It's been a long day."

"Mmm...the affair's been ongoing for about three years without the Professor...the hubby sniffing to it...or even the House Keeper...c'mon. That's just not possible. Three years??!!!"

I nodded my head. I found it hard to believe.

"Perhaps a threesome with one of the guys getting his nose out of joint. The hubby really didn't answer one question that we asked him. Not squarely. He was more than vague. Don't tell me these intellectuals aren't into things like that...just a continuation from when they went to Uni... OK, we do another interview with the House-keeper and the hubby...and Joe...your bloody imagination...the guy was in shock, for God's sake! And, by the way, you went to Uni studying Law...so that intellectual tag could very well apply to you...how was your Uni days. Drugs. Sex and Rock 'n Roll?"

A smart smile on her face.

I looked at her for some moments.

A cold stare.

If only, I thought to myself.

While High School days had been a continuous runt, I really struggled at Uni having to put in the hours otherwise I got too far behind. Unlike my son, Bill. He never needed to cram. To spend every waking minute studying. Doing submissions. Looking up pertinent cases. He knew all that shit off by heart!

Me?!

No way!

And women!

I hardly knew that they were a species on Campus during my time at University!

OK, High School was different. There I was the School Lover that even involved a Teacher

or two, so I seemed to recollect. Uni was an absolute shock to my system! With all those available young women cavorting about, I placed my nose into Law Books and Procedural Mechanics instead of other places...go figure....and still failed to complete the Course for all my endeavours!

CHAPTER ELEVEN

"Professor Salisbury? When would be a good time to see you again? Preferably sometime to-day." Mar asked politely. A pause. "You are where? On the Harbour.....!!" She raised her eye-brows. Shook her head in disbelief. "Perhaps to-morrow at your place of business. 10:30 on the dot. No, Professor. That would suit us better. Thank you...."

She placed her mobile in its charger dock.

"Can you believe it? He's on that Harbour Cruise with all the Symposium people. Guests. The day after his wife is brutally killed. Kicking up his heels and joining in the fun. Can you believe that? What an absolute jerk-off."

She obviously didn't like the man.

I had only just gotten off the phone myself.

To Motor Registry.

"A name and address of the Owner of said silver grey vehicle. A three-year-old Audi. License Plate Number JAP 1260. Owned by one Mr. Jonathan Aubrey Pavey. 122 Forest Way Circuit, Castle Hill. DOB 10/12/1960...that date is familiar somehow...That address would be about 15 minutes away from the Salisbury residence. Can we run a search on the man?"

Mar was looking off into the middle distance. Obviously not having heard my latest relevant bit of information pertinent to the case.

"Mar? Did you hear me?"

"There's something just not right about the man..."

"He's a typical, forgetful Professor. The proverbial icon of male inattention to his female counterpart...and it's a beautiful day, who wouldn't want to be out on the Harbour enjoying themselves"

"No... it's not that. He's no different to thousands of males who seem to live on a different wave-length, that does not include one byte especially reserved for their female partner. He is no different to the pack of ball playing males who prefer to congregate, to have physical contact and to belt the shit out of each other than go and get on the piss with the alleged combatant instead of a meaningful conversation with an intelligent and thoughtful person in the guise of the female form..."

Now I knew that she was pressing it a little too hard just to get up my nose. To get me to rise to the bait. This male was too intelligent, too knowledgeable to do so!

"Admit it, girlie..." I commented quietly, knowing that this would jiggle her strings more than anything else. "...admit it, will you. You just don't like the man. He is one of those miscreants who just rubs you the wrong way for no plausible reason...it's close to love actually."

A pen came sailing over the desk as my mobile began its first notes of another AC/DC number. I changed the tune every month. The rest of the Murder Room Detectives not amused by the ring tone.

I listened without interrupting.

"Can you repeat that...ta..."

I repeated the information that I had written down. To check that my notes were correct. "Ta...that's great. Anything else, yet? No? OK. Good work." I placed my mobile back into its docking cradle.

"Mmm..."

"What, Joe? Out with it. Who was that."

I was in one of those moods.

I flipped my Case Note-book closed, placed it in my shirt pocket and gave her a haughty look as I stood from my desk.

"I won't be long. Just going to the toot." I informed her as I passed her desk.

I could hear the tirade follow me as I left the room. That gave me inner peace and the need to burst out laughing.

I deliberately solved the problems of the world as I sat and farted. Filling in the minutes.

"OK. What, Joe?" Her exasperation peaking on my return

"The prints on the murder weapon...they match one Jonathan Aubrey Pavey. DOB 10/12/60. He's in the system. Arrested and charged with affray, failing to obey a Police directive, drunk and disorderly...in other words arrested and charged, given a suspended sentence with a fine of \$40 plus Costs for his involvement in a student demonstration in March 1980. Along with his closest friend and partner in crime, one Brian John Salisbury. DOB also 10/12/1960...go figure..."

"Both Sagittarians. As thick as thieves...um...I've got approval to do a search and financial appraisal on Pavey...in the mood you're in, we could have been waiting until Christmas. Maybe we should spread the net to include his best friend and colleague, Professor Salisbury."

"Nah...we've got our man, I reckon. Let's just concentrate on him. On Pavey. We'll fill out the background before we get a warrant issued..."

"His best friend? From University days? Having an affair with his missus. What do you reckon...she wanted a rest after three years of walking on egg-shells? There may have been gaps in the relationship from time to time...a guilty conscience perhaps? Then the itch got too much?"

"Or as simple as an overseas trip...let's not speculate until we find out more on our Mr. Pavey. You got Hendo doing the search?"

"Yeah...the computer boys are doing the more involved financial searches on him. Usually that takes a couple of days...should we visit our No. 1 suspect?"

"Nah... let's wait until after we interview Salisbury again...fling him a couple of hints...see what happens, eh?"

I could see that Mar didn't agree with me. She was biting at the bit to hit Pavey.'

I didn't want to pounce too early and lose all hope of an easy conviction. The early evidence seemed to fit him up tightly, as it was. More delving to tighten the screws. He wasn't going anywhere.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Office and Warehouse complex of MA &R Inc was in a Business Park that had been established in the late 1980's.

An experimental garden atmosphere for what was really an industrial area. Probably a first for Australian industrial Parks. This had trees everywhere, plenty of open space, modern

Architectural designed buildings that did not look like the normal Industrial Warehouse design, retention ponds filled with bird life and a Nine Hole Golf Course for the employees who worked there in the various establishments. There was a five-star Hotel within the boundary of the Industrial Park that was always full with Interstate and Overseas guests. A luxury Bar that was never vacant of clientele and customers any time of the day or night. Business conducted over a glass of top Australian Red and a five-star meal.

Serious business, so it was rumoured.

The Office complex one of the better designs in the Business Park.

"Business must be good...." I muttered as I stretched beside our Unmarked, looking up at the facade of the modern building, even though it was approaching its fifteenth year in existence.

"....and bloody profitable to boot!" Mar added sarcastically.

We'd parked our Unmarked in the Visitor's position. Strolled slowly under large spreading trees to the Entry Door. A large automatic glass door slid open silently as we approached via a cobblestone pathway. The Entry vestibule was all glass and light and rose skyward for several floors. A double helix of timber and glass staircases wound around itself from the ground upwards. Two glass sided Lifts whirred quietly on their up and down trajectory. In a display of Architectural wonderment, the Lifts did not go vertical as is the norm. they were at about a 70° angle to the horizontal. Creating a loose 'V' at the Atrium before they sidled upwards. The tracking system disappeared into a glass surrounded hole. Possibly to various Basement levels.

A youthful looking woman sat behind a timber desk. The counter top an impressive plank of hardwood with a beautiful sheen and grain pattern. An impressive multi-station phone and a computer screen and keyboard its only essentials.

"Can I help you?" She asked in a low husky voice.

We showed her our Warrant cards explaining that we had an appointment with Professor Salisbury for 10.

It was that, now.

"I'm sorry. Professor Salisbury is unavailable..."

"Oh!" Marge exclaimed. "I hope that he hasn't come down with anything serious.... perhaps he may have collapsed because of his wife's death..."

If Mar had the ability to disappear, the look on the face of the Receptionist would have caused her to do so immediately!

"Um, I'll get his Personal Assistance to have a talk with you. One moment please..." She replied coldly.

She spoke in muffled tones into the small speaker tube that was almost invisible beside her cheek. She finished off and glanced above her. We followed her gaze. Another woman was leaning over a glass balustrade waving to us. About six floors up.

We gestured to the Receptionist.

"Yes. Mz. Celica Forrest. Double 'R'. The Professor's PA. You can catch a Lift to the sixth or use the stairs..." She gave us a practised though tight smile.

We caught the lift to the sixth. Several other floors above us.

"You're the Police?" Breathlessness at our profession, so it seemed. "We've never had the Police here before. How may I help. Come this way. Perhaps it may be better to speak in our Office Suite. Sounds can echo around here a bit."

We followed the woman down a thick carpeted corridor. Subdued lighting. Muffled voices from several other Offices that we passed.

We came to a set of double doors that were flung open by Mz. Forrest as though she was showing us through a home that she was trying to sell. We the prospective buyers. She gestured to a gathering of comfortable looking chairs that had corralled an all glass coffee table. Not a mark on it. Several Trade magazines took pride of place. The Professor's face beaming from the front pages. An impressive Award piece balanced in his hands.

"Tea? Coffee? Water? No? I understand that you had an appointment to see the Professor this morning. Yes? He...arrh...he collapsed while entertaining some of the more important guests from that Symposium...he should not have gone. He had been advised that he should remain at Kirribilli...alcohol does not mix with his heart tablets nor the tablets that his Doctor gave him yesterday to calm him down...when his lovely wife...um...you know. That's why you are here...um... We understand that it may have been a heart attack. Or stroke..."

"The Professor?"

"No... although a heart attack is suspected in his case. We've been told a mild one. The attack. They're still doing tests. At St. Vincents Private. He's been ordered off work for several weeks...no... Gwen. Gwyneth Kasprovicz..."

She had lost me with her rambling. It was obvious that she was either effected by The Professor's sudden attack or the death of his wife.

"Did you know Mrs. Salisbury?"

It was obvious that Mar was not going to encourage this crazy form of elitism.

"Yes...Yes I did. A lovely person. She had so much to give. The medical Research fraternity has lost a genuine genius..."

It sounded as though she was practising a Eulogy speech.

"Quite well?" Mar asked.

"Sorry? Oh yes. She was a very regular visitor. Not just here, but down in the Research and Development floors...on the second and third floors. I always got the impression that The Professor used her a lot as a sounding board for ideas and new contraptions...she was so friendly. Would always ask about me. My family. My dog. You know that type of person who genuinely liked people...kept all the personal details of people in her brain."

"Do you know a John Pavey? Has he ever visited here?"

"Why do you want to know?" She asked suspiciously.

The open, honest look of the PA had vanished, replaced with a guarded, dark look.

"Has there been any association between Mr. Pavey and Mr. Salisbury? Or Mrs. Salisbury?"

During these words, the lovely PA had sidled awkwardly to her desk. Rocked forward on her feet as though the action could be hidden from our attention.

I started counting out loud to the confusion of the PA.

"One, two, three, four, five..."

I had reached 22 before the double entry doors swung open violently.

Both Mar and I had stood to face the doors.

"Impressive. Twenty-two seconds...Gentlemen, good morning to both of you! Though we could have killed your lovely Employee in that time. Drawn and quartered her." A false smile across my dial the welcoming gesture.

Mar gave me a filthy look.

We held up our Warrant Cards so that the intruders could see them clearly.

"Homicide Detectives Lind and Hendricks. Pleased to meet you. Impressive. Very impressive though Mz. Forrest with a double 'R' needs to practise her nonchalant approach to the Panic Button on the floor behind her desk...now...please sit. The three of you."

I glanced across at the PA to let her know that she was included in the request.

"We are here about the suspected murder of Mrs. Gwyneth Salisbury also known as Mz. Gwyneth Kasprowicz..."

"Murder!?!? No! Gwen murdered?!" Mz. Forrest's anguish was real. She sank into her chair.

"Gentlemen...you are?"

The guy with the hard wire into his ear was obviously the Security guy. Small. Wiry. A ginger mop that may have been a wig. Hooded eyes. Big ears. Possibly ex-military by the way he stood. Held himself.

I nodded at him.

"Jasper Jenkins. Everyone calls me JJ. Head of Security for this firm. Not just physical, but we also handle the Ethernet security program. Updates. Surveillance. After-hours sentries. Staff backgrounds. Stuff like that. This establishment is world renown. Lots of offers of 'Buy-out'. Take-overs. Industrial subterfuge and espionage is rife in this business...big costs. Big rewards..."

I turned to the other gentleman.

Lanky. Bald. Sharp features. Alert blue eyes. Fit. A Workout guy of discipline. Not zealous though. Age was catching up with him. Thin hands. Long, thin fingers. An expensive Fountain Pen in his left hand.

"Your weapon of choice?" I murmured. Nodding my head at the Pen.

He smiled. A broad, open, honest smile.

"Dibley C. Edwards. The C stands for nothing. My father was a Yank. Their kinda thing. I'm the nominal Head of Research and Development, answerable only to one man and my God."

He held out his hand.

We shook.

JJ still hadn't gone through that process and was never likely too.

I gestured for the gentlemen to sit at a table in the corner of the room. Used for conferences, I would imagine when numbers were perhaps six to eight and no more.

"OK....um... Mz. Forrest. That offer of coffee. Could that be arranged. For the four of us.

This could take five minutes or over an hour. I'm not sure...perhaps you could then help on the front desk until this is over...or..." The woman was noticeably distraught. "...or perhaps you should go to Sick Bay. See the Nurse. Grab a Cab home for the day. OK?"

Edwards wanted Mz. Forrest, with a double 'R' out of the way. PA's knew things about their Bosses that other people could only imagine at.

It was way too obvious.

We would pick Mz. Forrest up on the swing back.

The PA picked up her phone and murmured a hurried order.

I closed the Office doors after her exit. By her demeanour, I thought that she would be leaving for the day.

I got the distinct impression that the complete lack of sympathy shocked Forrest. Not something that was common in this firm, perhaps.

More to do with getting Mz. Forrest with a double 'R' away from these nosy Murder Detectives.

I glanced at Mar.

There was no response.

My cynicism must have been working overtime.
Again!

"OK...let's start again. Mr. John Pavey. What's his association with this firm. With the Professor and his late wife?"

There was silence. Both men looked at their shoes. Comparing shine so it seemed. Shuffled about in their chairs. Edwards more pronounced than the Security Chief. The open, honest look of the man vanished, replaced by a stern, poker face.

"We can do this the hard way...or the easy way. It's up to you two. We can close this establishment down and interview every employee on the grounds...who is Mr. Pavey? What is his association with this firm, as it has been clearly demonstrated that there is some association. Just by your actions. What is his association with the Professor and was he known to Gwyneth Salisbury?"

There was a quiet knock on the door. As I was standing the closest to it, I leaned further and opened one leaf. A trolley was wheeled in with coffee and tea. The aroma distinctive. A

great assortment of nibblies.

I will have to do a 10-kay run to-night, I thought to myself, just to off-set the calorie intake that I was about to indulge in...and that over the past twenty-four hours or so.

There was silence as the cups and saucers were placed on the thick glass coffee table. We took turns in pouring our own. There was no offer to do the honours. The air was thick enough to slice and eat as a heavy meal after the nibblies were devoured. Small talk was not a premium. The latest cricket or golf results were not applicable or of a concern to these two gentlemen!

We all settled into the easy chairs. Holding the cup and saucer in a hand.

It looked all very civilised.

Dib Edwards cleared his throat and glanced at the ceiling.

"Pavey! His name is like a revolving door to this firm. We are very successful. Perhaps the best in the world. Our patents alone ensure that our operations could survive to eternity without any further product manufacturing. Or research. Our present product manufacturing done under licence right around the world...the majority I proudly proclaim, still here in Australia...um...the firm began straight after the four of us finished University...actually before we finished University. Without doubt, as now, then the driving force was Brian...Salisbury. His first wife tragically drowned in New Zealand. She also one of the original four. Brian, Pinto, Pavey and myself. We are...or should I say, were the four signatories of the firm. The major shareholders, so to speak. We struggled for a lot of years. Many a time we agreed to fold up the Company and go our separate ways. Throw it in. It cost me my marriage. I'm glad that I persevered. I'm still not sure what kept us together. Our friendship, perhaps. Brian is the brains. The 'outside the box' Inventor. Pavey was the metallurgist. The guy who bought new processes, new manufacturing techniques, new metal compounds and different alloys. Pinto, Brian's first wife, Pinto Fabriano was the design genius. The one who could make a lump of metal with a thousand operating parts, look like a Picasso model. Or a Brahms Symphony. Me? I pull it all together to make a credible and cost effective process that would benefit both the medical world and our own coffers. I oversight the manufacturing processes of the various parts to create a whole. Chair the 'Brain-storming sessions' of our R&D personnel with Brian's role now the Devil's Advocate in a lot of ways. Medical equipment, apparatus and implements go through quite an extensive testing and examination process that is bloody duplicated in every country on earth! A bloody frustrating and wasteful process. To ensure its safety. Its use and its price structure. We have not had one failure of one of our products in any country. That's perfection in a \$5 bottle...as I said, we gravitated together as a group in our 1st. Year at Uni. Brian and John were friends from way back in Primary School through High School. Our group, sure, got up to a bit of mischief. A bit of trouble. A woman, of outstanding beauty I might add, well established in the group caused some...um...shall we say...male preening and overtures. Um...successful for each of us at some time until we realised that the whole

was the product of the four individuals...we settled down. It was with some surprise that Brian married Pinto. We all thought that she and Pavey were better suited. Even early in our raunchy days the signs were there. Pavey took it badly...the marriage...he was the somewhat emotional element in the group...he eventually was asked to leave after he continually made unfounded accusations on the sad death of Pinto. That near killed Brian. In selling out Pavey's share of the firm, it put us on the back foot for a while. Almost sent us broke, what with the huge Law bills..."

He took a preliminary sip of his coffee. Then a couple of gulps.

"We had only just started turning a profit...it was after the sad death of Pinto that something clicked...especially with Brian who literally threw himself into the business. He had a camp stretcher set up in the old Design Office of our first Factory...that is an exaggerated form of description for sure...a bloody shed, actually. We knew that we'd come good. That camp stretcher is still used by Brian..."

He gave a smirk at memories and pictures still clear in his mind.

"...less regularly, one must admit than the old days...but if a bug gets him, he can work non-stop on a problem, a project, a breakthrough design for days on end. Pavey in those early years began about half a dozen law suits against the firm claiming that he had been diddled of a sizable sum....um.... um... maybe he was. Maybe he wasn't. As I said, he was paid out with a sizable sum and a surety of more if the firm started to make a reasonable profit. We became clear of him and any covenants some years ago, now. Have been for some time now.... I don't think that the details of those episodes are relevant to poor Gwen's murder...I still don't believe it."

"We'll decide what is relevant to the case and what is not...Mr. Edwards." Mar cut in curtly.

He coldly looked across at us. Nodded his head slowly. Tried to stare down Marge, but failed dismally.

"Pavey was a product of the era...our wild Uni days...and never stepped out of it...that is all I'm willing to say on the matter. Anything more should wait until Brian is well enough to talk...with our Solicitors being present. Have a nice morning, Detectives."

Both the men stood, placing their cups and saucer on the table. Taking ours unceremoniously from our hands.

"Um...Dianne? Any further enquiries regarding the death of Gwen should be referred for my attention. My attention only. Understand?" Edwards stated into the phone that he had picked up from the PA's desk.

The words loud enough for us to hear clearly.

For our benefit.

We were ushered to the Lift Lobby by the Head of Security.

He seemed glad to be able to shove his weight around.

A little.

"Well, well. I'm not the only one who can get up some-one's nose...he didn't like your attitude, now did he, young lady?"

"He's hiding something, don't you reckon?"

"We may never know, my dear" I proclaimed in my best W.C. Fields impersonation.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

We both slumped into the front seats of our Unmarked. Rolled the windows down. It was moments like this when, in the old days, we'd light up a smoke.

"What do you think?" Mar asked as she lolled her head back against the head rest. Squinting at the sun.

I slipped on my sunglasses stolen from the residence of a bashing Victim who had a thriving gigolo business on the side. A Centrelink sham His main financial windfall was distributing and selling marijuana. Bashed to death in a Harbourside Park some four years ago now. Bloody top of the range sunglasses to boot. A pair among several pair that I looked at.

"The coffee was freshly ground. Freshly made. Superb, actually. They must have their own brand or combination of beans. I'll have to remember to ask them next time..."

Mar rolled her eyes. Shook her head.

"Next time?"

"Oh yes! There will be a next time. Very shortly in fact. It's what? Eleven thirty? Let's pay a visit to the grieving Mr. Salisbury. St. Vincent Private, I believe..."

Mar started up the Unmarked.

"Yeah. OK. But what do you really think?"

"I'd say that our Mr. John Pavey is firming as our prime suspect. There's history. Long-time

friendship. Jilted lover. And a history of emotional, acrimonious behaviour with a suspicion on his behalf of having been diddled out of a sizable amount of money and an ongoing financial stream..."

"Then why kill your Lover?"

"Mmm....Perhaps he became the Lover as a way of getting back at his one-time best pal for marrying the woman of his desires....and being unceremoniously and unfairly removed from the firm that would not only hurt his pride, but his pocket as well..."

"We're talking about Pinto? Pinto's marriage to Brian that occurred what? Twenty years ago? Kicked out of the firm not long after that time. And if he was getting back at his former buddy by having an affair with the second wife, wouldn't revenge be sweeter if the cuckolded husband was made aware of the affair...not killing the woman...and when you think about it, that's a long time to hold a grudge..."

"Depending on the emotional stability of the man, killing the much-loved wife would be the ultimate revenge, to my way of thinking..."

"Yeah, but you're one mean sick bastard yourself, Joe Lind!"

"And I love you too, Marjory Hendricks...now, to the hospital I think, Driver. Toot sweet, as my Nanna used to say."

"I'll give you 'toot sweet', Joe Lind. Just keep it up, my friend, and I'll give you 'toot sweet'. My father used to say the same thing. What does it mean?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"French, I think, with an Australian accent attached. Hurry up! I think that is what it originally meant!"

What worried me was that we were firming our suspect to the exclusion of all others early in the investigation. That was not normal. We always had several pots in the fire to keep us guessing more than anything else. Here, we were more convinced of our fellow. I looked at the Case from arse-hole to breakfast. We did not appear to be missing anything or drawing conclusions on ill-defined or preconceived thoughts. The cards were laying out of their own accord all pointing to the one person.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

"You two were at my place, when? The other day, weren't you?"

I nodded my head slowly to show that he was correct.

He was sitting up in a chair looking out of a window at the Sydney skyline. Tubes and wires running from his body. He was a yellow colour. His skin dry and parched. His hair an uncombed thick carpet across his head. He seemed to have withered somewhat since we had last seen him. Maybe he was just slumped low in the hospital lounge chair.

They were like that! And not that comfortable.

"How are you, Mr. Salisbury?" I asked cheerfully.

Mar looked as though she was abstaining from any contribution. It was clearly obvious that she didn't like the man. I couldn't figure out why, as it was I who had that nasty taste every time that I saw him. It was extremely rare that the surviving spouse of a murder victim effected both of us in such a manner.

He looked at us both. Nodded his head.

"More questions, Detectives? Can't we leave it for the moment?"

I ignored his request. The Doctor on duty had approved a maximum of 15 minutes with the man. I jumped straight into it.

"John Pavey. I understand that he was a friend of yours going way back. Primary School. High School. University. It was he and you who were the embryo, the centre of the group back then. With Pinto Fabriano and Dibley C. Edwards. Is that correct?"

He nodded his head in agreement. Slowly. An alertness brightened his eyes. Like snake eyes. Watching a possible danger edging closer.

"You've been doing a bit of digging into my background. My history. Why Detectives? Am I a suspect in the slaying of my wife?"

"In cases such as this one, every-one is...especially the husband, until we can prove otherwise."

"I was in Newcastle."

"That's not that far away, you know. Straight down the Motorway directly to Castle Hill...and then back."

"Hardly likely, Detective. Hardly likely. Now...is there anything else?"

"Why would you discount the logic so out of hand?"

"I don't like driving at the best of times..."

"That doesn't discount the theory, Mister Salisbury."

"Professor Salisbury, please."

He made sure that I registered his disquiet being called just plain old Mister Salisbury.

An Academic snob, I thought to myself.

"Anything else?" He was dismissing us as he wriggled in the chair to get comfortable.

"Yes...we believe that John Pavey was having an affair with your wife. Gwyneth. For roughly three years. It ended several times but always recommenced...were you aware of this arrangement? Or should I say that it seems rather hard to believe that you were not aware of the arrangement. A long-term relationship like that is very hard to ignore...to not know about."

He looked at me coldly.

"Was that a question?"

He stared at me until he turned to peer out of the window. He squinted at the glare.

"I think you people need to leave my presence...any further communication should be conducted through my Solicitor. Good afternoon to you both."

That was it!

Interview over.

As we stood waiting for a Lift to take us from the Fifteenth to the Ground floor, Mar leant into me.

"You handled that well, Sherlock."

"Thank You." I replied. "We learnt a fair bit out of it, don't you think?"

"Arrh....did I miss something here, Ace?"

"Well.... It has now been confirmed that there is bad blood between Salisbury and Pavey. That Salisbury knew of his wife's dalliance with Pavey as there was no reaction. No shock shown. In fact, looking at the heart monitor, his heart rate barely increased. We also now know that no-one from the firm had rung him to advised him of our meeting with them this morning which is a revelation. Also, the information gleaned from that meeting had not

been relayed to him. The supposed illustrious and beloved Head of the firm. It also showed that he has something to hide...and that his outward persona hides a very hard and cold man...he may be driven, but there is somewhat of a killer instinct inside him...and you have some foundation for not liking the man though I doubt that you can offer any explanation other than women's intuition on the matter."

Mar was silent until we got back to our vehicle.

"Told you, Joe. Told you. But now we have two avenues basically closed to further scrutiny as we have the restricting claws of Solicitors being present...I really don't know if that helps any. You seem to have him up there also as a firm suspect...maybe your instinct of not liking the man as I don't, is clouding your perception...those fingerprints on the murder weapon, on various surfaces and on the door sure aren't his...they point conclusively to another...it seems highly unlikely that both Salisbury and Pavey have the exact same fingerprints...that by the way is not mathematically impossible, but so improbable as to remain implausible."

"Hmm...I wonder sometimes on that. For example, twins have the same DNA trace."

"No, Joe...Exact, exact duplicate twins do...that is almost as rare as hen's teeth....."

"Then why don't they have the same finger prints?"

"Exactly!"

She'd lost me with her cryptic language. I shook my head.

"Lunch?"

"Is that an invite?"

"You can sit in the car, if you like.... but I intend to get something to eat. My stomach is growling."

"Is that what that noise was...I thought it was one of those machines that Salisbury was hooked up to...."

"One Day, Joe. One day, you will feel my service pistol up your nose....."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

We strolled back into the Office around mid-afternoon.

"Hendo? Got anything for us?"

"Yep. It's on your desk, Joe. Surprising fingers of influence. You are playing with some big fish. And it goes back a long way, so watch yer backs."

"Joe. Marge. Step into my Office after you have put your things down." Abbey, our Boss asked from his Office door.

"She's right Boss. What's up?"

"The two of you have ruffled some feathers. Where are you at, with the Salisbury murder?"

We sat while Abbey stood at his window. Enjoying the view of Parramatta Park. Playing with coin in his pocket.

"We're just about ready for an arrest. We'd like to get a bit more background before we do that."

"Mmm...have you told anyone of your suspicions on your suspect...like his fingerprints on the murder weapon? Name?" He twirled around to face us. "Mmm?"

"No, Boss. Not that we are aware." I turned to Mar for her thoughts on the matter. She shrugged her shoulders. "Our line of questioning with Professor Salisbury at the Hospital may have given him some suspicion as to our Number One suspect...we did say that he, as the husband of the Deceased, was also in the frame until evidence exonerated him. I also dropped that he must have known that his wife was having an affair for three years to gauge his reaction...nothing...not even an immediate rise in his heart beat...I thought that was rather telling. In interviewing the other Senior Member of the firm this morning, Dibley C. Edwards, our rhythm of questioning was about the background of the firm. In particular, history of our Number One suspect. How he fitted in, his involvement. His Associates. That Boss, is a given in any Murder enquiry when we are trying to gain the knowledge of Motive, Means and Methodology. That's Murder Investigation 101, Boss..."

He held up his hand to stop me.

"OK, Joe. OK...I've had two calls this morning. One from the Chief Deputy Counsel DPP. Jennifer Cartwright. The other from Davina Davidson QC. Both wanting to know where the investigation was at, at this point and were we close to an arrest...just a quiet, friendly chat. We're talking heavy artillery here. I'm half expecting a call from the Commissioner of Police and the Minister at any moment, such is my unease. Have you got enough to bring your man in?"

"Yes, Boss...his fingerprints. Around the house and on the murder weapon. His car often seen in the street parked there only when the Professor is Intra-State, interstate, or overseas. For around the last three years..."

"Confirmed by other witnesses?"

"Yes, Abbey."

"Is that all?"

"No, Boss..."

We filled him in on what we had learnt this morning and our talk with the Professor. More on not what he had said but what he failed to say and his reactions and general demeanour. We wanted to wait until we had possibly more trace and more background information on the break-up and its cause, before acting. Maybe in the next day or two. DNA trace always takes time. A lot more than a day or two.

"Mmm...we've picked up Suspects on less, haven't we? Why do you want to hang back? You seem less sure. I've seen you biting at the bit on a darn sight less than what you've got so far on this guy...what is it?"

Both Mar and I shook our heads. We didn't know. Honestly didn't know why we had this misgiving. But both of us felt it.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

"Looking back on it now, have you managed to reconcile you suspicions...that gut feeling that you Murder Dees seem to rely so heavily on?"

Jennifer Cartwright said this with a smile on her face.

Her friendly banter didn't hide the accusation. As though she didn't believe in these gut feelings existing. If I had mentioned something like women's intuition, she may have sarcastically come back at me with that being a sexist statement. A side-ways glance at Mar indicated that she was about to reply to the comment. I spoke over the top of her.

"It's not just us. Any person trained to do a specific task can often have gut feelings concerning that task. The gut feeling is based on prior knowledge, time in the job, training, and repetition. You can't tell me that you, as the Lead Prosecution Solicitor, does not have the same gut feelings, or if I could mention the words without stirring up any defensive statements... women's intuition..." Stevenson wriggled uneasily in her chair and straightened

and pulled at the hem of her skirt. Even so, she had a slight smirk on her face. "...whilst cross-examining a suspected Felon from time to time. Even interviewing us Police Officers, I would imagine that you would occasional get that same feeling on whether a person is lying, lying by omission, or telling little fibs...I would imagine there would be some Retail Assistants who also have these tremors...or any one dealing with the public, that's for sure."

"Yeah, I know what you mean. I wish sometimes that I could leave that feeling at the Office instead of taking it home to be confronted by screaming late teen-age bullshit...." The DPP Lead Solicitor added. Laughing as she spoke.

"Amen to that. My son has often told me to stop playing the suspicious, cynical Cop and believe him for once!"

We all laughed over this aspect of our professional lives.

I had made an important point, I thought to myself. A rare win against this feisty woman whose reputation as a ball breaker had long preceded her.

"Getting back to my original question....."

"Yeah...we spoke about it as the case progressed. After the Court Case and the Sentencing....not that long ago really. The insinuating, circumstantial evidence just kept on mounting up against John Pavey regardless of his constant cries of innocence...I mean, we've all heard that before...and we thought that our apprehension, our cynical nature, that little squirming worm was more due to our dislike of the Professor. I know that we are supposed to be unemotional and look only at the facts...but as you said, some cases are progressed only on that little gut feeling. That bolt of genius from out of the blue. This was perhaps, the first case where both Mar and I had that same squirming worm and dislike for one of the major players. That's never happened before in what? Over one hundred Homicide Investigations since we've been a team. Like most teams, we feed off each other...and that can be an ethereal, almost super-natural thing...that unknown quality."

Cartwright seemed to mull over this for some time. Nodding her head as she did so.

Eventually she leaned into her phone.

"Recording stopped 11: 32 AM Thursday the 14th. In the Office of Detective Superintendent Church. Head of the NSW Murder Squad."

She looked at the three of us in turn.

"Thanks for that. Could I ask the three of you to come over to the DPP Office to-morrow? Say Nine thirty. Eleventh Floor Conference Room? It will be explained then....."

"Um...do Mar and Joe need to bring a Staff Association member with them? Or a Legal

Rep?" Abbey asked.

"No... no... nothing like that at all. No. This is not a witch hunt or an investigation into procedures and actions of the two of you during the investigation. No. If it was, then the DPP would also be in the firing line. No. We have a visitor from New Zealand who, it may be a good idea that you meet...and ask any question that you may of her that you want. She is a retired Coroner from Canterbury. I think. South Island. She is here of her own volition and costs. Can I expect to see you then?"

The three of us nodded our concurrence. Still not convinced that it wasn't a classic mouse trap situation.

She must have seen our apprehensiveness.

"Please. I'll say it again. Your conduct on this investigation is beyond.... has been beyond reproach. There is nothing at all that the Force or the DPP's Office can criticise you on."

She looked sincere.

"OK..." She leaned back over the phone again. "Recording recommenced 11:47 AM. The same persons attending. Could you please finish off your discourse on the Salisbury Homicide Case, please?"

Cartwright smiled the most beautiful smile that I think I have ever seen. She wasn't that much older than me. Perhaps only ten years. That was very little years at all when you are my age. Never again seeing the sunshine side of forty!

Stevenson looked intently at me. I felt that I was under her spotlight. Another victim perhaps?

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

"First thing Monday morning. Six thirty at his place of residence. A warrant for his arrest and a Court Order for his vehicle impoundment, and anything that may be found at his place of residence that may have pertinence to the case obtained. The extra personnel are being organised as we speak. In hand. I'd like to go with you, OK? Any questions, you two? No? Good. Make sure that the Murder Book is in order and up to date. Now out of here as I have work to do."

We wandered down to our desks. Stopping there momentarily before I said that I would shout a coffee. Marge was to chase up Forensics for anything more and check through the background stuff that Hendo had prepared.

"Yes Boss. A massage perhaps. Barefoot up your spine...or perhaps a baseball bat would be better..."

"Promises, promises." I uttered as I walked from the room.

Mar wasn't at her desk as I re-entered the Murder Squad room. I glanced at the "WHEREABOUTS" Board.

She had ducked up to the Computer Forensic Section.

A hurriedly written note on my desk instructed me to follow her.

With the coffees.

"What's the urgency" I asked as I handed her a large container of the steaming hot liquid.

The young Computer guy who had been at the Crime Scene house looked longingly at my container.

"Sorry mate. If I'da known, I would have done the honours. Have you got a mug? I'll pour some out for you."

"I'd love it, but it's a big no-no around here. No drinking liquids or food anywhere near our Work Stations. You can wreck a case in one easy spill or crumb. Can you put them over there?"

He indicated a table at the entrance into the room.

Having obeyed the request, I sauntered back to his Station. The Work Bench was full of the skeletal remains of a Desktop and three Laptops. Wires drooped from all four implements into several black boxes. Red lights blinked. Green lights blinked. Four flat screens at head height rolled out binary numbers at a million miles an hour.

"What have we got" I asked.

Not sure what I was looking for...or at!

The young guy leant across his desk to his own 'together' Laptop to rapidly type in some commands. One of the screens stopped rolling. Blinked. Stuttered. Then an e-mail miraculously appeared on the screen. Dated over a year ago, now.

To:

Paveyjay1960@Bigpond.com.

My Love,

Even though I will die for you, we must stop this silliness. Sooner or later we will be found out with dire consequences to both of us. Personally, professionally, and emotionally.

No more.

Please

Your Lover Always

I let out a low whistle.

"Was there a reply?"

"No... for the major part, it would appear to be one way traffic. He has replied occasionally with the usual platitudes, even angry outbursts and an occasional *I can't live without you...I'd rather be dead* type replies. These go back over three years. Usually she wants to break it off in roughly a six-month cycle. Obviously, she has relented and given into his charms. Over the past month or two the wording gets more desperate. More emotional. It would appear to be on its last legs...the affair that is. These were in an e-mail account called *'YOUR SECRET SQUEEZ@gmail.com.au'* that was relatively easy to break into. She has five other accounts that are proving more difficult. She even had a Folio of the same name where she kept all communications from him. There is sadly very few in reverse as replies. It would appear that she was a ravenous e-mail sender...we'll have to wait and see what her phone texts and tweets show."

"When do you think that you'll have broken into all the computers and all the accounts?"

"How long is a piece of string. The remarkable thing is, who-ever organised these computer accounts knew what they were doing...this one that you can see, compared to other hidden ones, definitely wasn't prepared by the same person. That's a given...I'd hazard a guess and say that the Professor originally set up all accounts, all hidden zones, as there is a commonality across all four computers. This one no! This is some-one else's handiwork."

"Why do you say that it is the Professor's work...the good stuff...and not the Victim's? That's rather sexist, now isn't it?"

The young bloke looked across at Mar. A frozen smile in his face.

"Arrh...a word of advice young man? Just shut up, mate. Otherwise it will be a deep hole that you will start to dig." I advised the guy as I slapped him on the back.

In some perverse way, I was pleased that one of us had got the better of him. These

Computer geeks seem to think that non-computer geeks are lower than cockroaches with even less intellect. That they are at the top of the food chain with everything else sliding to sludge at the bottom!

Regardless, we thanked the young guy for his quick response. Asked him for a hard copy of that Account once the read-out from its inception completed. We gingerly left the guy to his work. I doubt that our departure even register with the young bloke. Grabbing our lukewarm coffees, we left the area.

"I couldn't hack that." I offered, as we caught the Lift down to our floor.

"What?"

"Those views are better than from our floor, but they don't seem to even notice them...they're so wrapped up in their little world...hardly ever out of the Office."

"Just as well for us, now don't you think...you should see the stack of stuff that 'Hendo' has obtained on our Suspect. 50 mm thick at least. Starting from High School Reports. Bugged if I know where he would have gotten those. He must have worked all night! Pavey appears to have been a bit of a loose cannon compared to the other three in the original quartet. Even at School. Would you believe there is a photo...not a very good reproduction I'll admit, from some Student Union Paper of the early 1980's from the NSW University showing a now familiar QC and a prominent DPP Chief Deputy Counsel in a compromising clutch. With a young-looking Salisbury and Edwards participating somewhat. I stress, they are not looking on, that's for sure. Now there's a foursome of some importance in to-day's society. I'll bet the four of them are hoping that none of their Uni days' cavorting ever gets caught up in this case. You can see where the pressure is coming from, huh? This is before any form of digital photography, phone cameras or social media circus. Just imagine what it's going to be like in another fifty years! God forbid! Do you want to go through the stuff this afternoon?"

"No. How about we pay Gwen's place of work a visit. This case sown up two ways to Sunday. Let's make sure that there's no loose ends."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Medical Research Unit was in the same Garden Estate to the Professor's impressive Laboratory.

Not close, but close enough for a fit person to jog the distance in under fifteen minutes. The building was more austere. Practical. Understated. Still modern though.

We were ushered into a poky Office that looked as though the Interior Decorator had an obsession with large, white, multi-ringed Binders and loose paper. Every flat surface whether capable of supporting the A4 size of the piles or not, were loaded down. Every pile appeared to be tottering towards us. Threatening to bury us in this mountain of paper. Reports.

Margaret Renshaw gestured to the piles.

She looked disparagingly at them for some moments, as though seeing them for the first time. She did not request that we refer to her as Doctor, even though it was sign-written on her door and repeated on a desk-top little sign.

"As you can see, it's top priority of my 'To Do' list." She gave a little chuckle. A sheepish look. An embarrassed smirk. "Gwen. Poor Gwyneth. Murdered, so they say. I neither own a TV nor a radio. The radio in my car is never turned on...was she a good Boss? The best. Was she a hard worker? Without question. A loyal and honest worker? You couldn't ask for better. A diligent Researcher whose Office was the complete opposite to mine? I always said that she suffered mightily from OCD...let me explain. While she was my notational Boss, we were equal. We worked on different subjects. Different projects, though they usually had a common thread. I was the more...ah...I have a Doctor of Medicine Degree that helped sometimes. Sometimes it was a hindrance. Our Projects financed through different funding arrangements. But we both had responsibility across each other's speciality. Each other's experiments and theories. Every day we rubbed shoulders with one another...I don't know what is going to happen now that she has gone...I'm sorry."

She blew her nose on a male sized handkerchief. A male sized blow. Wiped her eyes.

This woman was the complete opposite to our Victim. I could never see her wearing silk negligees to bed. Thick winter male PJ's and a woollen Dressing Gown would be her go. I thought to myself.

"Did she have any close friends here. At work?"

"She was friendly with just about everybody. She was that type of person. A people person. If you are asking was there any 'special' friends...female friends who she may have confided her innermost thoughts to...I guess that is me. We are somewhat proof of the adage about opposites attracting...she confided in me occasionally about her affair so I knew that she was having one...and it was long term. If you are asking me with whom; I'm afraid that I do not know. She was desperate to end it though. I know that. He was especially deft at getting her to continually go back to him after a very short time in abeyance..."

She wiggled around in her chair. A troubled look on her face.

"She loved her husband dearly...but it was more an affair of the mind. An intellectual love

affair. She respected his mind; and he, hers. Their conversations were wonderful...a sheer joy to listen to...to be a spectator of...to me and my kind. I guess with people not in this field, they'd find the conversations extremely boring...our conversations around the Dinner Table continually explored the outer boundaries...we continually talked shop...I guess that happens with highly motivated people...that was their common bond. Our common bond. That and both their intellectual bounty. But unfortunately, Brian, the Professor, didn't have a sexual bone in his body...or so I thought."

She laughed at her own wit. On seeing that neither Mar nor I had reacted to the point, she again displayed a somewhat embarrassed, glum countenance.

"Gwen was a sexual person unfortunately, who really hated cheating on her husband...but who-ever it was who could pull her strings, sure was expert at it! So it seemed to me."

"Was it some-one whom she worked with?" I asked, already knowing the answer.

"No... no. Good grief. If it had of been, everyone here would have known. Females. A Laboratory full of them. They'd all would've had an inkling of it if it had been a male within these four walls."

"Mmm...if Gwen hardly spoke to you about her Lover, then how do you know there was this off again, on again repetition with it?" Mar asked.

Good point I thought.

"She spoke about that. A lot, I suppose. In an obtuse way. She was angry at herself for being dragged back into it continuously. Frustrated by it. Guilty, terribly guilty by the fact...but she just never divulged who it was, to me."

"Would she have discussed the name with any-one else? Perhaps she didn't want you to know because you may have known the person involved?"

She shook her head.

Tentatively.

"No... I guess I shouldn't be so positive about that point, should I? It's always possible...and me knowing the chap? I've never really thought about that...that's a possibility, I suppose...if you are now going to ask me whether I suspect one of my male friends being involved with Gwen...then I really must say that I don't know. Though I doubt it. Most my male friends, while in the medical fraternity or the medical research fraternity, are mostly gay guys. The others...straight friends...are mostly married." As though this proves innocence to any hanky-panky!

That's the reply that I suspected to hear.

We interviewed the Manager of the establishment and his two Deputies. Learning that a sizable hole had appeared within the Research Community. In particular, in their establishment. Several Research projects would need to be put on hold or cancelled, such as Gwen Kasprowicz power and intellect.

We interviewed every one of Kasprowicz's fellow workers on three separate Research projects. Individually and as a group. A kind of brainstorming session that these intellectuals loved to participate in. Learning nothing new but having it supported that she was one hell of a woman, a friend, a co-worker, and a boss. When the question was asked about a possible lover, none of her co-workers and team members believed that she was capable of such a thing, such was the purity of her halo.

It was close on Six by the time that we walked back to our car.

"Worthy of the hours of work that we put in?"

"Good grief...Mary, Mother of God was sure tainted by comparison...you coming to-morrow night?"

"What you cooking?"

"Spag-bole..."

"C'mon Joe. Buy a bloody Cook Book. At this rate, you can't ask your father and step mother and their entire tribe over again as you will've run out of alternatives to cook them. For their second visit, you can't dish up Spag-bole *again*.... they'll know."

"Know what? ...And what if they do?"

"I'll come over early to cook a decent meal for them. Whose coming?"

"Dad. My stepmother...I've forgotten her name! My eldest Half-brother and his missus and their two kids. Both late teens. That's it. We agreed to keep it small. The entire tribe wouldn't fit into my place. Thanks Mar...no, don't worry about it. I'll fire up the Barby. I can cook a mean Roast Lamb and vegetables...or snags and prawns...with a tossed salad...a bit of Rump and some fish...I don't know yet."

"Joe Lind. You're a bloody worry. How Billy got to be 180 tall and built like a front row forward on your extremely narrow band of culinary talents is beyond me. He'll be there? With Mal?"

"Yeah...and I'll tell you something, Marjory Hendricks, he has never once complained about my cooking! Not once! In his entire life!"

CHAPTER NINETEEN

He opened the door slowly to our banging and cries of identification to crane his neck out past us to peer into the gloom. To look at the number of reinforcements that we had bought with us.

"I find this entirely unnecessary. You didn't need to bring the entire Force with you. Come in, Gentlemen. Come in. I've been expecting you."

"Mr. Jonathan Aubrey Pavey? You are under arrested on suspicion of murdering one Gwyneth Salisbury also known as Gwyneth Kasprowicz on or about last Tuesday 12 of this month, at or in Number 24 Flowering Gum Close, Castle Hill. Anything you say may be used as evidence against you at the time of your Court appearance. Have you anything further to say, Mr. Pavey?"

Mar always put on her most officious voice every time that she did this.

I always let her do the Undertakings as I knew that she got a kick out of it.

Another dirt bag bites the dust.

She always repeated that to herself as she placed hand cuffs on a suspect. Some type of karma to her, so it seemed. I thought it a little dippy, but would never say such.

"We have a Court order to seize your vehicle and anything that may be of relevance to the charges against you. Do you understand, Mr. Pavey?"

He nodded his head.

"You must understand, I didn't murder Gwen...I wouldn't...I couldn't!" he bowed his head.

Abbey led him out the front door.

"Where are you taking me? Aren't I supposed to be on the premises during any Police search. So that I can see if you plant anything?"

I followed the two of them out.

"Now, what for instance, do you suspect the Police to plant, as you say, in your house that would implicate you in the homicide of Mrs. Salisbury?" Abbey asked with a smile.

This was a double-edged sword. Sure, it was not unknown. Extremely rare, but not unknown. Then again, if he named something that was in his house that was detrimental to his case, and in so naming it, this added further aspersions and not the opposite, we would

be very careful in how we may unearth this incriminating evidence. He seemed to understand this point as all he did in response was to shake his head.

A Flat-top Truck idled patiently to take Pavey's silver grey car to the Forensic Vehicle Impoundments Garage.

I walked over to the Forensic guys who were working on the car. An Audi 4 two-door. A car that I would not have minded owning myself. This model was three years old. I wondered if that was pertinent in the timing of things and reminded myself to check on the car that both Salisburys drove.

That was something that hadn't come up.

"This vehicle has been broken into. A sloppy job. See here?" The young guy pointed to small chips out of the paintwork on the edge of the door at the height of the door lock. Another guy who was squirmed into the passenger side, pointed out a small smear of blood on the left-hand side of the seat base. Also, a smear on the floor mat and a drop or two on the brake pedal. The pedal itself had small bored holes in the metal. Sporty. It looked good. A small amount of blood lodged in one of those holes. It showed up under the magic light.

"It'll take us maybe until this afternoon to match the blood type. Maybe three weeks to match the DNA...at the earliest."

"He could have had blood on the pants he was wearing at the time of the murder that transferred onto the seat base when he sat into the vehicle. But...his shoe? That smear on the floor mat and the brake pedal. Transfer? He always parked the vehicle some three houses away from the Salisbury's place at Number 24. Could there be transfer after a walk of some...150 perhaps 180 metres from the scene of the crime?"

"Possible...not impossible. What was the weather like? What type of shoe was he wearing at the time? Was there distinct tread on the soles that would allow blood droplets to deposit in the cracks? Was there any evidence of blood smear or droplets at the crime scene...which may have been caused by the Perp walking in those droplets?"

"Don't know. Though I don't remember any smeared blood or signs of blood being smeared on the floor as he walked out of the house...you Mar?"

She shook her head slowly.

She was a little uncertain or she was thinking of something else.

"Arrh.... We're still waiting on the Forensics Report" I continued. "... I'll get them to check out all his shoe soles for blood residue inside the pattern cracks and any clothes showing traces of blood."

I walked back inside the dwelling to ask Forensics to pay special attention to pants and shoes. A row of trousers in Dry Cleaning plastic in a large Wardrobe didn't fill me with hope of finding residue on any pair of pants.

The same pleasant Computer geek was packing up several items.

"A Desktop, a laptop, a tablet and two smart phones. We're bound to get something from these. Something that links us back to the Salisbury woman's Laptop. Or her Smart Phone."

"Let us know, as soon as you can. Thanks." I called after him, as he exited the premises.

I picked up a Business Card that was lying on a small Hall Stand.

I flipped it over to Mar.

"Wonders will never cease. Chief Sales Rep for that Swedish firm. The one that makes all those X-Ray machines. MIR's. CAT scans. Robotic arm equipment for Operating Theatres... puts a twist on things... a direct competitor to Professor Salisbury's outfit, I would think..."

"Haven't you looked through all that stuff that Hendo collated on the suspect going way back? Pays to keep abreast of the situation you know, Ace...Industrial Spying in the guise of pillow talk, I reckon. A good money spinner on the side and one that increased his sense of worth in the world. Didn't want it ending...it may have been big bucks to him... lost control..."

"What? That more than getting back at Salisbury for taking his girl off him some twenty-five years ago, now?"

"Seems like a combination of motives to me. Let's wait and see what type of guy presents himself, when we interview him. OK?"

She had that smug look on her face knowing the end game.

CHAPTER TWENTY

We let the guy stew for close on four hours in the Holding Pens down in the Basement. We trawled through his house with a fine-tooth comb. We were in no rush to get back to the Office.

When we did stroll into the Interview Room, Pavey's shirt was bathed in sweat.

He'd be nervous as all hell...

Good! He'd be on edge.

"You do know why you are being held. Your Bail Appearance will not be until late the day after to-morrow more than likely. Two days in the Pig Sty. Not good. Can we get you some water? A Coke? Coffee?"

I nodded to the Uniform at the door.

"Plus, two for us and one for yourself, if you want. Downstairs. Not the Cafeteria's dirty tepid water. OK?"

I handed him a twenty. It was my shout.

"For the record," I continued. "It is Eleven fifty-five in the AM of the Eighteenth. Present is the accused, Jonathon Pavey of Castle Hill and Detectives Hendricks and Lind. This is in regards to the homicide bashing death of Gwyneth Salisbury also known as Gwen Kasprowicz on or about the twelfth of this month at her place of residence at 24 Flowering Gum Close, Castle Hill. Have you anything to say, Mr. Pavey?"

He gave both Mar and I a cold look.

"Yes." He finally stated forcefully. "I did not kill Kasper....Gwen Kasprowicz. And I am entitled to legal Counsel, am I not?"

"Is that what you used to call her? Kasper? Cute..."

"I have a right to legal counsel..."

"Interview terminated twelve oh-five as the Suspect requests legal representation."

I turned off the recording equipment. Stood and gathered up my files.

"Yer trying to pull my chain, Detective. It won't work. I did not kill Gwyneth. That phone call. Now. Please."

"Okay. We'll take you back down to the Cells until your Solicitor arrives..."

"I'd rather stay up here...."

"Not possible as this area is not considered a secure area.... phone?"

"Huh? You expect me to run amok or something?"

"I have no idea, but I am not willing to run the risk either way."

It was not until close to three that afternoon that I had a call from the front desk on the Ground Floor Foyer to say that Mr. Pavey's Solicitor had arrived. One Davina Davidson QC. We'd played the game and won. With the background, there was a two to one odds that she'd show and not some minion. This Case would be good news for her even if she failed to get her Client off a Murder Charge.

"Mar? She has arrived. She's down at the Foyer Counter."

"By herself or with company?"

"Don't know. Let's go and see."

We took our time getting to the Ground Floor Foyer area. Playing a game within a game.

Davina was by herself.

We both had had previous dealings with the QC.

"Davey? Good to see you again. You here representing John Pavey?"

"C'mon Joe. You know that I am. Where is my client? I hope not down in those dirty, crowded cells that can be rather frightening for some-one who has no experience in these matters? A first timer? Can we have him moved into one of your Interview Rooms?"

"They're not meant to be secure arrangements...you know that, Davey."

"C'mon, Joe. He is not going anywhere. He has shown no signs of malice or anger. He has not threatened to strike anyone and he was at home waiting for your call, I understand, when he had ample time to flee the country."

"As a major player in our investigation from the time that the Deceased was discovered, he has also had ample time to come into our Offices with Legal Representation to offer up that he was having an affair with the Victim. Yet he chose not to...Davey...before we commence...I understand that you have had previous history with your Client...and the Victim...and the Victim's distraught husband. And as a Homicide Case that has had plenty of Media coverage, I would think that the Lead Counsel with the DPP's Office will be the Prosecuting Official...I understand that you have had previous history with Jennifer Cartwright? If that is true, perhaps it would be wise that you should excuse yourself from the case. Do you think that as the proposed Lead Defence Lawyer, there may be a conflict of interest in continuing to represent John Pavey?"

The woman looked at me.

Stared through me.

Rocked from one foot to the other.

Looked away.

A smirk on her face.

She knew well enough that this was all a light-hearted game with me at the moment, holding most of the cards. The last person that I would want as Lead on the Defence table was Davey Davidson. A real fighter. Some even hinted that she had real balls!

"Dear Joseph..." She took a step closer to me. "You have been taught by the best. My husband when you were at Uni! And again, at the Police Academy. He always said that you were a shooting star. Congratulations. You have dug deep into the history of certain people, so I see. Facts that...arrh...shall we say, should be better left interred. I'll have my Junior here to-morrow morning...I'll ask you nicely...can my Client be awarded a cell on his own overnight? For old times' sake."

"Davey...anything for you. I'll see what I can do."

She spun on a heel to walk briskly from the building.

"You have history, Joe?"

"Oh, Mar! I never tell stories out of school. I'm too much the gentleman!"

I nodded my head at Abbey as we passed his door, letting him know that we would be keeping our Suspect under wraps down in the Cells for another day. Another night. We had all agreed that the evidence that we had on the man, while compelling, was circumstantial.

What we needed was an admission of guilt.

This stall was possibly one way to get it.

While we could hold a suspect of a major crime such as homicide for forty-eight hours without charge and ask questions of that suspect without legal representation being present, once the suspect was charged, he was entitled to that legal presence when-ever we wished to question him.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

With all of us crowded into the Interview Room, space was at a premium.

So much so that an additional camera and tripod had to be positioned to ensure that all participants were captured.

Only adding to the feeling of closeness.

Pavey and his Solicitor, Thomas Morton had conferred for some two hours in the Interview Room before we were permitted entry. A young, attractive Assistant took copious notes The Defence Solicitor had worked in the shadows of Davina 'Davey' Davidson for years.

Joining us was Hartlee Baro, a Senior Counsel from the DPP Office. Mar and myself.

After the usual preliminaries and introductions and a quick sip of my coffee, I began.

"That's a nice car that you've got, John. Mind if I call you John?"

"Arrh... No... Yes...that's fine." As though there was a bomb or grenade buried somewhere within my opening gambit.

"Did you buy it new? Or are you just leasing it?" Never ask a question that you don't already know the answer to. Run with it and eventually the Accused's tongue loosens up to give you tit-bits of information that you didn't know about.

"Detective? I'm sure that information you already have. Can we get on with it?"

I raised my eye-brows.

"Leasing it, then. Huh?" Thomas Graeme Morton was not going to put me off.

"No. New. I own it."

"Mmm...it's a vehicle that I've always liked. Love to have one. I've been told that it stands up and takes notice when the supercharger starts in....is that true?"

Morton shuffled his feet in a sign of impatience.

"Yeah." He gave a nervous smile. "It kicks in around two six, throwing you back in the seat..."

"You park it on the street?" Sounding incredulous.

"Yeah...."

"There's a garage at your address, isn't there?"

"Yeah...to tell you the truth, I hate backing out into the traffic. In the morning, especially. It gets a bit hectic of a morning along that road...it's easier to park on the street to obviate that morning problem."

I nodded my head, as though understanding the position.

"No Clearway restrictions there?"

"No... down further where it joins up with Grandstand Road....and Pavilion Avenue...."

Again, a nod of my head.

"You've had no troubles with attempted break-ins... some-one wanting to drive away in it?"

"No.....no, never."

"Yer lucky. Yer look after it then?"

"Oh, yes!"

"No mess. Clean as all hell inside...."

"Yeah. Spotless."

You could almost see him puffing his chest out proudly.

"So how do you explain the blood?"

"Blood?"

His Solicitor placed a calming hand on Pavey's arm. The man turned his head with a questioning look.

"Blood? What blood? There's no bloody blood inside my car..."

The Solicitor visibly tightened his hand on his Client's arm.

"Clean as a whistle." I repeated. "It looks as though some-one has tried to break into your vehicle you know? A botched job. Amateurish...minute scratches on the chrome surround of the driver's door key-way."

Pavey waited some. Letting his own blood go off the boil. He eventually gave a cut-off laugh.

"That was me. I...um.... accidentally dropped the keys inside the car as I was getting out.

Bumped my hand on the door, or something. Lost my grip of the keys but somehow triggering the locking mechanism as the keys dropped to the seat. It was raining.... I closed the door before I realised the situation. Bingo. Automatically locked. With the keys staring me in the face. I tried to force the door while I held an umbrella in one hand. It was pissing down rain."

He shook his head at the absurdity of the situation.

"Eventually came to my senses and rang the Dealership...they had some type of arrangement with the NRMA Road Service. They opened the door in a flash..."

"At your place?"

"No...at..."

He saw what had happened. How he had been led by the nose.

The NRMA had confirmed a 'call out' to unlock an Audi Sedan when the Owner had accidentally locked his keys in the car. At an address in Flowering Gum Close in Castle Hill.

"We have it recorded every time that you parked your vehicle in Flowering Gum Close, Castle Hill...funny enough, corresponding with the periods that Professor Brian Salisbury either went Interstate or Overseas on a business trip..."

"Um...arrh...I like to bush walk in the Sir Joseph Banks Nature Reserve. Opposite that street. It's beautiful."

I nodded my head slowly.

"For anywhere from several hours up to the longest period of three days. Going back around eighteen months. I cannot see you wandering around the Nature Reserve for three days...can you? Err...John? We know that the affair had been going for around three years. Off and on. Do they allow overnight camping? In the Nature Reserve?"

I didn't wait for a reply.

"What blood type are you, Mr. Pavey? We would like a DNA swab from you if that is possible."

"You'll need a Court Order before I allow my Client to submit."

"Sorry..." Mar butted in. "We are investigating a homicide. A brutal bashing homicide. Your Client has already been charged with the offence. We do not need a Court Order. His fingerprints have already been taken...and..." She lifted a sheet of paper. "...his prints have

been found on the front door. The Kitchen table. The edge of the flat screen TV in the Lounge Room. The cold-water tap, the right-hand tap in the Kitchen and quite a few places in the Master Bedroom. Including the bed-head. And in the nearby Ensuite. Shower cubicle. Shower head taps. Wash basin taps. How long were you having an affair with Mrs. Salisbury? Is the three years correct Mr. Pavey? And we'll take that DNA swab if you don't mind, Mr. Pavey."

Mar didn't wait for him to reply. She stood and quickly separated the DNA kit. Swabbed the inside of his cheek as she kept talking. Increasing the volume, pitch, and rapidity of her voice.

"Isn't it true that she wanted to end the affair? She sent you an e-mail to that effect a week prior to her sudden death. Several in fact over the weeks leading up to her homicide. You arrived at her place late on the eighth of this month. The Friday night before her death. She was killed the following Tuesday. Her husband was in Newcastle at a Symposium, from which she had just returned from. That night. You again visited her place of abode on the Sunday morning. The tenth. Was that to go bush walking in the Nature Reserve opposite...it wasn't, was it, Mr. Pavey? The gates close at 5 during winter. 7 during summer...you should have checked that fact, Mr. Pavey...Every time that Gwen had broken off the Affair, you had managed to worm your way back into her favour...you knew what strings to pull, didn't you, Mr. Pavey? You also returned early on the twelfth. To deliberately kill her as she refused your impassioned pleas of the preceding three occasions...to have her back in under your control again...under your control!"

"Yes! OK. I was having an affair with Kasper...Gwen...for about three years. But I did not kill her. I did not kill her."

His Solicitor once again asked that Pavey be quiet.

"How do you explain the blood in your car? On the front driver's seat cushion. Smear on the floor mat and some deposited inside one of those little holes on the brake pedal that make the vehicle go another ten kilometres an hour faster! How do you explain your prints, your fingerprints very clearly, around the stem of the granite object that we contend was used to kill Mrs. Salisbury? Your prints clearly indicated on the base of that object. You did not want to end the relationship that Gwen desperately wanted to get out of. You panicked. Your meal ticket to obtain various design proposals for medical equipment that earned you an enormous annual bonus from your very satisfied bosses in Stockholm would end...money that you required to ensure that your life-style could continue...you picked up the object as Mrs. Salisbury was heading towards the front door asking...pleading with you to leave. You bashed the back of her head in..."

Mar sank back into her chair.

"No. No. I couldn't do that. I loved Kasper..."

"I doubt that you know what love is, John." I interjected, as Mar angrily continued.

Pavey had trouble turning his head from Mar to I and back again.

"You were ejected, forced out of the quartet that had made up the nuclei of the embryonic firm controlled by Salisbury, Edwards, yourself and Fabiano. Pinto Fabiano. The fledging company wasn't making money but the four of you had a dream. You were...the four of you were convinced...highly confident that as a combination, you would very shortly crack it big. You were the favoured partner of Pinto Fabiano during your University days...your little Pinto, you used to call her. No? But you were emotional. All over the place. Highly unstable. Not good husband material according to those who knew you both at the time. The little Greek girl was looking for that stability. Perhaps better put, looking for that proverbial Golden Goose. She saw that more in the young Brian and not yourself. Perhaps she had always known that the Professor, not a Professor then, was far better husband material. More stable. Within a short period, she went and married Brian Salisbury, didn't she? You were inconsolable. Not even your long-standing friendship with the man could withstand your spite over your loss. The four of you were still poor so it was some twelve months before a delayed honeymoon to New Zealand could be organised. In a horrible accident, your love, the love of your life, who was stolen from you by your supposed best friend since Primary School, taken from you...that is when your unabated accusations began. That your friend, your partner in business had killed your Pinto....you had no basis for the accusations, but that didn't matter to you, did it?"

"He did...Brian did kill Pinto...I'm sure of it...when he found out that we, Pinto and I, had a short dalliance after their Wedding..."

His Solicitor pulled him back from the table. Giving him a stern look as he did so.

Mar leant back in her chair. Total disgust for the man etched on her face.

Loyalty didn't appear to be a strong suit with this guy. As long as he could manipulate people for his own coarse reasons, he was happy with his lot!

"I think that enough questions have been asked. I believe the Bail Application is scheduled for Court time to-morrow. Have you any objection to the Defence seeking Bail?"

The three of us shook our heads in unison.

"I would imagine that the Crown will request that he surrender his Passport and report once a week to his local Police Station until the Trail commences.... perhaps in about twelve to eighteen months' time." The DPP representative countered.

Mar and I now convinced of not only the guilt, but the obscene character of the man. The fact of making love to the hapless woman on her wedding night to his former best friend

and colleague was proclaimed in a boastful manner, certainly solidified that fact!

What an arse-hole, I thought to myself.

The look on Mar's face mirrored my thoughts exactly.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Our exercise regime increased exponentially as the date of the Selection Trials for the National Police Games drew nearer.

We now had a Professional Swimming Coach who had, in his earlier years, coached at the National Swimming Centre in Canberra.

Our times increased dramatically, though we reached that brick wall sooner than we had thought.

"Yer know?" Brian Sercombe admonished. "...yer not bad swimmers. Both of yers...but..."

There was that but!

"...even with a doubling of the training regime, you will not meet the minimum times for your age group...yer need to accept that you'll never be Olympic Reps but should continue with your training regime as it now stands, as it will ensure your health and well-being... sorry... there's a couple of others in the same boat in your age group... but there's also a couple who will, I think, be favourites for the two hundred and four hundred... sorry."

To add salt to the wound, our Gym Coach pulled us aside on the same day to murmur forlornly that no matter what we did, we couldn't possibly make the team... and here I thought our Half Marathon times were most competitive... at least in the dark of night or in the early morning. I guess that it is the same the world over, the successful athletes achieve their goals on the backs of those not as worthy. A bloody big pile of them!

A pyramid effect...and you know the end results of many a pyramid endeavour.

After several days promising myself to forego any further training activities as a total waste of time and dipping into the morass of self-pity, Mar rang at four one warm summer morning.

"Joe? The surf is flat so ya not going to wet yer toes this morning. How about we hit the pavement? I'm feeling it badly not participating in our former regime... as though age is

catching up fast and depression is settling over me... how about it, Dude? How about we get back on the bike and just accept the fact that we'll never climb up onto that podium to accept the gold... we weren't doing the kilometres originally for that reason, now were we?"

She had a point.

One that I could not argue with... and besides, she wasn't going to call me 'dude' and get away with it!

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The trial date came up in eleven months.

By that time, we had collated a mountain of evidence against Pavey.

The blood trace in Pavey's vehicle came back as belonging to Mrs. Salisbury.

Pavey had carried the blood from the front room of the house to his vehicle that fateful night. On his clothes as blood spatter. In his shoes.

The jury listened attentively as the case unfolded.

The circumstantial evidence rolled out in an increasingly convincing argument adding to the guilt of the man.

The fact that Pavey continued to bay his innocence to anyone who would listen, only seemed to concrete his guilt.

The Jury took just over three hours to obtain a 'guilty' verdict.

The Judge was scathing in his Sentencing Speech as to the gall of the man and the cocky attitude of innocence shown by him throughout the Trial. He showing not one iota of remorse or sorrow for his acts. His wilful, selfish, and callous acts on the two Salisbury women as a means of repaying some sort of bent revenge on his former friend and colleague displayed the true nature of the man.

Jonathan Aubrey Pavey sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment with a non-parole period of ten years, nine months.

All through the Trial, Professor Salisbury sat behind the Prosecution table. Scribbling sketches and rough descriptive notes into an exercise Book. Completely adrift of the proceedings.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

My phone rang.

"Detective Lind? Jennifer Stevenson. DPP's Office. Sorry, but could we delay that meeting at the DPP Offices for say... about two weeks? I've already spoken to DS Church. Is that OK?"

"Oh... I was so looking forward to seeing you again... um... you can soften the delay if you agree to Dinner to-morrow night? Straight from work. Say seven downstairs in your Lobby area. There's a new Restaurant that has opened down near the Quay. Would you care to join me?"

"Um... yes, I'd be delighted. Yes. See you at seven to-morrow night. Ta until then."

"Yeah. See you then."

"You bloody smoothie, Joe. What? She's around the mid-thirty mark..."

"Mar, that's not that far removed from my age! I want to try and find out what the bloody hell is going on with this Salisbury Case. Every-one's saying nothing, but that is not what my gut is telling me...I just want to know, that's all."

"And to get into her pants, if that is at all possible for an old bloke, such as yourself." I let fly with my pen. It didn't miss by much!

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

She was a tall woman.

Strong and fit for her age.

I placed her at around the late sixties.

Maybe early seventies.

Introductions all round.

I gave a special smile for that beautiful young DPP Solicitor, Jennifer Stevenson that only she and I recognised.

We hoped.

Anyone can walk in off the street into the DPP's Office and make a formal complaint on a Case that had gone before the Court, an alleged misbehaviour charge of a member of the Court or dissatisfaction of a Solicitor supposed to be acting on behalf of his Client, but fell abysmally short according to the Complainant. It may involve a lengthy investigation or a five-minute phone call, but all matters should be investigated. To be dealt with as a matter of course. Usually by the most junior of Officers.

That was a given!

That is how a retired Coroner from Christchurch in New Zealand happened to be sitting opposite me and Mar.

Her life status helped the matter to achieve a more than passing interest.

She was one of those people who conveyed an air of self-satisfaction. Quiet confidence. As though all things in her life had worked out according to the script. Alert, lively, friendly eyes. An open face. A hint of a smile behind every expression. Every word. Her words purred from her lips as though used to a life-time of discussion through a microphone. A soft New Zealand accent.

Pamela Elizabeth Adamson was her name.

I wished that I had known her in her younger days. Not in a sexual sense! But one got the hint of a very competitive woman. Highly intelligent. The type of woman who would jump in feet first at the suggestion of a round trip trek to the South Pole and back. Without flinching. Instead of a lazy holiday in the Maldives.

"I'm sorry for this." She commenced after the preliminary small talk had finished. "About the delay. A little scare on my part that put me into Hospital for a dreadful series of tests. No matter. All is well. I'm due to live for another seventy years. Perhaps I should start from the beginning....."

She leant forward to sip some tea. A tiny bite of biscuit. There was a heaped selection in the middle of the table. Better than we got in the Murder Squad Room, that's for sure!

"I started my career, and finished it, in the Coroner's Office in Christchurch. On the southern Island's east coast for those whose geography maybe a little askew. From the Coroner's Clerk to his Assistance, a position that really was a 'Coroner-in-Training', right up to District Coroner. I loved it. I've been blessed with a wonderful life. Wouldn't change a thing. There are cases that linger, snagged on some hook of grey matter in your brain. Some are there because of the human tragedy involved. Others purely because of the characters involved..."

Again, a sip of tea. A bite of biscuit.

"I've been retired now for five years. I've eventually relented to my one and only daughter's baying and sold my property just out of Christchurch. She and her wonderful husband have some acreage some kilometres out of Canterbury. He grows Sheep. Beautiful country. I'm looking forward to walks down country lanes with my dogs...and my Grandchildren. I had all my possessions held in storage until my little Grannie flat attached to the large homestead was completed. I had intended to unpack at my leisure. Not an enjoyable way to pass the time, I'm sure you all agree?"

She ran a hand through her luxuriant grey mop. Her hair just returned to that wind-blown effect

"As you can imagine, a mountain of cardboard boxes and a Newsagent's shop full of old newspaper detritus. One caught my eye. The headlines. About the Gwyneth Salisbury woman's homicide. Here in Sydney some time ago. The name rang a bell. I waited until my unpacking chores were complete with my little abode having the semblance of tidiness that I was striving for. I do not own a television much to the chagrin of my grandchildren and rarely read a newspaper or listen to the radio. If forced inside due to the weather, then reading novels, mostly autobiographical, fills my time, and listening to Gershwin is my go. Maybe a little light Jazz to restart the heart on those occasions when the weather chills it! When it is too early in the day to savour a sip of light Red..."

She gave a chuckle. It was contagious. A sip of tea. A tiny bite of biscuit.

We could be here for quite a while, I thought to myself. Sliding down in the chair trying to get more comfortable. She has nothing to do and all day to do it.
An added thought.

"So, it was sometime after that, that I began to research the Newspaper article more thoroughly. On the Internet. Wonderful, wonderful invention. What did humankind do before its inception? The thing is, I was the Coroners' Assistance at the time that Brian Salisbury's first wife was accidentally killed..."

My attention picked up. I glanced at Mar. She arched her eye-brows.

"As I have said, there are cases of long ago that continue to snag on some inner recess of your brain. A word, a smell, an aura can enliven what one had thought was long dead and buried. Such was the case with the death of Salisbury's first wife. Pinto. A rather appropriate name as it turned out. I do not know what the Coroner on the case thought, but I, as his Assistant, was tossed between an Accidental Death and an Open finding... I must stress that when-ever this case bubbled to the top of the maelstrom, I had to remind myself of one fact that a favourite Coroner, a lovely man, would often say to me. That is, *that we were not there to judge the person, but to look dispassionately at the facts. The facts are the case. They are everything.*"

She again sipped on her tea, managing to finish off the dregs of the biscuit that she had been

nibbling on. Licked the tip of her finger and picked up the crumbs from her plate as though it would be perhaps, her last meal.

"The Police the world over, are in a similar quandary. I know. I have read many a Murder Folder...I presume you know what I am referring to.... also, many a Murder Note-book. Not recommended. Not encouraged but I have never been known as one to stick rigidly to protocol and procedures. The degree of emotion, of opinion, of gut feelings often expressed in a Copper's Case Note-book when pure facts are the order of the day, is quite extraordinary. And that emotional attachment often found colouring the Murder Folder. A no-no the world over!"

"You thought that there were discrepancies? Enough to cause some argument as to the manner of death.....?" Mar asked.

Obviously wanting to hurry this discourse along.

"Yesss...and no. I would often replay the case over in my brain when-ever it bubbled to the top...understand, as a Coroner-in-Training, I had no authority... responsibility to be able to discuss my thoughts on the matter as the case evolved... and thinking about my misgivings... my apprehensiveness... years later, there was one over-riding fact that I had to accept. I did not like the man. At all... can we have a pee and top-up recess? My bladder..."

An excuse offered as a way of explaining how a half cup of tea could drain through her body in less than forty-five minutes. But what started to whir around inside my head instead of me paying attention to the delightful Jennifer Stevenson during this brief recess, was my personal take on Professor Salisbury.

Mar without even expressing it in words, felt the same.
I was sure.

We again settled with top-ups of our tea and coffee. Positioning ourselves awkwardly in the chairs around the Conference table.

The chairs not designed for sitting in longer than twenty minutes, so it seemed. Clearly, that seemed written into the design parameters for their construction. A deliberate act of piracy on the part of the DPP to not allow Clients to settle for too long.

Things to do. Not enough hours to do it in, was the DPP common complaint!

I cleared my throat and interjected before she could gather speed.

Even select first gear.

"Um...neither my partner nor me...or our boss here, have any idea on the finer details of the

accident that claimed the Professor's first wife. The only indication that we have is that it was a tragic accident and deemed as such. It was perhaps thirty months after the accident that the Insurance Company came through on a payment for Accidental Death. Quite a sizable amount from memory. Enough so it seems, for Salisbury to build a house where he still resides and to finance a major re-structuring and re-tooling of his embryonic firm to allow it to break out and become a major player in the design and supply of specialised medical equipment and paraphernalia. Could you give us a brief run-down on the accident, and the Coroner's Inquest, if you could.”?

The final comment an effort to diminish her verbal flow.

"Yes. Most certainly.... but your advice just given should spark some misgiving to the original finding of ‘Accidental Death’.... shouldn't it? You would by now, know the man as I once did."

She looked to the ceiling for some moments gathering her thoughts.

It wasn't divine intervention as we were at least fifteen floors down from the top of the building. That's a lot of concrete!

She shifted slightly in her seat. Crossed her arms. I thought this perhaps a defensive gesture as she began to speak.

"Um...They toured New Zealand for ten days in one of those hired Motor Homes. The money came from her parents in the form of a loan. Around fourteen months after they married. Indications from several sources surprised at the union. Proclaimed at the Enquiry. The nuptials, though they had known each other for quite some time. Right through University, if my memory serves me correctly. The two of them represented one half of the quartet that had set up this research and development firm in the design, making and supply of medical equipment. Salisbury was the driving force. Anyhow, the pair were camped at a popular free camping spot overlooking Lake te' Herara whom some proclaim to have the cleanest fresh water in the world. Amazing, isn't it? Stick a sign up indicating that it is the cleanest, the whitest, the widest, the tallest, etc., and it becomes an instant tourist destination. The morning of their departure from the area, Missus Pinto Salisbury was in the driving seat of the Motor Home. Brian Salisbury was to guide her backwards through the throng of other campers. Something went wrong. She chose the wrong gear. Put her foot on the accelerator and boom, she burst through a stone safety barrier, plunge down a 10 metre drop and down a steep, grassy incline, straight over a 20-metre cliff into deep water. The Motor Home disintegrated on impact with the water. Missus Salisbury drowned. Her body recovered two days later still strapped into the driver's seat that had become dislodged from its mountings. She possibly was unconscious shortly after she hit the water, as the weight of the body of the Motor Home bore down on the cabin at the moment of impact. She suffered from enormous impact injuries. Cut and dried...excuse the attempt at humour!"

She took another sip of her tea reacting to the heat of the water. She went to choose another biscuit but like a child caught raiding the biscuit tin, she timidly retracted her arm.

"Salisbury was inconsolable. Taken to the local Health Clinic in a state of shock. Within two hours he was doing what he apparently always did. Draw pictures of connecting arms. Joints. All sorts of devices that would solve the health of the world. Making notes. Not a tear. They had apparently dried up. The Coppers noted this in their Case Books as extremely disconcerting. Not normal. The example of the typical Absent Minded Professor out there in his own little world, as one Copper put it. The Inquest held some ten months later. Mr. Salisbury was flown back over to New Zealand to attend at Taxpayers' expense."

She again took a sip of tea. Ran her fingers through her hair that ignored the prompt and still stuck out everywhere.

"Now I know that in that space of time, most people come to accept the tragic accidental death of a loved one. Though usually at an Inquest when at times, gory details are examined, the weight and reality of the accident becomes too much...I stress loved ones! There is usually a tear. Perhaps sobbing. A reaction of grief in other words. Something! Anything! Mr. Salisbury sat there. He used up almost an entire Exercise Book. Scribbles. Notes. Bits of unattached drawings...have you ever seen those Da Vinci sketches? Higgledy-piggledy all over the place? That's what I understand of the situation by the genius. I doubt that he heard a single word...and when he gave evidence, he had to be led...there didn't appear to be any real recollection. Any emotional attachment...as though the accident deleted from his mind. When we say that Officers of the Law are supposed to be detached in all regard when investigating a crime... a gruesome or horrible homicide... then he, Salisbury should be used as an example of the manner of objectivity. Complete detachment."

She took another sip of her tea. Leant back in her chair as though she may have just run out of puff.

She slowly leant forward again, to continue.

"Now I'll be the Devil's Advocate. The two of them seen at the Lake's edge the afternoon before the accident. At a nearby small sandy spit. They again seen struggling up the incline with a ten-litre bucket of water. Walked about half a kilometre along the main road back to where their Motor Campervan was parked. What for? To partake, to sample a drop of water that is purported to be the cleanest, the most sterile fresh water in the World? Possibly...but a ten-litre bucket? A couple of litre bottles full of the water would have sufficed, one would think. Wouldn't you? And in a bucket...sloshing all about as they climbed the incline back up to their camping spot! Their Mobile Home had full water tanks. The Devil's Advocate..." A conspiratorial smile crossed her handsome face. "...He could have filled up the Motor-home's sink with water. The water that they had retrieved from the Lake the night before. Her lungs would have shown the purest water in them. Forced her head under the water in the sink until she died early of the morning of the accident. Any bruising caused by her

struggling would be impact wounds caused by the weight of the body of the Motor Home as it crushed around her. There would be no different characteristics showing up in the Autopsy. And any water splashed about the place? Who would care, as the Motor Home was some metres below the surface of the Lake. Remember, it took two days to retrieve her body. She could have been placed in the driver's seat, strapped in from the interior of the Van. No-one would have noticed. He is a big man. She a wisp of a girl. The steering wheel chocked by an umbrella. It would have more than likely sprung loose on impact. The motor idling over. He kicks it into first gear by leaning across her with the Driver's door open...supposedly he is there to guide her out...it should be pointed out that Brian Salisbury did most the driving. Not all, but most! Then he makes sure no one is watching...kicks down on the accelerator as he flings himself backwards. Screaming. Yelling out for his beloved to jump from the cabin as the vehicle teeters over the edge then starts its dizzying descent. She's strapped in... easy, huh? Especially if you consider the motive which only becomes known some twenty, twenty-five years later...that her former Lover...and one of the quartet of Owners of the firm way back then, admits to an affair with the young newly married Pinto...even on her wedding night...fair enough motive if, and I stress if, the new husband is aware of the situation...at the time."

There was silence. My mind started to run through the mountain of information that we had collected during the Gwyneth Salisbury homicide investigation.

"Yes, I'll go along with that...but also you have a huge Insurance Payout that not only builds him a most beautiful home in a reclusive sub-division, but there is sufficient left over to jump-start his business into international renown." Abbey reflected.

There were nods of agreement around the elliptical conference table.

"As we all know, there is a huge difference between the combative atmosphere of a Homicide Trial and the civilised air of a Coronal Inquiry. What I have just done is introduced a reasonable argument, another side to a sad event. Introducing another set of circumstances that fits the facts. Introducing Reasonable Doubt. That is not an option within the walls of a conducted Inquest. We are there purely to consider facts and whether there are sufficient facts warranting further investigations. At the time of said Inquest, there were no extenuating circumstances."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

"I should mention, I have read the entire Court proceedings into the death of Gwyneth Salisbury nee Kasprovicz. Read the Murder Book created by you two Detectives. Excellent. There can never be any charge of incompetence levelled your way. I've even read your Case Note-books and marvelled at your comments especially in regards to Professor Salisbury.

His financial worth has absolutely sky-rocketed though his need for huge sums of money seem to be minimal. Goes with the character, I'd say."

She leant forward to take another sip of tea. I reckoned that we had another ten minutes before another break was required!

"A subsidiary firm of the Professor's MA & R Inc called Medical Coverings P/L produces 85% of the natural skin tissue for the Australasian market. The skin produced in sterile conditions in Petrie Dishes. Around a 7-centimetre square of human skin that is not rejected by the body as it has been grown from DNA stranding taken from the patient. It is somewhat of a slow process and of little help to burns victims who need this second fresh dermis within hours of being burnt. Part of the problem is extracting and identifying the DNA strand. The great step to negotiate is time. Imagine if large A4 or A2 size sheets of skin could be produced that is actually the patient's skin. Within minutes. Like you copying out A4 copies of your Reports. Wonderful for burn patients as the body won't show any inclination to reject the product. Produced by a 3'D' Printer in any quantity...apparently, it is close...they already produce a proximity of the human skin...it just needs fine tuning. So that large areas can be covered without a rejection problem. Understand what I am saying. They already produce the replica of human skin in all regards down to the number of pores, the whirls, and prints...using 3 'D' printing they can produce a dermis covering of 1 mm up to 10 mm thick. Or even thicker. To attach to gloves... in the Professor's laboratories..."

I shook my head slightly. I was a little sceptical.

"Good God. There goes one hundred years of criminal investigations and the basis...the foundation of catching many a crook! Individual Fingerprint analysis. You spoke about reasonable doubt. That imbues a huge sense of reasonable doubt if the felon can prove that he has access to a 3 'D' Printer. I would imagine that like to-day, within say ten years, every house just about, will have a 3 'D' printer. Christ!"

"That's right, Detective..."

"And more to the point, you have introduced reasonable doubt into the Case against John Pavey into the killing of Gwen Salisbury..." Mar interrupted my train of thought. I was at that point, in any case.

"It may not be true. Any of it. But the Crown is not there to prove the innocence or guilt of a person who is not even on trial. They are there to prove, beyond reasonable doubt, that the person arrested for the crime and who is now standing in the dock, is guilty as charged...it is the Defence stance to introduce a Reasonable Doubt argument..."

"Yes." The woman replied, more than satisfied that she had put the pigeons into the cat house!

"Of course, that doesn't make it fact...that Pavey didn't commit the crime; this news that skin can be copied easily on a 3'D' printer. And furthermore, it does not introduce any new evidence that may be used to either appeal his sentence or repeal the verdict. Unless there is

video of the Professor actually using a 3D machine to copy a full handprint that can clearly be identified as belonging to Pavey...there is no new evidence that would instigate a new trial. There is no new evidence in this case. The man found guilty of a crime by twelve men tried and true, and sentenced to 12 on 10..." Abbey chimed in.

"Yes, true. By twelve men tried and true...and a forceful, astute, and professional Solicitor for the Crown. If the Defence had introduced that piece of information during the trial, do you think that sufficient reasonable doubt would have existed to exonerate our Mr. Pavey?"

"That is an argument that is part of the Law School Hypothetical Law Court play acting sessions...is there a real answer? Sure, if you can think fast enough on your feet. Is there a truth? It depends on what you want to believe...and where you stand."

Jennifer did not want to be left out of the discussion.

"Still..." Abbey muttered. "The truth should be based on the facts as presented..."

"The truth as presented.... half-truths and straight out fabrications can be presented as the truth. The Court Circus and the Defence is there to scoff at these untruths. As Professionals, we all know that that is not the case. We have just been given facts that were not provided to the Jury at the time. The man was supposedly found guilty on the facts presented...Just because those other truths were omitted..." Jennifer held up her hand to quieten the room. "...not intentionally, or unintentional or through no sense of incompetence or lack of discipline or knowledge. But that one simple fact by omission would indicate a completely different conclusion, for they still are facts. Not fabrications."

Jennifer was warming to the task.

The elderly New Zealander was sitting back enjoying the repartee. That slight smile on her face.

"Guilty by omission?" She added, just to keep it bubbling along. "Of course, you realise that in keeping Salisbury front and centre in your thoughts, I have manipulated your subconscious. Everyone here had some dealings with Pavey. With Salisbury. I doubt that any of us would admit to liking the Professor though that thought had been forgotten until I introduced a fact that could very well incriminate the man...not because he is necessarily guilty, but because he is "unliked". Says a lot for our preconceptions, misgivings and educated responses...an interesting experiment to some extent, hmmm?"

"Regardless, the question should be asked. Do we have the right man? And it should be stated again. Is this considered sufficient evidence, new evidence that could be used for a re-trial? Or even a repeal of the charges? I do not think so. But I think we need to investigate fully the implications that that piece of information brings to the table. I must further remind everyone here, that Pavey has not once desisted from his innocent stance in this matter...and

these discussions should not be made public or the persons privileged to this knowledge, not be increased at this stage. Let's keep it amongst ourselves, shall we?"

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

"What do you think? You two?"

I slithered further down into the chair. Shook my head. Gave it a violent scratch along the bullet crease line. Exhaled deeply.

"I don't know, Boss. We're given a scenario that seems to fit the known facts. Not proven...never likely to be proven. It neither proves guilt or administers innocence. It has nothing to do with the guilt or innocence of either Pavey or Salisbury in the homicide murder of Gwen Kasprowicz." I sat up straight. "We're entering the realm of conspiracy theory and supposition. Theories and guesses. Paranoia and whispered rumours and hearsay."

Mar glanced in my direction, not agreeing whole-heartedly with my summation, I surmised.

"That perhaps we should second guess everything that we do." Mar sarcastically answered.

"Mar, c'mon, settle down. We've both had misgivings about this case from the start. Remember?"

"Yeah. But for reason she mentioned. The old Kiwi! We've spoken about this. We realised that Salisbury was an eccentric dirt bag whom we didn't like. How-ever, that did not mean that the guy was guilty of anything more than being a dirt bag...an inattentive, dissociated dirt bag...simple as that."

"Or...because of those negative feelings towards him, we tended to go too far the other way and not investigate the one most likely... him... statistically... to have committed the murder. Always the way, right? Homicide Investigations 101! Remember?"

"Mmm...If we go down that track, Joe, we'll be chasing our tails on every investigation. It'll send us starkers!"

"I think that a new set of eyes should be used to re-investigate our initial conclusions..."

"No, Boss. No. If we did fuck-up, then we are answerable. At least let us have a second go as a face-saving exercise..."

"Face-saving? I agree with that Adamson woman. There is nothing there that would indicate disciplinary action. Your running of the entire investigation is above reproach...in fact..." He shook his head. "No... when you start to get into conspiracy theories, they'll send us all mad. OK... as I was saying, you can have the case for review on one condition, OK? That you and Mar report to me every week on that week's findings and what the intended action for the following week is. Also..."

"That's two, Abbey."

"Yeah...two...if something breaks while you're on the road, then you speak to me before you jump. Non-conditional. Non-negotiable. OK? I place these restrictions on you to protect your two sorry arses from those who are always looking for an excuse to nail the two of you...remember that, OK?"

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

"How do you want to handle this?" I asked Mar as we walked back to our desks.

"From the top. We start at the beginning and go through the investigation. Anything, anything at all, we note. We question every decision that we made considering what we now know. I'll take the Murder Book, Case Books, and everything on this side that we have. You can take the Inquest and the Trial transcripts. We then change it over. OK?"

"Sounds like a plan. Sure. I'll get us large coffees before we start."

As I was passing our illustrious Clerk, Hendo's desk, I stopped dead.

"Remember when you did that big search on John Pavey for us? Way back in history? Around two years ago, now... maybe longer. Did you get into medical stuff?"

"Yeah... but I didn't include it. Thought it would only cloud the issue. A lot of it either ancient history with his collaboration with Salisbury, or recent with his involvement with Siemens. Not a lot in between. Used three search engines..."

"OK. Good. Can you run another search on Salisbury, Professor Brian John Salisbury, with special attention on 3D printing of medical and surgical implements, skin patching? Stuff like that. Kept it tight as there will be a lot of stuff on him...just anything on 3D printing of human skin. OK?"

He nodded his head.

"When do you want it?"

"As soon as possible, but not that soon that you stay up all night compiling it. Do it here at work during those times that you can fit it in. No other way, Hendo. No burning the midnight oil."

We worked for almost four weeks going back through the records of the case. Sharing the time with three other Murder Investigations, one Inquest and two Homicide Trials.

A busy period!

We had changed tasks with me looking at all our internal records and files. Our Case Notebooks. Hendo's excellent compilation on Pavey's history from University and beyond. Noting discrepancies, omissions, and possible other solutions to pieces of information that we had come across.

Mar handling the Inquest and Trial transcripts.

When we thought that we were ready, we gathered up all the records and each of our pads on which we had scribbled our Devil's Advocate thoughts. Took them all into an empty Interview Room.

Our proposed next phase was to kick the shit out of each other. This literally could be a depressing time where we questioned our thoughts and actions in a chronological manner as the investigation unfolded.

"Me first!" Mar demanded. "We were on the scene at 10:29 AM on the morning of the twelfth. The morning of the murder. It called in at 9:58 AM of the same morning. The Professor was already at the premises. He supposedly was part of the organising committee for an International Symposium held at HUMRI. Staying at the Uni, or thereabouts for the entire time. Information which we accepted. He was on-site at his residence well before our arrival. We were coming from Parramatta to Castle Hill. He from Newcastle. The Housekeeper said that she rang Triple '0' very shortly after she arrived at the premises. Then she immediately rang Salisbury. It would have been impossible for him to arrive before us when he was supposedly coming from Newcastle..."

"Yep, I picked up on that too. Plus, he did state that the Symposium was finishing that week, and he failed to inform us that most the guests would be relocating from Newcastle to Sydney for that Harbour Cruise on the 13th. We need to know where they stayed in Sydney and when they relocated from Newcastle...and what they intended to do for the rest of that week which would then round out the three-week period. He was very vague with very little substance involved in what he told us. We sprang to that but didn't try to confirm or check anything that he did tell us. Sure, he was in shock and not powering along very well...and one must take into account his normal mannerism also. That of the typical Absent Minded Professor..."

"What cars did both Salisburys drive? We never bothered to chase that out..."

"OK. Little bites. The HUMRI person who was most involved in the accommodation arrangements for that Symposium...we talk to that person. Ditto a guest list of the Cruise. Also, a list of all their vehicles...let's sort that before we do anything else. I guess really, we initially thought that it was a Home Invasion gone wrong so there was no strong or motivating reason to expend our energy or time on whom we thought was part victim...and when it became clear to us that wasn't the case, we were honing our efforts onto one man...that narrow, pre-conceived tunnel syndrome of investigation... bad Mar. Bad! I reckon we fucked up on this one."

"In hindsight, Joe. In hindsight, everything has a slightly different appearance. A different take."

"Mmm...we didn't keep a clear head, is all I'm saying."

"By the way...what do you think Abbey was driving at? When he started to mention something about Conspiracy Theories...was it that Kiwi woman...that she has instilled a suspicion in us that really has no substance or truth..."

"...And everything that we're doing here is a total waste of time? I thought about that. Perhaps we should Google her up and check on her bona-fides..."

"Wouldn't the DPP have done that before calling us in? Check with your latest girlfriend...what was her name?"

"Jennifer. Yeah. OK. I'm seeing her to-night. I'll ask her..."

I buried my head in a folder to hide my face.

I had never mentioned...to any-one...that Jennifer Stevenson and I had become an 'item'.

We were especially secretive about our liaisons. Partly due to our connected working lives but also because she was still married. Albeit separated, thinking very seriously of divorce. Her husband a weasel little man with not an ounce of macho will or drive. He one of Sydney's leading Defence Lawyers. A mind like a trap. Perhaps that was what the attraction had been based on? I found it extremely hard to reconcile that the two of them had *even* been married for something like six years!

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

"Boss? You free?"

I filled him in on what we intended to do as the initial step of our re-investigation.

"OK. Go with it. I'll get Hendo to do a search on the woman, regardless."

It was a fine day to drive north to Newcastle and the HUMRI facilities.

We sought directions to a fourth-floor office of the Administration Building.

Building A of the Newcastle University.

A Mrs. Dianne Prezich emerged from an Office to greet us. Inviting us into her realm. Closing the door as we sat. A middle-aged ball of energy who was a little nonplussed about our investigation even when we gave what we thought was a plausible reason. That a recent verdict from 'on high' instructed us mere mortals that a case should be re-visited some twelve to twenty-four months after the event so that possible faults in the investigation can be improved upon for future cases.

She was right onto the negative evaluation.

"It's OK for those arse-holes on high who have forgotten what mere mortals go through in such a situation. To have the mud thrown up again not only is upsetting to those who knew the Victim, but also to those who knew the guilty party *and* the grieving husband having to weather the storm again, too!"

We both nodded our heads sagely. Hoping by our expressions and body language, that we thoroughly agreed with her verdict and was finding it hard to do our job. Again!

"The original team fuck-up in some small way? Forgot to cross the 'T's' in their report more than likely? Some minor technicality that could overthrow the verdict...with the guilty party walking free for no good reason...Yes? A bloody technicality that has no basis in who was guilty and who was the innocent party. That's all very well for them dragging it up again. They couldn't give a twit's whistle."

My Nanna used to say that.

The records of that Symposium took some time to drag out of the Computer.

"Huh! That was the one where we made a profit. Professor Salisbury does that every time for us. One hundred guests thereabouts who stayed on for the last week. I remember that one. Some interesting stuff. From both here and overseas..."

"When did it close up?"

"Really, the week of Gwen's death. Actually, on the Sunday beforehand. Up here. Most travelled to Sydney for the last week. Visits to Taronga, a couple of Drug Firms, several of the Professor's Factories, trips of interest around Sydney. Most guests flew out the following Saturday. That's right, we had trouble accommodating all the personnel in Sydney. There was something else on at the same time. Something big. Accommodation was at a premium. We billeted quite a few out."

"How did they all get down to Sydney. By Coach?"

"Yes...and around and about too. A couple of Coaches were kept busy all week..."

"Professor Salisbury?"

"Yes...him too...he cannot drive. Or refuses to drive. Not since his first wife died in that dreadful accident in New Zealand....and as you have noted, he can shut every other external connect out to just concentrate on what-ever is his little baby at the time. A bad habit, especially if you are driving a car.... he can just go off with the fairies, as they say."

I gave a shrug to Mar. She raised her eye-brows. The actions not lost on the woman across the desk from us.

"News to you, huh?" She responded.

"How does he get about, then?"

"He has a Driver and car...they both stayed with me while the Symposium was on. Gwen and Brian, that is. Gwen always called in to say hello when-ever she was up here on Campus. That was regular like. A lovely couple. Really lovely. All that garbage dragged up about Gwen's dalliance with John Pavey. A lot of nonsense. It made out there was some group of Intellectuals who organised wife swapping events. Not that I know of...I almost rang up one of those Radio Stations to complain...so completely false. Throwing complete absurdities about as gospel...Gwen would never allow such a thing in her house. Never. I didn't agree with the whole sordid business, but it really wasn't any of my business to stick my nose into."

"What was that, Mrs. Prezich?"

"The Professor was rather...with his mind usually elsewhere...Why and the where for is none of my business. Gwen was a young, thinking, vibrant, alive human being who adored life. Brian doted on her. Relied heavily on her, especially on these types of public displays. He was totally inadequate. Almost froze, in fact. Would prefer his wisdom teeth extracted without anaesthetic, so he once said. Though he was fine amongst friends and small Dinner Party gatherings..."

"You knew them both well?"

"Oh yes! Gwen is a cousin. We practically grew up together."

"Why didn't you come to the Police with this information?"

"What for? It wasn't the Professor who was guilty. The first I heard of it, they said that it was a Home Invasion gone wrong. The next I heard, John Pavey had been arrested..."

"Did you know Pavey?"

"No. Not really. I knew *of* him through Brian and Gwen talking about him...Brian is a brilliant man...a bit scatterbrain some would say...well...he can get rather single minded, I think they call it...which can be infuriating. Hard to put up with. But he absolutely adored Gwen. I don't know what he will do now that she is gone..."

"You hinted that Brian knew of the dalliance..."

"No, I didn't. I in fact, think that there may have been no such thing...speaking evil of the dead.... Oh....Yes. Okay....Something that I couldn't handle, but...he...arrh...not accepted...not endorsed...perhaps tacitly allowed the situation to exist...though I am sure that Gwen did not enjoy the.... feeling of cheating on Brian. I don't think she was comfortable with it, at all."

I felt that the woman would have not indulged in such gutter talk that involved her cousin and friend, and had allowed the fact of the dalliance to slip from her mind.

"Do you think that he could ever tire...become jealous...perhaps angered over the ongoing dalliance...um...affair?"

"Brian? Nah....no. He didn't have a jealous bone in his body and a feeling of inadequacy that could manifest itself into anger about the arrangement would not be in his genes..."

"You're sure of that?"

"Sure? He knew that Gwen had needs, shall we say. The usual 'love nest' was at the Hotel in the Business Park where Brian's Headquarters building is. And where John Pavey's Office is. Within spitting distance of one another. Brian's Driver would often be called to pick up Gwen after..." She turned away. Distress on her face. "Um...arrh...are we finished?"

"Can we have a print-out of the Symposium, the Hotel in Sydney where most of them stayed for that week...where the Professor stayed...the itinerary for the entire fixture.... and do you have the name and address and telephone number of Brian's Driver there, please?"

"Is there something new that makes you suspect Brian and not Pavey? That seems to me to be the turn of this conversation, Officers"

"In asking that, do you think that it is possible that the wrong man has been charged with the homicide?"

"No! God, no! Not on your life..."

The fierceness in her objection was worrying to say the least.

CHAPTER THIRTY

We rang Abbey as instructed.

Filling him in on what we had and what we intended to do for the rest of the day as we headed towards the Motorway that would head us back towards Sydney.

We wanted to interview the Driver, a Mister Brendan W. Horitz.

Also, visit the Hotel that now appeared to be the site of the great number of meetings between Gwen Salisbury and Pavey and have the City Hotel confirm Professor Salisbury's reservation. Physical proof of his attendance there would not be forthcoming due to the time span. It would have been so much better if we'd twigged to this arrangement as part of the pattern at the time of the death of the woman.

Nothing is meant to be easy.

"You're saying that their dalliance never occurred at the residence? In Castle Hill?" Abbey asked incredulously. "What about the pattern that that young Painter, the Disabled Kid, observed out of his front window every time that Salisbury went away. You did get his business itinerary for those times? Salisbury's? They did correspond with what the kid noted of the appearance of the silver-grey car, didn't they?"

"Yes...well...not all. He seemed to go away a lot more, a darn sight more in catching a cab of a morning than the frequency of the car's appearance...the silver Audi. But its appearance was always when Salisbury had taken a Cab. Always. Without fail."

"That's a relief! You had me worried then. Yeah. Do what you suggested, but take it easy especially with the Driver. Oh! And that trawl you've got Hendo doing? On the 3D Printing with the Professor's name attached...what for?"

"Because what-ever is unearthed, it will show a firm line between the Professor and possibly, a false set of fingerprints..."

"How would you connect the dots if that is the case...that in fact Medical Science can now produce gloves having other person's fingerprints embedded...where would he, presumably Salisbury that you're talking about, get a sterile set of prints of Pavey in the first place?"

And..."

"Boss, there appears to be only prints of the right hand that were lifted from inside the house. On the front door. On the bed-head. The Ensuite. The Shower cubicle. When was the last time that you? Arrh...never mind...."

"Huh...That I made love in a one-arm push-up position? The door can be easily explained. He had something in his left hand...making love...let me think about it. I'll talk it over with the missus..." He harrumphed at his attempt at smut. "Maybe he only has one arm. The other is a prosthesis, no?" He added as an after-thought. Laughter in his voice.

"Yes, Boss." I replied dead-pan.

I hung up. Slumped down in the front seat of the Unmarked.

"Find out where the Driver is, Mar. We can see him straight after Lunch time if we head back to Sydney now. I'm going to ring the Hotel."

"No, Joe. You do that. I'm going to have a chat with Forensics..."

"Mmm....what about?"

"This Case....the greater unequivocal part of the large circumstantial case that we built up, revolved around the fingerprints that we found in the house and on the weapon used. Right? Now it would appear to be the greatest part of *questionable* evidence that there is against Pavey. Right? I want a talk with some-one who knows about fingerprints...I'll have a word with Forensics while you track down our driver before we head south."

Mar pulled the vehicle over before we had reached the start of the Motorway. Hopped out of the vehicle while I stayed seated within the car to make my call.

I opened the door as I signed off.

"Good news. The Driver is at the Newcastle Campus. Drove his boss up here this morning for some meeting. He'll meet us in the Student Cafeteria in 45 minutes' time."

She held up her hand for silence. It was some time before she slipped back into the Driver's seat and asked where we were headed.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

"Right...according to a Mrs. Adriana Kemp who's considered the expert in Australasia with all things to do with fingerprints, in the last one hundred years, everything has been tried to duplicate some-one else's fingerprints to dupe the system. Even in to-day's climate of artificial skin production and 3D modelling, this has still not been achieved successfully. The reason being the oil content of the fingerprint itself and the pores. It appears that the oil content constantly changes depending on a person's health and well-being, mood, emotion and what has been consumed or not consumed in the last twenty-four hours. This is exhibited quite clearly in prints that maybe left within minutes of each other. This is more dominate in females and in nationalities that innately have oilier skin like a lot of native and Islander races and Arabian nationalities. Our case in particular, the prints retrieved showed that the same person had deposited them. Some in a very close time frame. Others of a fair age. That's all they can say on it. They still haven't been able to date fingerprints. Possibly they never will. But the prints in the Salisbury residence were deposited by a person and were not a copy or a 3D build-up replica. Over the past decade or so, there has been a huge development in DNA trace analysis from smaller and smaller samples. This has not yet been delivered to DNA trace from the oil residue of the fingerprint ridge or valley. It's not that far away...apparently...and there for the moment is the problem with 3D modelling of fingerprints. DNA, oil and sweat trace within the burls and squiggles of fingerprints. It cannot be replicated within the valleys and ridges on 3D examples as Nature does it. It sticks out like the proverbial if it is attempted. Same as a direct pattern replication without the oil or sweat content. It does not leave a natural trace...and it is easy to detect. This very point was not highlighted or brought to the attention of the Jury at the Salisbury Trial. The DPP Trial Prosecutor had her there as an Expert Witness ready to testify if the Defence bought 3D modelling of fingerprints to the attention of the Jury as a 'diverting' tactic. They didn't, as they knew what the response then would have been on the part of the Prosecution...the adage in a Court of Law. *"Know the answer to your question before you ask it."* The Forensic Technician who gave evidence at the time of the Trial on the collating of the crime scene fingerprints wasn't even challenged after she gave her evidence for the Prosecution..."

"Hang on.... if the fingerprint analysis and proof cannot be compromised, even currently, then what are we doing? It is the very thought that the fingerprints were compromised, were placed there by some replication method such as 3D modelling that has us walking down this track, isn't it?" I asked Mar.

A mixture of anger, frustration and impatience tainting my words.

My very posture.

"Chill out, Joe. Chill out. Frankly, I think that there is a more compelling reason why we are spinning our wheels on this case...and it ain't got nuttin' to do with a lil'ol' lady from Kiwiland."

"What do you mean by that, Marjory Hendricks. Do you know something that I do not

know?"

"Joe, c'mon. From the start, we felt that there was pressure exerted from on high. Not overtly, but gently. Covertly. Skilfully. There's not that many positions that can exert that type of pressure. Pressure from within the Police hierarchy tends to be the bulldozer type, doesn't it? We've felt it several times.... this was even different from State Political pressure, I reckon. That's all I'm willing to say on the subject until I can speak with some more knowledge."

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

It wasn't hard to single out the Chauffeur amongst a crowd of University students and Lecturers for even the dumbest of Murder Detectives!

He even had a cap. Wore a suit. Polished shoes!

He was small. Maybe tall for a successful jockey but small by the average size of the Australian male. An ex-jockey I would have thought. Or one who should have spent his younger days on top of a horse, in any case. Muscled. Regular gym work-outs. A ready smile. A sense of humour that always seemed to see the lighter side of things.

"Brendan Horitz?" Mar asked.

A quick smile. A ready hand-shake. He gestured for us to sit.

The general hubbub of Cafeteria noise made it difficult to hear without leaning into one another.

"How about we go outside?" I suggested. "But first, can I get a coffee and something to eat for you? And you, Mar?"

Mar followed the guy outside to a table and chair setting under a spreading Plains Tree. Dappled sunlight filtered the location. It took me some time to return with a plate of sandwiches and three coffees in a cardboard plate. Mar and he were laughing about something. The amiability died as I approach the table.

After sugaring our coffees and commenting on its surprising quality after a sip or three, we each selected a sandwich.

"I thought that I would have seen you guys long before now. At the time of the murder, perhaps?" Brendan commented. "The Detective here indicates that the case was as tight as a Mummy's wrap not requiring my input not long after Missus Ess was killed...which begs the question, why do you need my input now?"

This directed at me.

It always amazed me how a woman can be the centre of attention with a flirtatious air about, but as soon as the talk gets serious, the female is forgotten and the alpha male is square and centre. Even when the other person is a female herself. It can't be all nurture. There must be a natural inclination to pay more attention to the male when important matters are being discussed.

It's the truth!

So, call me a male chauvinist pig.

I cleared my throat. A crumb of bread seemed to be lodged in my throat. I took several gulps of coffee.

"Oh! That's hot...sorry...John Pavey is not only appealing his sentence but is seeking a re-trial due to new evidence becoming known. According to his Defence team. We know that he has bugged all and we do not want to waste the time and expense on a new trial. We want to make sure that every avenue...every aspect...every direction is covered. We do not want the arse-hole escaping or having a lesser sentence induced due to a technicality...and any new evidence that the Defence claim to have, answered as quickly as possible before the Court. Before a re-trial is called..."

Horitz shook his head gravely.

"Fair enough." He murmured. This seemed to work better than anything else that we'd tried. We'd run with it in future.

I looked around at the number of young girls hanging about in groups. Or paired up with some pimply goof. I said as much, adding that they were not this young when I had been attending

"Yeah...." The little guy commented. "As each day goes by, they seem to get younger and younger...for old blokes like us." An instant smile to help cool what I took as sarcasm. He was getting on my wrong side already!

Mar chuckled into her sandwich.

"How long have you been Professor Salisbury's chauffeur?" I asked.

Figuring enough small talk had occurred.

He looked about him. Enjoying the view. I figured a perve. A smarmy little man.

"Um...not long after he and Gwen married. About two years after the firm sky-rocketed into the stratosphere. About four, maybe closer to five years."

"Did you drive Gwen Salisbury around much?"

"Not in the beginning. She had her own car back then. But as time went on, more and more, I guess I was more at her disposal than the Professor's. If there was a conflict, it was he who would order a Cab for himself."

That point jog something from my brain. The cab frequency meant that the Professor was perhaps not going anywhere, but was a consequence of Gwen Salisbury requiring a lift. I wasn't too sure whether this was a pertinent point in the scale of things, but a scribbled note in my Murder Note Book would possible cause me to investigate the point later, if necessary.

"Were you aware of the relationship between Mrs. Salisbury and John Pavey?"

"Oh yes! From the start.... or not long after it started."

"Did you know if the Professor was aware of it?"

"Yes. He was. From the start."

"Doesn't that seem a little strange. Here is a man who supposedly had an affair with the first wife. Whether the Professor knew about that arrangement or not, his first wife was certainly Pavey's girl right through University. And upon her death, Pavey screams on high that the Professor had killed her. This claim causing bad blood between the two long term friends with Pavey eventually kicked out of the firm by the other two Stake-holders. Edwards and Salisbury. Bad blood. Yet he allows his second wife to have a long-term affair with the same man. Isn't that somewhat strange?"

"When you put it so cut and dry like that...then yes. But if you knew the two...the three of them...then you may be able to understand. I wasn't around when all that history took place...so I shouldn't really say..."

"No....you, it would seem, are in a more personal position than just about any-one else..."
Mar countered.

A conciliatory tone in her voice. I gave her a look. Raised my eye-brows.

The little guy nodded his head. Looked at the plate now devoid of sandwiches. Perhaps he hadn't had his fill, I thought.

"Umm.... Jeez...The Professor...yeah...look, he is one strange animal...could be quite

annoying with his aloof...no... not that...almost a non-involved sort of air. Complete detachment...some people would say. Almost complete ignorance of what was going on around him unless it involves something about his work. But that is not how the guy really is. That was purely his public persona."

"You saying that that reserved, reticent appearance was all an act?!" I responded somewhat aghast.

The Driver shook his head. Looked about him frustratingly.

"No...no. Yes, he was aloof. At times, downright rude...but there was another side to him. With people that he knew well."

"But you're speaking as a loyal employee."

"Granted. Yeah. In a way. But he doesn't have a jealous or spiteful bone in his body. It wasn't he who wanted Pavey gone from the Company after Pavey's outbursts...the Professor couldn't care less about that. All he saw was a life-time friend. Understandably upset. Whether it was right or wrong. He required a friend's support, not his cold shoulder. And he was an important cog in the wheel that would eventually lead to success. It was on the insistent of Edwards that the Professor eventually relented and got rid of Pavey...it actually required the two remaining major Shareholders to be in sync on the matter...that was how the Firm's constitution was originally drawn up when they were at University together. Edwards was adamant about bad press effecting the firm, then only a fledging concern I might add...after, the Professor had it inserted into Pavey's Clauses of Severance agreement with a very profitable severance allowance that included a 25% share of any moneys made from those patents that the quartet had and continued to hold when Pavey had been in the firm...I suspect that it still applies."

"That's very generous. Pavey wanted more though, with several Law suits almost sending the firm under. A Keep Quite outlay, wouldn't you say?"

"No...as I said, the Professor wasn't like that at all...and when the...umm.... problem arose with Gwen and he...he couldn't have been more pleased that Pavey and Gwen had some electricity between themselves...I know that is hard to comprehend...but I say again, the Professor is incapable of a negative feeling of anger or jealousy and sees only the good in people. Truly."

Both Mar and I sat there trying to understand the situation.

It was well beyond me.

"You may find this hard to believe...this once every six weeks, two months..."

"Not more frequent?"

"No... I either picked Gwen up or dropped her off...at the Rarda...the five-star Hotel within the Business Park. The Professor would occasionally have an evening meal with Gwen after the two of them had finished...with Pavey also enjoying the largesse of The Professor on occasion...a bit sick to even me...but as the two long term friends that they were...all this organised so that I could drive the two of them home together instead of me sitting around for half the night...that sometime happened too...but not as much. A stone's throw from the three of their work addresses...six to eight-week cycle thereabouts...and Gwen, yes, she wanted it ended. Guilt. Very guilty. That's why. It got too much for her...as simple as that, so Pavey killed her."

"Gwen wanted it ended. Do you know what Pavey's response was to that?"

"I've already told you..."

"No...this attempt of termination of the relationship by Gwen must have been going on for some time apparently..."

"Oh! He wanted to increase the frequency...he...according to Gwen...he was very upset. I really don't know whether there was any ulterior motive on his side of the relationship. I always regarded him as the unpaid Gigolo at Gwen's beck and call...what he got out of it emotionally, I don't know. But he was not in favour of it ending, that's for sure. Um...I usually drove Gwen home after work. She was a more regular person as far as knocking off at a consistent time and at a more regular hour than the Professor...but I suppose I started driving her home on a regular basis about six...maybe ten months prior to her death. There was a couple of run-ins with Pavey. He'd be waiting for her. Fly off the handle. I'd have to frog-march him to his car and tell him to piss off. He usually parked his car a couple of houses up which always amused me. He had a silver Audi. Not the most successful car to hide on the street."

"These altercations going back ten months?" I had trouble imagining this little guy frog-marching any-one, let alone some-one of the stature of Pavey.

"Yeah...about..."

"She had wanted to end it way back then?"

"Even before that. There was a bit of off and on. Off and on. He'd come crying. Knew what buttons to press with her."

"Would you pick her up from home of a morning to take her to work, also?"

"Yeah...that was a bit hard...one or the other...very rarely both together. The Professor was somewhat unreliable with his working hours...especially if Gwen ever went Interstate.

Overseas. He'd sleep on the R&D floor. He had a camp stretcher set up in a little room there. He could work three days straight. When he got in one of those moods, which was when Gwen wasn't around usually, he could work for two or three days without sleeping. Totally engrossed."

"Did the Professor go overseas a lot?"

"No. Not that often. Rarely actually. Usually Edwards or Canton from R&D or Prentis went. I think that the Professor only went if Gwen went with him...usually an overseas trip involved a fair bit of socialising which the Professor was hopeless at. Gwen was brilliant. A true Trooper."

"Did Gwen ever entertain Pavey....or anyone else at home? At the Castle Hill address?"

"In that manner, no. No. Definitely not. That wasn't an option for her. They used to have Dinner parties. Small in numbers. Usually a visiting Official wanting to purchase goods. Even then, Edwards was the usual "go to" for that even. Though I'd deliver and return several persons who were overseas buyers, customers, or reps to small dinner functions that Gwen and Brian would host. At their place at Castle Hill....Not a lot.... but some."

"Indispensable Edwards, heh?"

"You could say that."

"Overnight at that Hotel? Their dalliances?"

"No. Definitely not. My Log books will back that up. Either before she went to work or after work. That was the extent of it. Maybe the latest episode was about ten one night. That's it, as far as I can recall."

"Never when the Professor went O.S? Or Interstate?"

"Nope...never."

"Can you get those Log Books to us?"

"Yeah...perhaps to-morrow...where's your Office?"

Mar handed him one of her calling cards. He shook his head. A look passed between the two of them.

"Yep. No worries?"

"You usually sit around a fair bit. What do you do to while away the hours?"

"Use a Gym. Practise. I'm black belt. A Master in unarmed combat. Armed too. It helps to practise. Maybe a bit of running...push-ups if there's nothing close by...read some, sometimes, though I'm not what you'd call a ferocious reader."

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

"How the other half live. It never fails to astound me."

"Do you want to do the Rarda this afternoon?"

"Yes. It's not that far out of our way. We can fit it in and then a quick stop at the Office to fill in Abbey. What do you reckon?"

"Sounds like a plan to me."

She hit the siren going down the Motorway.

"What's your hurry? You got a night out, to-night?"

"Yep. With a little bloke...who's a ball of hard muscle!"

"Mar... bloody hell...he was an eggshell...what about our run?"

"We'll do laps to-morrow morning. I'll pick you up half an hour earlier than usual."

"Just because we missed out on that WA Police Games do, doesn't mean that we have to let off with our exercise regime..."

"I should get sufficient to-night...."

"Jeezus, Mar. Jeezus! I don't want to know."

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

"I thought that you intended going to that Business Park and the Rarda Hotel?"

I looked across at Mar.

She had that look on her face. As we hit the end of the Motorway, she turned off the siren.

For the entire trip down the Motorway, she had not said a word. The drowning sound of the siren had given me one hell of a head-ache.

She headed towards the Office.

"Remember in the Trial transcript? Jennifer Stevenson had forcefully stated to Pavey, when he was in the Witness Box, that he had entered the premises between one and three in the morning and killed Gwyneth Salisbury by bashing her head in. Savagely! He replied just as forcefully No. To which she had quickly replied, *'No? Is that no, to ever entering the premises? No? To entering at that time of the morning or No? To bashing in Gwyneth Salisbury's head?'* There were some moments before he quietly stated that he had not entered the house between one and three in the morning and bashed Gwen's head in."

"So?" I asked.

"Your lovely, little, latest friend failed to follow up. Pavey had not replied to all the questions. He failed to answer whether he had ever entered the premises."

"Mar. They were good friends at one time. It is safe to assume that he did enter the premises at some stage during their relationship...No. That's not right."

I thought about it for some moments.

"Salisbury had the house built with the money from his first wife's death. The insurance money. By that stage, Pavey was in purgatory as far as the remaining Shareholders of the firm were concerned...so? So what? He didn't want to perjure himself."

"That's right. Which means that he had been inside the house...he had keys! And this is reinforced with his fingerprints found about through the joint."

"OK...I'll go along with that, though there's no evidence to substantiate that statement...that he had a set of house keys."

"Yes, there is...how else could you explain his fingerprints all over the place...especially on taps in the Ensuite...the Kitchen...one tap only...in the shower stall...on the bed-head...one hand! He had to have a set of house keys. Not as we once suspected, that had been placed there during coitus...that would be bloody hard for even a fit young man such as yourself to do...I doubt that Pavey had it in him to one arm during ejaculation!"

I thought about what she had just said...I doubted that I could do a one arm push-up let alone during coitus. I must try it with Jennifer one time. A little experiment...she would understand if I informed her of my reasons...and accept it as I collapsed on top of her. I smiled to myself.

"Joe? You with me, boy? I seemed to have lost you there for a bit."

I had to think where we were with the conversation. It took some moments for me to pick up the crumbs...

"If you can say that, then it is just as easy to believe that Salisbury had keys to Pavey's home. His car...turn the whole thing around."

"That makes Salisbury one mean mother-fucker with a lot of patience."

"That is how everyone basically describes him. A very patient man. Substitute all those wonderful words to describe the man with conniving, cold-hearted, uncomplaining, single-mindedness...how does one kill the lover of your first wife? How? By manipulating his second wife into a relationship with the man knowing that he will be blamed for the death of the second wife when it does occur."

"He has already killed the first wife for having an affair with his best friend...the same guy I might add, who kind of heightens the suspicion around him...not Pavey...but he got away with it...so how does he kill the ex-best friend and/or the second wife who walks into a relationship with him.... that's what the old girl from New Zealand wanted us to concentrate on. Not the business with the fingerprints!"

"Yep...well, there's some balance to the theory."

"Mmm....though you always come up with these theories out of left field that really screw up a simple explanation!"

"Don't get catty on me, dear boy. I can hear it in your voice. Remember when we were standing near the door of the murder house. The weapon was on the floor all wrapped up in an Evidence Bag? I picked it up and wondered aloud that a woman couldn't have committed the crime because of the weight of the bloody thing. You did your usual charade to show how it was done. Picking the object from the shelving....as Gwen is walking passed you to go to the front door to ask you to leave...where did the object come from? I'm sure not from the shelving. I'd like to see some Crime Scene photographs of that.... of those shelving sections, as I doubt that the object came from any of them. There wasn't enough room and the thing...you liked it from memory...didn't go with anything else on those shelves. Remember that?"

"Mmm...." No, I didn't, but I was not about to let on.

"Salisbury entered Pavey's home by key. Stole that object. Could have been some time before the murder. Even years perhaps. Who's fingerprints? Pavey's of course...had his car key. Opened the door to drop in some smudges of blood..."

"What about Pavey's fingerprints elsewhere in the house?"

"Mmm...." She didn't have an answer for that, but wasn't about to tell me so.

"Another thing!" She suddenly erupted. "We had always presumed that when-ever Salisbury left to go overseas or Interstate, Pavey was there straight away to keep Gwen company in her own home. We've had two confirming statements this day that nullifies those notions. We know that he parked his vehicle for anywhere between a couple of hours to three days I think the maximum period was for...outside Number 18. What did he do for that period? Break into number 24 to smell Gwen's underwear? Sleep in her bed to smell her? We know that he did something in that bed...I do not want to think about it...we know that he touched the TV, turned the cold water tap on in the Kitchen...even had a shower where he could smell the scent of her...and that must have been done very shortly one would think, before the homicide...as they were clear prints...what was he doing?"

"I really don't want to think about it, either...but he shows all the signs of one sick, obsessive fellow who was quite capable of murdering her if she continued with her want to end the Affair....we've just given the guy more plausibility for the crime that he is in jail for!"

"Well, if that is the way it falls, then it falls that way. We've just got to check our investigative prowess in the matter."

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

Mar quickly slumped into her chair. Worked her fingers through her hair and stretched.

Twisted around to the huge pile of Folders and Ringed Binders that formed three separate towers. She picked up a large cardboard container clearly marked 'Crime Scene Photographs'. Taken Tuesday 12 November 2012 at the residence of Professor Brian Salisbury/Gwyneth Salisbury. Possible Homicide.

She emptied the contents onto her desk and quickly rifled through the thousands of shots. Most were on contact sheets of A4. There was perhaps a hundred A4 close-up shots. The close-up shots of Gwen Salisbury's body and head still had an effect on both of us.

"I wonder what-ever happened to that ensemble. I reckon that I could do with that to-night."

She had a thin smile on her lips. I knew that she was trying to lighten the mood after we had been reminded of the Crime scene again.

"There. Those ones. There. The shelving couldn't possible accommodate the murder weapon. There wasn't enough room. Look!"

She laid out about half a dozen shots. The shelving in the Lounge but adjacent to the opening out into the large Hallway. Some shots clearly had the shelving sections in mid-frame or thereabouts. It was bloody obvious that the weapon had not come from that unit as we had theorised at the time.

I stood up and mentally sailed into the middle distance. Blocking everything out. Taking myself back to the room. Walking slowly through it. Seeing everything. It was neat. Tidy. Clean. Everything in its place and a place for everything, as my Nanna used to say.

I realised that I had stopped calling her Mum. Or Mother. That is how I had known her all my life. As my mother. It wasn't until after her death that in going through a mountain of paperwork, I had found out the truth. I had never known my father up until about a year ago, and I had never known my real mother. She was my Nanna's daughter.

You can live your life and take as gospel the truth that you are fed. Believing in it. Even when the real facts are exposed, it takes some time to digest. To mull over. To accept. I guess there are people who never really accept the true truth but live with a kind of truth that is most comfortable for them.

"Joe? Joe? Come back, boy. Yer with me? I gotta go. Can you fill Abbey in on what we have found out to-day? Let him know what we intend to do to-morrow. I'll pick you up half an hour early. For that morning swim that we keep missing out on. OK?"

I didn't have a clue on our intentions for the morrow. Not to worry, it wasn't that far away.

She'd rushed from the Murder Squad Room before I realised that I had lost my ride home. It was a bugger by Public Transport. I didn't have a choice though as my daily lift had left without me. Eager to escape because she had a man taking her out to-night.

What an unthoughtful bitch, I thought to myself as I walked towards Abbey's Office.

I guess I should have felt some sort of pleasure for my partner. At her obvious show of happiness, enthusiasm, and expectation. Instead of thinking of her as that unthoughtful bitch.

It was me who should be so categorised!

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

"Remember that business about the computers?" Mar asked as she again rifled through the pile of Crime Scene Photographs. "That dude supposing that it had been the Professor who had been the expert? Who had set up the accounts and all that business about gate-ways and

passwords? Remember? There's no evidence to suggest that is the case. Just that it was the same person who set it all up for the four computers...and it was the Professor's computer that had some naughty photos of his missus..."

"Mar, that ain't that unusual. You know that."

"Let me talk for one moment, will you? That's not what I'm getting at...here we are, I think."

She picked up an A4 contact sheet of 35mm sized colour shots. "This is it. I'm sure." She muttered as she held the sheet close to her eyes. "Can we get a blow-up of this series of shots? We'll get Hendo to work on it..."

Neither I nor Marge had attended the newly introduced Computer Classes that taught you the wonders, the intricacies of these new-fangled machines.

"Not necessary, Mar. The Flash Drive. Don't forget to sign it out...and back in."

We fiddled around with the Flash Drive for some time until we had the series of photos that we wanted. Then we were snookered, having to call on Hendo's expertise after all.

"Photoshop, guys. You've gotta do a Course on it. It is a wonderful tool. True!"

Hendo sat and flew his fingers across the keyboard of my computer.

"There it is, Joe...and the keys. How can we compare them with the photocopy of the keys that Pavey surrendered when he was arrested?"

Hendo looked back at both of us and shook his head in bewilderment.

"....and you guys are supposed to be up there with the best Dees in the Squad. God help us!"

Hendo again flew over the keyboards with images seeming to moved, rotated, and placed beside like images.

I bent down to the screen to peer at the images seeming to be hovering in space.

"We got him Mar. We got him. The silly bugger being too neat. It was against his very nature not to place things in the spot that God intended for them. Bless his cotton socks!"

"We should re-interview Pavey. See what he might say about the whole bloody thing. To think that he was willing to go that far...shit...that's obsessional!"

I sat back down, clasped my hands behind my head and placed my feet up on the desk. A smile across my dial.

"We've done it, Joe. We have got the bastard..."

"How did you go last night?" I asked as she sat facing me. A smug look on her face. It was a good feeling in completing a Case successfully, even if we had to take two bites at it.

"A good meal...."

I gestured with my hands for more information.

"Don't ask, Joseph Lind. Don't go there, huh?"

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

"Good grief. It's a little early for door knocking, isn't it?"

"Not if you want to catch some-one unexpectedly." I quickly retorted.

I thought I saw the eyes move oh, so slightly. Those snake eyes again gauging the distance from he to the danger zone.

How close was it!

"Can we come in?" Mar asked. "Even though it's really light, drizzly, mist-like rain, we're still getting wet."

The Professor opened the door wider.

"I'm just starting some breakfast. Would you care for a coffee? A piece of toast? How can I help you? What are you doing here, and so early?"

We stepped over the threshold into his large Hallway. The length of the hallway had two rows of shelving down both walls. On it were all the Awards and medals that had been given to the Professor since he had commenced the firm.

His baby.

"Everything in its place and a place for everything." I commented as I pretended to wonder at the various shaped Awards. Skipped over a few with my hand. Went to pick up another. The Professor was hovering in the background displaying a rare sign of nerves

"Sorry," I muttered. "You'd prefer that I leave these alone?"

"It's just that they're irreplaceable. They represent my entire working effort. My career....."

"Why aren't they at your Office? Wouldn't that be a safer place for all of them? I envisage a very large glass cube just hovering there in the Foyer, filled with all these impressive Awards...you're obviously very proud of them...look at that. Isn't that the same one that was the murder weapon that Pavey used on your late wife?"

I picked it up. The granite base was some 25 centimetres' square. Around 3 centimetres thick. It lifted it out of a black satin trimmed timber 'base' container. The thick glass tube that suspended the solid granite cube and through which the tube passed before curling to the centre of the granite base, had been broken.

"Um...be very careful of that. The glass tube was broken. It is now rather weak. I tried to get a replacement but these were one off things....and yes, Pavey, Edwards and I received one from a firm called AGA Specialised Medical Equipment Manufactures. Before we could afford to tool our own equipment, that Company in the US...arrh....manufactured our first lot, for some time, of our break-through apparatus...a robotic arm used in Micro-Surgery. It was a big seller. That award was for design excellence..."

"It deserves a Design Award of its own, I reckon." I commented.

I turned it over a couple of times just to make him more nervous. It worked. I placed it back into its timber base stand to his audible sigh of relief. I went to move on, but came back to it again. I picked it up again.

"It's bloody heavy! How did you break it?"

"I didn't. My House-keeper did as she was cleaning around the surfaces. She was inconsolable. Accidents happen...."

"That Candice Holgate? She still with you? After all this time? And after breaking such a rare thing of beauty....it seems strange that she could break the thing quite easily while cleaning it, yet.... it's replica wasn't broken when used to bash your wife's head in. Strange, huh?"

I lifted the heavy granite object up towards the light.

"The granite isn't as shiny as what Pavey's was from memory. What do you use to clean it? I hope not Bleach....or Vinegar? They're weak acids. They eat into the polished surface. That stuff may get rid of blood and stuff like that, but it sure corrodes the shine away over time."

I placed the Award roughly back onto the base material.

"You should tell Candice that...she should know, shouldn't she? And you still have blood remains on the material...why would Pavey carry his Award all the way from his place to use in the homicide? Makes you wonder, huh?" An afterthought just to see the reaction from him. There was none! He did take a second glance at it as he followed quickly behind us.

I walked towards the Kitchen, continuing to natter in a friendly manner.

"It's amazing Professor, what happens when a capital crime is committed. It's just as well the Forensic Photographer does not pay for the film and development costs...that doesn't happen anymore now, does it? What with digital photography. The guy just snaps away madly as though his life depends on it. The date and time permanently embedded into the shot. For us, he may only enlarge something like 10% of the total number of photographs that he takes. The rest on contact paper. Bloody hard to see any detail in those little shots, heh? But the remainder are there for ever or when we like to re-assess a situation...in a computer 'C' drive. A back-up disc and for extra safety, a flash drive."

He looked at me as we sat at his Kitchen table. Again, that look of detachment. He not really connecting the dots of what I was saying.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

We sat at the small Kitchen table. A large bowl of fruit centred on its ancient surface.

"I'll get you a coffee? A piece of toast? Yes?"

Both Mar and I nodded our agreement.

"What's this all about, Detectives? You come barging into my house at some ungodly hour of the morning. Just on light it is...." He added as he peered out the window.

"Professor.... We didn't barge into your house. You opened the door wide and beckoned us in. Out of the rain.... Invited us in for coffee and toast...."

"OK. OK. All right. But you're talking in riddles." The tone was getting to the nervous, excited pitch. "...About Gwen's murder. A man's been charged, found guilty and sentenced. He is sitting in Prison right this minute patiently wiling away a twelve-year sentence..."

"I'm sorry, Professor. John Pavey was released about half an hour ago, now."

He turned to face me. An astonished look on his face.

"What!!! Bullshit! Why?"

"Evidence has become known that clearly exonerates him of the crime. We are in the throes of commencing a new investigation...."

The man sat heavily into a straight-backed kitchen chair. He stared at the surface of the table gathering his thoughts. The sound of the toast ejecting echoed heavily around the room. The Professor seemed to have not heard.

"I'll get the toast...and the coffee. Professor? A top-up?" Mar volunteered.

"Pinto. Your first wife? She was the girl that everyone shared. Isn't that right. Do you remember Marilyn Sartar? Mary O'Brien? Juanita Forez? There's something like another half dozen girls who we've contacted. At some stage, you and Pavey tried to coerce them into your little threesome. With Pinto. Even a well-known QC and a high-ranking DPP Prosecutor. You and Pavey. Pinto had basically enough of the shenanigans before your courses were completed. Figured that the best defence was to marry you. Thought that it would stop. But it seems that the two of you, Pavey and yourself, thought otherwise. Raping her while she still had her wedding dress on. She figured that she was doomed even though she was somewhat afraid of what may happen if she threatened to leave you. She put up with it for a while. Perhaps a holiday away together? She got the money as a loan from her parents. A couple of weeks by yourselves would do the trick. Where you could listen to her objections on what seemed to be a life of perversion.... you hatched a full-proof scheme to murder her when she didn't show sense...when she failed to see the reason of your argument...an accident....so it was handed down at the Inquest."

I scratched my nose and took the offered toast to spread Vegemite into a slurry with the melting butter. Marge looked at my labour as though I was some errant child.

I took a bite of toast. Washed it down with a gulp of coffee.

"It near worked, except for a former University Lecturer who eventually came forward. He is dying of Cancer. Wanted to right the wrongs. Only weeks ago, actually. Pinto had confided in him that she was scared that you would kill her in the end. He was her Tutor at the time..."

The guy seemed to have reverted to a more familiar role that was missing up until then.

The detached, Absent Minded Professor came to the fore.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

There was a knock at the door.

He looked absently at the wall clock.

"It's a little early for my Driver. I asked him to pick me up at eight. On the dot!"

"That's OK. Your Driver won't be coming. We've cancelled his day's responsibilities. It more than likely is the Forensic Team. At our behest. I'll get the door." Mar informed the man.

She placed the toast back on her plate. A mug of coffee steaming on the table in front of her position.

"You can get your own butter and Vegemite. I'm not your Keeper." She said over her shoulder as she headed out of the Kitchen.

I waited until she again sat at the table.

She nodded her head.

I had not said a word.

Either had the Professor.

"As I mentioned before, Professor. Everything in its place, and a place for everything. Your House-keeper had mentioned around two years ago, while we were investigating your wife's tragic homicide, that when she had commenced working for you, you were unmarried. With a single bloke's reverence to just throw stuff everywhere. You improved a bit when you married Gwyneth but it was Candice who tidied up this place. Cleaned it. Polished it. Did the washing. Hung the clothes out. Ironed. Vacuumed. Made sure those items that needed Dry-Cleaning were dropped off and picked up. It was her hard work that made this place look like an exhibition house. A place for everything. She was proud of her endeavours. Looking after two of the World's famous Research members. It was she who had said that she doubted that your wife was having an affair, because if she was, as the Maid, she would have known straight away. There was nothing to indicate that your wife was being unfaithful. But every-one seemed to know...except for Candice...about the on again, off again dalliance that your wife was having with Pavey. This was all your manipulation...total control over the two people who loved you more than life itself, so it seems. You had created a monster. You didn't believe your wife when she tried to tell you...that she didn't want to continue with the dalliance that you coaxed her into. After all, you had known him since Kindergarten basically. You loved him like no other. Excuses were easy for you when he mucked up. Played about...you placed everything back on him...on Pavey!"

I took a bite of toast. A gulp of coffee. We could hear the Forensic guys under the floor. I nodded at Mar to take over.

"Your House-keeper didn't break that heavy Award piece. We know that."

She pulled some photographs from a folder and spun them towards the guy who was slowly looking older by the minute.

"Notice the date. Embedded into the photograph. The morning of your wife's murder...that morning some hours after the act. The granite base of that award piece is in the wooden base container. It's clear glass solid tube has been broken, yes? The smaller granite cube is actually sitting on the base and not as intended, hovering, or suspended over the base by the glass tube. Easy to miss when there is so much to take in. The Forensic guys have just spotted for blood. Given me the nod that there is blood trace. Of course, there is none on the granite base, not now after countless bleach attacks to remove it all...but there is transfer on the black material. Even money on it matching your wife's blood...want to go with me?"

The Professor mumbled.

"Sorry Sir?"

"So? What does that prove?"

CHAPTER FORTY

"You know. You have been one lucky man. You made that comment to us, remember? To have two wives who absolutely adored you. Worshipped your intellect. Your very being. And Pavey who also worshipped you. The very ground you walked. Yet you wasted it all...Pavey would have taken the fall for you for his life-time...except you never made the effort to visit him in Prison. Not once! That really hurt the man. I think that made him realise what a selfish, manipulative bastard you really are. It wasn't Pavey who was pleading with Kasper.... Gwen...to continually return to him. It was you begging her to return to the relationship for your sake...for your perverted reasons."

"When did you begin to have homosexual activities with Pavey?" I butted in.

"Before we both could ejaculate...it felt good. I guess around ten. Maybe eleven."

"Pavey wasn't ready for what awaited him in Prison. He has been raped a fair few times. He even has tried suicide...you didn't even know, did you? Your lifetime lover and friend...there are some interesting photographs that have emerged during your hectic Uni days...photos of orgy-like proportions...most, it would seem, involve you and Pavey...sometimes with Pinto....always together amongst the writhing mass of bodies...something that in my times at Uni I was never privy to...unfortunately."

A tone of slight disappointment in my voice. A soft smirk on my face.

Salisbury didn't even stir. Completely unaffected by the comments.

"We provided him with a Minder. A chap whom he could confide in... protected him somewhat from the animals lurking...one of the things that really concerned us was the apparent appearance of Pavey when-ever you went O.S. But you hardly ever did, did you? Go O.S....and never without Kasper...that was your favourite name for her, wasn't it? Not Pavey's. It was Gwen who had the regular O.S. trips...Brendan, your Driver, used to drive her to the Airport early in the morning. On those occasions, you would catch a cab into work. That worried us when we realised the situation...because what did Pavey do for that time that he appeared to be here? You were, still around. His car certainly was parked for hours or days up the road...Kasper never saw it, did she? When Brendan drove her, he always, always went down the road...a most opportune time for you and Pavey to get together undisturbed...except on those days that the cleaning was done...but they could be easily re-scheduled without too much problem, eh?"

Mar shifted in her chair. Finished off her toast. Slurped the last of her coffee. Looked blandly back at the old bloke sitting opposite her. He seemed to drift in and out of his little world.

"Your house is a mass of hidden cameras, isn't it? Not hard for a person like you to fit...but where was all the recording equipment. Pavey spilt it to his Cell Mate only months ago. We've been under the house. Had a look. Cosy. Even a hammock bed. A toilet with the plumbing easily accessible. A bit dank. Cold. Several Laptops are still there...you couldn't bring yourself to retrieve them could you. Then you would have to acknowledge her death...that Kasper was dead...Pavey used to come up here into the house regular like. To have a shower. To sleep in Kasper's bed. Yours was of no use. A Camp Stretcher in the musty third bedroom. It was worse than the basement. Maybe Pavey could smell Gwen's body odour.... the reason for lying asleep on her bed. It was a bit obsessive...the reason for the single right hand prints on the bed head. Tidying up the bed. He occasionally would grab that bed head. I know that I do...sometimes when you're straightening out the bed linen."

Salisbury sat through this monologue with a slight smirk on his face. The eyes snake-like. Gauging the distance.

I sipped on my coffee.

"Excellent stuff. The same as at your Office. Excellent." I wanted to keep him off-balance.

I spun a series of photographs across the table to him.

"Notice the date. And time on those shots."

Salisbury peered at the photos. Looked up at me. Confusion written across his face. He gave a shrug and placed each shot carefully back on the table to form a neat stack.

"Keys...." I commented deadpan. "A place for everything, heh Salisbury? That set hanging there...Audi car keys...with a couple of house keys."

I pointed them out to him with the butter knife.

"They match a set taken from Pavey when he was arrested. The keys photocopied so that there was evidence of what keys were taken from his person. Not something that we do regularly but lucky enough in this situation...they match those photographed on your key hooks above the side of the Fridge over there..." I nodded towards the side of the Fridge. "...Candice found them...oh...some months ago after the death of Casper. Under the bed. She hooked them up onto that Key Minder beside the Fridge. Now what would you be doing with a set of keys, including to the Audi, belonging to Pavey? But then, if he had a set of yours to let himself in, then why not you having a set of his? The occasional romp between the two of you to keep Pavey on the hook, so to speak? Hmm? You still have them hanging up there by the looks of it? A place for everything..."

Mar took over effortlessly.

"We have been informed that a Mr. Simon Haigh-Walters has been arrested at his London House and charged '*after the fact*' with the murder of Gwyneth Salisbury. Your European Sales Representative for your medical equipment."

We again waited for some reaction. A comment. A shrug would have done.

Nothing!

"Apparently, you wanted to take the arrangements to a new height. Were the old ones getting a little tainted? A little stale? Jaded, huh? It seems that you were for-ever trying new ideas...extending the boundaries, so to speak...in your professional life and your sexual encounters. You bought him back here from the Highgate in Sydney around eleven on the eve of your wife's murder. Brendan, your driver drove you up. With the Pommy chap. Your wife strongly objected about having to be the subject of lust for this fellow. Just a dirty old man.... A strange man that she didn't even know. It was getting too much...I understand he's the representative for Europe for your products. Your wife accused you of sinking to a new low, as well...you using her as an unpaid prostitute! Six years of frustration having to bend to your absurd sexual experimentations and abasement spilled forth. You couldn't have that now, could you? Brendan, your driver transported the gentleman back to Sydney to his Hotel. You requested that Pavey go with the gentleman to talk him out of any action or scuttlebutt that he may indulge in later..."

I let the moment hang in silence for some moments before continuing.

"...Still your wife went on...your world was beginning to crumble...you grabbed the first thing and hit her over the back of the head.... breaking the object. Cool as a cucumber, you replaced the Award back into its timber base. Carefully placing the granite cube onto the base. It didn't look out of place though it was half the object of art that it had formerly been. Grabbed an old towel to smear up some blood droplets, even placing some in an ampoule,

pocketed Pavey's house and car keys and drove yourself, in Pavey's car, to his address. You stole his similar shaped Award that was covered in Pavey's prints, one of a number that had been awarded to the Firm early in its embryonic stage of development...drove the car back to the spot that it had been parked in, smeared some blood residue from the towel onto the side of the driver's seat, onto the floor mat and the brake pedal. You then went inside to place Pavey's icon on the floor...after you had placed the corner of it into the head wound to obtain brain matter and blood trace. You replaced Pavey's keys back onto the key hook. A place for everything and everything in its place. You then retreated down into the secret little room. You slept like a baby on the hammock bed...until you awoke to return upstairs to await our arrival. We got it about right?"

He looked up with hard eyes. Nothing seemed to reflect from them as though they swallowed matter and light. Mar stood, asking him to rise and place his hands behind his back. As she hand-cuffed him, she spoke by rote.

"Professor Brian John Salisbury? You're arrested on suspicion of killing, by drowning, your first wife, Pinto Salisbury, nee Fabriano on or about the twenty-seventh of March 1992 at Lake te Herare on the South Island of New Zealand. You're also arrested on suspicion of killing your second wife Gwyneth Salisbury nee Kasprovicz on the twelfth of November 2012 at 24 Flowering Gum Close, Castle hill. Anything you say may be used in evidence against you in a Court of Law. Do you understand *Mister*. Salisbury?"

I could almost hear her humming, *another one bites the dust*. With gusto.

"One thing, Mr. Salisbury. You had two women who would eat out of your hand, so it seems. You had it all. Why?"

Mar screwed her face up. Arms akimbo. A shrug of her shoulders.

He turned to look at her.

They were roughly the same height.

Tall.

His face was expressionless.

"I guess..." He shrugged. "I guess I loved *him* more."

There was emotion in his voice at last!

"Yeah...well. Yer might be lucky to share the same cell, but I doubt it..."

He gave her a puzzled look.

"Oh! Your long-time lover was re-arrested as he stepped to freedom. Near killed him. But you wouldn't really care about that, now would you? Arrested for taking pornographic photographs and video of an adult without their knowledge or consent...and for murder after the fact..."

As I led him from the house, I murmured into his ear. "Everything in its place and a place for everything"

It made me feel good.

Very good indeed!

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