

MURDER at the COLONIAL

A novel by the
residents of
Freedom
Village



A tribute to the Colonial Building of
Freedom Village Bradenton

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MURDER AT THE COLONIAL

Chapter 1 – by Jim Baker

Minjie and Jacko were both grinning as they left the dining room and turned into the Courtyard. The grins were the result of their first Anniversary dinner at the Colonial Dining Room. Somebody might guess that after just one year of marriage the anticipation of getting back to their apartment for some amorous adventures might also play a part in their happiness. Maybe so, but this wasn't your usual one-year Anniversary deal, Minjie and Jacko Bryan were both octogenarians, living at Freedom Village, along with lots of other senior citizens.

But never mind that, they were still happy and both of them loved going through the Colonial Courtyard which isn't a courtyard. It's really more of a hidden tropical garden, circled by the walls of the Colonial Building. Minjie loved all the tropical plants, particularly the Ligustrum tree which harbored a bunch of transplanted orchids, including her special one, the last gift from her previous husband. She'd been taking care of it for more than three years now. Jacko, on the other hand, was more of a wildlife guy, so he was into the lizards. The Colonial Courtyard sports the largest lizard collection in all of Freedom Village, and Jacko knew each and every one of them. He had names for some of his favorites, including one small guy he'd named Little Jacko Gecko. Jacko was holding hands with Minjie as they strolled through the garden but was sort of keeping his eye out for Little Jacko.

Both partners had lived at the Colonial for several years before they got the courage to become a couple, so the one-year anniversary was like the end of a trial period, a successful one it would seem. Both would hold on to the memories they had before but were committed to making some new memories that would also be good, just in a different way.

Courtyard stroll completed, they came into the other side of the building by the mailboxes where they were joined by Bren and Bruce Turner, their closest friends. The Turners had eaten in the Concord Dining room tonight, and naturally the topic of conversation turned to food – just like it did every night. They ambled to the elevator and Jacko pushed the Call button then turned back to the culinary conversation.

Bruce: "I ordered the Filet Mignon and Boy, was it ever good. Best steak I've had in a couple of months, it was hot but not overcooked for a change! I'm gonna keep ordering Filets while the kitchen's on a roll."

Bren: “I should have done the same, but I chose the Buffet tonight. I had a small piece of the Chicken Whatever and a piece of the Snapper. I hate it when my fish tastes fishy, but this one did. The lettuce wedge salad was great though.”

Jacko: “You have to give them credit for making an effort. My pork tenderloin wasn’t all that tender so the server took it back and brought me a better piece. At least we don’t have to do dishes.”

Minjie opened her mouth to say something just as the elevator door opened. Instead of speaking her eyes grew wide and she let out a low moan – as she crumpled slowly onto the settee behind her.

Minjie is on the settee, looking pale as a ghost. Jacko stepped over and grabbed her to make sure she didn’t fall and Bren helped get her seated. Then they all looked at the elevator - a body lay face-down in the elevator in a large pool of blood. Blood was on the walls, blood was dripping down the crack into the elevator well, blood was all over the body of the man – at least it looked like a man.

“Somebody get some help while I check him.” said Jacko.

Bruce headed toward the lobby while Jacko steeled himself to turn the guy over to check for signs of life. He was able to lift the body just enough to see two things:

The poor guy’s throat was cut, and Jacko had never seen the man before. He was definitely not a Colonial resident. Jacko was certain of that, not only because he didn’t recognize the face but also because the guy was probably only in his thirties.

Jacko and Bren were seeing to Minjie who was finally getting some color back in her face when Bruce returned with Sandy, the evening Concierge, and two Security Guards. One of the guards blocked the elevator open while the other called 911. Sandy went to phone all the East wing residents to tell them of the elevator closure. Then everybody, plus a few more residents trying to get to the elevator, stood around waiting for the police to arrive.

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The two couples were sitting in the Betsy Ross Room, huddled around one table, talking about what they’d just experienced. There were a few other residents there also, mostly those with upper floor apartments who couldn’t manage the stairs. They would either need help getting upstairs or would have to get an empty apartment on the first floor. The elevator area was designated a “homicide scene” and blocked off with black and yellow police tape. One lady, Celine something, seemed more shaky than usual, her husband

had taken the stairs to their apartment, but she couldn't manage that in her scooter. Maybe someone in the police would help her to the fifth floor. Or, perhaps management could find her an empty apartment on the first floor for the few days it would take to get the elevator cleaned of all the blood and gore and back in service again.

Patrolman Lewis of Bradenton PD had secured the crime scene and requested that everybody gather in the Betsy Ross room until the Homicide detectives arrived.

Jacko was describing to the other three what he had seen when he partially turned the body over.

"His throat was slashed from ear to ear it looked like. There was blood all over the place except for his face which had hardly any blood on it at all. It almost looked like the face had been cleaned, but there was something written or drawn on it with green paint. Maybe a green Magic Marker."

"What did it look like, Jacko" asked Bren, "could it have been a drawing of a mask?"

"Maybe something like that, I didn't really get a good look. I just wanted to get out of there once I saw he was dead. But I really think it was either green printing or maybe some kind of symbols."

Minjee chimed in – "What's going to happen now? How long do you think we're going to be here? I'd really like to get home."

Both Bruce and Jacko predicted it would be late that night before they returned to their apartments.

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A couple walked into the Betsy Ross. The woman was maybe in her '40s, medium height, and the man was somewhat younger, tall, and dressed casually. Both wore badges. The woman seemed to be in charge as she glanced around and immediately headed over to the two couples and introduced herself,

"I'm Detective Tracy and this is my partner, Detective Franks. We've been assigned to investigate this unfortunate situation. I'm guessing you are the Turners and the Bryans, but could you tell us who is who?"

All the introductions got straightened out and Detective Tracy got right down to it.

"We're going to have to talk to each of you about tonight's events. We know you're all probably a little bit tired and upset right now, but the interviews are something we really need to do as soon as possible. We'll be talking to you individually in Apt 115, right down

the hall, but right now we have a question for the group.”

Detective Franks interrupted, sort of gruffly. “You four are the only ones who saw the body. Can any of you identify the corpse?”

All four began to shake their head and try to answer but Franks broke in again.

“C’mon people, this is a serious police matter and it’s against the law for any of you to hold back any important information.”

Franks was glaring at them as he uttered this last sentence.

Tracy was showing an equal if not greater glare toward Franks as she tried to defuse the situation. “OK, we understand you didn’t get a very good look, so we might ask you to try again after the medical examiner has cleaned up the body. That may be tomorrow. Let’s start the interviews now, so we can get them done and get you folks back to your apartments. Ms. Turner let’s start with you. We’ll go to Apt 115. I’d really appreciate it if you others would not talk about the situation anymore, maybe just talk about your plans for tomorrow, or grandkids or something. I noticed there are restrooms right down the hall. Feel free to go there, but please don’t go anywhere else. ”

Franks broke in again. “Maybe it’d be better if they sat at three different tables, don’t you think?”

Tracy gave him another look! “No, I’m sure they’ll be just fine keeping each other company.”

The two detectives escorted Bren down the hall and all sat down on some card-table chairs which were the only furniture in the apartment.

Tracy led off. “Ms. Turner, I’ll call you Bren if you don’t mind, just to be comfortable. You’re welcome to call me Tracy if you like, or Detective. Would you tell us, in your own words, just what you observed tonight?”

Bren explained that she and Bruce had eaten at the Concord tonight and just happened to meet their friends at the mailboxes when they were returning.

“We were mostly talking about our dinners when the elevator arrived and Minjie almost fainted. I looked over at the elevator and saw the body, but I really didn’t see it very well. Jacko checked on Minjie, then went over to see if the guy was still alive, but he said he wasn’t. Bruce went to call Security, and that’s all I know.”

Franks was still looking irritated, but Tracy calmly said “Thanks Bren. Now I’d like you to

think this next question over before you answer. Was there anything about what you observed that struck you as being out of place or unusual?”

Bren thought for a while and said “Well, it seemed to me that we were waiting on the elevator for a long time, like maybe it was up on the fifth floor. And I don’t know if this counts, but Jacko said the man had something on his face.”

Franks quickly said “No that doesn’t count. Just tell us what you actually saw yourself.”

Tracy returned to the elevator timing. “Bren, instead of being on the fifth floor, might it be that the elevator was being delayed, perhaps even on the second or third floor? I noticed that there is a floor indicator above the elevator door, maybe you looked at that?”

“No,” said Bren, “I didn’t notice the floor number thing. Anyway, it’s broken and never shows the second floor. But yes, the elevator might have been held up on a lower floor but I don’t know why it would have been unless . . . Wait, do you mean . . . oh no, I don’t want to think about that.”

On that note the interview ended and the three of them trooped back to the Betsy Ross. Bruce was up next and they went through basically the same procedure again. Bruce explained his role, he went to the front desk and stayed there until Security drove up and he had requested that 911 be called.

Tracy then asked if he noticed anything unusual about the arrival of the elevator.

“Well, seeing that guy laying there was the most unusual thing I’ve seen in my life!”

Tracy apologized, saying “I’m sure you’re right about that, but I’m really asking about how quickly the elevator arrived, was it fast or slow?”

“Sorry, it just seemed normal to me. I don’t pay that much attention, sometimes it’s fast and sometimes it isn’t. If anything, I’d say it was about as usual.”

They escorted Bruce back, then brought Minjie to the interview room. Minjie had pretty much recovered, she had all her color back and no longer looked shaken. Her story was pretty straightforward. The elevator door started to open and the first thing she saw was an arm flopping out of the opening, then she saw the rest of the body and all the blood. She got a little dizzy and sat down on the settee. Minjie said she didn’t actually faint, but that she didn’t see or hear anything after she sat down. When asked, Minjie said she didn’t notice that it was a man, but thought that one of the others told her. Minjie also had nothing to offer about the time it took the elevator to arrive.

They had saved Jacko for last, perhaps thinking he had the most information.

Jacko described his actions, that he pushed the elevator Call button, then turned away

from the elevator to join the conversation.

“I heard Minjie moan, and saw her sort of slumping toward that stool. So I went over to grab her and when I saw she wasn’t actually fainting Bren and I got her sitting up. I looked back around at the elevator. I saw a body and a lot of blood. My first thought was that someone might need help so I went to the elevator and lifted the upper part of the man’s body to see if he was breathing. I only got it far enough up to see the throat was gaping open, like it had been cut cleanly across. There was blood all over and I was sure he was dead, so I put him back down and went back to check on Minjie. That’s about it.”

Tracy asked, “Can you describe the body?”

Jacko explained that he could see it was a man, he thought about thirty-ish.

“When I lifted him up I saw some green stuff on his face, I thought it looked like printing but couldn’t make out any actual letters. I don’t know what it was.”

Tracy asked if he had touched anything other than the body.

“I might have touched the wall or maybe the door. I really don’t know if I did or not.”

Tracy then asked about the elevator timing, whether Jacko thought it had arrived quickly, or not so quickly. Jacko answered confidently “It was slow. After I pushed the button the conversation went on for a long time before the elevator arrived.”

Franks stood up and stood over Jacko -

“Mr. Bryan, do you know it is illegal to alter a crime scene like you did by moving the body?”

Jacko tried to keep his calm, and said “As I explained, I thought I should see if I could save a life and . . . “

Franks continued “and perhaps you would like to explain how you got that bloodstain on your shirt.”

Jacko couldn’t take this. He said “What’s going on here? I’m trying my best to help you people but you’re acting like I’m a Suspect. Maybe I need to get a lawyer.”

Tracy tried to get control of the situation by telling Franks to ease off a little bit.

Franks continued “Damn it Dixie, this guy knows more than he’s telling us and I think we should take him downtown where we can get some answers out of him. I don’t care if he does get a lawyer, we need information.”

Jacko stood up, as mad as he’d ever been. “That’s it! I’m out of here. I won’t talk to you

people any . . .”, turning to Detective Tracy, “Wait, did he just call you Dixie? Are you really Detective Dixie Tracy?” Jacko began to laugh, and Tracy ruefully joined him. “You’ve found me out, but please don’t tell anyone else, just call me Tracy. I can’t take any more wrist radio jokes.”

“OK,” she said, “interview is over for now, but I’m sure we’ll need to talk again after the medical report comes out. Hopefully the next time will be a little more genial.” With a look toward Franks as she said this.

Jacko joined the other three, and they were okayed to go back home, but of course they had to walk around the first floor to reach the stairs leading to their apartments.

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Dixie Tracy was worrying about her partner as they returned to the elevator. Her old partner was close to retirement and had moved to a desk job about six months ago. So she became a lead Detective, and Detective Franks was assigned to be her junior partner. Truth be told, he was a really good detective, a workaholic, and happy to do even the dullest paperwork when needed. His only problem was a complete lack of tact during interviews. He couldn’t seem to grasp that an interview technique that would be ok on Gangsters and Drug-sellers wasn’t appropriate for classy senior citizens. Oh well, maybe he’d learn something from this case before she had to kill him.



## **Chapter 2 – by Bill Twomey**

It was late when they left Freedom village and both detectives, Tracy, and Franks, were at home winding down after a long day. Tracy enjoyed a nicely appointed apartment in south Bradenton and Franks had purchased a small house on the near east side. Both were in an easy chair, and both were enjoying the taste of their favorite “end of the day” beverage. Tracy a nice cab and Franks a Famous Grouse, neat (room temperature with no ice). Both pondered the new case and their relationship.

Tracy felt a renewed concern over trying to control Frank’s actions during interviews with ordinary citizens, particularly the senior bunch they were now dealing with at the old people’s home. They were great together with the everyday bad actors, merely assuming the “good cop – bad cop” roles inherent in their nature. Oh well she mused, they were new together and it would work itself out.

She smiled at the memory of the chief of detectives describing them to his boss. “My Doberman and bulldog team” he said as he chuckled, “you don’t want either one locked on your gluteus maximus if you’re a bad guy.” She was fairly sure which role she enjoyed in the chief’s assessment. And that was ok, quick, smart, and lethal when necessary was accurate, even if not personally flattering. She smiled again as she drew the cab over her tongue.

Franks was on his second round as he pondered Tracy. Competent... actually better than that he admitted to himself, she was damned good at what she did. But the senior detective’s slot should have been his. He had more seniority on the force. Tracy had transferred in from Chicago. She had never served as a patrol officer in Bradenton or anywhere else.

But he grimaced as he acknowledged to himself, there was the fact that she had nearly aced the advancement exam. He had scored high, but not nearly at her level. He smiled at last when he remembered that since they had paired up as a team, they had enjoyed the highest clearance rate on the homicide squad.

As his stomach warmed and his mood lightened, he conceded to himself that it would probably work out. She was really smart and good to work with. If he could just break her of sounding like his mother.... He quickly put down his drink and picked up the phone. Geez, he thought to himself, it’s been way too long since I called my mother. “Hi Mom....” “Oh! Dave, how wonderful.”

Tracy and Franks met early the next morning at a convenient diner to enjoy a cup of coffee and to plan their day at the OPH. They reached an easy agreement on how to proceed, then and drove back to the Colonial building to start canvassing the residents for further insight about what had transpired the night before. A short distinguished greying man met them at the door, offered his hand, and said, “we need to talk.”

I’m Alistair McDuff the General Manager, and you are? After the preliminaries were exchanged, McDuff offered that he or his staff would afford them any assistance they might require. Tracy thanked McDuff. Franks opined the best thing McDuff could do was to stay out of the way. Tracy thought she actually heard McDuff’s teeth grind as he walked away. Oh well “another day another dollar” she thought. She asked Franks to start with the resident canvassing and decided she would meet with the General manager. Patrolman Lewis would help Franks.

Tracy met McDuff in the quaint administration building known to the locals as “The Landings.” She thought the building looked like it would be more at home in the Alps rather than Bradenton. More inviting of snow than palm trees.

“Please call me Al” McDuff said as he offered her a cup of coffee. Dixie pleasantly replied, “Yes, on the coffee -Tracy or detective Tracy as you prefer.” “Now, what can you tell me about the victim?” Al replied, “good, let’s get down to business.”

Their conversation quickly established that the victim’s name was Douglas Fairhaven and that he was a “senior accountant” for Freedom Village’s owners. McDuff further clarified that Fairhaven’s job really was more of a trouble shooter and that the military would have designated him as the company’s Inspector General.

Apparently, Fairhaven was on the campus concerning an issue with bookkeeping or, perhaps, some other troublesome activity related to the Colonial building. The Village rumor mill hummed that “where Fairhaven goes, usually heads roll shortly thereafter.” McDuff finished with, “I actually know little more than that.” Tracy also confirmed that the owners had notified Fairhaven’s next of kin and McDuff offered to provide that information if she needed it.

From her own observations and McDuff’s input, Tracy determined Freedom Village covered over thirty acres of ground and the Colonial was only one of several buildings. Potential suspects – five hundred plus residents and four hundred plus staff. “Great” she thought.

Tracy asked McDuff for a business card so she could contact him again, if needed. He produced a card without further comment. “Ok,” she thought, “this interview is over as far as Al is concerned.” Well, she had everything she needed and felt no need to prove

who packed the biggest gun...for now. She simply replied, "Thank you," and went looking for Franks and Lewis.

As Tracy made her way back to the Colonial building she noted the location's proximity to Blake hospital's emergency room, only a short block away. Many of the people who ended up in the ER were there because of a lifestyle incompatible with "law and order." If nothing broke quickly in this case Blake is another big question she couldn't dismiss.

The Florida weather was hot and oppressive. Tracy felt her clothes absorb her body's moisture as she walked. "Phew." Perhaps evening would provide a breeze off the Gulf of Mexico, or a rain shower, to give temporary relief. But for right now she remained uncomfortable. She yearned for the building's AC as she headed for the Colonial's front door. The anticipated relief vanished when, in the U-shaped front drive, Tracy encountered the "crime scene team" loading their van. "Oh well, business first."

The crime scene team's chief tech provided additional detail to her case. Luminol, a chemical used with ultraviolet light to disclose otherwise unobservable blood stains, had identified the area outside the second-floor elevator door as the other half of the crime scene. The "uniforms" had secured the area with the ever-present yellow tape. The technician noted further that the Luminol also uncovered a partial shoe print in the hall. Unfortunately, while the Luminol revealed part of the tread pattern, most of the details were obscured.

Even more troubling, as far as Tracy was concerned, was that the necessity of using the luminol meant the perp had tried to destroy the evidence and, apparently came prepared to do so.

The lab would test blood samples from both areas. She thought, "Oh yeah, those results would show up too late to help me." Useful to the prosecutor's case, but unlikely to provide any useful information for her investigation. The tech finished with an opinion that the "green" writing on the victim's face was probably blue magic marker interacting with whatever chemical was used to clean the "vic's" face.

Those details logged in her brain, she entered the lobby and was finally enjoying the blessed AC. The Medical Examiner was waiting for her in the seating area across from the front desk. She put the ME on hold for a minute while she poured a glass of icy water from a nearby fountain.

They then sat in comfortable adjacent chairs and the ME noted that, while the final results would await the autopsy, the apparent cause of death was exsanguination, loss of blood, from the jagged wound that nearly removed the victim's head. The wound, she opined, was from a blade at least eight inches long with a serrated edge.

The ME agreed with the crime scene tech's yellow and blue hypothesis. Closer examination, she explained, disclosed that the writing read, "*Sic semper tyrannis.*" The time of death was consistent with the discovery of the body, about 6 P.M. Tracy appreciated the "hard evidence," albeit sparse, that these details provided. She thanked the doctor for her help.

Franks and Lewis stood nearby and patiently listened to all this while waiting to report their findings to Tracy. Lewis went first. Tracy had assigned him to interview the original four octogenarians on the scene, sensing that he might have more success than Franks. Lewis reported that all four had solid alibis as they were each with forty or more other residents eating in either the Concord building or in the Colonial's first floor dining room at the time of the murder.

One of the four, Jacko Bryan, did offer that one of the other residents, "Lou Ferrigno, a big hulking guy," was seen from time to-time with some pretty "unsavory characters." These "visitors," according to Turner, seemed to come and go at all hours of the day and night. "They didn't look like our kind of people" was his last thought.

Following Bryant's revelation, Franks collected data on Ferrigno from the police database. Ferrigno, as it turns out, was from Howard Beach New York and had an extensive arrest record, but no convictions. He was "suspected" of being muscle for the local, "Howard Beach," crime boss. Again, no proof. Shaking his head Franks finished, "Believe it or not, his nickname in Howard Beach was "the Hammer."

"Interesting" Tracy thought, but the idea of a mafia hitman living in an old people's home in Bradenton Florida didn't get much traction in her immediate plans. Looking back at Franks she asked, "What else?" Franks, thorough as always, had surveyed the Colonial's inhouse kitchen as a logical source of knives. Indeed, "the chef" indignantly reported that one of his personal, "awfully expensive," knives had "gone missing." The missing piece of cutlery was about ten inches long with a serrated blade.

The business with Ferrigno nagged at Tracy's mind. She had to put it out of the way before moving to other issues. So, she and Franks returned to Jacko Bryan's apartment to flesh out the story. Glancing with distain at Franks, Jacko immediately asked where police officer Lewis was.

Franks lit up like a Roman candle. Stepping into Jacko's face he angrily yelled, "You are way too close to this case and I'm going to figure out what you're up to." Backing up, Jacko responded, "we're through here." Tracy looked to Jacko and asked if he could give them a minute. Jacko blew out his breath and shrugged his shoulders. Tracy took that as a "yes" and asked Franks to step into the hall for a moment.

In the hall Franks, still angry, said, "That guy is up to something." Tracy nodded, "perhaps, but we're not going to get anywhere if he is unwilling to talk to us without lawyering up." Franks mumbled, "give me two minutes alone with that clown and he'll sing like a canary." Tracy took a deep breath and thought, "teaching moment."

"Dave," she began and then assigned Franks to go through the small dumpster she had noticed earlier behind the kitchen downstairs. Franks started to reply, "Dixie," an upturned hand in his face stopped him in mid-sentence. "Senior Detective Tracy" she ominously intoned. "Does the junior detective have a question about his assignment?" Franks glared at her for a moment, said "No" and quickly turned on his heels and started downstairs.

Shaking her head she thought, "Good move Dave Franks, perhaps there is hope for you." She went back to Jacko but learned nothing new about the case or "the Hammer." Tracy then went to the Betsy Ross room and tried to put the facts together in her head. After a few minutes Patrolman Lewis stuck his head in the door and Tracy asked him to canvas the staff at Blake Hospital to see if anything stood out in their minds on the night of the murder.

Dismissing Lewis, Tracy returned to her review of the facts. For the next hour and a half Tracy pondered the facts and cataloged them in her notes.

Tracy heard the door open and turned to see Dave Franks looking a little more than worse for the wear. Deeply bowing his head and spreading his arms in supplication Franks offered, "The Junior Detective humbly seeks permission to approach the venerable senior detective to report."

Despite herself Tracy chuckled aloud and asked, "What have you got Dave?"

"Sorry Dix" he said. He then produced a plastic evidence bag containing a long kitchen knife. "Bagged, tagged and entered in the log" he reported. He also noted that FV employees had dumped the small trash wagon Tracy had seen into an exceptionally large dumpster in a nearby building. That's where he ended up. Franks was as thorough as ever she thought. "Let's get it to the lab" she instructed. She also wrinkled her nose and observed "Franks you smell and badly need a bath." She got back only a grunt in response.

Tracy then told Franks that their next step was a walk around the building and its outside perimeter. "We need to get the lay of the land." As they walked, Tracy explained her thoughts about the "cleaning" attempt in the Second floor elevator area. Franks confirmed her conclusion. "Yeah Dix, this is looking more like a hit than a crime of passion."

The pair stopped to see a flock of White Ibis foraging around the edge of a small lake in front of the building. "Nice," Franks observed. "Umm," Tracy agreed. Still stuck on the "cleaning mystery," she shared her discovery that almost everybody on campus possessed a key to the "Resident Storage Room" immediately across the hall from the elevator's second floor door.

Franks considered the location and postulated that the space would indeed provide a convenient place to wait in ambush and to hide the cleaning materials that the murderer used in his or her failed attempt to destroy the evidence. Their journey then took them down a path between the building and a wall separating the adjacent housing community.

The pleasant smell and ambiance of hibiscus and bottle brush quickly gave way to something far less pleasant. Pointing to a small building off to the side, Franks confirmed the structure as the one housing the knife yielding dumpster. "Yes, I recognize the odor" she offered as she looked over at Franks and moved slightly away. His short retort quickly followed, "Not funny Dix!"

Their walk also disclosed that there were several entrances to the Colonial building, all of which, while locked, offered little real deterrence to anyone determined to gain entry. One door, immediately across from the hospital, renewed their awareness of the Colonial's proximity to the emergency room and its sometimes-dodgy clientele.

Just off the property they also noted the presence of a bus stop and apparent "smoking areas" used by Freedom Village staff and Blake employees as well. Franks gestured to a preschool nearby and wryly noted, "I guess we can count most of them out." Tracy merely looked at him and rolled her eyes. "Unfortunately," she mused, "they are the only ones. And if a gun was involved I might be worrying about the five-year-olds." "Speaking of which, where the hell did Lewis get to?"

After looking confused for a second, Franks responded with a shrug and shared that his and Lewis's earlier "resident interviews" supplied the fact that the vic, Fairhaven, was a creature of habit and would, predictably, arrive at the elevator sometime between five of and five after six every evening. He inevitably ate at the Anna Marie Oyster Bar on Cortez Boulevard at six-fifteen and promptly returned to his guest room by seven-thirty.

Tracy turned and queried Franks, "What the hell are we missing Dave?" Franks thought for a minute, shook his head, and observed, "Damned if I know Dix."



### **Chapter 3 – by Phyllis Lorelli**

Freedom Village was buzzing! There were four women who, since hearing about this dead man in the Colonial Elevator, seemed to be huddled together in deep conversation.

Madge Bishop was one of them. Donna Adams, Ruth Viner, and Mary DeFeo were the other three.

The main thing that brought these four women to Florida and Freedom Village was the death of their husbands and the cold weather as a lot of elderly residents can attest to. The cold weather and the expense of maintaining a home, well, that had to end! Even if it meant not seeing their children and grandchildren that often. They could always visit them in the summer and likewise the families could visit Florida in the winter. That way the families could stay connected.

They knew about the Village because of their winter vacations there. They liked the fact that Bradenton was a clean, quiet, bedroom community which was strategically located close enough to Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota. If you wanted culture, and entertainment you didn't have that far to go.

The Village was beautiful with many highly educated and talented people and, thank God, a library. All of the ladies felt that they made a good move because of all the activities, and it just so happens, mahjong was their favorite.

All four of these women had another thing in common ... their fascination with murder mysteries. Mary watches true life crime and forensics. Donna likes espionage and Ruth, and Mary were Alfred Hitchcock fans. So naturally, these four women were caught up in the Village mystery.

They decided to meet in one of their apartments. They did not want people to be stopping by to chat; it would be too distracting. Mary offered her apartment. Since she liked to cook, she could offer them treats and drinks. All agreed, so Mary's it was. They would meet that afternoon at 3PM. That way they could go over any new murder gossip. "Just think" Mary said, "a real life murder where we live and breathe!" As long as it isn't one of us, Ruth added.

That afternoon Mary brought up a few facts:

1. The victim was staying at the Colonial temporarily because he was working for the FV owners as an accountant in our community.

- 2) There has also been some unsavory men here at strange hours.

“Oh,” said Donna, “Why didn’t someone report it!” She was quite shocked. “You know,” she went on, “I think Freedom Village should put up cameras at all the entrances to the buildings and in the hallways...both sides!”

“Who knows?” Mary said, “It may come to that.

“Again,” Donna put forth, “this may do away with Ruth’s idea of maybe one or two women having an affair with him.... what did they call those kind of women?”....Not to miss a beat, Ruth chimed in “Cougars” “Older women and younger men. Truth is stranger than fiction” she went on, “take a good look at the women here. There are many here that are very attractive, dress beautifully, in good shape and have a young attitude!”

“Are you talking about yourself?” said Donna jokingly.

“Not at all.” Said Ruth. “But to be honest, you only live once.”

Donna felt that she had to warn Ruth about something that happened to a friend of hers not too long ago. A nice man in his fifties showered her friend with compliments and she fell for it hook, line and sinker. “To spare you of the gory details,” she said, “my friend almost lost her savings. “Come to find out that is all he was after! A purse! I’m told depending on the age of the men, it’s either “a nurse or a purse”.

“Oh, for heaven’s sake, let’s get back to what we know! Which isn’t much.” Says Madge.

“To rehash,” Madge stated, “Mr. Fairhaven is an accountant for the Freedom Village owners. Could he have been messing around with the books to pay back the mob boss and he ended up, as they say, over his head. No pun intended. I heard that his throat was slashed from ear to ear which almost removed his head. Maybe the unsavory men have been blackmailing him over his dealings with the mob. Fairhaven certainly would not want the Freedom Village owners to know about it, if, in fact, it was true. Maybe the unsavory men were tired of the cat and mouse game that he was dishing out and they gave him an ultimatum.” Madge went on, “You know, you can’t go to the mob to help you get out of a jam. You owe them a favor in return... when they come to collect, you better not say no. Putting it mildly...they own you!

Ruth could not wait to tell them what she had found out. After having another drink she began...ladies, I was at the colonial visiting with our friend Minjie. As we were in the lobby talking, a big guy walks by and says hi to Minjie. Minjie says hi Lou, they talk a little bit and then he goes on his way but not before Minjie introduces him to me. Ruth goes on, I couldn’t believe my eyes! After he left I said, I know him. I use to dance with him and a lot of other Italian men. I can’t remember his last name but his first

name was Lou. They called him "The Hammer! Could it be Ferrigno, Minjie asked?  
Yes! That's it! Replied Ruth.

I'm not surprised that he didn't recognize me. I was in my early 30's but I looked a lot younger back then. Nobody thought that I was 30! Anyhow, I remember him! Wow!

Say what you will about the Mafia, they were complete gentlemen with me. Whenever I left the club or bar, they would see to it that I got in my car safely.

"I always knew that you had "past" said Donna. Don't we all have skeletons in our closet answered Ruth.

O.K, Mary said' I think that we have gone as far as we can with this mystery. We are not going to be any help to the detectives. Even if Ruth did have a past and even if she did dance with Italian, Mafia men, this is not our territory! Let's do what is our territory! Play mahjong, they all said together!

## **Chapter 4 – by Bill Jacobs**

Lou Ferrigno had moved alone into the Concord Building at Freedom Village only a year before, but it didn't take him long to make an impression, and it was not a good one. In addition to his commanding physical appearance he had a direct personality and focused his energy on trying to meet every single woman in the community. It didn't take long before he established a bad reputation. But he pressed on, having relocated from the Bronx where operated a furniture moving business, which flourished in the overheated real estate market in downtown Manhattan. A business that was based upon the intersection of real estate brokers, corporate office managers, the union, and behind the scenes, the mob.

And there was always a lot of dollars involved in every transaction. The first Tuesday morning of every month they would meet together at the Hunt Club, a venerable building on Front Street. Within a few hours they would have all the pieces together for the month to make sure everyone was taken care of. A tough job in a tough city.

Although Lou had sold the business and retired, there were strings attached as they always are in that business. He had become aware of Freedom Village, as it's owned by a real estate investment trust company, aptly named HardNose., a corporation that he had been servicing its office locations for years. When his references were checked by Freedom Village, he was a shoo in.

A few weeks later, Lou had a phone call from New York.

"So how's it goin' down there, Hammer?" asked the caller.

"Hi Sam, just fine but the place kind'a operates different from home", he said.

"Look," said Sam, "we've got a problem. The exec's from HardNose are concerned with the financial results of this place and they've sent down one of their accountants to scope it out."

"So what can I do bout it?" asked Lou.

"Well they want to make sure the accountant is extremely accurate on his assessment because although the occupancy rate is dragging down their profitability, there might be additional problems" said Sam. "And they know you live there so they want you to keep tabs on what's going on. His name is Douglas Fairhaven, so check him out and get back to me", said Sam.

"I'll try my best" said Lou, "and let you know what I find out."

The total campus of Freedom Village spreads over 50 acres including Lou's building, the Concord, which is connected by covered walkways to the Landings, - the main offices and community facilities, and the Lexington, the largest of the residential buildings.

Directly across from the Landings, the INN provides to Assisted Living, Memory Care and Skilled Nursing. Behind and separate from the Inn is the Colonial building, the scene of the crime. Its remoteness might have been contributing factor due to its low occupancy.

And north of all these buildings, across 18<sup>th</sup> Street, there is a separate community, the Villas. Ironically the Villas, isolated to the north and the Colonial, isolated to the south share one main desk and dining room, located in the Colonial. Yet another source of potential witnesses. Once detectives Tracy and Franks understood these connections, they realized the complexity of their task of interviewing and understanding the relationships of the two outlier communities.

Doug Fairhaven had arrived two weeks before he was murdered. He was assigned a guest bedroom on the second floor of the Colonial building on its east side. The east side has a higher occupancy than the west side. Another very curious fact is that the east and west side are two different heights and are only connected on the first and second floor. The east elevators service five floors while the west side has a separate elevator servicing its three floors. Another variable in solving the case could be determining if the murderer might have escaped by crossing to the west side of the building, where they could exit the building without being seen..

Doug had a thing for raw oysters ever since he was a boy in New Orleans. He was a regular customer at the Acme Oyster House on Iberville Street in the French Quarter. Within the first few nights he tried a few oyster bars in Bradenton and Sarasota and settled on the nearest, Anna Maria Oyster Bar on Cortez Road . He made it a point to get there around 5PM and sit at the bar. A steady flow of customers came and went each evening so it was easy to strike up a casual conversation. By the end of the first week, he had made a slight acquaintance with a couple of younger guys who were visiting nearby Anna Maria Island and its great beaches. They hit it off as Doug had an apartment on the lower east side and the guys were right across the bridge in Brooklyn.

"Yeah, we come down every year late in the spring when the tourist crush is about over," said Tony. "Particularly the old timers who can't wait get to back to Cleveland," his buddy Dino added sarcastically. "Well, I might as well admit that I am down here on

accounting business at an old people's home," said Doug. "You gotta be kiddin' said Tony. "Let's have another round here, bartender!" said Tony.

Doug was busy every day reviewing detailed financial statements from every department. When he opened the books of the food and beverage operation he knew this would be a good place to check out. Firstly, it was a relatively large percent of the total operating expense, and it contained many transactions every month and was subject to constant variation. Particularly in this year of rapid inflation.

He paid particular attention to one account: S&S Food Distributors headquartered in Brooklyn, who were by the far the largest supplier to Freedom Village every month. Because his employer Hard Nose also owned a dozen other senior living communities in Florida it would be possible to construct comparable costs between locations.

With some effort, Doug was able to compare invoice amounts to the amount of food products by shipment. The amounts charged monthly did not seem consistent with the quantities of food being delivered. The month to month variance was sometimes as high as 20 percent. On an annual basis this could amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars!

It was also interesting to note that six months prior to his arrival the Director of Food Services had died in a late night motorcycle accident. There was no other vehicle involved and there were no witnesses so the cause of the accident was still under investigation. "Something is rotten in the food department", thought Doug.

Meanwhile, back at the station, Detectives Tracy and Franks had been summarizing what they knew so far. The key facts were arranged with stick pins on the large felt evidence board:

- Doug Fairbanks - found dead in the elevator.
- An accountant working for the owner of FV, a real estate investment trust - HardNose.
- He was likely killed with a large serrated knife.
- He had the phrase "*sic semper Tyrannis*" scrawled on his face.
- He dined regularly at Anna Maria Oyster Bar
- An FV resident, Lou Ferrigno, had mob connections, nicknamed "Hammer." He had been seen with a couple of unsavory characters that were not FV residents.
- Both Fairbanks and Ferrigno had connections to NYC.



As they scanned the board, Tracy said to Franks, 'We need to find out more about Lou and the two "unsavory characters" he has been seen with. We know he eats regularly at AMB. Let's stake out the place tomorrow night'. Frank said "Hey, I love oysters."

"Get some discreet photos of these guys and I will run them through the NYPD database. " said Tracy. "Captain Benson and I graduated from the Police Academy together. I'm sure she'll put a rush on it."

## **Chapter 5 – by Laverne Raisch**

My name is Crystal and as do Madge and her friends, I also live in the Colonial Building in Freedom Village, in Bradenton, Florida. I have been here for a little over 6 years with my roommate, a beautiful muted calico cat, named Love. And as a widow, being alone, I have always felt very safe – inside the buildings if I walk down the hall in the late evenings or any time if I walk outside to the Landings or the Villas. I also take that elevator, where the murder took place, sometimes alone and sometimes with other residents, so I was very upset with what happened to Doug Fairhaven, the visiting accountant sent by Hardnose.

Living on the 3rd floor, the elevator or the steps if we are able, are our means of access to another floor, when visiting with friends, often several times a day. Sometimes I see Madge and Donna, and others and have short visits with them, often about their lives before being here in Freedom Village. Few of us are Florida natives, we are mostly from other parts of the United States with different backgrounds and we enjoy comparing notes. Being from the Midwest I was learning much about the East, particularly the Northeast - from the terrain to the speech. You can tell a little about where a person is from by his speech and it's always interesting to put in a 'guess'. Sometimes you are correct.

But, back to my story. Occasionally, a workman, security person or aide will join us on our trip in the elevator, up or down - so we are accustomed to people in the elevator whom we do not know. But this day, the day of the MURDER, I was alone.

I was going down to see if there were seats in the dining room. Sometimes I had a place but today I had been undecided, last minute decisions, trying to find someone to dine with.! I know I was late but Donna had just called to ask me to sit with her so I had to see if I could do so. Donna is a very interesting lady and we talk often – I enjoy her company. We are not from the same part of our country so we get to learn about parts that we have never visited and know little about.

This was about an hour before the body was found, so I had left my apartment and walked to the elevator. As I approached, I saw a man waiting by the elevator, whom I had not seen before, so I approached him with apprehension and stood a little ways from him because there was just something about him! I didn't like his looks and I didn't want to get too close nor go in the same elevator with him. I did not see which button he pushed, so I didn't know whether he was going up or down. But he was going without me !

Now, since the murder, I have been watching but I have not seen anyone who looks like him. I'm sure I would know him if I saw him again. He was unforgettable- not only for his looks but for his manners.

He was younger than the residents of our building and had dark, wavy hair, dark brown eyes and a dark moustache but clean shaven with no beard. He was about six feet tall and had a slim build. He was wearing a tan tee shirt and tan shorts and dirty workman's shoes. So I wondered what he was doing and who he came to see. I also noticed that he wasn't carrying any tools that I could see – so - probably no workman of any sort. He wasn't wearing an ID tag from the lobby nor a mask so he had not signed in in the lobby. He did look like an outdoors man and looked and smelled like he needed a shower. I was surprised because we usually don't see younger men like that here - even the workmen are better dressed. Also, he did not look like the son of any of the residents dressed like that. I had seen a couple of younger men, sons of friends, who were visiting but he did not look like any one I had met.

So I wondered whose apartment he was going to. I knew all the residents on the floor we were on and wondered whom he had seen on that floor - OR - had he walked the stairs to reach that floor.? Did he really not want to be noticed – and used the stairs -- and now was hoping to use the elevator before anyone saw him? Because he was VERY noticeable. But if so, why did he not continue to walk the stairs, instead of using the elevator?

But there he was, standing at the elevator, nervously, for several minutes before he finally pushed the button to bring the elevator. He looked around as if he didn't know if he wanted to be seen going up or down and he had a suspicious look about him that SAID "I don't want to be seen". Then all of a sudden he saw me and he managed a small 'smile' and nod. But his smile wasn't like others' smiles. –It wasn't a 'smirk' but it wasn't a "nice to see you" smile, either. It was furtive and had a strange look to it. Should I have called Security then ??? But what would I have told them – that "this man is strange and I'm worried about him being in our building." Probably, the answer would have been "YES"!, but I didn't call. I do not have a 'Smart Phone' so I would have had to go back to my apartment to use the telephone and who knows where he would have been by then. He truly surprised me because we usually don't see younger men here unless they are workmen and as I said, he certainly did not look like the son of one of the residents.

So I stood there and waited – a little while longer – but since I didn't see which floor button he pushed, and our elevators don't show the floor stopped on, of course I didn't see which floor he got off on.

A few minutes later, I ran into Ruth and asked her if she had seen the man -- in the elevator or on her floor. She said she thought that Madge had asked for help with her washing machine but our maintenance man would have been the one to come and work on it. And it definitely was not Robert. So that was no help. She said she would call a few other friends and see if anyone that noticed a strange man on their floor.

After speaking with other friends on other floors, I was beginning to get worried for our residents. Where was he? If he were a stranger, who knows what a stranger would be

there for? What were his plans? Did he know one person he was searching for? Were we safe? Our Security are very quick to respond to a call so they would have been here fast and might have stopped and interrogated him had I called them. I hate decisions and this was maybe a bad decision that I made but I never would have believed that something like murder would happen in our Colonial Building.

Then I got to thinking -- No one else that I talked with had seen the man, so then I wondered if I had let my imagination run away with me. Maybe the man didn't look as 'rough' as I thought. Maybe his clothes weren't that dirty. Maybe his clothes weren't that smelly. Maybe his shoes were 'just outdoor boots'. Maybe he was a nice man with no ulterior motives. Would I ever know? If everything was OK – he would just leave the building, nothing would happen on the campus, everyone would be OK and that would be the end of my concern.

EXCEPT that we DID have a MURDER in the COLONIAL Building and could I have prevented it by calling Security earlier when I saw him in the hallway? We'll never know, will we?

Since I never saw him again and the murder was done, Security was not whom I should speak to. We had detectives, Tracy and Franks, on the case. I hoped to find them - they were the ones I should speak with. Maybe I could shed some light on our mystery man. While thinking these thoughts, the dining room doors were opened and those in the dining room were pouring out to go their various ways, either to their apartments for the evenings or to the entertainments, if there were any. It took the picture of the man in the elevator out of my mind and I started talking with some friends who had just dined.

All this had made me hungry! So I asked around "What were the entrees? Were they good? Were they something I would enjoy" ? So FOOD took over!! And I went into the dining room for my dinner.

With everything going on that evening, it took me until bedtime to get my thoughts together again.

I should have called Security earlier because something about him had worried me. But now with the murder and the police here on campus, I made up my mind - "I WILL SEE" the detectives tomorrow. Maybe I can help!!

As I went to sleep that evening – my thoughts were:

Could he have been the murderer??

Could I have stopped him??

Could I have been the last, maybe the only one,  
except the victim, to have seen him????

## **Chapter 6 – by Judy Leetzow and Jim Baker**

*1930 – Monongalia County, West Virginia*

Sheriff John Bryan was cruising around outside the city limits of Morgantown, the county seat of "Mon" County. He was disturbed by the recent influx of gangsters from New York, but so far he didn't know enough to begin an attack to keep them out. He had reached out to a friend in the NYPD and learned that the Bambino Family, one of the five groups who ran all the crime scene in NYC, had been having some problems lately.

The last of the Bambinos had gotten too old to maintain control of their neighborhood, so he turned the mob over to one of his Lieutenants, Danny Franks, aka Babyface Franks. Babyface had two sons, both of which he installed as **his** lieutenants. They were trying to rebuild their strength, the older son working on the current NYC territory, the younger by stretching out to other cities in New York, and even to other states. The sheriff had an idea this might be what was happening here. Last week a couple of his "friendly informants" had told him about two strangers hanging around as if they were scoping out possibilities.

The sheriff was nearing retirement himself, and he spent a fair bit of time thinking back on his life as a sheriff. There was a time when he was younger that his job was mostly settling family disputes or breaking up bar-fights. More recently the bar-fights were gone because of Prohibition, and instead he spent a lot of time hunting out moonshine stills. Some of these he dealt with himself, but the bad ones he just turned over to the Revenuers. Prohibition was a strange law, one that had always seemed useless to him. He'd heard rumors that the Government was going to repeal prohibition, but the Governor had made a speech saying that would never happen. Sheriff Bryan knew that only a fool would place much faith in rumors – but he figured it would be a bigger fool who believed anything the Governor said!

He pulled into the lot of *Dolly's*, one of the most popular places in the area. You couldn't call it a bar, of course, because bars were illegal. If this were Chicago you might call it a "Speakeasy". But since this was Mon County, West Virginia, people just called it Dolly's. The place had a reputation of serving honest drinks at reasonable prices. The sheriff knew that Dolly also provided another product which was in frequent demand in Morgantown, and this was a big reason for the popularity.

He walked in and the bartender said "Hey Sheriff, didja come in for an off-duty drink?"

Or maybe we can find some other kinda entertainment for you?”

“Knock it off, Jerry, you know I’m always on duty. Just let Dolly know I’m here and need to talk.”

Jerry grinned and went back behind the bar and pushed a button. It must have been an important button because Dolly came right out. She gave him a quick hug and said “Hi John, it’s great to see you. Come on back to the office, we need to talk.”

They sat down at a small table, and, without asking, she poured them both a drink. The Sheriff decided maybe he wasn’t on duty after all and took a nice long sip, accompanied with a nice long sigh. He started right in:

“Dolly, I’m in a bind and I really need some information about . . .”

She interrupted him, “John I’m way ahead of you, as usual. You want to know about those two thugs nosing around town. Well, they’ve already visited me, stayed about an hour, so I know a lot about them.”

“Well, you surely know more about them than me, but at least I’m smart enough to know where to come for answers. Quit gloating and tell me what you know.”

Dolly got more serious. “The boss claimed to be Babyface Franks’ son and let me know that since taking over the Bambino’s NY gang, they were expanding into other places, including West Virginia. He told me that they were not interested in taking over my business, but that they did want to become my only supplier. Then he gave me a lot of bull about how business would be better with them in the picture. When I explained that I was very pleased with my current alcohol supplier and wasn’t interested in any other deal he got a bit rougher. Let me know in no uncertain terms that they planned on supplying all of West Virginia’s needs, both alcohol and girls. He said I’d better think it over and decide the right way or things would become very hard for me. He’s coming back in two weeks to make sure I’ve agreed.”

“Damn it, Dolly, I know you well enough to know you’re not going to agree to that. But you must have a plan, right? You know I’ll back you up whatever you do.”

Dolly grinned. “Yes, I pretty much knew you’d be there for me, just like you’ve always been. But this time I don’t think I need any backup. I figure the time has come for ME to retire. I’m going to shut Dolly’s down, sell it to somebody, or maybe burn it down. Then I’m going to move in with Alice and the new baby. It’s a great solution. After all, next year you won’t be sheriff anymore, so things probably wouldn’t go as easy for



Dolly's even if the mob didn't come in."

John's smile was ear-to-ear when he heard this. "God, that's exactly what I hoped you'd say. It's time for both of us to start taking it easy. By the way, how is Alice doing these days? I haven't seen her since before the baby."

Alice, Dolly's only child, had gotten into some serious problems when she was in high school ten years ago. The sheriff had stepped in and had spent several months talking to Alice and helping her straighten her life out. He also had some one-on-one time with the three football players who were causing the problem. He still had a strong bond with Alice, and this was the beginning of the friendship between him and Dolly.

Dolly replied "She's doing really great. But you should go see for yourself. Since you sheriffs know everything, I suppose you know she named the baby 'John'."

The sheriff just grinned and that was all the answer Dolly needed.

The next morning when the sheriff walked into his office the desk sergeant stopped him. "Sheriff, there's two guys in the back room say they've come to see you. They're kind of mean looking. Want me to go back with you?"

"Nah, but thanks anyway. I know who they are, and they won't be causing any trouble today. Maybe I'll need help later though."

The Back Room was a general-purpose room used for meetings, interviews, family counseling and whatever else happened that day. John walked in and sat down across from the man who was obviously Franks.

Without offering his hand he said, "I'm Sheriff John Bryan, what can I do for you today?"

Franks replied: "I'm Daniel Franks, Sheriff, and I'm guessing you already know a lot about me and my business. I want to be real up-front with you Sheriff. My organization does not want to cause trouble for you; in the places where we work, we are always happy when there are good law enforcement people to keep the peace. All we want is the freedom to do our business of supplying certain things to the people of this county. We'd like your cooperation in our efforts and are willing to pay you for your help."

Sheriff Bryan looked Franks straight in the eye as he answered. "No."

Franks looked startled. “Did you just say No? That is really a mistake, Sheriff. We should talk some more about the benefits and consequences.”

“No more talk is needed. Let me be clear. Monongalia County does not want New York mobsters here, and as sheriff, I won’t permit it. We are happy to stay just the way we are and don’t want anyone forcing their way into our business. I hope you enjoyed your visit, but it’s over. The Deputies will escort you out of town. Don’t come back.”

The sheriff then called the desk sergeant and another deputy in and had them escort the two to their car. They took the sheriff’s car and followed them North, out of town, then reported back to the Sheriff that there were some hard looks, but no trouble.

Later that afternoon, Sheriff Brian decided to take a run up North to the county line, which also happened to be the state line. He thought the hoods had probably gone back to NY to plan their next visit, but he liked driving and this direction was as good as any.

As he neared the county line he started a U-turn when a reflection caught his eye. Then he heard a rifle shot and felt a pain in his left arm. He pulled out his revolver as he continued the U-turn, holding the steering wheel with his bloody left hand. A car pulled out of the woods, and he saw two men. One of them took another shot, breaking a rear window, and the sheriff managed to get off one shot before the car sped North. His arm was hurting like hell, but he figured he could still drive. He was so mad, partly at himself for driving into an ambush, that he wanted to chase them all the way to New York. But good sense took over, so he gritted his teeth and headed back to Morgantown and a doctor. As he replayed the scene in his mind, he thought his shot had hit one of the men, but he wasn’t sure.

*2022 – Bradenton, Florida*

Dave Franks was home having a drink, but he was in a bad humor. First problem, he had run out of The Famous Grouse and had to settle for a glass of Cutty Sark blend that he found in his pantry. But more important he was still fuming over that Jacko Bryan guy. Dave was a cop, not a mobster, but for his whole life he had kept up with the family. On occasion he helped them out when they needed a special favor in this area, and he was in a position to provide a lot of information. Also, he knew all the family history. So, when he first heard the name “Jacko Bryan” something rang a bell. He checked him out, and his instincts proved to be right on. Jacko was definitely the grandson of the old sheriff who killed his great-uncle in West Virginia 90 years ago.

Maybe that's too long to hold a grudge, but family is family, even after a long time. Dave hadn't decided exactly what he was going to do, but he was going to keep his options open and not give the SOB any leeway in the investigation.

Dave was also a little nervous about Sam and the Hammer. He had gone to Anna Marie Oyster Bar earlier this evening and found a chance to talk to them privately. Of course they knew he was part of the family, but he wanted to make sure they knew how important it was not to leak any information about him. He would lose all his usefulness if his connections came out. They swore they would be discrete, and he figured they would try, but he wasn't sure they were smart enough not to let something slip.

Still, he figured the visit was worthwhile, not even counting the oysters! During the conversation, Sam had let him know that they'd had orders to keep an eye on Fairhaven, the victim. Sam wasn't too happy about this because he didn't know what they were supposed to be watching for. All he knew was that if he and The Hammer were supposed to have been keeping him safe they had failed and might be in trouble themselves now.

Dave chugged the rest of his drink and poured the Cutty Sark down the drain. He'd get some real whisky tomorrow.

## ***Chapter 7 - by Pamela Wentling***

Mella Sutton was a person who loved walking. She walked in all weathers, the sunshine, the rain, even the snow when she got a chance. Mella spent the early part of her life in the county of Kent in southern England, near to the Romney marshes where even the sheep wore little Wellington boots! Kent is known as the Garden of England; they grow gardens of hops from which they brew the beer. In those days before the advent of hop picking machines - people from London would arrive at the farms – which housed them – in the late summer to pick the hops by hand and earn some extra money. It was a great time for all, even the villagers loved having them there.

No one in Freedom Village walked more than Mella and she was a very inquisitive lady. She looked at everything that grew, and also observed the people she met. Mella liked to think she was another “Miss Marples” and thought she might solve the murder at the Colonial Building where her good friend Celine lived.

This morning Mella was on her way to the Colonial – the Betsy Ross room – to find another jigsaw puzzle to work on. Then she planned to go upstairs to visit with Celine and chat for a while. Mella was also friendly with Minjie and Jacko and the two BTs. Jacko had a favorite gecko which he had named Little Jacko – not what Mella fancied as a pet!

She picked up a couple of jigsaws, then started up the stairs. She was thinking about the murder and wondering if the investigation had turned up any new and significant information. She suddenly remembered the young man hurrying down the stairs the last time she had come this way to visit Celine. How could she have forgotten him!! She hadn't seen his face clearly since he was looking away from her, and it was just a quick look anyway since he was really hurrying down the stairs. He wasn't a resident of Freedom Village and his clothes were disheveled and dirty.

Where had he come from? Who was he?

Mella turned around and hurried back to her apartment in the Lexington Building. When she got home she brewed a cup of tea and got her knitting out. Both of these helped her think! How could she have forgotten about the young man? Perhaps it was because she was so excited about fact that her only sibling (her brother) was arriving with his wife from England. They lived on the East coast of England where Mella's parents had kept a pub for 23 years (they have since popped off).

Mella sent a message to the detectives and Det Tracy insisted that she come down to the station. She said she would pick her up at the Lexington Lobby and Mella got to ride the police cruiser to the BPD. Tracy wanted to know if she could describe the strange man she had seen, and asked her to work with a police sketch artist to come up with a likely resemblance. Working with several police agencies and the FBI they managed to find one potential match. The match was in the FBI files as a known “Hit Man” who had worked for several different mobs.

But Mella continued to think about all the little things she had seen lately around the campus and the story she had heard about an extremely rich – maybe a billionaire – lady from the Colonial. The lady had died, but her jewelry had never been found. It seemed to Mella that all these things were coming together – the furtive figures in bushes and several younger people moving around in the Colonial building.

The murder victim had only been at Freedom Village a couple of weeks, and he had been staying in a Guest Room which was next door to the large apartment the billionaire lady had occupied. Is it possible that he had seen or heard something that he shouldn't have?

During her visit with the detectives Mella had overheard them talking about the victim, Fairhaven. She thought they were saying he was a descendent of the rich lady, Madame von Pozzi – possibly a grandson or great grandson. Could it be that he was working with the man she had seen on the stairs?

Mella poured another cup of tea and started thinking about how she might be able to get into the empty von Pozzi apartment for a quick look around.

## **Chapter 8 – by Gwen & Jim Baker, Henry & Kathy Manning, Eileen & Len Raab**

The Wednesday Couples Bridge met every other Wednesday night - a lot of socializing with a bit of Bridge thrown in. It had started rather casually, but for the past year or so it had become a bit more of a dress-up affair. The group had four couples:

Bertie and Benny Hill from the Colonial,  
Brigitte and George Burns from the Concord,  
June and Arnold Cleaver from the Concord,  
Sue and Tom Jones from the Colonial.

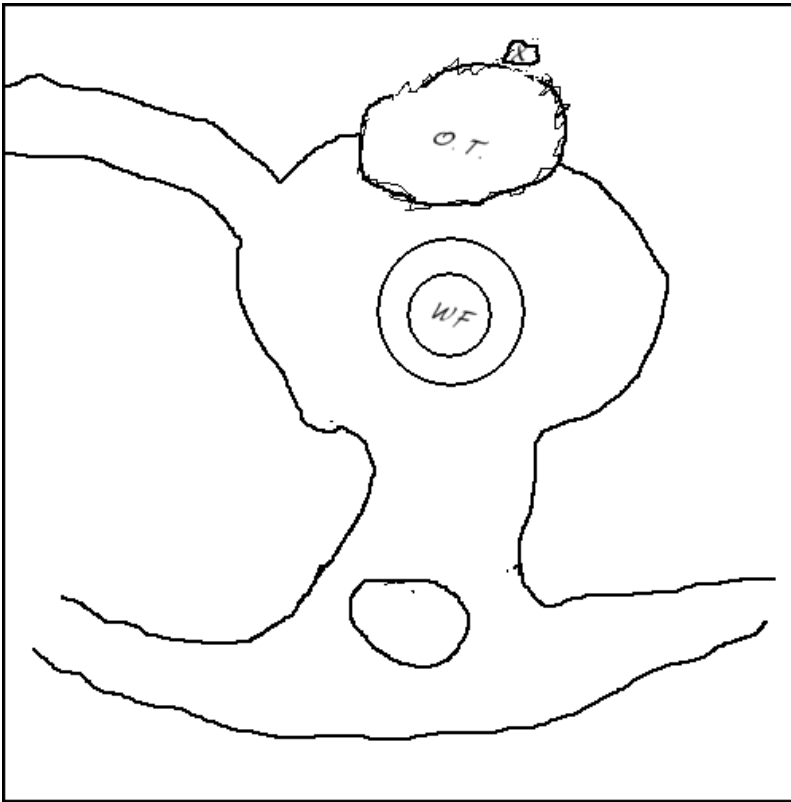
This Wednesday was no exception, they gathered at the Hill's fourth floor apartment and sat around for a while going over the day's gossip and particularly about the upcoming hurricane. The storm was called TD 9 right now but CNN and FOX were both going on about how it might turn into a category 4. Some even suggested it might reach a 5, but these couples weren't fooled. The news channels said that every time a little storm showed up in the Atlantic. And this one was almost surely going to miss Freedom Village, just like all the others did. Even if it did come close, so what. Maybe some limbs knocked off and a few power dips.

Sue had heard enough hurricane talk. She turned and said "Bertie, what a really lovely brooch. Is it an emerald?" She was smiling as she said this. Bertie replied "Oh I think so. It's just something Benny picked up for me the other day." June chimed in: "Sue, you and Bertie always wear nice jewelry. Must be nice to get a surprise like those diamond earrings for your birthday." She gave Arnold a little sideways glance as she said this.

Arnold figured it was time to get out from under those looks so he said "Hey, let's play Bridge, I feel some Slams coming up."

Over at the Lexington, Mella had worked both new jigsaws, and didn't have the energy to go get another one so she decided to read awhile. So she made her usual cup of tea and sat down with a book she had picked up from the Colonial library the day before the murder. That was the day she had seen that scruffy young man on the stairs. The title of the book was "*One Spade, Two Diamonds: a Bridge Mystery*". Mella didn't play Bridge, but several of her friends kept suggesting she should give it a try. Of course other friends kept

after her to learn Mahjong but she didn't fancy bothering with either one. She doubted she would finish this book, but she opened it anyway . . . a scrap of paper fell out.



“What in the world.” thought Mella. This didn't look like it related to Bridge, but she really wasn't sure. Did bridge involve Overtime? She'd rather not contemplate what WF might mean these days. Truth to tell, it looked kind of like Frosty the Snowman running through the town. She put it in the back of the book, turned to the first page, took a sip of tea and started reading.

Ten pages later Mella decided that Bridge mysteries weren't for her, so she took the Frosty picture out and put the book away. She turned it this way and that, trying to make sense of the bits and bots and finally it hit her.

“Oh my word, it's a map!” she exclaimed out loud. Once she had figured this out she kept thinking, and ten seconds later she knew what the map showed. She was so tempted to go check for herself, but it was late, and dark, and maybe dangerous, and just not a good idea. So she rang the number Detective Tracy had given her and told her everything she had figured out.

Thirty minutes later, Detective Tracy knocked on her door. Over another cup of tea Mella told her what she had figured out and gave her the book and map.

Thirty minutes later, Detective Tracy knocked on her door again. No tea this time, Tracy was in a rush. "Hi Mella. Just stopped by to thank you and let you know you were 100% right. If you're ever looking to un-retire let me know, we might have an opening for Detective First Class."

On her way to the station, Tracy called her partner to update him on what she'd found. Then Franks updated HER on what he had just run down. They agreed that both of their new information could wait until daylight so they decided to call it a night and start fresh the next morning.

It was Tracy's turn to buy donuts so she stopped at Dunkin' on the way to the station and bought a whole dozen. Who knew if they'd have time for lunch.

Dave Franks went first. He had been running the background on the billionaire Madame von Pozzi. "Well, as it turns out, she isn't a billionaire, and her name isn't von Pozzi, and I doubt she was ever a Madam. She was Poesy Palumbo from Jersey City. Twenty years ago she helped her no-good boyfriend knock off a pawn-shop in Jersey City. They took everything they could carry, but the only valuable stuff was about 200 grand worth of good jewelry. They caught the guy with half of it but Poesy managed to escape and took the other half with her. New Jersey kept the case open for a while, but finally gave it up. The jewelry has never been found."

Tracy grinned. "Well, actually Dave, it has been found." Franks, looked up a little puzzled, but waited for her to continue. "You remember Mella, the British lady from the Lexington?" "Sure" he said "the one who kept seeing mysterious men on the stairs. How could she find missing jewelry?"

So Tracy explained everything Mella had done while Dave just sat there flabbergasted. "I'll be damned" he said, "maybe I'd better start reading Bridge books."

"Wait till you hear the rest, Dave. I went to the Colonial Courtyard last night, and looked at the 'rock' which was shown on the map. It was one of those fake rocks that are hollow inside. It was a pretty real-looking job, but easy to open. In fact it was so easy to open I figure it has been opened frequently in the past year or so. And the jewelry inside was laid out very neatly, not particularly concealed other than being in



the rock. It looked like the jewels were laid out in a showroom.”

“What are you saying, Dix? That some has been looking in there every day to admire stolen jewelry?”

“I’m thinking something along those lines. But not just admiring. I’m pretty sure that the people who found the jewels in the first place didn’t have the villainy in them to steal the jewels, but thought that just borrowing them every now and then wouldn’t be so bad.” She continued “So this morning we need to pay a call to the Wednesday Couples Bridge group for some answers.”

Dave grinned “Let’s go Dixie, this assignment sounds like it might be fun. I’m really eager to find out what crime you’re going to arrest them for. Maybe it will help me learn enough to get your job!”

Right after lunch the two detectives met with the four couples who made up the WCB group in the Admin conference room. Two of the couples were looking very puzzled, but the other two looked more sheepish than surprised. Tracy plowed right in. “Would someone in this room please tell me what they know about diamond earrings?” Everybody looked at everybody else, until Arnold Cleaver finally said “Well I don’t seem to know as much about them as June would like. She wants a pair for her birthday like Sue got.”

Sue looked even more sheepish, but she knew she had to say it. “Oh, those aren’t MY earrings, Arnold, I just borrowed them for Bridge Night.”

Bertie took the opportunity to speak “Why yes, it’s just like that emerald brooch Benny borrowed for me the other day. Just so I could look stylish on Bridge Night.”

The detectives just sat quietly and let them talk.

George chimed in “Benny, where in the world can you borrow an emerald brooch?” Benny, looking like he wanted to sink under the table, took his medicine bravely. “Oh, all the jewelry is under the Jewelry Rock in the courtyard. Whenever Bertie or Sue want to look nice we just go down and borrow a nice piece. Of course we always return it right away.”

Now it was Detective Tracy looking puzzled, like she didn’t know what to do next. Detective Franks took pity on her – “Det Tracy, I believe these two couples may have committed a misdemeanor – tampering with evidence of a crime. It looked to me like

they have been cleaning the mud off of the jewelry. “

Tracy looked at him gratefully. “I believe you are right Det Franks. Mr and Mrs Burns, Mr and Mrs Cleaver you four are free to go. But please keep this meeting confidential. Mr and Mrs Hill, Mr and Mrs Jones, we’d like you to write out a statement explaining what you had been doing with the jewelry. After that you may also go home.”

And that was the end of the Wednesday Couples Bridge game.

## **Chapter 9 – by A. Don Holsipple**

Without measuring human worth, the gift of life is precious containing potential for greatness or ignominious failure. We evaluate according to our cultural norms, dividing good from the bad. We search for facts, picking up fiction along the way. With conversations and musings finished, we have the reality of murder, a passion, misdirected emotions, an unforgivable offense, and an unredeemable loss.

Our sensibilities are bothered by a bloody mess in the elevator. “Why” worms its way through our consciousness, asking for details and reasons and expecting the long arm of the law to solve and fix this travesty. Who is the perpetrator? How many people are part and party to this wrongful act? Do we become amateur sleuths, believing we have the answers?

Rumor spreads because folks like to talk and speculate. The current marketing campaign for new residents would be in jeopardy if the papers printed even a sketch of murder in one of their buildings. Alistair McDuff had to act quickly to maintain the reputation and appeal of this Independent Senior Living campus.

Thankfully, Patrolman Lewis of Bradenton PD took control of the crime scene, sequestering spectators in the Betsy Ross room. Soon, Detectives Tracy with partner Franks arrived, hopefully bringing a speedy and neat conclusion to this sordid affair. At least, that’s what McDuff hoped. His comment and direction in meeting with his staff were, “Let the law do their job; we have other pressing matters to solve. I’ve contacted “SLC,” Senior Living Consultants from Dunnellon, asking for a meeting. Be prepared to apply their recommendations, providing we all agree.

Herman Holman, the senior member of the “Investigative Arm” of SLC, sipped the last of his unique blend “Gevalia Majestic Roast” coffee. With honey as a sweetener and organic half and half, the concoction would give enough mental energy to get through the day. The email had to be read and answered with two reminders of scheduled meetings noted and deleted; the next read, “ProtonMail,” a secure and encrypted message. Click to open.

The content was undoubtedly confidential and private, a detailed account of a homicide at Freedom Village in Bradenton. Alistair McDuff, General Manager, and Executive Director were asking for the services of our company. He and select staff members sought an unannounced and private meeting to head off a scandal and protect the current marketing campaign. His highlighted words in the email were, “We have a large number of empty apartments ready and waiting for “Senior Citizens” who we’ve contacted and are interested in “Independent Living” here, at FV, in the Sunshine State! They don’t need to hear about a murder committed in one of our elevators. Who would ever want to ride in that space again?”

We have rented office space at Rainbow Springs Realty Group, a developer of properties. Our company, SLC, Senior Living Consultants, was the brainchild of Dr. Delbert Caldwell, a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, the author of several books on Elder Care, and the developer of SLC, situated in Dunnellon, Florida. Succinctly stated, we offer Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the basics of human existence, plus the social aspect of belonging and respect. Determined needs are discussed and solved through counseling/planning and follow-up.

"Able" Mable, the wife of Herman Holman, was the executive assistant and office manager for SLC. She crafted the official reply using the icon provided at the base of McDuff's ProtonMail, automatically encrypted. Future correspondence would be on regular, secure lines. Meetings will occur at the Freedom Village office.

The road ahead would not be without difficulties. The challenge was; to prevent image degradation, assure security, making positive notes about the facility with future enhancements to apartments and grounds.

We know gates or fences do not achieve the security we desire. Electronic surveillance and alarm systems have protective functions that may warrant discussion and improvement. McDuff hinted at the last meeting with SLC that he would contact OSA Global Security Agency, a local LLC company, for their expertise. Besides that, McDuff figured "Forever Vigilant" would be his mantra.

## **Chapter 10A – by Laverne Raisch**

### *Crystal*

Here it is – the morning after the murder last evening. I didn't sleep much, had a lot of nightmares as I tried to remember the events of yesterday.

I called Detective Franks early this AM to ask for a meeting with him and Detective Tracy, so I am now still trying to remember how the day went and waiting to see Franks.

I know he will ask what time did I see the man? Well, it was before dinner which was 5:30 PM, and my daughter, Laine, in Crystal River, had called about 4:30, her usual time to call and we spoke for 15-20 minutes so I know it was after that. I went back to my computer for a few minutes after the call but do not know how long I worked. So I must have seen him after 4:30 and before the murder.

Then the Detectives wanted to know, again, the attire of the man, and anything else I could tell him: height, weight, color of hair [or was he bald?] eyes and skin. Did he have any tattoos that could provide a clue? Was he wearing a special ring or pin or earrings that stood out – that could identify him? Could I tell if he had an accent of any kind: foreign; New England, Southern, Midwestern – to tell what part of the country he came from? And I wracked my brain trying to remember – had he said ANYTHING? Maybe even one little word he had said might help. But he hadn't said even that one little word. He just acknowledged me with a little, quick nod.

Then a thought came to me --- had he been in the Landings earlier this morning and happened to pass by the open door to Doug's office and heard something he was not supposed to hear or had he heard something as he passed by Doug's office earlier?

If he happened to be in the Landings earlier that day, perhaps he had overheard Doug speaking loudly – too loudly – and it caught his attention and he loitered a while. A loud voice, arguing with someone about money. By hearing this, it made him think that Doug had money on him and he surely needed money. This was a crime of opportunity. Maybe if he got Doug apart from others, he could take his money so he decided to get into the action. He made Doug take him to the Colonial where they found an empty upstairs apartment away from the halls where people might be walking, and they started arguing again. The argument stopped long enough for them to get on the upper floor elevator and they started back down. The argument escalated and the man pulled out a pocket knife, stabbing Doug. He stopped the elevator on the next floor and got out, stopping the elevator until someone else pushed the button.

He had tried to hold Doug up, thinking he had money on him, since he was an accountant for Hardnose. BUT Doug didn't carry cash with him. So he got angry that his plan didn't work and he was afraid that Doug would call the police on him, so he thought he had to kill him.

Now --- Did he leave Freedom Village immediately after he killed Doug? Could he have left ANY clues that the police could find?

As Detectives Franks and Tracy searched for anyone having seen the man in the Landings, Colonial or Concord buildings --- Thomas, one of the residents in the Concord, suddenly remembered seeing him and said "Oh, yeah, -- he's been here before. He's TROUBLE.! He begs from everyone he can".

He had told Thomas his name was Joe Round and he lived a few blocks away ---- so he was familiar with Freedom Village. A few years earlier he had gotten mixed up with some unsavory characters in New York and decided to change his residence to Florida. Besides that, he said he liked the warm weather and was ready to get out of the snow and cold.

After he disappeared, the police searched all over the area for him -- boats, cars, planes -- railroad, supposedly if he got to the East Coast. He was nowhere to be found! They were able to obtain his car license so they had APB's out for him. Maybe someone was hiding him. Maybe he had another license and another name. But the police never found any relatives or any business associates of any kind. No mob connections. No military service. It was as if he JUST APPEARED. So time passed while they kept looking. They were not going to give up until they found him.

About three weeks later, there was an accident on Highway 95, the Dixie Highway, in St. Augustine. The driver was driving at high speed in a rental car - a tire blew, the car turned over three times: fortunately no other car was involved. The driver survived -- *and it was Joe Round!* He obviously was getting ready to flee Florida -- but it was unknown where he was heading. Perhaps thinking of leaving the country when he could.

The newspapers in St. Augustine had published details of the accident and Joe's picture, asking for identification on him because all they knew was his name.

How/why his picture and name got up to New York was interesting. Johnny, one of Al's men was vacationing in the St. Augustine area just at that time and picked up a paper and read about the accident and saw Joe's picture. He recognized Joe! The police and the paper found information about him with the mob and because of mob activities, it was highly publicized. Joe knew it would come to the attention of Al, the head of the mob, which terrified him.

Joe had tried to escape but now they had found him. Not only had the Florida police searched for him but the New York mob was now seeking him also. He did not want to go to NY so he worked with the Florida police. He went on trial. He would rather be incarcerated in the Florida sun than be incarcerated in cold New York - with the mob close by. So he pled guilty to killing Doug for the money he thought Doug was carrying.

The trial was very short, the jury easily found him guilty since he had already made the admission. He was sentenced to 25 years in prison for killing Doug.

MAYBE he would see the Florida sun out of his prison window.???

THIS WAS A KILLING FOR NOTHING!!

BUT he would NEVER kill again.

NOTE: Chapter 10B is an alternate ending to the novel.

Bradenton dodged a bullet. That's what the talking heads on TV news were saying after the electricity came back. At the eleventh-hour Hurricane Ian decided to verge East and hit Fort Myers instead of Bradenton. The weather experts talked about tracking models and water temperatures and such, but many of the Freedom Village residents knew the truth. Bradenton was the home to some ancient Native American burial grounds, or middens. These sacred grounds have the mystical power to deflect major hurricanes from the city of Bradenton!

Detective Dix Tracy had heard this hurricane theory and although she was quite logical and analytical in her crime investigations she had decided to go with the Native Americans in this case. It seemed to produce results.

Unfortunately the murder investigation was NOT producing results and Dixie was depressed. A rule of thumb for murder cases is that if you didn't have a good idea who the killer was after the first week you probably would never solve the crime. It had now been two weeks and they were nowhere. Her partner was still after Jacko Bryan, but even Franks knew that Jacko had not killed the guy. To make matters worse it turns out they didn't even know who the victim really was. To be more exact, the accountant Doug Fairhaven had a past that only went back to 2002, when he entered college. Earlier than that there was no evidence that he existed at all – no parents, no birth certificate, no high school, just nothing. The Crime group at FDLE was assisting in this part of the investigation, but so far without success. But the toughest blow of all was that she only had one more day before the case was taken away from her.

Hardnose, the owners of Freedom Village, had finally got around to sharing some information. The lawyers had informed them that based on Fairhaven's final report they were ruling out Freedom Village as the source of any serious bookkeeping problems. "Small stuff only." the lawyers said. Instead, they had received an inside tip about serious problems at their Jacksonville community, which just happened to be where Fairhaven was scheduled to visit next. Captain Benson had let them know this morning that because the case now was inter-county, Bradenton PD would be turning it over to FDLE tomorrow. Dixie had a feeling that was the wrong thing to do, but without any real leads she had no leverage to keep the case.

So, a last-ditch effort. She assigned Patrolmen Lewis to man the phones and go over the murder files one more time to see if he might see something she or Franks had missed. Dave Franks was to go over to Anna Marie Island and try to pick up any new information about The Hammer and his cronies. Then he could treat himself to an expense account oyster dinner at AMOB while he talked again to the staff at the restaurant.



Tracy herself would go back to Freedom Village just before dinner to see if any of her contacts there had anything new – like perhaps an ID on one of those mysterious hall-walkers.

At four O'clock Dixie was at the Colonial front desk talking to Sandy the Concierge. Her phone buzzed; she took a quick look at the screen and saw it was from Patrolman Lewis. She quickly excused herself and moved away to take the call. "What's up Lew?"

"Dixie we just got a fax from FDLE about the DNA testing on Fairbanks. I think you'd better come right in; I don't want to talk about it on the phone."

Lewis sounded so concerned Tracy took him at his word. "I'm on my way, I'll see you in 15 minutes."

Tracy used the siren and it was only 10 minutes till she and Lewis were huddling as she read the Fax. He said "Dixie, how could this be? Do you think this info is wrong?" She replied "I need to call my FDLE contact right now. Keep this between you and me for now. If ANYBODY asks about this fax just tell them I received it and that's all you know."

An hour later Tracy came back and told Lewis there was no mistake. "You and I are going to talk to Captain Benson right now. After that I'll call Dave."

So, at 7 O'clock Dixie was sitting alone in her office and Lewis was out front. Dave Franks came in just as Lewis was going out the door and asked him what was going on. "Don't know, Dixie received a fax and started acting funny. She's sending me back to Freedom Village with some more questions for The Hammer. She's in her office." he said on his way out.

Dave went to the Detective room and said "Hey Dix, I was getting ready to have a drink. What's so hot that it couldn't wait till morning?" She replied, "We're finally getting somewhere Dave. The Staties got a hit on Fairhaven's DNA at last. Sit down and let's talk about it." Franks remained standing but tensed up. "Oh, I thought you might have something concrete; you know that DNA lab makes a lot of mistakes." Tracy replied, "Not this time Dave, they checked and double-checked. Fairbanks was the brother of someone in the Bradenton Police Department, and I'm sure you know who."

"Stop right there, Dixie, we're partners. This can't go out of this room."

"We're not partners anymore Dave. I talked to the head of the State Crime lab and not only does the DNA match, but they have a conclusive ID on Fairbanks. He was born Douglas Franks, in New York City. He was 38 years old when he died, just one year older than you Dave. He was your brother and you cut his throat. Before I arrest you, maybe you could explain why you murdered your own brother?"

Dave had pulled his revolver out and was holding it by his side. “It was his own fault, Dix. When we were younger he decided that both of us should leave the mob and start new lives. He changed his name and enrolled in Florida State University. I moved to Atlanta and went to Cop school there, but kept my own name. Everything was going good for me here in Bradenton until he saw me at the Oyster Bar one night. He told me he’d found out I was still working with the family and that he was going to turn me in. The next day I caught him as he was entering the elevator and killed him there. The sic tyrannis thing meant nothing, I was just making sure his face didn’t look like me. He was a traitor, Dix. I had no choice but to stop him.”

“Wrong Dave, you did have choices, you just made bad ones. Becoming a detective while reporting to a criminal mob was one bad choice. Killing your own brother was another. And taking that gun out of the holster was maybe your worst choice of all. Dave Franks, you are under arrest for the murder of your brother, Doug Franks. Drop your weapon and put your hands on the desk.”

Dave had a terrible look on his face but he kept the gun in his hand. “Dixie, you’re forcing my hand, just like Doug did. You know I can’t let you go now. Let’s go for a ride.” With these words he aimed the gun at Dixie.

Suddenly, from the doorway Captain Benson shouted “Don’t make a move, Franks. Drop the weapon to the floor NOW.” Dave made another bad choice, the last one he would make. He spun around and took a quick shot at the doorway but the Captain had already moved. He saw her and also got a glimpse of Patrolman Lewis. He moved his arm to take another shot at Captain Benson when Lewis shot him in the heart.

Dave Franks didn’t dodge the bullet.