

Fissure Monroe

by Tom Lichtenberg

TABLE OF INFORMANTS

Dawn Debris - In the Land of Many Things

Hellen Duane - Bone Fucker's Song

Ferdinand Jerome - From the Age of Skeleton Chic

Rick Frick - Store Dick

Miss X: Defendant x - ruin my career!

>Chief Inspector Stanley Mole - the case of the missing fibula

Filmed on location at "The Dorsal Humerus "

1214 Discovery Street

Jamestown, Virginia.

My name is Richard Frick. I am a private store detective, presently employed at "The Dorsal Humerus", a bone and fossil shop at 1214 Discovery Avenue in Jamestown. I am forty-six years old, divorced, and live alone, well, with Jeremy, my frog, at 16th avenue and West 7th street. I have been employed at the forenamed store location for the past eight months. Previously I worked for Harriman Investigations, based in Roanoke and Richmond.

> Roanoke and Richmond?

Yes

> Thank you, Mr. Frick.

Your welcome, Mr. Chief Inspector, sir.

F. Jerome: it all began last winter, last October, thereabouts, when Ardell Industries introduced their special x-ray spectacles. Did I say last year? I meant two years ago, the previous October. That would make it almost nineteen months now, yes, I think that's right. October tenth, I think it was, to be exact.

> Does this have any bearing on the case, Mr. Jerome?

F. Jerome: Yes, I'm coming to that, yes, of course. I'm just trying to give you some background information. My testimony would be incomplete without it.

> All right, then, get on with it.

F. Jerome: Thank you, sir, I will.

Dawn Debris, Yeah, that's my name, my working name, that is. You can look it up, in the yellow pages, under 'things - lost and found'. No, I find them, I don't lose 'em. And I guarantee my work. If you aren't completely satisfied, I'll refund my fee. And fuck you too, I say. But anyway, these here are my memoirs Dawn Debris most fabulous cases, recorded for posterity, and anybody else that's inarested.

>note: in order to safeguard her constitutional right to privacy, and to protect her anonymity, Miss Janet Monroe, of northwest Fortieth street, will hereafter be referred to solely as defendant X, in all matters pertaining to the investigation of this case. The testimony of three witnesses has also been included in this report for further reference, in case it should be needed.

I didn't do it, I swear, I didn't have anything to do with it. I'm entirely innocent. If anybody hears about all this, it will ruin my career. You don't have any evidence, no evidence at all, because there isn't any evidence, I'm innocent. I didn't do anything wrong. I was only shopping.

> Miss X, the detective on the scene, the store detective, mister Frick, has testified that he saw you do it, that he saw you put it in your coat, and proceed to head straight toward the door.

He's wrong. It's obvious, of course, how could he see me do it when I didn't have anything, I didn't have anything on me. I wasn't even shopping, really, not for anything in particular. I was only browsing. Isn't that allowed? I am not a thief, Mr. Mole. I must insist you let me go.

> Not yet, Miss X. I'm sorry but I have to ask you some further questions.

But I've told you everything. I've told you all I know. I'm innocent. I didn't do a thing.

>Miss X, if you please... What did you do with the fibula?

What's a fibula? I swear I don't know what that is. I've never even heard that word before.

> Come on, Miss X, everybody knows what a fibula is.

Maybe they do, but what do I know? Is it so important to know the name of every bone in the human body? Since when? When I was growing up, no one seemed to care about all that.

> So you do know what it is?

Well, now I do, that's for sure. I can tell you, though, I wish I'd never heard that stupid word!

Hellen: I've got a voice, a beautiful voice, but you, you'll never hear it. I hide it here behind my harp.

Listen! In 1985 a cup of coffee costed fifty cent over at the burger joint, that's fo a small cup - tiny! And a egg salad samwich was about a dollar ten. So lunch is two dollars just about right there. I could make that in a hour on a lucky day. Then there's dinner, which ain't much, maybe two and fifty if I go fo a burger and some fries. Cup of coffee in the morning, an another one at night, and that's your whole day, just about.

So I figure it cost me about four dollars every day or thereabouts, you know, that ain't so much, four bucks is only sixteen quarters and I used to make that much on a good day, and then I'd get a magazine or something at

the pigeon weather place over there on Madison, or else one time I got a army blanket real cheap at the flea market out in Frederick

I worked for Harriman Investigations for seven years and four months and eight days. Eight had always been my lucky number. You may think me superstitious, but you can take my word, it works. I've been in this business long enough to know, if it works, then use it, no matter what it is. I've always been suspicious, I mean superstitious, well, that too. Some folks are naturals, I suppose.

> Mr. Frick, please keep in mind that this is an investigation, not a reverse-enhancement class.

Forgive me, sir, I'm sorry. As I was saying, then, directly after leaving Harriman's, I was hired by the dorsal humerus to be their chief security officer. Since that time I have made numerous arrests, and have co-operated fully with the law.

> Yes, I am aware of that.

I'm sure you are, sir. And all but one of the criminals I've caught have been convicted by the courts, or will be, soon enough. I take my duties seriously, sir, and I will not have it said that I have been a derelict in them. I know what I saw, sir, and I am a firm believer in my own eyes.

> Please describe your usual procedure in such matters, Mr. Frick. How do you operate in cases of this kind?

First thing, sir, you have to look. That is the most important thing. Be alert. Notice everybody. Watch their every move. Everybody gives themselves away, in one manner or another. Nothing can escape the person who knows how to watch.

> And this particular suspect, did she seem suspicious to you right away?

To me, everybody is suspicious right away. It's only later on that they become a suspect or do not. I have to scrutinize them all. The very first thing I notice is the arms - what they do with both their arms while they are walking. Most people don't know what hell to do with them! It's the people who know that seem the most suspicious, as if they have come in with the specific intention of using them - especially the hands. You have to watch the hands most carefully.

> And what else do you notice right away?

The feet. The legs and feet. You gotta see what they do with them. Most people just ignore their feet. A thief has a special use for them. So I pay close attention to the feet.

> The feet.

Yes, sir, the feet. Not just the feet, but the legs and feet together. No one has the same anatomy, when you get beneath the skin.

> I'm not sure I understand.

Thru-ray vision, sir, that's what I mean. As a security maintenance officer, I of course employ the most sophisticated technology in my work. In other words, I take a skeletal approach. We no longer merely stay upon the surface of the matter, sir. We use depth-perception now.

> Yes, I am familiar with the method, Mr. Frick.

I am certain that you are, and I didn't intend to imply

otherwise, sir. In fact, I have a great respect for officials of the law, and hope to be one myself someday.

> Well, I wish you luck in that.

Thank you, sir, I need it.

> Yes, I'm sure you do.

Okay, the case of the missing fibula, in the land of many things. I get most of my business through the telephone. That's because I got this great ad in the yellow pages. I even designed it myself. And I've got a whole compartment, all my own, so, no competition, none at all. Nobody does what I do. Oh, there are other guys who find things for a living, but the kind of things they find, I don't deal in any of that shit. They look for wallets, jewelry, so-called 'precious' shit, but I don't give a fuck about that kind of stuff. That's not what 'precious' means to me. Gold ring? You can keep it, I don't care. Pigeon feather earrings? Well, now, that depends. If they didn't cost too much, okay? Silver-plated salad bowls? I don't even want to know. That's not what 'value' means to me.

So mostly I've got this answering machine, you know, the way I screen my calls, see if I wanna talk to them or not. I don't sit there listening, either. I leave the tape on all the time. It's got a message on it, so that when it picks it up it says, yo, diss is Dawn Debris. I ain't aroun' jus' now, so you jus' tell this here machine what's on your mind, and what yer callin' fer. An' leave yer name 'n number so's that I can call you back.

A lot of people just don't go for that. They hang up right away and don't call back. That's fine with me. It's all part of

my screening technique. And then I listen to the message, and if I don't like the kind of thing they lost, then I just don't call them back. So, you see, it's all extremely simple. I just do the kind of job I like, and the rest don't bother me none at all. Of course, a lot of people they don't like the way I operate, but it's just too bad for them. The people I help know better. And I've got a flawless record, guaranteed!

I'll make it plain. I only locate special things - things of no intrinsic money value to anybody but the person who has lost it. I'm talking teddy bears, favorite socks, old tin forks, whatever it is that means a lot to them, that means so much they're actually willing to pay me to try and find it. Call me a sucker, but I've never turned away a client missing something truly trivial and stupid. Call me a sentimental fool, call me anything you like, I don't care. I know what my mission is in life.

I am the best there is. One time there was this guy who lost his favorite sweatshirt. It was all black, with a zipper down the front, and a big hole in the left front pocket. It was stolen from the backside of a chair, while he was sitting in a coffee shop reading about that boy without a nose. You know, the one that everyone was crying about, in the papers, on tv. Well, I not only found the sweatshirt, I also found the nose, and I wasn't even hired on that job! Tell you how I did it. There's a man called soy sauce merry, lives down in the underground, on deliberate skid row. Anyway, this guy, he's an old time friend of mine, and he knows every little thing that passes on down there. People think he's lost to all the world, but things are never what they seem.

F. Jerome: I am a scholar, sir, an independent researcher, to be exact. My field is general culturology. I am, if I might

say, the leading expert in my branch of this particular realm. You may have seen my book, 'the fossil files'. I was working on the sequel at the time we are discussing. In my book, I cataloged the most outstanding characteristic features of the so-called 'fossil culture' which swept across the nation some few years ago, remnants of which remain, as remnants tend to do, among certain sideline segments of our general population.

> Mr. Jerome, I really don't see the relevance of this testimony. We are speaking of the afternoon of may 14th, and what occurred then at the dorsal humerus.

F. Jerome: of course, sir, yes, I understand, but I must give my reasons for my being there at that time, and I assure you that all of this is most excruciatingly relevant, as you will no doubt see.

> Well, you may not doubt it... But go ahead, proceed.

F. Jerome: Thank you, sir, I will. As I was saying, the fossil mania was quite the thing there for awhile. It changed the way that people thought and acted. In some respects, it was a backlash to the previous mood of high anticipation. The very concept of the future was revalued, to the increase of the notion of the past. Of course, I'm only summarizing some of the salient features of my book. 'New Wave ', as it was called, culminated as all trends do in utter caricature and parody of itself. It was impossible to be younger, fresher, newer, shorter, faster, cuter, smarter, sharper, slicker or more avant garde than the ultimate models of that fashion were. The same kind of decay was bound to happen with the fossil fashion too.

> Mr. Jerome, this is not a...

F. Jerome: Personally, I expected the manikin trend to become the dominant fad - and I still believe it will - but first the age of skeleton chic was born. I will admit it took me somewhat by surprise, but in hindsight now I know it was to be expected. But if you want to understand this skeleton chic, first you have to understand the fossil culture, which was its most direct progenitor

> Mr. Jerome, I don't want to understand this so-called skeleton chic. That is not my business. I only want to know what you were doing there, and exactly what you saw occur.

F. Jerome: I was attempting to explain, sir, if you'll only have some patience.

> I do not have all day.

F. Jerome: Nor do i, sir, nor do i.

Hellen: Of course, there's batteries. I think that was my main expense, but I really didn't need them things, you know, but that was just my big thing way back then, and it was something no one else had ever done. It was the sound I had, still back then that was long before I got the system I got now so I don't need no batteries as long as I can plug it in to those construction workers things.

Listen! I am telling you the story now! In 1972 a cup of coffee was only fifteen cent, where I was back then, and I got by on less than two a day, two bucks that is, and I will tell you this - I know it's difficult to believe but even then the cost of living going up so much by now and people still felt the same about a quarter then as they did then in 1986

and even now today, right now, they give a quarter mostly.

From where I'm at, there's a hell of a lot more quarters in the world than dimes or nickels and I swear I hardly ever see a penny. People'd be too much ashamed to give me a penny, and it's a good thing too, 'cause I'd a thrown it right back at their face, say what the hell you mean by givin' me this lousy penny? Ain't you got no lousy quarters? What the hell you think this is? You can fuck that penny shit, you know!

> You said that you were only browsing. Why? What made you go into that store, that day?

Oh, all this talk of skeletons and bones, I guess. I was never very interested. None of my friends were into it at first, and, to tell the truth, I found the whole thing rather troubling, if not downright disgusting. But then, you know, it's gotten to be so popular - it's always on TV, on the talk shows, in the fashion magazines, so lately I've gotten curious. I just thought I'd look around, since that store was said to be the best.

> What do you mean, the best?

Just that everybody says so, says it's really basic, just the essence, like, the underneath, you know?

> Yet Mr. Frick remembers seeing you before.

I'm sure he's just as wrong about that as he is about the other thing. In fact, I think he has probably gotten me confused with someone else. It's happened before, you know, I'm not the most uncommon type of human being there is.

> And yet no two specimens are exactly alike, and Mr. Frick is experienced in this field.

Your Mr. Frick is an asshole, that's what I think, if you really want to know. That type just makes me sick. They creep around and spy on you, judging you as if they're god, and wearing those beetle vision focals, yes, they look like bugs, and they act like bugs. He is a bug, some kind of gruesome insect thing. They follow you around and make you so uncomfortable - they shouldn't be allowed to have them in the stores. In fact, I'm going to complain, and I'm going to sue that slimy bug for everything he's worth, even though that can't be very much.

> That would suit me fine, Miss X. In a trial, the truth comes out. And I intend to know the truth of this affair.

Well, I've already told you. I am innocent. I've been falsely and unjustly accused of a crime that I did not, that I could not commit.

> Miss X, please tell me, what is it that you do? What is this career you're so upset about?

I work at Henrietta Marvell's school of beauty.

> Skeletal beauty?

Yes, of course, that is involved, but it isn't my department. I am a nail and pigmentation, shape and tone designing engineer consultant.

> My, that's quite a title! But I'm not sure I understand. What is it that you do?

I instruct.

> And whom do you instruct?

My students, naturally. I offer several courses related to my field.

> So you are primarily involved in what they now call 'superficial beauty'?

Well, I don't call it that. I prefer to think of it as classical, or traditional, if you please. I belong to the old school, which believes that beauty is essentially skin deep. In the natural eye - not in the eye that peers through those satanic spectacles. If god had wanted us to see through our external parts, he would have fashioned our optical apparatus differently, don't you agree?

The skeleton is more individually unique than even fingerprints. And, of course, they say that motives of the deep unconscious are revealed in the tensions of the bones. This is what I mean by watching the arms and hands and legs and feet. Everybody gives themselves away, in one manner or another.

> Tell me, Mr. Frick, do you ever feel at all peculiar looking at people through those things?

No, not really, sir, because I only do it in the line of duty, and I am a professional. I know some people say there is a kind of beauty in the skeletal arrangement, but frankly, sir, I just don't see it. I must not have that sensibility in me.

> I see, well, never mind. I was only curious.

I am only doing my job, sir. I can assure you that it gives me no other sensual stimulation of any sort or kind.

> Yes, yes, go on. It's really not important anyway.

Very well. As I was about to say, I watch the tensions in the bones, and follow everybody's movements. From these I can conclude a suspect or unsuspect nature in the subject. Of course, it matters what they do - where they go, what they touch, pick up, and buy, or fail to buy, as the case may be.

F. Jerome: As I was saying, Mr. Mole, the fossil culture picked up where the dead new wave left off. Slow motion was the order of the day - impassivity, indifference, apathy and immobility were characteristic traits of the major fossil types. Appearances became irrelevant: they were neither symbols for nor even against anything at all. This is of course significant because the skeleton fashion took all this to the extreme. But more than mere appearance, the same indifference applied to mental life as well. The tendency was frozen time, the intentional petrification of all culture and ideas.

There were no discussions on any matter of importance. There was no dissent, but no approval either. Politics was moribund, essentialized by the stagnant rule of president Stanton Peterson. No extremes, and yet no middle either. The fossil culture was a cloak of silence, a code of lethargy, a dead undying breed. More than this, the fossils were oblivious even to themselves. They were not organized in any sense - they were all alone together, as it were. The truth is that they weren't even interesting - it took the skeleton revival to give them any life at all. Their stagnation

was just crying for renewal in some way. It was a sleepy culture, desperate to awaken.

> Mr. Jerome, will you please just answer the question, and stop going on and on like this?

F. Jerome: In a moment, sir, in a moment. You cannot hope to understand this crime if you don't know all the factors building up to it. Why would someone do it? Why indeed? Because finally, after all those years of cultural sterility, there was something new, something different, something desirable, something to be valued for a change. No fossil would have done this thing. Only someone eager to participate in the world of skeleton chic would even dream of it. In fossil culture, there was never any rivalry, no one to be emulated or be envied. No one even to be compared to. No standard to achieve, or fall short of. I am speaking, Mr. Mole, of the motive of the crime.

> The question of the motive is my business. It isn't yours. Please confine yourself to the facts. I am a busy man.

F. Jerome: Obviously you do not understand this case. You cannot approach this matter as a simple, isolated incident, for chances are that it was not. There probably are such cases, yes, but more likely there is something larger looming behind this seemingly petty incident.

> The crime was hardly petty, Mr. Jerome, but I still have no idea what you're talking about.

F. Jerome: I'm speaking of 'the market', sir. Yet even that cannot be understood without some background reference to the cultural implications that support it and make it possible. And so, if you don't mind, I will continue

with my evidence.

> Oh, go ahead, why not?

Hellen: But even way back then in 1966, they'd rather be giving me a quarter than any other thing, although in those days I was only twelve and I used to make a lot mo doin what I did back then which I ain't doin anymo and I ain't done now for a lot of years. The money was good but ain't no way that I am gonna live like that, no I don't need yo betta money anyway at all.

Nowadays a cup of coffee cost me eighty cent at the burger joint on yardley in the undergoun', and the whole day cost about nine bucks. It ain't as good now as it was fo' years ago, but maybe it's because it is a different city now and the people had more quarters they was willin to part wiv in d.c. than here in Jamestown, and I often thought that maybe I should move on up back there, 'cause I tell you, the people here hang on to them quarters like it was gonna save their life whereas it could be savin' mine if they'd just give it up.

Only one time I seen a fifty cent piece, only once, from some kid up there in Philadelphia, but that was back in 1973 I think it was and maybe there was lots of fifty cent pieces goin' aroun' the town at that partickler time but I doan' know bout that.

I have been taking a course in elemental skeletal detection at the Purvis Institute every Monday night at eight pm.. There I have learned the most amazing facts.

> Such as?

Such as the fact that the human skeleton is made up of

more than two hundred separate bones - and that each of these bones not only has its own individual function, but is instrumental, even indispensable to the other functions of the other bones to which it is connected. Also, from the skeletal point of view, there is no discernible difference between action and intention. One can judge the situation squarely on the facts. No longer need we have to guess by the expression on the subject's face. No longer is skin color a predeterminant factor in suspicion. The detective's personal prejudice can play no role in his service nor his duty. They say you cannot judge a book by its cover, nor anything by its surface appearance. Skeletal detection not only transcends these possibilities, it actually eradicates them entirely from consideration.

> In other words, it is less easy for the officer to be deceived or biased by emotions.

Just so. The officer can only proceed on the basis of the facts, by what the suspect actually does, and not by what one may presume or guess they might do given half a chance. At the institute we also learn to pristinely distinguish one motion from another. That is, a nod of the head can seem to signify many things when observed merely superficially. But seen as skeletal, there are definitely precisely qualitative and quantitative distinctive nodding motions which cannot be confused with one another to the acute observer. And these are motions common to all humans, regardless of their sex, race or creed. The skeletal perspective is an equalizer of all humans. This has made the security maintenance officer's job infinitely more scientific and infinitely less subjective. He is neither attracted to nor repelled by any surface features, and so his emotions have no part to play in the function of his operative procedures.

> Isn't it possible for a man in your position to actually be a

skeleton admirer, just like anybody else? And if you were, might you not be prejudiced in favor of or against whatever skeletal configurations you were attracted to or repelled by?

Yes, sir, it would be possible. That is why we skeletal detectives have to undergo a series of depth analysis conditionings. Susceptibility has to be erased. This is where the training is now mandatory by state law. Security maintenance officers are required, by said law, to submit themselves to the processes involved. These include hypnotic pre-positioning, indifference enhancement implantations, anti-attitude injections, and various other basic preparations. However, there are certain kinds of people who by nature are already predisposed toward these sensibilities already. I was one of these. I tested well above the norm, and was subjected to a minimum of character alterations. I am much the same as I have always been. And such persons like myself are actually preferred, and therefore actively recruited by the institute.

> Hmmm, in other words, you're saying that you are what they call a 'fossil' type.

Yes, sir, that appellation has been commonly agreed upon. I would not object to being labeled so.

> And this is not a bias? A predisposition on your part?

I'm sorry, sir, I do not understand your inference. I believe I said that we are free of prejudice by nature and by training.

> You have no anti-skeletal sentiments at all?

Neither pro nor anti, sir. We are impartial and indifferent. Skeletal structures arouses no emotion on our part. That is what makes us so especially effective.

And I've got other sources too. The point is, there's a network out there of people you would never think are in the know and are. The eyes, the ears, the noses of the city, and I'm on friendly terms with every one of them. Not to mention all my contacts in the trash and dump departments. But mostly I rely on these - my wits, and my seventh sense. I've been finding missing things since I was this high, even smaller. And I've always got my last resort, if all else fails.

One time a woman lost her favorite old stuffed bunny. She left this message on my answering machine, it said, dawn, you've gotta help me, I don't have anywhere to turn. Since Fuzzy's disappeared I haven't slept a wink. And all my food is stale. If you don't find my fuzzy, I think that I will be awake and very hungry for a long, long time.

How could I resist a genuine appeal like that? So I called her back and then she came to visit me. It's very important to get all the details, every one, because you never know when they will come in handy. So she told me fuzz's birthday, and how he lost his stuffing, and the right eye, which he lost, and also how her Binky chewed her little fuzz's left earlobe, and the hind leg that she got restitched, and every other little crucial fact about the matter.

This woman was a wreck. You should have seen her eyes light up when I said not to worry, I will find your fuzzy soon. It made my heart feel good. It seems she lost the thing when her boyfriend chucked it off the balcony - they were having a little tiff, you see - and it landed on a moving

pickup truck below, and bye bye little fuzzy. Neither the woman nor her boyfriend happened to catch the license number or the make. All they knew was it was red. So, on the slightest information, I fearlessly took on the job.

I never work directly - I mean, it would be ridiculous to go all over everywhere hunting for a stupid cotton rabbit. No, no, you've got to know your business. I rely on intuition and the inductive process. So I asked myself this question - if I found a rabbit in the back of my pickup truck and I had no idea where the hell it came from, what the fuck would I do with it, huh? Well, I guess I'd give it to some kid. If that's what happened you might think the case was hopeless, but consider: what if the person didn't have a kid or really know a kid to give it to - or what if the kid didn't want it because it was old and mangy, beaten up and just about to fall apart. What then? Most folks would probably just chuck it in the trash.

Following the scientific method then I checked with Arnie at the dump - no luck. I looked around myself for just a little while, but not too long, 'cause Arnie's sharp and knows his trade and I wouldn't want to offend him. I have to treat my sources good or else they'll just clam up on me, and that wouldn't do me any good at all.

Just in case I made the goodwill rounds, but fuzzy never made it through those doors. Scumbowl would've seen it, since he's got a bunny fetish anyway. For a moment I considered maybe Scumbowl wasn't telling me the truth, maybe he had taken it himself - that happened once before, but that's another story altogether. The point is, I just could not afford another run-in like that time.

So if Scumbowl had the rabbit, I just wasn't gonna know

(and there ain't no way I'm gonna sneak into his dump again, that place is grosser than the kitchen back at Chez Petite) - I had to go on to another option. And this is where my genius comes in handy. Who else would have thought of it? No one. Except me, Dawn Debris, I am an expert and a pro and I never say defeat.

If he didn't give it to some kid, if he didn't throw it in the trash, and if he didn't give it to the goodwill agencies, I'd bet you anything he tried to make some money on the thing. One way would be to hold it up for ransom. Or another thing would be to do an advertisement in the classifieds. So I checked that out, but no. And so I scouted all around to see garage sales, and that sort of thing, but there wasn't any Fuzzy anywhere.

I did not despair. I waited for a coupla days, and checked the sources, made the rounds, but I didn't have no luck. Pretty soon it got to bugging me. I don't have any staying power, but that is not a weakness, it's a strength - I just get bored and irritable, and I don't like myself like that, so when in doubt I go straight on to my last resort. That is, I go shopping.

> But you do admit that you were in the dorsal humerus that day?

I told you, I was curious.

>But if you were merely curious, certainly your Henrietta Marvell school has some departments which could satisfy your curiosity?

No, I will not go in there. I have my principles. Everybody at the school knows that I find this skeletal fascination most

repugnant. It would harm my reputation if it were known that I even ventured near that store. That is why I must insist you let me go at once. I am already late for class. So, if you have no further questions, I'll be on my way now.

> I'm sorry, Miss X, but I do have some more questions.

I don't know what else I can tell you. I've already told you everything. I only went there because I was curious. I wanted to see what that shop was like, since everyone is always raving on and on about it. I looked around, and I saw what there was to see, and that is all.

> Tell me what you saw.

You can see it for yourself. It's really rather dreadful. All those skeletons and bones for sale! Can you imagine buying things like that? For what? You've already got all the bones you'll ever need, unless there was an accident, and you needed some replacements.

> Go on.

So there were all these horrible things, and all these terrible people buying them.

> What things were they buying?

Bones, of course! All kinds of bones. Vertebrae and tibia, fibulae and femurs, parietals and sphenoids, ethmoids, nasal bones, spines and malar bones, turbinate bones and palate bones, hyoides, vomers, maxillaries, clavicles and ulnae - every kind of bone. You want it and they've got it.

> You seem to know a lot about these bones.

Oh just the names, who doesn't nowadays? People are always talking about their bones.

> Yet earlier you said you didn't know what a fibula was.

I didn't, now I do, okay? Is it a crime to not know something and then find out?

> Well, that all depends.

I refuse to be insulted, Mr. Mole. I have told you the truth, and I am a woman of my word.

> Forgive me, Miss X. I didn't mean to offend you. But, tell me, what do you think those people do with the bones they buy?

I've been told they replace their own with them. Transplants. Personally, I find the whole idea tremendously obnoxious. I don't know why something isn't being done to prevent this awful practice. I don't know why it is allowed.

> Well, the first amendment, mostly...

Even so, there are limits to common decency, and this is way across that line.

> That is very noble of you, Miss X, but there is nothing the law can do.

I really don't see why. If you want my opinion, the whole thing should be banned, and stores like the dorsal humerus ought to be shut down. It's a matter of the public interest, as well as decency and health

F. Jerome: Every culture has its accepted standards; of beauty, virtue, morality, value, truth and good. In some instances we have seen where what one group calls ugliness, another group considers ideal form, this idea of cultural relativity is hardly new, and I'm sure you will agree that there can be no absolutes or objective laws concerning these intrinsically subjective issues. However, fossil culture changed all this, by denying the existence of these categories altogether. During the fulcrum of the fossil age, there simply was no truth, no worth, no virtue and no beauty. It was as if these things did not exist. True fossils didn't give a damn about them whatsoever. This had a tremendous impact on all people of all ages and all groups. The fossils brought an era to an end - the era of change and progress.

> Don't let me interrupt...

F. Jerome: Motion was no longer going forward. Skeleton chic opened up an entirely new direction, that of depth, of going down, descent and penetration. No doubt this was related to the pertinent environmental transformations still ensuing daily - but more about that later. The introduction of the x-ray spectacles into the common marketplace was more than just a symbol of this directional upheaval - it was directly linked and very much a part of the very change itself. Suddenly we were 'exposed'.

>Personally, I found the whole thing rather indecent, myself.

F. Jerome: Yes, that is the very vessel of the issue - the exposure! All at once there were people seeing other people as they really were, beneath the skin, beneath the fat and tissue, underneath the muscles and the hair - the

original skeletons were shocking, frightening, unsettling. Yes, terribly so. I'm sure that you recall those first few months - some places even banned the brand new vision capability. It was even made a crime! Until, of course, the law enforcement people, like yourself, began to realize just how useful such technologies could be.

> But that doesn't mean that we approve of it for the general population. The same applies to every sort of weapon or technique.

F. Jerome: It has been a revolution, and like every revolution, its effects have been far reaching, unpredictable and often strange. New ideas were born, as was only natural, for this truly was a whole new way of seeing the world, and everything that implies. Depth psychotherapy noticed how, as they say, the unconscious motivations are revealed in the skeletal positioning.

> But that has not been proved...

F. Jerome: New categories were born - no longer race but new groups classified by structure, shape and size. The family of man had different subdivisions than before. It was possible to determine health and sickness at a glance. Anyone could see the essence of another easily, almost involuntarily, in fact. Those who wore the glasses constantly began to change - they were a different kind of people altogether. No wonder, then, that the skeleton chic has proved to be so dynamic as a culture.

It may be very harmful - no one has determined precisely the effects of x-ray vision on the viewer. No doubt the radiation isn't good, but by now, with all the other radiation everywhere, most people just don't care. It is more

important to be one of your own kind, than, well, than practically anything at all.

> Mr. Jerome, it's getting late, and I have other things to do. Please come to the point.

F. Jerome: Yes, yes, I know, and I am trying to explain. You see, the fossil people do not like the skeletons at all - in fact, they usually detest them. I think all fossils are disposed to hate all skeletons, and this fact has bearings on the case. I had occasion to observe your Mr. Frick in action, and I think it rather strange that such an obvious fossil would be working in a skeleton department store.

> Mr. Frick has stated he was trained to be impartial towards the skeletons - and this training is required by law. The security officers are bleached of all opinions, so I'm told.

F. Jerome: But you see, I hope, that the very lack of attitude is an attitude itself. It could not be otherwise. And this is the essence of the fossil culture, as I have explained. It could not be otherwise. And this is one of the very reasons why I was at the dorsal humerus that day. No matter what you're Mr. Frick might say, it is a fact that skeletons hate fossils more than any other kind of living creature. In his position there, Frick is constantly exposed to people who regard him as their enemy - doubly so, for not only is he spying on them all the time, but he is even a fossil at that. He is a real foe.

> I see your point, but are you saying that Mr. Frick is prejudiced or not? If he was, wouldn't he be against every customer in the shop?

F. Jerome: I think that's very likely, Mr. Mole, and I wonder at the psycho-chemical construction of the man. Why would

anyone put himself in a position like that?

> He has a history of concern with seeing justice done. F. Jerome: ah, yes, justice. But isn't justice always in the eye of the enforcer?

> Law is common to society.

F. Jerome: To the dominant culture at the time, you mean, and there is always the generational time lag to consider. For though this is the age of skeleton chic, the fossil culture remains entrenched in the positions of authority and power. You can be sure that skeletons would never pass a law requiring fossils - or fossil- type creatures - to be the agents of justice over them;.

> Yes, yes, I see your point. But consider, Mr. Jerome, that neither I nor any public law official is required to be a fossil - we are speaking only of a limited situation, and this was brought about by the rise of the skeleton black market.

F. Jerome: Yes, I was going to mention that. The market is behind this crime. I am convinced of the fact.

> That is mere conjecture - you cannot be sure of that.

F. Jerome: Perhaps not, but indeed I am. I have seen this kind of thing before. And the fossils run the market.

> Mr. Jerome, please. With all respect, I cannot listen to your idle speculations. What did you see that afternoon?

F. Jerome: Seemingly ordinary people, and that's the irony of the whole thing, is it not? For without the special glasses it is impossible to tell who is a skeleton fashionette and who is

not. And this is most important.

Hellen: Still, it was in 1983 that I hit my peak, you know, I made the most of doin this altho what I'm doin now is a hell of a lot better than the shit that I was doin then, but for some reasons I musta been in the right place or sumpin 'cause I was takin in those quarters and those dimes like you would not believe it now, I'd stuff my pockets full of them, and sometimes there wasn't enough room in there I had to put em in my shoes and maybe it was all because the weather, it was really nice that year, or sumpin, I couldn't tell ya, really, 'cause I used to think about it but I never could explain, I had no idea why I was takin in so much that year, and that's when I went out and got myself those boots, you know, those boots that I still had last year until they finally wore out and I couldn't afford new ones, but I had to buy em anyway 'cause those old boots just wore out and I couldn't a worn them anymo.

I got myself this jacket too back then and I've still had it ever since. It's my best one, you know, never had a nicer one than this, I'm gonna keep it fo awhile, I guess. So maybe it was all because the weather, or sumpin I doan know, but all of a sudden those people were tossin me those quarters and them dimes, some nickels too but not just one but a few at a time because it's almost as bad to give a lousy nickel as a penny, you know, and I ain't seen nothin like it since.

It's gone back to pretty much the way it was, I blow my harp, I do my stuff, and every once and awhile here comes a quarter headin' my way, yes sir, it goes right there in the hat, that's what it's sittin' on the sidewalk for, that's right, good boy, you like what I play?

Listen! Ain't no one can blow this thing like I can and I heard em all. I ain't proud, you know, but I know what I got and it's what I got that keeps me goin' on and I ain't gonna stop, no way, even tho things have pretty much gone back to the way they were before in 1982 and for the last eleven years or so, no, more, it's been damn close, and maybe even it's been gettin' worse 'cause even in the winter time, they got the tourists here, they got 'em all the time, and the uropeens, like that, but I don't get no mo' quarters than I did and that is why I came here in the first place, because it was sumpin new, and that's what I have to offer too, because nobody's ever done what I do so you'd think they'd pay it for the novelty, but you know what it is?

They just take it all for granted. They come here and everything is new and every time they turn around it's something new is going on, and pretty soon it all wears off, and hell, they don't even notice that it's new, it's all already old. Shit!

Anything that's not brand new is old, not brand new I say and brand new's only for the very first minute, and then it's old, it's old and they have heard it all before even if they just heard it for the first time half a second just before, because that half a second is really all it takes, it's new but then it's old and why should they pay attention - why should they pay at all?

They don't, and I don't make no mo' quarters now than last year even tho the shit I'm doin' now is a hunnerd times better more better than that old shit ever was. It gets better all the time, an you can ask anyone who's heard me over the years, that is you can ask em if you can ever find em 'cause I'm movin all the time, I got no use for anyone place too long, it's all the same to me everywhere I go.

I still make the quarters, and I stand out there on corners, I blow my blues and they jus sit aroun an gawk or else mostly they jus pass on by and it's all a blur to me, it's gotten so it's all a blur and I doan know who the hell they are, but I have the definite sensation that I have seen them all befo' and they've seen me, and maybe that's why they doan give me no mo quarters ' cause they did it once upon a time and think that is enough, it's all it takes, but hell, you know, I can't jus use the quarter once and that's it 'cause I need mo' every day, it takes small change to keep this girl alive and so you give me a quarter once, why then thank you very much, I appreciate it, and you sure got a hell of a lot mo than your money's worth, I can tell you that, but then what about tomorrow? Why ain't you gonna give me another quarter then?

I'll need it just as bad tomorrow and you'll get double your mo' than money's worth if you give it to me one day and then not the next. But a lot of people are just chicken, they're scared to give me a quarter, I swear I jus can't unnerstand that shit, because it ain't no big heroic act, you know, it's a pretty easy thing to do, lean over and give the girl a quarter, but no, they think about it, they worry themselves, and then they back away, they walk away, keep out of the way, and about a block down later on I can hear them sayin', gee honey, I really shoulda given that poor girl a quarter - but did you? Hell no! You was chicken, and how'm I gonna get that cup of coffee that used to cost a dime but now it's almost ninety cents, shit, I doan know, it's all gone up about a hunnerd percent and I'm still takin in the same old quarters in the same amounts, and I swear it's got to be some kind of explanation somewhere.

I feed them, I feed their soul, they got to help feed me, they got to, 'cause they owe it to their well fed soul to see that I'm fed too. I wish I'd see some fifty cent piece sometime. That'd make my heart feel good, that big ol heavy fifty cent piece layin in my hand, but maybe they ain't makin' so many of them anymo', or else I'll have to go back up to Philadelphia someday. What you gonna do? You feed their soul and they give you a lousy quarter or a lousy dime. Is that how much it's worth?

The well trained fossil officer has no attitude at all. He is merely an observer, a scientific watcher attention and detachment, precision and incisement. We operate by stolid principles. All this is to say that we do not, as a general rule, make errors or mistakes. The well trained officer cannot be wrong. And i, sir, if I may say so, and a highly trained, extremely competent and efficient security maintenance officer.

> I don't doubt it, Mr. Frick, but, if you please, let's move on to the case at hand.

Excuse me, sir, I didn't mean to wander from the point. All that was merely referatory to this fact: that I have seen the defendant at the dorsal humerus, and have long suspected her of harboring sinister intentions.

> You are prepared to swear to that?

I do swear it, sir. And I can prove it, too, with incontrovertible evidence. That is, we have x-ray footage of this creature. Unfortunately, such evidence is not as yet permitted in the courts. Even so, you have my expert word on it, and that should be sufficient.

> Precisely which features are you relying upon to make this positive identification?

First of all, the suspect is a member of a particular skeletal type. This type, known as procanthean elixi, is distinguished mainly by anomalies of the outer skullular depict. For example, the os lachrymalis of this type is essentially pitiful in display. And I use that term in its scientific sense, sir, as I'm sure you understand. The pocks and marks are representable and outlayed schismatically. One also notes the zygomaticus major in formation, and the angle of the maleus stapes joint. There is as well the matter of the tensor tympani, constructed and obstructed illucidly and chipped. These traits are common to all procanthean elixi types, and the suspect in question is certainly no exception.

> That's all very well, but I really want to know about the particular case of Miss X, as distinguishable from other persons.

Miss X has undergone a transplant of the septum, sir - I would say about eighteen months ago, although I cannot be precise. And that's not all. It is obvious that the tibia of the rectal lower extremity is not her own original. I am sure that the corresponding fibula was intended for her personal use.

> That is mere conjecture. You cannot be sure of that.

Nonetheless, I feel it is a reasonable assumption. Just as it is also very reasonable to assume that her frontal perichondrium is inordinately loose and sags.

> We will look into that.

Do so, by all means. But this is merely structural. There are also her unique behavioral patterns to consider. I would never fail to recognize the lean upon the sole, nor the quirky motion of the minor digitales. I have seen this particular disturbance in other suspects too.

> You're saying it is a characteristic gesture of this social type?

No sir, not inherent, but situational in fact, and only thus in function. It is the agitation of the moment which gives rise to certain skeletal dysfunctions. Put anyone in that position, and the chances are they will respond accordingly. There is a certain incus twitch quite common to these criminals. I almost think it is deliberate, although perhaps unconscious. The criminal will send out a charge, a radar scan, prior to the commitment of the crime.

> This has not been proved. In fact, most of what you've said so far is very hypothetical, and unsubstantiated. Perhaps you are just jumping to conclusions, Mr. Frick.

Well, sir, I am speaking from experience, which is more than the so-called experts can proclaim. In the lab, results are often inconclusive, but on the streets, in action, I can test the evidence directly, and I can assure you that it's true, in fact, if not necessarily confirmed by limited experiments.

> So you know more than the scientists do.

In my field, yes, I think that's true.

> Excuse me, but you seem to be emotionally involved in these particular matters - if you are unbiased, as you claim, then why the firm convictions? Why the solid opinions?

They don't know these people like I do. They only see them in the labs, in ordinary situations. They don't know what they're really like. I do. I see them all day, every day, going about their lives. I have spent more time observing them in the field than any of the scientists have.

> Miss X, have you ever undergone a bone transplant?

Well, yes, I have, but strictly for medical reasons, I assure you.

> What were those reasons?

I was in an accident, some time ago. My nose was broken. I had to have my septum replaced.

> And your left tibia?

What about it? My tibia is my own. What about your own tibia?

> I have the same bones I was born with. Even my septum is my own.

I told you, it was an accident. God knows I didn't want to do it.

> Where were you born?

In Coultervale, why?

> Just checking.

What? Just checking what? I must say, this interview seems

highly irregular to me. Next you'll want to know about my private life, but that is none of your business, sir, none at all, and I don't have to answer any of your questions anyway.

> That's true. I told you you could have a lawyer present.

I don't need a lawyer. I am entirely innocent I've been falsely accused of a crime that I could never commit. I've had to sit here all day long, answering your irregular and peculiar questions, and for no good reason whatsoever, because I haven't done anything wrong. My god, if word of this gets out, it would ruin my career. You don't know how sensitive the matter is. You probably aren't aware of all the implications.

> Perhaps you'd care to fill me in on them.

Certainly. There is a war going on, Mr. Mole, a cultural war between the old ways and the new. The new way is depraved, corrupt, amoral and very dangerous indeed. Our children are being exposed to these, these deviants, and in the process many of our cherished concepts are being threatened with extinction. I know where I stand. You may say I am old fashioned, I don't care, but ten thousand years of beauty wisdom may well go down the drain. I have a responsibility towards the preservation of my culture - and I don't care what anybody says. I know where my duty lies.

So I went to K-Po's junior shop on Harrison and bought a white stuffed rabbit. Then I took it home and went to work. First thing I did was pull the eyes out, and put one back in a little skewed. Then I ran the bunny through the dryer many times. Then I pulled the stuffing out, then put some right back in and stitched it up real bad. I got my feline dentures

out and wound 'em up and let 'em chew the ear for half an hour. I pulled the back leg off, and tossed the bunny in some mud. Then in the washer and the dryer for the rest of the afternoon. A little more detail work was all it took to get it right. And that was that.

I called the woman up and she came by - oh, the happiness, the joy, and she couldn't tell the difference because I did it right. So, there's another case resolved and another fifty bucks. It might sound easy, but you've got to have the knack, and as far as I know, there ain't no one's got it like I do.

F. Jerome: How can one tell a real skeleton from a normal human being? Well, in several ways. It is now *derigeur* that a real skeleton must have at least two unconnected bones replaced with others not their own. These can be any two, but one thing is mandatory - the new bones must be better than the old. What is this 'better'? Ah, this is where the skeleton chic is so dramatically different than any previous trend. It has introduced new standards. Skeletons are rated in order of their beauty and perfection. Fossils had done away with standards of this kind, but now they have returned, and with a vengeance. The emphasis is on color, texture, strength and grace.

Don't ask me how it started or who decided what. All I know is that these biases took hold, and then suddenly certain types of bones were in demand and were more highly valued, while others were looked down upon and denigrated as inferior structurals. And they were priced accordingly. As usual, the wealthy led the way while the poor paid dearly for their ascent to status. It was only natural for a criminal element to emerge in all of this. But in the market, there are forces with intentions far more sinister

and far less honorable than mere greed.

>You have evidence of this?

F. Jerome: Nothing solid, sir, but I have every reason to believe it's true. You remember when that load of bones was stolen from the hospital? They were stolen by these agents of the market. I know it's difficult to prove, but everyone accepts the fact. I think, however, that they were stolen by the forces I just mentioned. Why do I think so? Because many of those bones were radiation- sick. The hospital was going to cremate them. Now they're out there on the loose, and this was their intention!

> We are aware of the nature of those bones. But you don't think the market would be scrupulous about the quality of the merchandise they sell, do you? After all, they're racketeers.

F. Jerome: No, sir, you are wrong. This could ruin them - and it will! If these plans are carried out successfully, they will create a panic, an hysteria. Not only the market, but the entire skeleton fashion could be wiped out virtually overnight!

> Over a few poisoned bones? I find that rather optimistic.

F. Jerome: Realistic, Mr. Mole. I'm speaking of an epidemic, a plague. And whose interests would this serve? Obviously, the fossils'.

> But you just said they weren't organized.

F. Jerome: they weren't, no, but now they are, and have been every since the skeleton chic began. Not all fossils are

involved in this, of course, but certain of them are. In every war, you must see who stands to gain and who to lose. This is economic, sir, which is the root of politic. There are fossil interests threatened by the skeletons, and they must defend themselves or perish. These are very serious affairs.

> Mr. Frick, I have to ask. Why are you in the profession of security maintenance?

I believe in justice.

> Whose?

Society's

> And who is this 'society'?

Why, the vast majority of the people, of course.

> And they are fossils, like yourself?

Not necessarily, no. I couldn't say that they were one group or another. Even skeletons are for the law and against the criminals.

> "Even" skeletons?

Yes, even them, and I say that not to be derogatory, but because it is a well-known fact that skeletons are, in general, not the most conformist types.

> You really don't like them, do you?

It is not my business to approve or disapprove of them. Neither is it in my natural nature to do so.

> But, come on, what do you really think of them?

In my private life, I do not wear the thru-rays, and so I cannot tell a skeleton from a normal human being.

> Normal?

I mean 'ordinary', in the clinical sense, of course. It may well be that skeletons are really not like us, not genetically, in fact.

> That's what they say about the manikins.

Well, sir, on that score I will admit, I do not like the manikins. They are decrepit people, a discredit to the species.

> But the skeletons are not?

I believe they are misguided, sir, and that is all. They will someday be brought back to their senses.

> And who will bring them to their senses, Mr. Frick? Is that your real goal?

Of course not. What are you implying? I only meant to say that they will grow out of it someday.

> Is that really all you meant? I've been told that someone is deliberately trying to destroy them, by selling poison bones.

But why would anyone do that? It makes no sense. No businessman would sell sick merchandise if he wanted to remain in business long. The idea is absurd. Still, if someone

goes to a dubious source for 'bargains', well, as they say, it's a case of caveat emptor, is it not?

> I've been told these poison bones are being sold at outlets like the dorsal humerus.

No, no, that's impossible. It is a very reputable establishment, thoroughly above reproach. Why, it's owned by Mr. Richardson buck, one of the most honorable men in our city.

> So you claim you don't know anything about this plot?

I'd say it's quite ridiculous. Whoever told you about it must be mad. Why, at the dorsal humerus, every bone is checked and checked again, and guaranteed for double your money back if flawed in any way.

> Very well, then, Mr. Frick. Tell me about the crime itself.

First I must reiterate, sir, my solid faith in the honorability of that establishment. I would never work for any other than the most respectable firm.

> Will that be all, Miss Duane?

Hellen: No, that ain't all, what you talkin bout? I know what I come here fo. I know what you want from me, but I jus gotta tell you who I am or else you just woan unnerstan the thing I got to say. I got my testimony in my heart - it ain't only in my mouf. Nothin is so small that it ain't also big in some way too.

> Anytime you're ready, then.

Hellen: I'm ready now, I'm always ready, mista cop. You wasn't even there, but I know what I saw cause I see all sorts a shit, yeah, every kind a thing, I see it all fom where I'm at because I'm right there allthe time where everything is happening.

> I know who you are, Miss Duane, believe me. What I want to know is, what happened on that afternoon outside the dorsal humerus. What did you see, and exactly what did you do?

Hellen: Listen! That's what I'm gonna say. You think I'm just a crazy goin on an on when really I am sayin everything you need to know, but you think you know it all already, don't you? You already know it all.

> No, I don't. That's why I'm asking you.

Hellen: All right, so just shut up an listen! I know what you are. I seen 'em all jus come n go, every single one. Jus like all them bone fuckers out there now. You see em go aroun wiv dey funny eyes, starin at you soul, they think they see inside, but they doan see shit, not shit. It isn't what's inside that's it, an it isn't what you got outside. It's nothin, an that's the truth. Inside out, it doan make no difference You ain't shit and you nevah was, jus a greedy selfish bone fuckin pig. They doan give you nothin, not a quarter, not a dime, as if they doan know what it cost to live. They must've got it easy. They must've got no other thing to think about. That's always it. They loaf aroun, they doan do shit, and they doan even care.

> I must admit I've never heard it put in quite those terms.

Well, it's true, that's how I see it anyway. And if my culture's

doomed to die, then I am doomed to die with it.

>That's pretty extreme, Miss X.

I'm just trying to tell you that I'm serious. I've staked my life on this, and if anyone finds out that I was even anywhere near that store, why, it would ruin my career. They'd never let me forget it, I'd never live it down. That's why you've got to let me go at once.

> I'm sorry, miss, I can't do that. There are still some things I have to know.

There is nothing I can tell you, absolutely nothing. We've been through all of this before. What could I possibly tell you that I haven't said already.

> You said it was a war. Well, in that case, I want to know, who is your commanding officer?

What? You must be nuts. I only meant that metaphorically, like, you know, the war between the generations.

> Don't be coy, Miss X, you know as well as I that there are forces out there in this thing.

Oh, that's only rumors, and anyway, I don't know anything about it. I don't belong to any group.

> You're working on your own?

I don't know what you mean by that.

> I think you know exactly what I mean, Miss X.

I most certainly do not. You must have me all mixed up with someone else. Yes, that must be it. Both you and Mr. Frick have me confused with someone else. It's entirely possible. My skeletal structure is not at all unique. I am a rather common type. There are many others like me.

> You are familiar with the appearance of your own skeleton. Just how familiar are you, I wonder?

Oh, everybody knows their skeletal type by now. That's not so unusual, is it? People come up to you on the street and say, hey, aren't you a Procanthean Elexi?

> That is your type, is it not?

That's what they tell me, anyway?

> That's what who tells you?

The people who come up to me on the street - total strangers, too. It's really quite disconcerting, as if you were a car, and they tell you what your make and model is. It makes one feel quite silly, actually, as if it was your fault that you were born with just these bones, not others.

> Do you wish that you had other bones, Miss X?

Of course not, no. I'm not one of them.

> But you could be if you wanted to.

But I don't want to, Mr. Mole. I thought I'd made that plain enough. So I know a little about the human skeleton, who doesn't nowadays? I also know about the acid rain, the telephyll and the solar wind decay. These things are

common knowledge. Everybody talks about them all the time. It is not a crime to be informed, to know what's going on in the world, or do you believe that everyone is guilty by virtue of having been born?

> Let's not discuss religion, miss.

Oh, very well. I thought you were a ringer. Let's not discuss anything at all, okay? I must be going now. I am already late for class. You have nothing on me, Mr. Mole. You don't have the slightest shred of evidence.

But anyway, the missing fibula was something else entirely, one of the greatest cases anybody ever solved. At first, I didn't want to take the case. It didn't sound like my kind of thing at all. I never really thought about it before, but I guess that bones are really meaningful, if they happen to be your own. I know I wouldn't want to lose a single one of mine. Anyway, so this was new to me, but then I thought, why not? Let's give it a try and see if I can do it. Not that I had doubts - I just didn't have experience with these particular objects, you know?

Also, the way it came to me was not entirely to my liking, as they say. The message on the phone was not exactly what I like to hear. First of all, the woman's voice was just a bit too gross. The accent's what I mean - too upper for my blood. She said, 'you must help me, miss debris'. Now, I ain't no miss. I ain't no missus either, but I definitely ain't no miss. And I don't must do anything. And then she said, 'I can pay you well'. I hate to hear that shit, you know? I don't give a fuck about the money, I don't need it, see? And usually when they say that it comes out that they lost a solid gold thing or a sterling silver thing or a jade or bronze or ivory thing, and I

just don't give a shit about that kind of shit. Anything cost more than fifty bucks is a total waste of money, as far as I'm concerned, and I don't even want to hear about it, not now, and not ever!

Also, she said it deb-briss, and that is not my name. It's Dawn Debris, with the accent on the ree. Debris, like garbage, trash, and junk, cause that is what I deal with and so that is what my name is too. If you can't stand the muck, get out of the sewer, Jack! Some of us survive - the rest of you are someone else almost every other day. So then when she says fibula, I think, oh shit, it's one of them, one of those creepy peeping toms. I don't go for that shit, man, it just makes me want to puke. So I am thinking no no no while I listen to this message on the tape, but then something changed my mind. It wasn't the talk about the money, or about how much it meant to her, and not about how grateful she would be - it was when she said the cops can't find it and they said she shouldn't call me.

Now, if there's anything I love, it's solving something that the cops cannot. I can't resist it when they say the cops can't or the cops won't or the cops said I shouldn't call you. I hate the fucking cops, and if they said, do not call Dawn Debris, then I would simply have to take the case. And so I did. But it wasn't only that about the cops that got me into it. It turned out that the cow was in the hospital without a fucking leg! Now, I already told you, I'm a sucker for a lot of shit, and when it comes to someone being in the hospital without a leg, well, I just had to help. Yeah, of course I thought it was pretty funny, but I didn't laugh when I went in to see her - I just cracked up on the curb, once I got outside. I was all compassion in there, though. Here's what it was. The lady's leg was sick, real sick, radiation sick. I know a lot of people getting that these days, but for her it got so

bad they had to chop it off. They were going to put a new one on, but her leg was such a strange shape, or so she said, that it took them awhile to find a good replacement.

And what do you know, the night before the operation, some clowns sneak in and lift a load of bones, this lady's leg included. It had to be the market, and I didn't want to mess with them, but then I thought, well, shit, the cops won't even touch it, so I've got to give it a try. It's a matter of civic pride with me. So that is how I got involved in the case of the missing fibula. Turned out to be a hell of a lot more complicated than anybody would've thought. Where do you look for bones? The dog pound? The butcher shop? The sausage factory? It could be anywhere, I thought. What do I know? I don't know shit about bones.

And this skeleton thing. I didn't want to mess with it. I had successfully avoided them just like I stayed away from all the fossils and the manikin people too. I don't want to have anything to do with these unstable types. Give me the people who know they're fucked but don't do anything about it 'cause it's no use anyway. You should leave yourself alone, that's what I say. But all these other creeps, they'll do anything as long as they can be somebody else, follow all the fashions, do all sorts of unnatural and unnormal things, paint their teeth, their ears, their nostrils, you just name it, they will change the fucking thing. Just 'cause someone else is doing it, they gotta do it too. I don't make friends in any case, but especially not with them.

> You really think there is a plot?

F. Jerome: Undoubtedly there is. Why would anybody steal defective bones and try to sell them in the open marketplace?

> What open marketplace?

F. Jerome: Why, the dorsal humerus, among other outlets. Do you know who owns that store? I'll tell you, Richardson Buck, that's who. And do you know who he is?

> The mayor's uncle's step-wife's nephew, I believe.

F. Jerome: Not only that, he is also the director of the modern fossil institute, the owner of the Petrichemiconarius, and the moving force behind the reptile renaissance exhibit at the bacon park cathedral fashion show. This man, more than any other in our city, has cashed in on the fossil way of life. They said that it could not be done, that fossils were by definition non-consumers, but he proved them wrong, and he was on the verge of causing a tremendous shift in the fossil culture itself. He was going to give it definition and direction. He almost had it in his hands.

> But from what you said, that sounds almost self-defeating. A self-conscious fossil cannot really be a fossil.

F. Jerome: All that was going to change - it was on the verge. But then this skeleton chic came up and cut it off before it had a chance to bloom. Oh, it was going to have been something totally unique - the rising of the dead, a living contradiction, fossil culture as commodity. It would have been amazing.

> Did you, by any chance, just happen to predict this in your book?

F. Jerome: No, not at all, I didn't learn about it till much later on. What I had predicted was that the fossil generation

would continue as it was - and live to be the first entirely irrelevant generation of the past few centuries. If buck had had his way, the culture would have coalesced, and made some impact on the social scene.

> I'm afraid you've lost me, Mr. Jerome. What the hell are you talking about?

F. Jerome: Economic recovery, sir, that's what I'm talking about. There is money to be made in fossilized revival. With the skeletons, this is not the case. The only money to be made in bones is for doctors, lawyers, archaeologists, and specialty stores. The fossil economic boom would have been much broader in its impact on the national product. Just to mention the apparel industry - with skeletons it doesn't matter what you wear. And then there's barbers, health food stores, exercise salons, diet books, and every other superficial industry which fashions have traditionally nurtured and supported. Fossil could have been a moneymaking fad, it could have been revived, transformed, and put to work. And it still could be, but first it would be necessary to eliminate the skeletons.

> But now your Mr. Buck is cashing in on them. I'm afraid your theory doesn't hold up.

F. Jerome: No, you're wrong, it does. He's not merely cashing in on skeletons, he is also simultaneously trying to destroy them.

That's where the poison bones come in.

But I was saying anyway, I didn't know the hippies and I didn't know the punks. I didn't know no preppies, and no new avers neither. I didn't know the yuppies or the macs. I

didn't know the thrillers or the jotes. I didn't know the slummies and I didn't know the picks. I didn't know the fossils, I still don't. And I don't know no skeletons, and I don't know no manikins as well. I just stay clear of that. You can be whatever you want to be, just don't come bother me about it, right? Cause I don't give a shit and I don't want to know. Still, it's a free country, that's what I believe.

So I've got to find this bone, and I don't even know just what the hell it is. So I look it up in the library in a book about anatomy. It says a fibula is a leg bone - well, that makes sense, I guess - and it's got a picture of the thing in there. Yep, looks like a bone, like a bone you'd throw to a dog. Now, the lady gave me measurements, so I do a little comparison, and I see she's got a tiny leg. That's not too surprising, since she's a tiny lady too. Up to now, no wild inspiration, no big breakthrough anythings, just a new and different kind of thing that's lost. I don't know where to look. The folks who stole the thing are pros, and they are all mixed up with the market. I think, okay, the first thing that I gotta do is find out more about this racket. So I call on Slimy Jim, my main man in the meat biz.

I was positioned in command zone seventeen at that particular time - one forty two pm. The store was very busy, and I had to keep my eyes on several suspects all at once. Whenever this occurs, I choose the most suspicious to observe, and place less focus on the rest. This is standard practice, not some innovation of my own. That is when I noticed her come in. Since I had suspected her before, I put her on my watch list, and notified the camera to record her movements.

> Yes, I've seen the tapes. Proceed.

That is all the evidence one should require. I hope the statutes are transformed in time to prosecute this criminal.

> Don't count on it. In any case, the tapes aren't always clear, particularly at the end, where it is most important.

Well, the outcome may be seen in doubt, but the perpetration of the crime is clearly visible.

> And yet the artifact itself was missing, and has disappeared.

I'm convinced that an accomplice was involved. That is the only explanation possible. All the facts point clearly to that, sir. You must call in everyone who was on that tape and question them as thoroughly as you have questioned me.

> I know my duty, Mr. Frick.

And I know mine.

> Okay, all right, continue.

Very well. Immediately upon entering the store, the suspect proceeded directly to the information counter. The assistant in position at that time, Miss Beverly Fell, told me that the suspect asked to know where the gibbon fibulas are kept. However, I am convinced this was a ruse, designed to baffle me and lead our security officers astray. I state this with assurance, sir, because I had on previous occasions witnessed this same suspect visit that display, and its location has not changed.

> Gibbon fibulas, you say? These are for sale?

They are only there as artistic artifacts. The dorsal humerus sells many breeds of skeletons for the casual and serious collector. It is rather popular to own the skeletons of many types of creatures, and have them in your living room or elsewhere for the benefits of conspicuous appearance.

> I thought the missing fibula was humanoid, not simian.

Yes, sir. As I said, this was a ruse. The suspect did indeed proceed towards that display, and pretended to be interested for several minutes there. However, she did not buy a gibbon fibula, nor a gibbon anything, but next checked her make-up in the mirrored pillar.

> Her make-up, Mr. Frick? How could you tell that that's what she was doing? Did you remove your spectacles to see?

No, sir, the movements are quite typical. I have witnessed female specimens engaged in this procedure frequently. It is not necessary to observe without the spectacles in order to know what they are doing.

> And what did she do next?

After pretending to be concerned with her superficial chemistry, she proceeded to the digitalis section.

> Humanoid or simian?

Humanoid. And this was another ruse. Such procedures are quite typical of common petty thieves. The sophisticated market crook will follow another path entirely. This is why I came to the conclusion that the suspect was indeed a private criminal, and not a member of the larger, more

insidious clans. Nonetheless, the small-time criminal is just as guilty as the pro, and the law must be enforced.

> so you are just as vigilant when it comes to minor crimes as you are with major ones?

Just as much, sir. I do not make distinctions. All criminals must be punished, regardless of the magnitude of their infraction. In any case, her behavior in the store was not customary - in the sense of being a regular customer. She was obviously not intending to make a purchase of any kind.

> How could you be sure of that?

It was apparent in the referent motion of her abductor policis.

> Abductor police?

Policis, sir. The muscle between the thumb and forefinger. There are vibrations characteristics of all purchasers which are most apparent at specific periods during their pre-proposal perusal. This is common knowledge in the profession, and one of the most obvious signals we inspect.

> Excuse me, Mr. Frick, but it was my understanding that muscles and tendons are not visible to one who wears the through- ray spectacles.

That is true, sir. However, the motions are indirectly risible through the essential related movements of the bones.

> And you can always distinguish legitimate purchasers from those who are not?

In most cases, yes. The prospective purchaser cannot conceal nor prevent these involuntary giveaway reflexes.

> But what about mere browsers?

In the case of browsers, it is always possible to distinguish between those who might make a purchase if they happen to see something which appeals to them, and those who will not buy no matter what occurs.

> I must admit I didn't know the art was so advanced.

These are now commonly accepted facts, Mr. Mole. Of course, you could not be expected to be aware of all the latest developments in this most specified field.

> I don't mean to question your integrity, Mr. Frick, but I don't quite believe you all the way. From what I have been told, by the recognized experts in this very field, there is no way at all to distinguish between a browser and a purchaser.

I am sorry to disagree, but your experts obviously do not have the kind of extensive experience that I do.

> You've only been on the job for eight months!

Eight long months, sir. And I have learned more in those eight long months than obviously your experts have in however many months or years they have been studying these phenomena.

F. Jerome: Of course, it probably won't work. Such schemes rarely do. But still it constitutes a menace to society at large.

You cannot change the course of time. This plot must be stopped, and those behind it must be prevented from carrying it out. You see, one single case could do the trick. That's all it would take. If only one person dies because of this, the rest would become hysterical. I don't think I am exaggerating this at all.

Already the skeleton fad seems somewhat distasteful to most people - to say the least - but it could easily take a grisly turn for the worse. It's one thing when a generation takes to rejecting the dominant culture's standards, and sets up its own in their place, but... Well, you may recall from the history books how the so-called 'hard drug' phenomenon impacted on the hippies. Marijuana might have become acceptable then, but the hard drugs came along, and hippies started 'freaking out' and o'd-ing themselves to death. The whole thing just began to sour. By the time the punks came along, one of their big things was no drugs whatsoever, and they rejected all the rest as well, the peace and love and flowers, and all of that sort of thing.

> Are you saying the same thing might happen to the skeletons? Instant cultural oblivion?

F. Jerome: No, not the same, exactly, but maybe something similar. Those skeletons who persevered, like homosexuals during the great aids plague, would be seen as sick, corrupt, insane, and they would be outcast. They'd be seen as irresponsible hooligans willfully inviting dangerous disease and death. That would suit the fossil interests fine, like it suited the homophobic moral morons, but think of all the needless suffering, the anguish and despair. The skeletons have a right to live exactly as they please. Still, even without this fossil plot, there are other

dangers lurking - the radiation, for one thing. X-rays are very harmful.

> I hardly think they care. Indeed, some people say that they are already inviting cancer and death by wearing the awful things.

F. Jerome: Yes, I know, it's true. But there is a difference between suicide and murder. And I can even understand the psychological dilemma at the root of skeleton chic. This is a dying world. A dying race. We all know that. The fossils were content to drift along and die without a struggle. They were resigned, apathetic, they didn't seem to care. They had no energy, no will to fight. The skeleton reaction is a reversal of this attitude. They say, since we're doomed, at least let's do it to ourselves. We didn't cause this radiation everywhere. We didn't make the toxic dumps, we didn't cause the acid rain. And we'll be damned if we'll just up and die from someone else's sickness. We will create our own. And I can understand it, Mr. Mole. All of us feel relatively helpless in this situation now.

> Well, Mr. Jerome, I don't. My generation was and is committed to the task of dealing with these problems. We're trying to clean them up. Why don't they join in and help with us? Why make things worse? I do not understand.

F. Jerome: People like ourselves are closer to the source. We remember how things were, and we think we can restore those days. The fossils never thought so. They never tasted water, real water. They never breathed good air.

> Still, it makes no sense to me. They change their bones instead of making real changes in the world.

F. Jerome: It's the only thing they have. In a sense, they're way ahead of us. We still worry about going bald, having wrinkles, warts and pimples. Hell, they know very well that everyone is going to be like that - just look at the children being born today!

> Very true, Mr. Jerome, and I agree it is a tragedy. But perhaps we can return our attention to the matter at hand?

F. Jerome: Just so, inspector mole. I was about to come to that.

Hellen: I seen through them, that's what it is. They think they see through me, but no, it's jus the other way aroun. They can't hide from me, no way. All day long I watch em come n go, I'm watchin all the time. I know what they're made of, and it isn't bones, 'cause they ain't got no spine. You know what I'm sayin? They're already dead, and here I am, I'm tryin to stay alive, I've been doin it for years, but they doan try, maybe they doan have to, but I do. So I doan give a shit. And then they're even thieves, they even steal fom me. That's right, they steal my quarters an they steal my dimes, as if I didn't work for it. You doan find the kids like that no mo, the real kids today, they say they're mankins, but they're all right wiv me, they know what's goin on. It's the older ones, the ones who shoulda grown up but they nevah did, they're the shits who steal fom me.

I knowed she was a thief - jus fom the way she looked. She didn't have those funny glasses on, but I could tell that she was one of them, jus by the way she looked aroun. They look right at your face, as if you wasn't there, as if you was a specimen. I hear they cut off people's heads, jus to get the cheekbones. They tell me that I got good bones up in my

face. That's 'cause I come from a history of breedin'.

But they won't get my bones, no way fo sure, they won't nevah get my bones. I'm gonna have em burned up wiv the rest of me. Some of the kids, they say they'll do it fo me, they'll make sure it's done, and I believe em too, because they're decent human beins, not like them older ones that should grown up but they nevah did, not like their stupid parents neither. I nevah had no use fo them. They couldn't even fuckin hear. They go aroun as if they was stone cold, them fossil relic types.

> So you hate the skeletons too?

Hellen: You bet I hate em, bout as much as anything, especially the ones like her that go aroun undacovah, as if they wasn't skeletons, but I can tell they is, I know it cause it feels sick jus to be aroun em. You can smell the sickness too, like burnin flesh! I know what that is like. I seen enough.

> You can identify the suspect?

Hellen: Yeah, that's her. I see her all the time, out there wiv her buddies on the street.

> Miss X, what did you do with the fibula?

I don't know anything about it. Why don't you believe me? This is clear and plain harassment, Mr. Mole, and I will not stand for it. You must not have a case at all. You must be desperate for some break. Is your career in jeopardy too? Well, I will not let you further yours by means of ruining mine. I insist you let me leave this very moment!

> What do you know about gibbons?

Gibbons? Why, they're monkeys, aren't they?

> I believe that they are apes.

Monkeys, apes, what's the difference, and what's that got to do with anything?

> You asked the clerk to see the gibbon fibula display.

Did i? I suppose I did.

> Why, Miss X?

I told you, I was curious.

> I thought you were curious about the human bones.

Bones are bones, human, ape, whatever. Anyway, someone I know was telling me about this gibbon thing - apparently, they're all the rage, especially since the real apes are totally extinct. Radiation sickness killed them off, I'm told. So I just thought I'd see what all that was about. It's really rather peculiar, don't you think? I mean this whole skeleton phenomenon.

> Peculiar? In what way?

In ever way. I mean, what will they think of next? Fossils, skeletons, pretty soon they'll all be worshipping the dead ancestors, or something primitive like that.

> Miss X, are you a fossil?

I suppose we all were, in some way.

> And in what way were you?

In what way? Oh, I don't know. I didn't vote. Does that count? I used to run through stop signs - but I shouldn't be telling you that! I watched tv a lot, you know, the usual stuff.

> Do you know Richardson Buck?

Not personally, no. Of course I know who he is but everybody does.

> Did you know he owns the dorsal humerus?

No, I didn't. Really? Gee, that's odd.

> Why do you say that's odd?

Because he was trying to be some kind of fossil king. That's what everybody called him. It was just a joke. Of course the fossils never had a king. We never even had a president.

> We, Miss X?

Yes, we. Oh, very well. I might as well admit it. Though I can't see it matters much. Yes, I am a fossil. Of course I am. It was my generation. I suppose I'm antiquated now - though not as much as you, but I don't care. The same thing happens to all generations when they come of age. They grow old, and then there is a new young generation, and they do things differently. What were you, a jote? I'll bet you are a jote.

> No, I'm not that old. In my day it was all the rage to be a

pick.

Oh, I hated picks. They were all so dedicated. How could you be a pick? As if it really mattered if you had opinions!

> We thought it was important.

Well, we thought it was a joke. So what do you care about the skeletons? You must hate them even more than fossils do.

> So you hate the skeletons?

I don't exactly love them. That's for sure.

There just ain't much that Slimy Jim don't know about this shit. He's been an emotional scavenger for just as long as there has been the trade itself. He was selling style to picks, tantrums to the rocks - the man knows what these loosehead people want and he can get it for em. Now, I never need nothing from the man, but we go way way back in a transaction sort of thing. You see, we both find what people are missing. In my case it is things. In his its personality, if you know what I mean.

But I hadn't seen him since before the fossil thing, so we're talking an entire decade, just about. Last time I saw Slimy Jim he was dealing magic carpets to the slummies, when one of them got rust and started coming at us with a sledge. I just beat the cracks and lines and got my butt out quick. That was a nasty bit of scenery, that was. After he got out the ward he lay low for a time but soon enough I heard that he was back, but I didn't see him anyway cause he was sore and told some people that I'd set him up. It wasn't one of my jobs, but I let him erase the episode from

his tapes, no sense busting in that kind of sore.

Well, Slimy Jim was all smile, nothing but, so I thought he must be doing all right these days. I asked him so and he says yeah, the bone biz has been good for me. You wouldn't believe the kind of shit that's going on, he said. So he filled me in on all the latest developments, and soon enough I knew what I was in for. There isn't just one market, slimy says, not anymore. At first, okay, the money men got in the scene and tried to put a hold on everything, but it didn't last for long, and now there's room for every operator with the stuff. Nowadays there is about a dozen different rings that've gotten in the act, and all of them are tougher, meaner, than the worst of the slummies ever was.

Shit, I said, I don't know if I want to know or what. So he says, come on, dawn, I know you, you're into something really sleazy, am I right? What'd you do? Carve up some meat? I can bury it for you. Find some Biafrans? I can use that shit. Fuck, that's high grade stuff, the highest. I said, slimy, what the fuck are you talking about? I don't understand these terms. He says, ha, you really got lost this time, didn't you, dawn? Where ya been? I said, look Jim, I've been out of this side of the world for a long time now. Strictly on the surface, understand? He laughed, said I didn't know that anyone could tame the beast. Who did it to ya, huh?

I'm only putting down all this so you know exactly where I'm coming from. I mean, I've been really straight. I got fired of the sewer side of life, and I didn't want to jump back into it. So I was having second thoughts about this missing fibula. Anyway, I jus told him what was going on, and he got all serious expressed, and didn't say nothing for awhile. Finally, he said, this is nasty shit, you know? I'm glad you came to

me. That purveyance job's got everybody on the slant. You know what those fuckers did? They took the bad bones, too, not just the good. Hell, they could've made a fortune with the good shit by itself, but rumor says they're holding back on that and peddling the bad. I mean, shit, purveyance hospital had the best stuff you can get - Biafran, Ethiopian, Tanzanian, Libyan, you name it. High grade shit, and I mean really high high high. Famine stuff, you know? That shit is really in demand. But there's something deadly going on, and I don't like it, not one bit. If I could get my slimy paws on their scrawny little necks...

I said wait a minute, man, I don't know what the hell you're saying. He shook his head, said, dawn, that bad shit they stole, it's all radiation sick. If it gets out into the marketplace, it'll kill a lot of skeletons. And if that happens, the whole thing might just dry up overnight. It's a living we got now - and I don't know who's pulling this one off, but I've got ideas.

Turns out it could be any one, well, almost any one of the dozen operating forces. Might be the slingers, or the stoops, might even be the moneymen, though slimy didn't think so. Someone's trying to kill the trade - why would the biggest bonus guys do that? No, slimy said, I think it's the Marvells. I asked him, who are they? He says, they're a big old front, pretend to run a beauty school - of all things, specializing in fossils! But behind the mask they are an international cartel.

I said, woah, that's way too much for me. I don't wanna get mixed up with any of those skin soapettes. I'm just a little guy - what do I know about some international cartel? Nothing, and I don't want to know. Okay, so there's an in-war going on, and these guys want to wipe the slate, get rid of all the competition, and set it up again alone, but all I

need is just one stupid little fibula.

Slimy says, well, you want it, and they got it. I say we get together on this thing and hit those fuckers before they have a chance to pull this stunt. Hey, now you're talking dangerous, I said. You want to do it, you go on ahead. Just leave me out of it. Okay, he says, we're going to do it anyway. It's already in the works. Just thought I'd cut you in on it. There's a lot to be made in this. I backed off right then. I don't need the money, Jim, I said, and I especially do not need the trouble. Tell you what I'll do, he said, if I find your fibula, I'll sell it to you cheap, okay?

Well, there's a lot of things I'll do to find somebody's missing thing, but I won't get all mixed up in some kind of mess like that. If the small fry stole it, well, I might steal it back. But these Marvells, the way that Slimy Jim made em sound, they are nasty with a capital N, and Dawn Debris does not go international! So, time to think of something else, I tell myself, but what? I don't have any other sources in the trade, and I don't have any other leads. I just went home and sucked my favorite thumb, and let the answer come to me.

> Mr. Frick, it seems only logical to me that no one can be absolutely sure that someone is going to steal something until they actually do.

Well, sir, she did commit the crime, and I saw her do it with my own two eyes. I see you don't believe me, but that is not important. I knew she was going to do it and she did.

> All technicalities aside, the facts please, Mr. Frick. Where did the crime take place?

At the lower extremities section, on the second floor, down the middle aisle in the back.

> And you followed the suspect there?

I did. After she was through pretending to be interested in the digitalis, her incus twitched, and her ankle bone turned in step - though she was going the other way! I wasn't fooled. I motioned to my deputy to take up my position, and I slowly moved towards a better vantage point, near the cranial capacity zone. By this time she was convinced that she had tricked us into thinking she was just an ordinary customer. I could tell that by the way her vertebrae were leaning.

> Mr. Frick, I do not want to have to tell you one more time. You are to report the facts, and not your hypothetical suppositions.

I see you aren't a scientific man! Very well, the, very well. One can't speak Latin to a Greek, I suppose. She went upstairs and headed straight towards the extremities department. I should mention that she hurried - not because she was late or anything like that, but because she had decided to make her move, and was intent on doing so.

> I assume that you could also read her mind.

As I've told you, Mr. Mole, with thru-ray vision it is possible to know all things. Anyone with the simplest understanding of the ear bones in relation to intention and desire could see exactly what she had in mind.

> In other words, she went upstairs.

She did, and she didn't hesitate. She located the fibula in question, then turned away as if she wasn't interested. She must have known that I was there, for she dawdled nervously, fingering some toes on sale at two for one.

> But she wasn't really interested in them, am I right? You could tell by the way she twitched her nose.

Precisely, sir, you're finally catching on! No, she wasn't interested in feet - it was the leg bone she was after. They have a hard time selling toes these days. Anyone whose really into skeletons has already had their toes replaced - it's very cheap, and not quite so 'extreme', if you'll excuse the pun.

> Mr. Frick, your attitude seems to be disintegrating rapidly.

I'm sorry, sir, it's just a joke we have.

> Who has?

Us fellows in the business. You know, these skeleton people really are ridiculous. I mean, they're chopping off their arms and legs and sometimes even their rib cage too, just to put some new ones in! It's really quite absurd! How could anybody do that to themselves?

> I was sure you weren't as impartial as you claimed to be.

It doesn't interfere with the performance of my duties, sir. Certainly I have my own opinions, but I am a security maintenance officer, and in that capacity I am as fair and honest as the sunrise every day.

I just went to a store, I looked around and left, then suddenly I found myself in the most upsetting situation, attacked, arrested, and dragged off to the station and questioned on and on about some matter I know absolutely nothing about. How would you feel if all that happened to you? You'd feel unjustly victimized, abused, and you'd demand, as I'm demanding, to be set free and left alone. Just to imagine that such a thing can happen, well, it's simply dreadful. I am a decent human being, a sensible and law-abiding citizen, I pay my taxes on time, I don't owe anybody any money, I have a fine career, which I love, and which could easily be ruined if anyone found out about all this!

> All this chattering won't do you any good, Miss X. Now, I want to know exactly where you went inside that store, and exactly what you saw.

I looked at many things - how am I supposed to remember every move I made? I wasn't even seriously looking at anything at all. But very well, I'll tell you what I can. First, I went to see the gibbon fibulae, because, as I have already told you, I was curious about them. Then I simply walked around and saw what else there was. I remember noticing the most unappealing display of digitalis - more fingers than you could count on both hands put together!

Anyway, what else? Oh, I really don't remember. There were so many bones! I really didn't realize just how extensive the business was. I thought that it would be some small shop - like a jewelry store, but instead it was a huge emporium, they even had an escalator! And salesmen all over, not to mention those horrible security guards wearing those loathsome spectacles.

> Did you take the escalator up?

No, I think I took the stairs. But then I realized that I was running late, so I took a hurried look around, only I paused a little, I remember now, at a glass case full of toes. I was really rather shocked by the sight of all those little toes! And they were even having a sale on them! I guess I never thought about my toes before - I didn't know that anybody did.

Hellen: that crowds the worst. They'll do anything fo money. They're the ones that chop off peoples hands and feet, jus to sell the bones. If they like the way you's built, well, you betta watch yo ass. They doan even speak English. I stay away fom them. Lead ears. No innarest in music at all. They tell me, you, shut up, move on. I jus go away, but I play where I wanna play, doan no one tell me where I can and where I can't. I hate them and they hate me. Sometime they say if you doan move you've had it bitch.

>So why don't you just move?

Hellen: it's good on that corner there, better than mos corners anyhow - I get some quarters and some dimes, now and then a dollar bill, but not too often, no, that's pretty rare. And never any fifty cent piece, doan see none a them. It's got the Chez Petite right there, and the Rosary Denise Cafe, and the Hopper Peaceful Center and the Bank of RJR - and the steps outside the markup store. People come out there fo lunch, there's always people passin by, and I got a permit too, I gotta right to play. That's my place, signed an guaranteed , ain't no one gonna say I can't stay there.

> Did the suspect ever threaten you in person?

Hellen: No, not her, cause she's a boss. She makes the flunkies do it. I see em talkin, pointin, right at me, I know what's goin on - I know what they're up to. They're a gang a thieves. I seen em stealin lots a shit and gettin away wiv it, cause the cops is dumb, more stupid even than the crooks, they can't see past the decoys and the fakes, but I know em all, I know just who is doin what an when.

F. Jerome: As I believe I told you earlier, I was in the dorsal humerus conducting independent research for my sequel to 'the fossil files', which I intend to call 'the age of skeleton chic'. The skeletons, I have observed, are an unusually conformist group. All of them are trying to look exactly alike beneath the skin. There are certain types of bones, certain shapes, consistencies, and styles, that are all the rage - mostly northern African, for some peculiar reason. In any case, all the dedicated skeletons are buying these and nothing else, and to the depth perceiver, they come outlooking very much alike, no matter what their surface appearance might be. This is in direct contradiction to the fossil style, where neither conformity nor diversity were valued or encouraged.

> And the point, Mr. Jerome? The point?

F. Jerome: The point is, inspector mole, that no real skeleton would be caught dead with the kind of fibula you've described. From your description, I would guess the fibula in question was of Scythian descent - not at all the fashion, not at all! In fact, I am quite surprised that the dorsal humerus would even carry such a fibula. There can't be much demand for Scythian bones of any part. All of this would lead me to conclude that there was no such fibula at all, and this whole matter is a ruse. Furthermore, I suspect

your Mr. Frick and the management of the dorsal humerus fabricated this entire affair for some unscrupulous purpose of their own.

> As far as we are aware, she is not a member of any of the so-called market forces.

F. Jerome: That doesn't make any sense. You see, the fossil interests couldn't care less about an ordinary skeleton. They would have no reason to do anything but let them shop in peace. I have spent a lot of time inside the dorsal humerus, and I know that ordinary thefts like this hardly ever occur, and when they do, not much is done about it. Those security maintenance officers are not quite what they seem.

> I don't follow you, Mr. Jerome. I happen to know that they have apprehended several criminals, and we have prosecuted them. So what are you implying?

F. Jerome: Only that they're after certain types of criminals. Have any of these suspects, criminals as you put it, been ordinary citizens with no prior or major offenses on their records?

> Well, no. Most have been professionals with histories, but that's to be expected in activities of this kind.

F. Jerome: That proves my point. No ordinary skeleton would attempt to steal a lousy, ugly, out-of-fashion fibula from a well-protected, heavily guarded store like the dorsal humerus. Only a professional would dare a theft, but again, no pro would have stolen such a specimen, because they'd know it wasn't worth the effort. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that there was no crime

committed. That doesn't mean, however, that your suspect is entirely innocent. In fact, it's likely she's a member of a rival market force, a force the fossil interests would like very much to intimidate. In that case, you yourself are being used by one illegal outfit in their war against another. If I were you, I'd find out just exactly who she is - that would be the key to solve the whole affair.

> Your theory is interesting, Mr. Jerome, but what if I should tell you that we have a video that shows the suspect in the very act of committing the crime.

F. Jerome: In that case I'd say she was a fool. And your detective is another fool, for failing to recover the allegedly stolen item.

> Mr. Frick, it has been brought to my attention that of the eighteen suspects you have apprehended in your eight months on this job, no fewer than sixteen are classified procanthean elixi. What could account for this?

They are notorious, sir. If you consulted the available literature, you would find that this type has been rated woefully degenerate by the most distinguished experts.

> What experts are these?

Well, for one, there's dr. Roderick Waitley, of the Cantor Institute.

> Is that the Roderick Waitley who declared nestothenese mayoris was the favored structure type?

You've heard of him! Isn't he tremendous? Such a scholar! Such an intellect!

> Some would call him a racist.

But that isn't true. His research is strictly scientific.

> What type are you?

Scythian Decantis, I'm afraid.

> Oh? Isn't that good?

According to Roderick Waitley, the Scythian delineaments are destined for an immature extinction. This is because our cranial capacity is severely limited. Not enough room for the neocortex to develop to its fullest extent.

> And you believe all that?

It's only logical. The human species is developing at a rapid pace. Those races which cannot adapt are doomed to fall behind. The future emphasis is on a leaner limb, a tauter chest, a larger brain, and longer, trimmer digitales. We Scythians are too thick, too stout, too short.

> And what about Procanthean Elexi? How do they fit into this so-called evolutionary scheme?

That's the shame of it. Yes, there is no other word - the shame! A race that's prone to criminality, hypocrisy and greed, a foul-minded, narrow-spirited, grasping, spiteful, nasty bunch, and yet they have the length, the curvature, and most of all the larger cranial capacity to accommodate another twenty thousand years of human development. I say it is a shame! Why should they get the best of it? They don't deserve it more than we do - no, we

deserve it more! That just really gets my goat!

Hellen: I say I've been here long befo they came along, and I aim to be here just as long as after. You see, I can survive, I can play that game. They ain't the only ones. Why I've been cussed an I've been kicked by meaner guys than them. You should've seen the guys I ended up with down along the way. They wanna take take take an doan give nothin back. They say do this do that the other thing but I doan stan fo that, no, I doan take no shit fom no one any time not ever. If you want to get ol Hellen gone, well, you might's well jus pray, cause that is all the good its evah gonna do you, an that is none!

I doan care who they are - pickers pockers dips or sticks, I jus doan care, cause I got me a duty to perform, and I am gonna do it an it doesnt matter what I have to do to keep my sidewalk clear of scum like that. They wanna lick me down, I kick them down, they spit on me, I spit on them, they call me names, they gotta answer to the most high one, that's if she answers when they call help me save me from that bitch. They really made me mad this time, lord, I can tell you that. Nobody does what they did an then gets away wiv it. I got my friends, and even alone I got myself an I'm a match fo anybody, man, woman, beast or what.

> What did they do?

Hellen: Eighty seven cent, that's what they did - they took my eighty seven cent. I've been out there all day long, blowin my guts out playin that ol bone fuckers song a mine from dawn till two, an all I got to show fo it is two quarters and three dimes, a nickel an two lousy fuckin pennies! They shouldn't a took my eighty seven cent. I nevah stan fo that.

> Did this suspect take it from you?

Hellen: No, she told em to. I saw em standin on the corner with her buddies and she's pointin over at me, she's sayin get that bitch outta here, go chase her out. So they come and tell me go away, get lost, but I jus say fuck you this is my place, I stay. So they knock me down an kick my harp into the street, and took my eighty seven cent. I jus got up an I said to myself, this time that bitch is gonna pay!

> Miss X, you said you never visited that shop before. Yet I have a receipt here for a purchase you made on last December tenth.

You do?

> Yes, I do.

Well I really don't know how that -wait, oh, I remember now, of course! How stupid of me! How could I forget? Yes, I did go there that day. I had to buy a Christmas present for another girl at work. She's in the cheek department. She was dying to get a set of Ethiopian eight year old female cheek bones. So I drew the lot and had to go, although I really didn't want to. That must be what that receipt's about.

> Yes, that is what it's for.

Oh, of course. I really didn't think - I mean, that didn't count. I went right in and out as fast as possible because I really didn't want to go at all. It was a most unpleasant duty, I assure you but the girl was thrilled. I can't explain it. I don't know what she wanted with those cheekbones, but then I've never really understood this whole weird thing.

> Are you sure you never went in there any other time, another visit that you might have 'forgotten' to tell me about?

Oh, no, I'm sure. And I'm also sure I'll never set my foot in there again - what a truly horrible experience this has been! Can I go now?

F. Jerome: You know, I've just realized the strangest thing. Funny I didn't notice this before. I'm not sure it has any bearing on the case, but now that I think of it, I realize that I've never seen a skeleton who wasn't actually a fossil! Isn't that strange? But no, of course, it isn't strange at all, it all makes perfect sense. Yes! That's it! That explains it all!

> What does it explain? The missing fibula?

F. Jerome: What fibula? Oh no, not that. I told you, there was no such thing. It was a plant. This is the answer to the question. The skeleton chic is not a generation of its own! Not at all! It's merely the last dying gasp of the general fossil culture. These skeletons are fossils who are trying to wake up before it is too late for them, before they're totally petrified and wasted. No generation wants to be remembered as the one that made no contribution whatsoever to the history of the species, and the fossils were in danger of doing just that! Naturally, the shock of this awareness would be enough to jolt the more enlightened members of the group - they would have to take some drastic step, some exceptional maneuver, to revive their fellow fossils and themselves. The skeleton chic is a call to arms! It is doing exactly what the bucks would like it to do. Only they did it first and better! This is the attempted recovery of the race itself - and now those other fools are

going to go and ruin it, they're going to kill their only chance! My god, the tragedy! The shame of it all! Skeletons are only fossils in bloom! I must get the message out! I only hope that there's still time! This is a matter of the greatest urgency!

So I said holy shit, what the fuck am I gonna do now? That old lady's wasting in the hospital without a leg, and I gotta find it quick before the something seals and they can't operate anymore. Anyway, that's what she said was gonna happen if I didn't get her bone back real soon. So where do you go to find a missing bone? Obviously I had no time for my usual investigative methods. I figured, Slimy's right, the Marvells got the bone and there ain't no way that I am gonna go and get it from them. It's time to go shopping dawn, I said, but where am I gonna go? I don't know shit about those kinds of stores.

Right then it came to me, a stroke of fucking genius! I sat right up in bed and said, of course, the fucking yellow pages - use em! So I look up under 'bones', but there ain't nothin there. I look up bodies-human, not a thing. I don't know what to look up anymore. I check out under meat, but all there is is frozen. I check out surgical, but it's all just supplies. So I'm flipping through the index in the back - I see things, lost and found - I say hey, that's me, all right! But still no fibula. Finally I get another stroke of genius - they always come on time - so I look up under specialty shops, and there they are - we specialize in human bones! All things skeletal! Bobby's Bonus Bones Bazaar. Sternum Pycanthus! Norman Mobilus! Well, in any case, there's a bunch of them, so I say get on the move, ol gal, let's see if we can't find ourselves a fibula this afternoon.

I copy down the names of all the shops and hurry out the

door, get on my bike and pedal off. First place was this Ethiopian import store. I go in and tell em what I need, give em the dimensions and the weight, and this woman she just laughed at me, she said, we don't deal in that kind of junk! I swear she even turned up her nose like that and called it junk! So I said, listen, bitch, this isn't junk if your life depends on it, but she just snorts again and says, I'd rather be dead than have a Scythian fibula!

A what? A Scythian fibula? What's that? Most inferior, she says. The lowest kind of extremity you can have. So she sends me to this other place, this Bobby's Bonus Bones Bazaar, the sleaziest looking joint you'll ever wanna see. An yeah, he's got some Scythian, he says, this fat old fucker in this greasy pastel shirt, and I mean greasy, sweat and piss. So he brings some out, I'll let you have em cheap, he says, but two of them are plastic, even I could see they were, and the other two were just too long and didn't fit. Every other place I went they said the same thing as the Ethiopian - only Bobby's Bonus deals in shit like that! I'm going nuts! I'm running out of time and I don't know what to do. I tell this guy, look man, I've been everywhere, all over town, I've got to find a fibula like this size quick. He says, well, I suppose you might go over to the dorsal humerus, but I'm sure you'll just be wasting your time. They don't deal in Scythian either - still, it is the largest store in town. Well, you can't beat that! The largest store, and they're not even in the fucking yellow pages!

> Miss X, please tell me exactly what happened when you left the store.

What happened? I wish someone would tell me that! It should happen to you sometime! Just so you know what it's like to be the victim of this kind of thing. I didn't do

anything! I just went in and looked around, and then I left, that's all, when all of a sudden this screaming lunatic comes at me, jumps right on me! She jumped on me, knocked me down, screaming and yelling all the time - I don't know what she was ranting about, but she wouldn't let me go, she was holding me down, calling for the cops, and then this Mr. Frick comes running out of the store, saying I'm under arrest, and grabbing me all over in the process, I might add. And I am a decent woman, sir, he shouldn't have been doing that!

> What did he say to you?

He called me all sorts of names. I can't repeat them all. And he kept asking me what I did with it - he kept yelling, where is it? What did you do with it? I was crying by this time, as you can well imagine. I don't easily cry but you can see that anybody would've been crying in such a situation.

> This woman who jumped on you, do you know her at all?

No, I'd never seen her before in my life. She must be a lunatic. I don't know why they let those people run loose on the streets. She's dangerous! Imagine jumping on a total stranger like that! She even kicked me, Mr. Mole, she kicked me in some places I would rather not reveal.

> You can't think of any reason why this woman might attack you?

None at all. It's like I said, she must be a nut. She ruined my dress, it's absolutely ruined, and I think my knee is bruised - it hurts.

> And what happened then?

Next thing I know this Mister Frick is putting handcuffs on my wrists, he stood me up and then he's frisking me in public - there were a lot of people gathered there by then - oh, if anyone knows I was there, if word gets out, it'll...

> Ruin your career, yes I know, Miss X, go on.

Go on? As if that's not enough! Then the cops came and this Frick prick said, she's a thief, and they dragged me off. The rest you already know, because since then I've just been sitting here trying to convince you of my utter innocence. Why don't you believe me? I didn't do anything wrong. I was only shopping. There's nothing wrong with that, is there? Well, is there?

Hellen: Well, I really showed that bitch - she won't forget that lesson soon. No one fucks wiv Hellen Duane, not no fossil, not no bone fucker neither. She wanna hit me, I hit back, only I go directly to the source, an I doan use no lacky functionaries. She's the one that set me up, so she's the one I kicked right down again. No way she's gonna mess wiv me. I've got a life to live an a right to live that life, when an where I choose. An the quarters and the dimes is mine because I earned them right - I ain't no thief. That one, tho, I wasn't gonna let her get away with that shit, no suh, nevah!

> Then tell me what you saw?

Hellen: Ooh wee and wasn't she surprised! She wasn't expecting that - oh no, she thought the boys had licked me down an kicked me good, but I got up again, right up, an I know what I had to do. One time in 1982 I think it was, they tried to put me off, they come down wiv official looking

paper, but I stand my ground. Fuck that, I said, I don't care who you are. I am a artist and a soul well feedin all the world. You can't get rid of me!

> Mr. Frick, I want you to tell me what happened when the suspect tried to leave the store. What did you do?

She snatched it and she ran - well, she didn't exactly run, but she definitely was motioning rapidly. I knew she was about to do it even before she did, and when she did I knew that she would head straight for the door. She stuffed it in her coat and fled.

> You gave pursuit...

I did. I was right behind her all the way. Of course, we can't make any arrest until the suspect actually attempts to leave the premises without having paid for the merchandise she has with her. There was still the legalistic possibility that she might thwart my efforts by stopping off and purchasing the thing on her way out. A legalistic possibility, as I said, but I knew she wasn't going to. Still, I had to wait to make my move. So I followed her down the stairs, into the main floor area.

> Did you alert your fellow officers, or indicate in any way that the suspect was to be apprehended in the event she did go past the cashier without paying?

No, sir, there wasn't time, and in any case, there was no need. I was on the spot. I didn't need a backup.

> Yet you lost the fibula?

I never had it, sir. It wasn't mine to lose.

> Nonetheless, if you had called for assistance, the item might have been recovered, isn't that true?

I suppose it could be, sir. However, it was not my fault. This big old crustian parella stepped in front of me and blocked my way. During those moments I lost sight of the suspect, but I soon picked up her trail again. By that time she was almost out the door. The video shows she hadn't paused inside the store, nor did she come within proximity of any other customer.

> So you believe that she still had the fibula when she went out through the door?

Yes, sir, I'm sure of it. The video confirms. And the accomplice must have been outside, right outside the door, beyond the camera range. She made it past the guard - after that she would have been home free, except that I was right behind her all the way.

> And what occurred outside?

I called out, stop that thief! Stop her, thief! And a courageous woman obliged, responding to my call she pounced upon the suspect, and wrestled her to the ground. I was immediately on the spot, and I placed the suspect under arrest.

> You searched her?

Yes, I did.

> But you didn't find the fibula?

No, sir, it was gone. She must have handed it off to her accomplice.

> Did you actually see this accomplice, or witness any such transfer?

No, sir, I did not, but all the evidence points to that conclusion. I don't have the slightest doubt that that is what transpired.

> No, you don't have the slightest doubt, but you don't have the slightest evidence, either. Mr. Frick, are you aware of any irregularities in your handling of this case?

No, sir, I did my job. And I did my best. It's those Procanthean Elexi - they're pretty tricky customers.

> Frick! Look, just get out of here, all right? I mean, thank you for your time. We'll be in touch.

Thank you, sir. I hope we nail this one, don't you?

> I'm still waiting, Mr. Jerome. F. Jerome: I'm afraid I'll have to make it brief. What do you want to know, sir? I'll be glad to answer any questions which you might still want to ask.

> What I want to ask is what I have been asking you all day long. What did you see? I want to know what happened at the dorsal humerus?

F. Jerome: well, I really couldn't say.

> You couldn't say?

F. Jerome: Not really, no.

> But you said you were a witness!

F. Jerome: I was there at the time, and I was a witness, sir. I was witnessing the ebb and flow, the nature of the concourse, the process of the actual transactions. I was observing everything. I could easily go into detail, if you like, but I am pressed for time.

> Tell me, Jerome, just tell me!

F. Jerome: I saw many sad and lonely people, desperate for action and for change. These people must be pitied, sir, not blamed. They are victims of their temporal circumstance. It's not their fault they happened to be born during an era when emotion was to be denied, when intellect must be stifled, when the creative urge of every individual was hampered and restrained by the common situation of decay, despair and helplessness.

> I don't believe this guy!

F. Jerome: It's true. It was very different for you and i. Even though, in our time, this creative urge was forced into the boxes of prepackaged product-self, we still had some outlet and some chance to be ourselves. The fossils, though, had no identity at all. Identity didn't matter. It did not exist. Now they want to be someone before it is too late - that's why all the frenzious activity, the flocking crowds, the boom in skeleton sales. It won't last long, no matter what, because a new world is arising. The manikins will overthrow this order and establish themselves as the rightful rulers of the fashion marketplace. And that will be a change indeed!

> Oh, for Christ's sake, why am I wasting my time with you?

F. Jerome: You see, the manikins know the age of mass production is all over. There will be no industries to cater to their whims and determine their every taste. They will be their own producers and their own consumers too. The rest of us will have to live on whatever we can scavenge from the remnants of ourselves. We'll be picking on our bones, so to speak, before too long. This generation will not be fashion slaves of any kind. You should go sometime and watch, at the dorsal humerus, the last great fashion shopping spree in history. Bones, the last commodity!

> Mr. Jerome, did you see the crime or not?

F. Jerome: But I've been telling you all along. For the last nineteen months unscrupulous investors have been using the general fossil culture erosion, taking advantage of the poor misguided fools, who just happened to be swept along by the march of time, they've poisoned them with deadly x-ray vision, soaked their skins with dangerous acid potions, implanted cancerous bones, caused a general amputation, and all so they could cash in on the last potential gold rush. They've been squeezing blood out of this petrified social stone. The age of skeleton chic is nothing but the burial ground. As usual, the vultures pose as priests, delivering the rites. And there's no one left to mourn, because everyone is rushing to the tomb, as advertised.

It doesn't make no sense. If you wanna stay in business, you just gotta advertise! It's so fucking basic! Anyway, I head on over to this store, but on the way I'm thinking that there ain't no way, I ain't never gonna find this bone, and I gotta get myself to break the bad news to the lady in the hospital. Do I tell her the truth? Look, the market forces got your leg, and

they ain't gonna give it back. If it was me, I'd say forget it, you know, it's gone, and you're just gonna have to live with it, or live without it, whatever. And why don't she get a fake one anyhow? I hear they're just as good, maybe even better.

Okay, she's rich, she wants the real thing. She must be rich - she's living in the fucking hospital! So what am I supposed to care? People lose things everyday - I got my work to do. I can't go running around all over town because some lady lost her leg! What about the fuzz's in this world? What about the sweatshirts? What about the old tin forks? Some things are simply more important, that's the way I see it. But, hell, I'll give it one more try, I'll check out this dorsal humerus even though I know they're gonna laugh at me and say, a Scythian? No way! Not on your life! I don't take humiliation easy. I get embarrassed, you know? The whole damned fucking species makes me blush sometimes. I look around, I see what's going on. Humans! Now, that's embarrassing!

And this is where it gets ridiculous - I mean, I don't even get inside the place. I'm just walking towards the door when suddenly this fossil fashion monkey type comes spinning out - she looks around, there's this other woman starts to yell, and this guy is shouting from behind, the crowd gets thick, and I get stuck, I just can't move, I'm trapped. Next thing I know, I got this bone - it's right here in my hand! I don't know what it's doing there! I don't know what the fuck is going on! I think, hey, this is suspicious, but then I say, well, fuck, who cares, let's go, so I turn and get my ass right out of there, I run and run, I duck into an alley and I check it out. Well, whaddya fuckin know? It's the fuckin fibula itself! Same size. Same kind and everything! I wanna laugh. I wanna cry. So I just get up, I peek around the corner, then I turn into the wall, I scream, I did it, motherfuckers, me!

Dawn Debris! I got the lady's leg! There ain't no one's got it
like I do!