

Captain Walt Lincoln

Sleeping Giant

by David M. H. Butler

The clear night sky revealed a blanket of stars overhead. The cooling breeze carried the smell of salt water with it. The soft splash of waves on the shore below was almost a whisper. The late-spring night in Maine was shaping up to be the perfect vacation ending for the two shadows snuggled together on the front porch of their rented beach house.

A noise in the other room brought Walt Lincoln to his feet. It sounded like his daughter Joan might have fallen out of bed. Walt and his wife Jackie ran to her room. She was sitting on the floor, still asleep, but one arm was waving. Walt gave his daughter a gentle shake. The light from the hallway cast shadows across their faces putting everything into stark contrast.

"Hey pumpkin," he asked soothingly as she came to, "is everything okay? You were so peaceful a few seconds ago and then you started thrashing around."

"It was a dream about you or Pete. The face kept changing. Sometimes I was sure it was you and then it would change to..." Joan started.

A shout came from the adjoining room and Walt jumped from the one room to the other. Now it was his son Peter who was talking in his sleep.

"What's going on!" he wondered.

Joan ran past him and over to her twin brother.

"Pete. Are you okay?" she asked waking him up. "Dreaming?"

"Huh? Uh, yeah. A person was running. At first I thought it was you but then it was Dad. Whoever it was, It was as if you had stepped..."

"On a hornets nest?" she finished for him.

Peter nodded and Walt felt the hairs rise on the back of his neck. For the last three or four years the twins had occasionally dreamt about each other. Sometimes, even miles apart, they would seemingly dream about what the other was doing, but this was the first time that they had what appeared to be the same dream at the same time. And was there a significance to the fact that he appeared in both of the dreams?

"Maybe it's just a reaction to our vacation being almost over and having to go back to school soon," Jackie suggested. "Fortunately we don't have any bee hives in the area. At least I don't think so."

"Well let's try to get back to sleep," Walt said. "We're leaving tomorrow and I'd like to get an early start."

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Glimpses of river and open fields gave way to a row of old, colonial style houses and then an old town center. Above the buildings a huge steel bridge came into view. Crossing over the Connecticut River at Portland, the highway skimmed along the river-side for a short mile. The broad river flowed lazily around a bend in one direction as the dark green rental car cut off in the opposite direction to pick up Route 17 and its ancient roadbed heading for New Haven.

Walt Lincoln turned to his wife Jackie and smiled. Overall the kids had been great for the entire trip. Now that Peter and Joan, were almost through with High school it was getting harder and harder to get them to participate in family vacations, but they'd come along and had actually enjoyed themselves. Jay was still at the age where being with the family wasn't even questioned. The first weekend in Boston hadn't been a hit with the kids, but the week on the Cranberry Islands of Maine had been a huge success. The large house they had rented looked out over the North Atlantic and the island had almost no cars to interfere with relaxing.

They were due at Kennedy Airport in two days, but had decided to visit several New England villages on their way south. Tonight they had picked the town of Quinnipiac simply because they liked the name.

The kids had an interesting mixture of their famous father's detective skills and love for adventure. Pete scoured the maps every night and often would have one open on his lap while they drove. He had a keen interest in tracking and map reading. He was already talking about going to college to study forensics. Joanie's spontaneity and gut feelings had been amazing at picking great places to stop. Where Pete took after his mother's organizational skills, gentler side and dark hair; Joanie was more like her father: blond, ready to act on an instinct and let people's feelings come second. Jay didn't seem to have the detective bug, but he did share his father's love of boats and the sea. On Cranberry

Island he had found an old man who built boats and had spent several days helping him glue blocks of wood together to form jigs for a small boat the man was building.

They passed through Durham with its old town green and Revolutionary era houses. They spotted a road called the 'Stagecoach road.' To a family from California this was one more clue to the differences between the Coasts. There were a few cars on the road, but the Interstate, a few miles west, handled most of the traffic. Pete looked up from his maps.

"There's something called 'Sleeping Giant State Park' right near the town of Quinnipiac where we are staying."

"I wonder what that's about!" Joanie mused. "That should be one of our destinations while we are here!"

A few miles later as they got closer to New Haven, Jackie nudged Walt and said, "Look over there! Could that be the sleeping giant?"

Everyone followed her gaze. A set of hills seemed to form the head, chest and legs of a person lying on the ground.

"Whoa! Do you think so!" Jay exclaimed. "That is so cool! Joan's right we have got to check that out!"

The traffic became more animated as they reached the town of Quinnipiac, but the guesthouse where they had reserved a room was off the main street and in a quiet section of the town.

"Let's get unpacked, grab some lunch and take it over to the Sleeping Giant Park," Walt said as they pulled the luggage from the car.

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They parked the car in a shady lot and gathered around a notice board that displayed a map of the park's features. A heavy line indicated a trail that started under the giant's chin and worked its way up over his chest and down towards the legs.

"Look," said Jay, pointing at the map. "There's some sort of monument down here by the stomach. Wouldn't that be the perfect place to take our picnic?"

Everyone agreed, so they strapped on their daypacks and began up the well-beaten trail. They passed beneath the bare rock cliff that formed the chin of the giant. Jay was ready to try and scale it bare handed and probably would have if the family hadn't persuaded him otherwise:

"It would be dangerous, honey," said Jackie.

"You need climbing equipment," insisted Peter

"Come on, I want to eat," implored Walt

"Don't be stupid," Joan added.

The monument turned out to be almost as good as the rock face. It was something like a miniature castle that had a great view of the surrounding area. Jay and Peter charged up to the top, while the others sat down at a table to have their picnic lunch.

"Dad! Dad!" Jay called down from the top. "You gotta show us your Jackie Chan wall climbing trick!"

"Give me a chance to eat something." Walt called back, but there was a part of him that itched to scale the wall at a place he could see where the wall angles provided a perfect spot for climbing. During his training in martial arts while in the Coast Guard Walt had seen a Jackie Chan movie and had been inspired by his stunts to hone his own acrobatic skills.

Jay was back down on the ground. "I'll do it then!" he shouted, running up to the wall excitedly. He got a first foothold; momentum carried him to a second foothold. But he ran out of steam and had to push himself back from the wall and drop to the ground.

That was all the prompting Walt needed. He set down the juice he was drinking and jumped up. He ran to the wall. He seemed to flow up the wall, using momentum and the angle of the wall to give him compression and traction. As he reached the top his last move was to throw himself into a sitting position on the top of the wall, and in a single move, swing under the railing and come up standing. It must have taken all of five seconds.

The kids went wild. They jumped to their feet and cheered. Jackie shook her head but beamed. Walt leaned against the railing and surveyed the ridges of low mountains that stretched northward. Suddenly he heard a 'bonk,' then "Rats!" and standing beside him was Joanie, rubbing her head.

"So they are teaching you something in that Karate class you are taking!" Walt laughed, hugging his daughter.

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After lunch Pete pressed Jay into playing one of his favorite games. He called it Indian Scout. Pete would get someone to run and hide leaving footprints and broken twigs and Pete would then try and track the person down. Joanie didn't have the

patience for the game. If she was the person hiding, she got bored; if she was the searcher she tended to give up on the tracking and go on instinct. Pete on the other hand had often continued shifting through the clues that the tracks left even when he knew where the person was.

Peter closed his eyes and stuck his fingers in his ears and hummed, so that Jay had some time to find a hiding place. After about 2 minutes, he opened his eyes and called out, "OK Jay, I'm on your trail!"

As Peter walked over to the picnic table where Jay had been last standing, Joan blurted out, "I'll bet he's hiding in the monument. It's the best place to hide if he has to wait for you to discover him." Peter gave her a pitying look and shook his head. "Let's not jump to any conclusions." he said and leaned over to inspect the trail.

The trail started easily enough with signs that Jay had run backwards for about 30 feet until he got to the hard packed trail. As Pete squatted down to inspect a scuff mark in the trail, Jay snuck out from behind the monument and quietly moved over to the picnic table, sat down and picked up a hand full of grapes. Joan smiled triumphantly. Pete didn't make any sign of noticing. He was either too absorbed or he didn't want his game wrecked.

Walt noticed that Pete seemed to be contemplating something very intently. He'd been looking at one area from several angles. Had Jay stumped him? That didn't happen often. After several minutes he couldn't stand it any longer and walked over to see what Pete was up to.

"Did you lose the trail," he asked?

"Oh, hi Dad," he said looking up. "Check this out. At first I thought that Jay had tried to cover his real tracks and leave a footprint going in the wrong direction. But then I found a couple more tracks and realized that Jay hadn't been the one covering his tracks. These covered tracks were made several days ago, maybe longer."

Walt crouched down. It was true someone had dragged something over the ground to obliterate his or her tracks. In fact it looked like it had been done twice or three times.

"You know what it looks like to me," Walt said to Pete? "I'd say someone was dragging something heavy. Notice the faint footprints we can see are turned slightly and dig in on the leading edge. What ever he was dragging covered the prints; at least partially. Then he went back over the ground with a branch."

Now Walt's curiosity was captured and he looked up trying to guess who would have been dragging something through the woods and why.

He turned to Pete. "Have you followed the trail very far? I've seen you start in a couple directions."

"It heads over to the edge of the cliff over there. But I was still trying to put a time estimate on when they had been made. But without knowing the weather in the area for the last week, it's pretty tough to determine." Pete stood up and pointed to a bush. "That broken branch is my best clue. I'd say the weathering on the broken end is about 6 or 7 days."

Walt nodded his head. "Nice work, Pete. Now let's see if we can find out what this is all about."

Joan and Jay caught up with them as they reached the cliff edge.

"What's going on," Jay asked. "You guys can't be following my trail, I can believe one of you could get messed up. But not both!"

"We found an older trail that is very suspicious," said Pete. "Dad thinks there could be..."

"There," exclaimed Walt! "Looks like there are two garbage bags at the edge of the trees down below."

Walt looked around for an easy way to get down. There really wasn't one. But Walt was far too intrigued to just walk away.

"I'm going down," he stated decisively. "I want you kids to stay up here. One of you go and tell your Mom what's happening. I'll be back up as quickly as possible."

The rocky face of the cliff was almost vertical but offered plenty of handholds. Jay watched from above and wished that he could be climbing too. But he took solace in watching his Dad's swift and sure moves as he made the descent.

As he neared the two bundles he knew that they had stumbled onto something big. He could smell the sickening odor of decaying flesh. Unless someone was trying to hide the carcass of some animal caught outside of hunting season, Walt was pretty sure of what he would find wrapped in the bundle of black plastic and blankets that stood before him.

He took a breath and pulled back a corner of one of the bundles and sure enough, he could see a man's body soaked with blood. He didn't linger. He folded the corner back over the man and pulled back a corner of the second bundle, the lifeless face of a woman looked straight back him and he involuntarily recoiled.

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Within moments of his call to the police, Walt had a good idea of who the people were. He didn't even have to wait for the police to tell him. The clerk in the drugstore where he called from, overheard the phone message and gave Walt the story.

A professor at Quinnipiac College and his wife had been missing for about 8 days. There had only been a tiny spot of blood found at their house, but no signs of a struggle. There was a chance that the couple had gotten into trouble and run off, but the police had been questioning people at the school and also members of the Sleeping Giant Park association. The only shred of a motive they could come up with was that both the school and the park association were interested in buying the couple's land. It sat right on the edge of both the park and the college. The park wanted it to complete a right-of-way for a trail to the Quinnipiac River. The college wanted it for expansion. They were trying to attract an endowment from the government, but they needed the land to make their pitch more attractive.

Walt thanked the clerk and left the drugstore. Jackie and the kids were waiting outside and he filled them in on the story of the murdered couple.

"I told the police that I would stay here and lead them to the bodies. The rest of you should go home or take in a movie. I don't think the police are going to want all of us trailing along. I can probably get a ride back to the guest house in a couple hours."

The kids were all disappointed, but Jackie was more than happy to get them away from such a grizzly scene.

"Now don't forget that we have a plane to catch day after tomorrow," she said. The kids all started looking at each other knowingly.

"How can you think about leaving with the scent of a mystery in the air?" he asked incredulously. "Besides with the bodies identified, maybe that will give us the clue to uncover the murderer and, zip, no more mystery."

Jackie gave him a crooked glance. "Okay, Okay. We'll decide in the morning whether we need to rearrange our flights."

"You're the best!" he grinned.

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A local police officer picked Walt up at the drug store and drove him over to the sports field at the college. A few minutes later a red and white helicopter landed with the New Haven police detective in charge of the case. He introduced himself as Ray Brainard. He appeared to be a good-natured man, with a crooked grin and a twinkle in his eyes. He was probably in his late fifties, with thinning grayish hair that still held

hints of the brown hair he must have had as a younger man. He was wearing a cloth jacket with leather sleeves over a white shirt and dark tie. He shook hands and paid Walt the high compliment of saying that he had followed many of Walt's cases.

"But don't forget," he added, "This is my case and I would appreciate it if you don't try grand-standing. Otherwise the essential thing is to solve this case and I welcome your help."

"Fair enough," returned Walt.

"I'm sending some men up on foot to collect evidence, but you and I will go up with the helicopter boys to see if we can get the bodies out as rapidly as possible."

With that they climbed into the Jayhawk search and rescue helicopter. They pulled on a couple of headsets and buckled into their seats. Besides the pilot and themselves there were three other men in search and rescue jump suits. Walt nodded a greeting, which they all returned.

"I believe you've flown helicopters?" Detective Brainard asked.

"That's right. In the Coast Guard I flew search and rescue missions in Sikorski Sea Stallions." Walt replied.

The pilot turned and grinned at Walt. "Welcome aboard, sir!"

As they swung over the clearing by the monument, Walt pointed out the position on the cliff edge where he had climbed down. The helicopter eased into position and hovered just above the treetops.

"There!" said Walt. "See the dark patches?"

The others nodded and the team swung into action to begin retrieving the bodies. The side door opened, a winch swung out and two men rappelled quickly down the rope to the bodies.

"Do you think it is the missing professor from the college?" asked Walt as they looked down from their front-row seats.

"So you've heard about Professor Anderson and his wife?" Brainard responded. "We can't say for certain, but from your description of them and your guess at the level of decomposition, it does seem like a good possibility. It could be the break in the case we have been hoping for."

"I take it that, up to now, you weren't even certain that they were dead. It was possible that they had been kidnapped or simply gone off on their own for some unexplained reason."

"That's right. Without bodies or even evidence of a struggle or robbery at the house we have been grasping at straws. The family figured it was foul play. Kidnapping at least. There was no reason for them to have just run off. They also were very suspicious of a dean at the college. A guy named Fiefield, he runs the geology department and was pressing the Andersons to sell their family home." Brainard pointed down idly, indicating to Walt that several of his ground crew had arrived at the scene and were going down into the ravine to begin investigating the scene. "The house and property have been in the wife's family for generations and they were not interested in selling."

"What about the Park Association. I heard they had gotten into the fray as well. Is there anyone in particular who was pressuring the Andersons?" asked Walt.

"You didn't waste any time in learning about the case, did you?" laughed the detective. "While it's true that the association had written a couple letters expressing interest. The president of the association, a woman named Vertepais was mostly hoping for a grant of a right-of-way rather than purchasing the land."

The winch motor started and Walt looked down. One of the bodies had been loaded onto a stretcher and the third crewman was winching it up to the helicopter. Walt could see men stringing out crime scene tape and the flash of photographs being taken of the crime scene.

It took about 20 minutes for them to get both bodies up on their stretchers and to secure them to the helicopter. The two crewmen, who had gone down to get the bodies, buckled themselves into their seats and the helicopter headed for New Haven.

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As the Jayhawk landed at Police headquarters several reporters from the local newspapers and TV were there to greet them. A pretty, dark-haired TV reporter stood before her video camera, apparently doing an intro for her story. Meanwhile cameras and microphones were pointed at them as they exited the helicopter and an excited crowd of voices called out to them for comments.

Most of the comments were strictly about the case and what had happened. Suddenly Walt heard a question directed at him.

"Mr. Lincoln! Is it true that you found the bodies and that you have positively identified them as the professor and his wife?"

It was the TV reporter he had noticed doing the intro. She wore a dark suit and had a red scarf around her neck that gave her a European look. He smiled and opened his mouth to answer.

"Will you stay to help solve this case?" as second reporter chimed in.

Walt cringed and he turned to see how Detective Brainard had reacted. But he realized that it wasn't the questions, but his answers that would matter.

"I simply found the bodies. I will help Detective Brainard as much as I can. Other than that, I can not comment."

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Later that evening, in their guesthouse living room, Walt, Jackie and the family watched the news to see what would be reported. Walt had already filled everyone in on the case, but the family still got a thrill from seeing their Dad or his cases being reported on.

A teaser was played just before the news began. A close up of the dark-haired TV reporter appeared, below it a banner identified her as Cathy Landers. With a solemn face she announced. "A major break in the case of the missing Quinnipiac couple by a famous detective..." Walt's face appeared saying "I will help..." Then back to the anchor who intoned "Our top story tonight on TV7."

Jackie turned and looked at Walt. "Looks like the media found a way to make you the center of attention. Hopefully Detective Brainard won't hold you responsible for their creative editing."

"So Dad. Do you think it was one of those crimes of passion?" Joan asked after they had turned off the TV. "I mean, after all, a man and his wife murdered. Abandoned in a remote ravine. He was a handsome professor. He probably had girls falling all over him and one of them snapped and killed them both."

"That's an interesting theory." Walt nodded. "But unless she was a major athlete, I think a girl would have had a hard time getting those bodies up to the ravine. Still, I like your idea."

Walt could see each of the kids trying to come up with ideas, but before anyone else could propose an idea the phone rang. Walt answered the phone and was greeted by a woman's voice.

"Walt Lincoln?" she asked tentatively.

"That's me. Are you a reporter? Because I really have no more..."

"No!" she cut in quickly. "My name is Norah Workman. It was my sister who was murdered. The ... uh ... woman who you discovered this afternoon."

"Oh, I'm really sorry. What can I do for you?"

"Could we meet. I have an idea that there may be a smuggling ring mixed up in my sister's death. I found some contraband, cases of beer and cigarettes, on the property, and," she stopped to catch her breath. "But it would be much easier to show you what I have found than to try and go over all the details on the phone."

"Have you told the police?"

"No, I haven't. I guess I was afraid it might turn out that the two of them were actually part of something shady. I was hoping you could give me your professional opinion before I reported anything to the police." she paused, then added, "we can pay you."

"I'd be happy to meet with you tomorrow morning. Say about 9:30? Just give me the directions and I'll be there."

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Arriving a few minutes early, Walt turned into the driveway of the colonial style house. There was evidence of additions and remodels that had taken place over the years and a plaque on the corner of the house gave evidence that there had been plenty of time for those changes to have occurred: It gave the name Benjamin Henry and the date 1801. They'd passed many houses in New England with similar signs denoting the builder of the house and the year it was built.

The driveway curved around behind the house, where he parked next to a newer Jeep Cherokee under a large old maple tree. Getting out of the car he looked around. There was a barn that was probably the same vintage as the house and a garage across from it that he guessed had been added more recently. A brownstone wall ran between the two structures with a stairway that led up to the property behind the barn where a small apple orchard and a garden area could be seen.

Walt heard the crunch of a boot on the driveway behind him and turned to see Norah Workman approaching. She looked to be in her early-30s, straight brown hair, pretty, with eyes like a Siamese cat behind large rimmed glasses.

"Mr. Lincoln!" she called. "I'm Norah Workman. I'm so glad you could come."

"So this was where your sister and brother-in-law lived?" Walt asked. "It's a very beautiful house and yard. I've heard that the house has been in the family for a long time, are you related to the builder. The guy mentioned on the sign up front?"

"Yes. My sister and I are the great-great-great grandchildren of Benjamin Henry. He was a captain of a schooner that plied what they called 'the coast-wise trade.' That is they

sailed down the eastern coast picking up and selling cargo and did a lot of their trading in the West Indies. Stories of Captain Benjamin Henry have been told proudly by my family since I was a kid."

"Just from your short description he sounds like a fascinating man. I started sailing as a young man and joined the Coast Guard to get a chance to sail on some bigger ships." Walt replied. "But aren't we kind of far from the coast? Is there a river that comes up this far?"

"The yard does run down to the Quinnipiac River at the far end, but you wouldn't sail a schooner up it. Actually he lost a ship and its cargo to some French Corsairs sometime in the 1790s. I think he became discouraged with the merchant trade and moved down here from a house on the Connecticut River. A little town called Cromwell. The story goes that he tried to get restitution from the American government when they finally signed a treaty with France to end the attacks by the Corsairs and the French agreed to pay the U.S. for the boats that were taken. But only a small fraction of these 'French Spoliation claims' were ever paid."

"Well now; there's a piece of history you don't read about in school. At least not where I grew up!"

"Funny. I never even thought about it as history. It's just one of the family stories I grew up with. My Dad would haul out old affidavits that his great-grandfather had prepared, trying to settle up after his father, Benjamin, died."

"Well you said you had something to show me," Walt said. "Some sort of contraband, you said? How about filling me in on the details."

"Right. Follow me and I will show you."

They walked up the brownstone steps that took them into the back yard. From the driveway, the barn was a two-story structure. From the backyard, only the top floor was visible and it had an entrance, presumably for getting at the garden tools and storage.

"It's kind of interesting how they built the barn into the hill like they did" Walt mused. "I guess that would provide better insulation against the cold during the winter."

"In fact it provided for more than that, as you are about to see." Norah Workman said with a slight air of mystery in her voice.

They had reached the bank overlooking the river. There was a stairway leading down onto a dock on the river shore and an old stone boathouse built up against the bank. Walt could see that the river was big enough for boats with a shallow draft, but larger sailing ships would not have come up this far on the river.

She lead Walt into the boathouse, past a good sized motor boat and went to the back wall, where an old white-washed cupboard stood. She turned and gave Walt another mysterious look that seemed to say "wait until you see this."

"Smugglers are hiding contraband in this old cupboard?" Walt asked incredulously.

"Not in it. Behind it," she replied.

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Instead of opening the cupboard doors, she grabbed the top of the cabinet and pulled. The entire cupboard swung out revealing the black gapping mouth of a tunnel behind it. A cool, damp smell emanated from the doorway. Walt whistled.

"An old tunnel that leads to the barn, I gather?" it was half question and half statement. "And that's the mysterious reason behind building the barn into the hill? And also built by your great-whatever grandfather?"

"Right on all counts. We could have gotten down here by way of the barn entrance to the tunnel, but I thought it was a bit easier to come around this way since the cartons are only a few yards in on this side."

"Have they been here since your sister's disappearance?" Walt looked into the dark shaft. He was anxious to see what lay inside.

Norah pulled a couple flashlights from the cabinet and handed one to Walt. "I can't say for sure, but they have been here for several days. I came down to check on their motor boat after they had been missing for a day or two. Their car was gone and I wondered if the boat was gone as well. My sister and I have always loved this old tunnel and almost on a whim, I decided to take a look inside."

Norah could stand fairly easily in the tunnel, but Walt had to stoop over to walk. The tunnel was dark and rather damp, but it was wide enough for two people to walk side by side. It angled slightly up and appeared to go in a straight line towards the barn. They quickly came to an alcove that had a couple of shelves. Sure enough, on the shelves were about 4 cases of beer and maybe 10 cartons of cigarettes.

"Uh oh!" Norah said, "It looks like someone has been here. There were twice as many cases of beer in here yesterday."

Walt held up his hand. "Hold still," he commanded. "We need to be very careful not to destroy any clues. But this would tend to clear your sister and brother in law. If this was their cache why would a thief simply take part of it? Though it is also possible that they had a partner who is selling off these things."

"If they did have a partner, maybe that's who killed them!" exclaimed Norah.

Walt took his flashlight and ran it along the shelves and down onto the ground. The floor was made of crushed rock that had left no sign of footprints. There were some scuff marks on the walls, but they were probably from the boxes themselves. His flashlight caught a glint of something on the floor up ahead and he went to see what it was,

"The cap to a bottle of beer," he mused. It was the same brand as the beer in the cases, "It seems odd to think they might have broken open one of the cases. Tell me a little about your sister and her husband. Did they need to make extra money? Were they in debt to someone?"

"No. I certainly don't think so. Julie, my sister, used to fantasize about being a pirate, but that was a long time ago. She and Alan had been married for almost 8 years. She worked in a little real estate office and Alan, of course, worked in the Math department at Quinnipiac. Both had decent salaries, but when my Dad died a couple years back they bought out my half of the house and spent some more money fixing it up. I suppose they could have gotten themselves in over their heads. But Julie never talked to me about anything like that"

"They didn't have kids?"

"None. They had tried. Still were holding out hope I think. Julie had wanted so much to have a family she could pass the house on to."

Walt shook his head sadly, took a breath and said, "Let's go out by way of the barn. I'm interested to see the rest of this tunnel. Are there any branches or side rooms?"

"No. There is another alcove up by the exit to the barn. It's a little bigger than this one, but basically just more storage space."

Their lights made shimmering reflections on the damp rock walls as the beam slid down the corridor in front of them. They reached the other alcove and it was just as Norah had said: a large shelf which might have been used as a workbench with a few old boxes underneath it, a couple old lanterns hung on the wall above the shelf. Walt spotted several envelopes on the shelf. He picked them up and shined the light on them. They were addressed to Professor Anderson at his University office. A couple of them were advertisements for seminars, but one was from Robert Fiefield of the Geology department. The name was familiar and then he remembered it was the Geology department that was interested in buying the property.

Norah sprung the latch on the door into the barn and pushed open the door. It too was the backside of an old cabinet nearly identical to the one back in the boathouse. She and

Walt stepped out into the barn where Walt could finally stand up straight. He looked around and moved his head back and forth to stretch his neck.

"Do you think old Benjamin Henry set up this tunnel to do a little smuggling of his own?" Walt asked.

"There's no proof, but it certainly has crossed our minds as well."

They stepped out of the barn and back onto the driveway. Walt rubbed his chin and went over what they had seen.

"I think we need to report your findings to the police. I can't say for sure that your sister wasn't involved in something. But we can't keep this from them. It might be the clues they need to find the killer."

"Please, Mr. Lincoln. I've said I'd pay you. Maybe we could catch who ever is picking up the beer and cigarettes ourselves. Maybe they could tell us what happened."

"I'll tell you what. I'll give it 24 hours. We're supposed to be heading back to California tomorrow afternoon. If by tomorrow morning nothing has turned up, then I think we should turn this information over to the police. Meanwhile I will do what I can to ensure that your sister and her husband weren't involved with smugglers or something criminal."

Norah beamed at him. "That would be great."

"I need to make some inquiries at the university. Meanwhile, could you get their records, checkbooks, and the last couple months bank statements? That sort of thing. I'll be back about 1 o'clock or one-thirty and we can look through them. I'll also see if I can get my kids to station themselves across the river and keep an eye on the boathouse during the afternoon."

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"Okay. So tell me again why you want me to go with you to meet this guy at the Geology department." Jackie asked as they pulled into parking lot "C" on the university campus.

"It's simple, Jay-bird," Walt replied. "When I called to ask if we could meet, I told his secretary that our daughter was interested in coming to school in his department."

"So why aren't we bringing Joanie?"

"What! And have her prove that she knows nothing about geology?" Walt laughed.

"I see your point. Lead on McDuff!"

Quinnipiac University was tucked up against the southern side of the Sleeping Giant State Park and the forest that covered the hills spilled over onto the campus. The peaceful scene was suddenly interrupted by a car going by with a load radio. When they looked, they saw a car, literally overflowing with students, going by. Two boys were sitting on the window frame, their feet inside the car the rest of them outside. They thumped on the roof to the beat of the music.

"Seems like a friendly place!" said Walt.

"In other words: Tame by your standards?" teased Jackie.

The Geology department shared their building with several other science departments. A student directed them to the elevators and they took it to the 4th floor where the faculty offices were located.

A tall, thin woman met them. She looked very professional and efficient, and also like she must be getting very close to retirement.

"Mr. Fiefield can see you right away," she said, smiling warmly. "If you will just follow me I'll show you to his office."

Robert Fiefield was a very forceful looking man, with shining dark hair, cut short. He was probably no more than 35 and had the air of someone who took pride in staying in shape. He came around his desk, buttoning his dark gray suit, and extended his hand to Walt.

"Pleased to meet you, Mr., uh..." he looked down at the note in his left hand as they shook with their right hands, "Mr. Lincoln, of course. And you. Mrs. Lincoln? Delighted."

He indicated for them to sit down and he moved back behind his desk and sat down as well. Walt could see that something was bothering him. Fiefield checked the note one more time and looked up.

"So your daughter Joan is interested in attending Quinnipiac College?"

"Yes. Well, at first I thought she was just enamored with the name 'Quinnipiac.' You know how kids can be, but it turns out she'd heard about the chance your school had for that Government grant..."

Suddenly the bewildered look went out of his eyes and was replaced by a cold and wary gaze. "Wait. You are Walt Lincoln. I saw you on the news last night saying how you were here to help the police with Professor Anderson's murder case."

"What you saw was clever editing by the news staff. Detective Brainard made it very clear he didn't want me usurping his case." Walt said, manipulating the truth much like

he had accused the TV news staff. "It was mere coincidence that we were on a New England tour of colleges."

"Well I don't believe in coincidences, Mr. Lincoln. If you are trying to get information for the police, you can see my lawyer. If you really want to learn more about the school, my secretary can give you the school prospectus on the way out."

"Does it cover the work you propose to do under the government grant?" asked Jackie in an attempt to try and save the day. "Joanie was saying that it was important work that would be going on here."

"I'm afraid I have several appointments I must get prepared for. Just ask my secretary for the grant summary document." He stood up to indicate that the meeting was over.

* * *

"I guess that was a waste of time," Jackie sighed as they left the building. "These documents can't be what you are after."

"Oh, it didn't go as well as I had hoped, but I got what I was looking for," Walt replied.

"And what was that?"

"A chance to see the dean close up. Get a feel for what he is like." He paused and then added, "Let's drop by the Math department. I'd like to see if we can get a look at Professor Anderson's office."

This time Walt decided to take advantage of the impression left by the news cast and announced he was there with the approval of the police to go over the professor's office.

"But the police have already been over his office." the administrative assistant said inquisitively.

"I should hope so!" Walt replied. "But if I am going to be of any help on this investigation, I need to revisit some of the places the police have already been. If possible, I'd also like to talk to whoever is taking over his classes."

"I'll show you to his office," the woman replied, getting up. "Then I'll see if Mr. Riccio is available. Here's the office, I'll be back in a minute."

Walt watched her walk down the hall toward an open door with several students standing around. One, a pretty blond in a short skirt seemed to be watching him and Jackie pretty intently. He smiled briefly and went into the small office.

He sat down at the desk and switched on the computer. While waiting for it to start he flipped through the daily planning calendar that he found on the desk, reading a few of the notes, looking to see if any names jumped out at him. There were a few long lunches marked out for the week before he died, but no names were written down. He idly opened each drawer in the desk. When the computer finished the start up process, it automatically launched the email program. Walt didn't know the password, but he noticed that the program still let you see mail that had recently been sent or received. He scanned through the titles of the messages, looking especially for ones he had sent to people outside of the university.

A man showed up at the door. He was tall, with dark, wavy hair. There was something about him that made Walt think of Dean Martin, and having sung his share of 'Amore,' he found himself instantly, if not illogically, liking the man.

"Hi, my name is Frank Riccio. Sarah said you were interested in talking to me?"

"My name's Walt Lincoln," Walt replied, standing up to shake the man's hand. "This is my wife Jackie. I'm doing a bit of investigating for the estate of Professor Anderson. I'm looking for people who he was friends with or that he spent a lot of time with. We're hoping to find people who he might have owed money to, or vice versa for that matter."

"As far as his money matters, I have no clue. He was well-liked by all of us here in the department. We often had lunch together, but after work we hardly ever saw one another, except at college functions and the occasional party."

"Did he have any problem students?"

"Oh, we've all had our share of those. But he hasn't mentioned anyone this year. I'm covering two of his classes and they are all pretty good kids."

"Girlfriend's?" he asked nonchalantly.

The man looked shocked. "He was a well respected teacher," he stammered. "He was married! You're barking up the wrong tree there." His voice softened and he added. "Sure there are students who flirt with their teachers and vice versa, I suppose. But an affair would be a hard thing to disguise at a small school like ours."

Walt looked at his watch. It was approaching noon. If he was going to get any lunch before going back over to see Norah Workman, he was going to have to cut this short.

"Thanks for your time, Mr. Riccio. I hope we have a chance to talk again."

* * *

The elevator door opened and Walt and Jackie stepped into the lobby of the Math building. They had hardly gone five steps when the blond girl that Walt had noticed in the hall of the Math department came up to Walt and stopped him.

"Mr. Lincoln? You are Mr. Lincoln?" she asked and Walt nodded his head. "Is it really true? Someone just told me that you found Professor Anderson's body last night." Her eyes were starting to well up with tears.

"Yes, I'm afraid the police confirmed his identity."

The girl stepped back and sank into a chair. "That's so dreadful," she sobbed. "We had all hoped that he was safe, kidnapped maybe, but not dea--"

Jackie sat down next to her and put her hand on the co-ed's shoulder.

"When you say, 'we,' do you mean all of his students?"

"Sure. Students. Teachers. Everyone liked him." She seemed to stop short. She looked around and then continued in a lowered voice, "Can we talk. Somewhere private. I really can't talk right now."

"Sure," replied Walt, dropping his voice as well. "We were going to grab some lunch, want to join us?"

"There's the ABC Pizza parlor just up the street on Carmel Avenue. Do you know where that is? I'll meet you there in 15 minutes." She jumped up and headed towards a group of students that appeared to be her friends.

"Now what was that all about?" asked Walt, as they walked across the parking lot towards their car.

"A love-struck student, perhaps? Maybe Joanie was onto something, after all." replied Jackie. "But she certainly got all mysterious, with that 'I can't talk here' routine."

"Well let's hope she has something enlightening to tell us. She looks like she may have been our best reason for coming over to the college today. Anyway. Let's get over to that pizza place."

As they started to back out of their parking space, Jackie held up the notebook that contained the University prospectus and the Grant summary that she had been carrying around.

"Any reason to keep these?"

The question was barely out of her mouth when the driver's side window exploded and almost simultaneously they heard the report of a gun.

"Walt!" Jackie screamed.

"I'm fine. I'm fine." he called back, shaking off some of the glass fragments and slamming on the brakes. "You get down. I'm going to try and..."

Walt turned and saw blood against the opposite window. He looked at Jackie. Her face was white. He could see blood on her arm, but couldn't tell where she had been hit. The mystery of who had shot at them would have to wait. He knew he had only one duty.

"Oh my God, Jackie! You just hold on! I'll get you out of here."

He spun the wheel and shot out of the parking lot. He cornered expertly onto Carmel Avenue and then slid to a stop in front of a phone booth. He jumped from the car and ran to open the passenger door.

"I think it's just a scratch." Jackie said looking dumbly at Walt. She was still holding the notebook, which had a ragged hole in it. "My right arm feels kind of stiff and I feel cold."

Walt looked down and saw a nasty gash on her forearm. He pulled out his handkerchief and made a tourniquet for her arm.

"Your body is probably in shock. Put your feet up on the seat and take some deep breaths. I'm going to call 911." He kissed her on the temple. "You're going to be all right, Jay-bird. Just hang on."

* * *

Walt saw Detective Brainard striding down the hallway of the hospital. He braced himself for an assault and accusations of taking the law into his own hands. As a private investigator he had heard the sermon more than once. Brainard turned out to be cut from a different cloth.

"How's your wife?" he asked simply.

"I think she's going to be fine. She lost a lot of blood, so they want her to stay here for a couple hours for observation. From what I can gather the shooter used a 22 pistol or rifle. Jackie was holding a folder of papers and I think that slowed the bullet down. It probably caused the bullet to tumble though and that caused the gash on her arm."

"We'll need to get a look at that slug. That could tie the two incidents together. It's the same caliber that killed the Andersons." Brainard confided.

"Not exactly the weapon of choice for your average thug."

"My thoughts exactly. Any guess on why someone was taking pot shots at you? Did you stir up a hornet's nest at the university?"

The detective's words reminded Walt of Pete and Joan's dream on their last night in Maine. What had he stirred up; who had the time to know of his involvement and act on it?

"That's an excellent question. So far I've talked with Professor Anderson's sister-in-law, Norah. I had a short meeting with Dean Fiefield of the Geology department, then Riccio of the Math department. Oh yeah, then I met one of Anderson's students who wanted to meet with me. But I never asked her name. She seemed very nervous about talking while on campus and I figured I'd ask when we met."

"You don't waste any time do you?" Brainard laughed.

"I figured I had a plane to catch and if I was going to be of any help I had to act fast." he shrugged his shoulders as if it was all in a days work.

"So the attack could either be tied to the fact that you found the Anderson's bodies, or perhaps, one of the people you were talking to is the murderer and you hit a nerve. We may have the bodies, but we still don't have a motive or a clear suspect."

"My daughter had the interesting idea of one of his students being jealous of his wife. A student with a serious crush on her teacher. That sort of thing. So when that girl said she had to talk to me and said it had to be somewhere off campus, it made me very curious. We were going to meet, but that was over an hour ago, and without a name, I'll have to go back to the college and see if someone there can give me her name."

"You think she would talk to you and then try to shoot you?"

"Maybe she suspected that the murderer was one of her girlfriends. I just hope I can find her right away. This case has suddenly become personal."

"I hate to do this to you Lincoln, but I am going to need to have my men go over your car to get that bullet and do some forensic work."

"I didn't want to ride around in a car with a broken window anyway," Walt laughed.

"The rental car company isn't going to be thrilled. Maybe I can get a replacement before they find out about the mess this one is in."

Walt looked at the clock; it was almost quarter to two. He had told Norah he would be back at her place by 1:30. He handed his car keys to the detective and told him where the car was parked.

"I've got to make a couple phone calls," he said. "Let me know when I can get the car back."

As he turned to head for the phone booths, he saw the dark-haired reporter from the TV news program coming down the hall. He knew it wasn't a coincidence, she must have heard about the shooting.

"Mr. Lincoln? It's Cathy Landers of TV7. Can I ask you a few questions?" Her pretty dark eyes flashed a winning smile that could probably draw a statement out of the most hard-nosed subject. Unfortunately for her, Walt had his mind set on a mission and he didn't want to get caught up by another tricky video editor.

"Ms. Landers! I'm so pleased to meet you. Let me introduce you to Detective Ray Brainard, he's handling the case."

"So are you saying there is a connection between the Anderson's slaying and the person who shot your wife?" she shot back.

"Uh, would you like to comment on that?" Walt said turning to the detective. "I'm sorry, but I have to run."

* * *

Norah Workman met Walt at the hospital. The kids were in the car with her. They all scrambled out and gathered around their father, hugging him and demanding to know how their mother was doing.

"When I left she was sleeping. She lost a little blood, but she is going to be fine. They have visiting hours just after supper tonight and we'll come back and see her then. But right now we have some detective work to accomplish."

The kids looked at each other.

"REALLY!" asked Pete. "You want us to help crack this case."

"Well, remember that dream you two had the other night? Let's just say that we have all stirred up a hornet's nest and it just might take all of us working together to keep from getting stung."

"But Mom already has been stung." Jay responded with the sound of a small knot forming in his throat.

"And we are going to see that the person who did that will be brought to justice," said Walt firmly. "Now, back in the car. We've got some surveillance to set up."

As the kids clambered back into Norah's car, Walt turned to her. "You said you were willing to pay me for my help. I really don't need the money, but I could sure use your help with the kids and maybe a ride or two until Jackie is out of the hospital."

"It's a deal," she replied.

"Great. First stop: An electronics shop."

* * *

"Okay. So here's the plan," Walt said as they bumped down a gravel access road that led to the river across from the Anderson's boathouse. "From now until dinner, I want the three of you to keep an eye on the boathouse. If anything comes up we'll use our new two-way radios to stay in touch. Meanwhile I will work on the Anderson's records to see if I can find any trace of them being involved in smuggling and Norah will go to the school and see if she can locate the girl who wanted to talk to us."

"What if the smugglers have a fast motor boat. They could be gone before you get down to the boathouse," said Jay.

"Your job is to get a good look at who ever enters or exits that boathouse," Walt cautioned. "I don't want you trying to follow them or attract attention to yourselves. We need a description of the person far more than anything else."

"And after dinner we go see Mom, right?" asked Joanie.

"Right. Norah will take you to the hospital. But if nothing has happened, I am going to continue the surveillance while you are away." Walt explained. "Also we have some snacks and juice for you as well as a set of binoculars. Now be careful and call me the second you see anything suspicious."

* * *

When they got back to the Anderson's house, Walt decided to make a couple phone calls before sending Norah on a wild goose chase looking for the pretty, young blond girl. He called the Math department and asked for Mr. Riccio. Unfortunately he was in the middle of a class and couldn't be disturbed. Walt thought he recognized the woman's voice as the administrative assistant and remembered Riccio as calling her Sarah.

"Is this Sarah?" Walt asked hopefully. "Are you the AA for the department?"

"Why yes, I am. Who is this?"

"This is Walt Lincoln, I'm the investigator who was in this afternoon."

"Oh my Goodness!" cried Sarah. "I heard that someone shot at you. Are you all right? We thought that we heard the sound of a car backfiring and then heard someone had been shot, but it wasn't until we heard a radio report that we realized it was you and your wife that had been shot at."

"Thanks for your concern. I think everything is going to turn out fine. However I'm trying to find a girl who talked to me moments before the gun shot was fired. She was standing outside of Professor Riccio's office when you went to get him this morning. Blond, short black dress, maybe a touch too much make-up, but very pretty?"

"That sounds like Laura Sturbridge. Straight, shoulder-length hair?"

"Yes. That's her. Would you have a phone number for her?"

"I'm sorry Mr. Lincoln. I really don't feel comfortable giving out someone's phone number without their permission." she replied hesitantly.

"Okay. I can understand that. How about if I give you my number and you call her and ask her to get in touch with me. It's very important that I talk with her today if at all possible."

Sarah agreed to the idea and took down Walt's phone number.

"I guess there is no reason for you to go off hunting for this Laura Sturbridge. We'll just have to wait and hope she calls us." Walt said, turning to Norah and hanging up the phone. "Let's get started on the bills and records and see what we might find."

* * *

"Dad!" a squawk from the two-way radio brought Walt to swift attention. "I think we've hit paydirt!"

Walt grabbed his radio and clicked the send button. "Pete? What is it?" he asked.

"A canoe just landed by the boathouse and two guys are going inside."

"Are they carrying weapons?"

"Not that we can see."

"Excellent. You guys stay right where you are and note every detail you can about the boat and the two guys. I'm going after them. I'll have my radio, so if anything looks like big trouble, give me two squawks on the radio, but otherwise keep it quiet."

Walt grabbed up his .38 police issue hand gun and slid it into his shoulder holster. As he ran from the house he had another thought.

"Norah. Keep an eye on the barn. Don't try to be a hero, but should they try to escape that way, we want to get a good look at them."

Walt was up the steps, into the garden and down to the river ledge in less than two minutes. He looked across the river and saw the gleam off the lens the binoculars, but the kids were well covered by the underbrush. He quietly skirted the side of the boathouse. He pressed his ear against the side, listening for voices or the sounds of movement.

He heard the scrapping sound of the cabinet opening or closing, followed by a clacking noise. "That must have been the sound of the latch as the door closed," Walt reasoned. "They must be coming out."

He stepped to the front edge of the barn. It would be safest to let them get out in the open before he made his move. He heard the two men laughing and then the sound of a beer opening. "They aren't going to just sit in there drinking a beer, are they?" he thought. He grew impatient, drew his gun and stepped around the corner.

"Put your hands where I can see them!" he snapped.

The two "smugglers" yelped in surprise and one of them sneezed beer out of his nose and dropped his bottle. Walt recognized him as being with the car load of students that he'd seen that morning, thumping on the car roof like it was a drum. He tried to run but Walt was standing square in the doorway and grabbed him by the collar and spun him back into the boathouse.

"Don't shoot!" the other rasped out, hardly able to get his voice to work. "You can have the beer. Just let us go."

"I don't want your beer. Now quick, get over there with your hands against the wall." Walt snarled indicating his directions with the nose of his gun.

They quickly complied and Walt patted down each for weapons. Both of them were shaking like leaves and one was sobbing. They didn't have any weapons on them. He took their wallets and stepped back to find out their names.

"Okay. Steve and Ronnie? Why don't you have a seat and let's have a little talk about what the two of you have been up to." He tossed the wallets back to them and put his gun back in its holster.

"It's our beer, Mister. Honest." said Steve. "But we live in the dorms and we just needed a safe place to stash it."

That story made a whole lot more sense to Walt than smuggling. It also fit with the bottle cap he had found in the tunnel. But the coincidence of their using the tunnel for their beer and the professor dying made him wonder if there wasn't a connection.

"Did Professor Anderson know you were hiding this stuff in his tunnel? Was he buying it for you?"

"Heck no," said Steve. "We didn't even know about this place until after the Andersons went missing."

"Well then how did you find out about the tunnel? It has a pretty well hidden latch system."

"One of our buddies found it. We never asked him how. But he said no one was living at the house so that our beer would be safe here."

"So who is this buddy of yours? How can I get in touch with him?"

The two students looked at each other. Ronnie, who still hadn't said a word, glared at Steve. They had started to collect their nerves and Walt could tell they were trying to decide how much more they should be telling.

"Look. As far as I am concerned you are of legal drinking age in this state and all you've done is the minor act of trespassing. I can look past that. But if you want to start withholding evidence in a murder case, then the police are going to want to have your names and addresses; and they are probably going to have to confiscate this stash of yours." He paused to let that sink in. "Now, the name of your buddy and where I can find him."

"Okay, Okay. It's no big deal anyway," said Steve. Ronnie just shook his head. "His name is Terry LaRosa and he lives in our dorm, Sherman Hall. He's probably there now, unless he's over at his old girlfriend's place."

"And who would that be?"

"Her name is Laura Sturbridge."

"You said 'old girlfriend.' Does that mean they broke up."

"Yeah. But you don't know Terry. He doesn't give up that easily."

Walt tried to put this new bit of information into the puzzle. Maybe Laura Sturbridge was afraid of her old boyfriend and that was why she didn't want to talk there at the school.

"One last question, do you know where does this girlfriend live?"

"I don't know the name of the place, but it is in an apartment building just off campus. Right there on Carmel Avenue across from a little shopping center. She shares an apartment with a couple other girls."

"Okay Steve, thanks for your cooperation; Ronnie owes you a huge debt, because I'm going to let the two of you go. But first I want you to clear all of your stuff out of the tunnel and take it with you."

Walt called Norah on the two-way radio and asked her to come down and supervise the two students. He walked down to the shore so that he could call without being overheard and radioed the kids to tell them to sit tight for awhile.

* * *

Back at the house, Walt stopped and called Sarah at the math department.

"This is Walt Lincoln again. Any luck getting hold of Laura Sturbridge?"

"I'm afraid she was out when I called, but I left a note with her roommate," she replied.

"Great. Thanks for doing that. Now I have a new person I am trying to find. A guy named Terry LaRosa. I've heard that he lives in Sherman Hall, but do you know anything about him? Was he in any of Professor Anderson's math classes?"

"I know him by reputation only. He wasn't in any of Professor Anderson's classes, but I heard him talk about Terry a couple times. Maybe you already know that Ms. Sturbridge used to go out with this young man. Well after they broke up she would often come up here and talk to the professor. He was well liked and a number of the students confided in him from time to time."

"Did the professor have any run-ins with this kid, Terry?"

"I don't think so. Well, wait. He did say once that Terry was spreading lies about him. He seemed angry and flustered and didn't want to talk about it."

"When was that?"

"You know, I think it was just before he disappeared. It was certainly within a week anyway."

"So when you talked to Laura's roommate did she give you any indication of when she might be home?"

"It wasn't a 'she' Mr. Lincoln," she replied. "It was a man's voice."

* * *

Walt grabbed a phone book and flipped hurriedly to the S's. He scanned down the page. He found an L. Sturbridge on Carmel Avenue and he jotted down the address and phone number. When he called a woman answered.

"Is this Laura Sturbridge?" he asked.

"I'm sorry, Laura is out," the woman replied. "Can I take a message?"

"My name is Walt Lincoln. I'm a private investigator. Laura wanted to speak to me this morning, but we didn't have the chance to talk. Did she get a message from the school to call me?"

"There aren't any notes by the phone, if that's what you mean. She wasn't home when I got back from classes."

"Do you know her ex-boyfriend? Terry LaRosa? Has he been at the apartment recently?"

"Terry? No. He hasn't been around for several weeks."

"By any chance could you describe what kind of car he drives?"

"It's some kind of a small pickup truck. All black with those big tires."

"Please. When Laura comes in or if she calls, give her my number and have her call me immediately. And what ever you do; don't let Terry into your house."

As he was hanging up, Norah came into the house.

"You should have seen that canoe after they got all the cases of beer loaded into it! The water must have come within 2 inches of swamping them."

"I'm sorry I missed the show," Walt laughed. "I'm going to go get the kids and find them some supper, then I can take them to see Jackie."

"If you are in the middle of something, I can take care of the kids. I can get my husband to pick them, if you want to use my car. I'll make them some supper and meet you at the hospital in 2 hours."

"Norah. You are an angel!" Walt called the kids on the two-way radio and gave them the plan. "So, I am going to run over to the school to see if I can find a student and then I'll meet you at the hospital."

* * *

Sherman Hall was easy to find. It was one of four five-story brick dormitories that all faced on a common square. However, since it was supper time most of the students were in the cafeterias. Walt found the dormitory manager for Sherman Hall sitting in an empty activity room watching the news on TV.

"Excuse me. I'm looking for Terry LaRosa. What room is he in?"

Just then he recognized the face of Cathy Landers on the TV screen and he turned his attention to what she had to say.

"Detective Brainard of the New Haven police force had no comment, but the famous detective Walt Lincoln of California, gave the impression that his wife's brush with a gunman this morning was connected to the case of the murdered Quinnipiac couple. The shooting which took place on the University campus seems to have hardened his resolve to bring the murderers to justice."

Rather than using any of Walt's actual comments they just showed him talking with Brainard and the reporter, thereby lending credibility to her words without having to say a word.

Walt shook his head. Why did he even try to outsmart her?

Suddenly he became aware that the dormitory manager was talking to him. He looked around to see the man literally charging toward him with his arm extended.

"You're Walt Lincoln, aren't you!" he exclaimed, then added somewhat officiously, "Welcome to Quinnipiac, sir. I do hope your wife's condition is progressing satisfactorily."

"Thanks." Walt smiled and shook the man's hand.

"So, do you think this LaRosa fella is a key suspect in the case?" he was nodding his head and squinting his eyes conspiratorially.

"Sorry to disappoint you," Walt replied simply. "I'm just trying to find his girlfriend, really."

"Laura Sturbridge. I see." he replied still nodding his head knowingly.

"So you know her?"

"Oh yeah. She's broken a few hearts during her tenure on campus."

"Anyway. Have you seen either of them tonight?"

"I did see LaRosa earlier; maybe mid-afternoon. But I'm not sure of his whereabouts at this point in time. However I can give you his room number and you can go up and see if he's in his room."

"What about the cafeteria? Could he be in there?" Walt asked.

"Let's take a quick stroll through our esteemed eatery. I should be able to tell you if he is there or not."

The smell of food reminded Walt that he needed to grab a bite to eat before going over to the Hospital. It would probably have to be a stop at fast food restaurant on his way there.

The dorm manager didn't spot LaRosa or Sturbridge in the dining room and no one answered the door to LaRosa's dorm room. Walt had one last idea before he called off his search: Take a quick walk through the dorm parking lot and see if he could see the black pickup with big wheels. He stopped and asked the dorm manager if there was a particular lot he might find the truck and armed with that piece of knowledge, bid the man good evening and left.

* * *

As he neared the end of the first row of cars, Walt heard someone approaching from behind. He could tell that whoever it was, was making an effort to be quiet. Then he heard a second and third set of footsteps in the adjacent row of cars. Walt sensed danger and quickly assessed what he had for protection, and an escape route if that was necessary.

He spun around and there was Ronnie. He had probably seen Walt pass through the dining hall. He had a metal bar in his hands and had it ready to swing. Walt could tell he had been drinking. Evidently getting off scott-free wasn't good enough for his bruised pride. From the corners of his eyes he could see the two others trying to get behind him.

"Ronnie. You are going to be sorry you ever started this." Walt warned as the metal bar made its arc towards him.

"Oh right! Tell that to a doctor." Ronnie sneered.

Ronnie's cackle of victory turned into a squeal as Walt threw himself inside the range of Ronnie's overly extended arms and the blow wrapped around him. The only thing that connected with Walt's body was Ronnie's arm. The force of the blow pulled the bar from his hands and it clattered against the asphalt.

Walt had Ronnie in the air over his head and swung him around to act as a shield from his two other attackers. A stick thudded against Ronnie's calf and he yelped. The second attacker was pulling back for a second strike. The third was getting ready to throw something. Walt used the momentum from his turn to heave Ronnie into the line of the third attacker.

The stick caught Walt on the thigh. He winced and brought his hand down snagging his attacker by the wrist. He twisted brutally and the attacker dropped the stick, a second blow to his kidneys sent the attacker to the asphalt curled up and out of the fight.

Walt looked around Ronnie was out, but the third attacker had seen enough and was running. He started to go after him, but realized that he really didn't care. He went to check Ronnie's condition. He had a nasty bruise on his cheek and Walt didn't doubt that he had a few other scrapes from hitting the pavement, but he was breathing.

Several people were rushing up to the scene of the fight. One was the dorm manager.

"Should I call the police? Someone in their dorm room saw what those kids tried to do and called me."

"You know," replied Walt. "I don't want to be bothered with this kid. I just hope he grows up before he does something really stupid."

* * *

Jackie was sitting up talking to the kids when Walt walked into the hospital room. He felt drained from the long day and the recent fight, but seeing her with her beaming smile and shining eyes lifted the weight from his shoulders.

"Hey Jay-bird." He said giving her a kiss. "It looks like everyone is taking great care of you. Have the kids filled you in on the afternoon's big adventure."

"They sure did," she replied. "But I'd guess that you've managed to add to the adventure since the kids saw you."

"Oh? And what makes you say that?" he asked, surprised.

"Oh. Maybe it was that faint limp you had coming in and the way you were favoring that hip as you sat down."

He told them about the attackers at the dorm and how he was looking for Laura Sturbridge's ex-boyfriend.

"I'm developing a theory based on Joanie's idea. What if the professor and Laura were having an affair? We have no proof of that, but let's just pretend. Her jealous boyfriend

finds out about the affair, when he sees the two going into the tunnel at the back of the boathouse."

"So he finds out about the tunnel. A discovery he later uses when he needs a place to stash all that beer." Joan chimed in.

"Right, but more importantly his anger overpowers him and he goes to the Anderson's house and kills them. The fact that the police couldn't find the bodies and had no clues or motives emboldens him and he tells some buddies about the tunnel." Walt paused. "Okay and now to play out my theory a bit farther. Laura Sturbridge stops us at the math building and says she has something to tell us. LaRosa has let something slip and she suspects he is involved. Maybe he was there in the room and she didn't dare continue. If my theory is correct, LaRosa is in the room and he is afraid she told us something and goes out and tries to shoot us. But he can't stop there..."

"He has to stop Laura Sturbridge from talking to anyone!" Joan finished.

"Which makes it very important I find both of them."

"What about the attackers at the dorm?" asked Jay. "Do you think they are working for Terry LaRosa?"

"They might be his friends, but I think the attack is unrelated. I'm 99 percent positive that it was just Ronnie trying to erase the embarrassment that he had felt by getting caught with the beer. Unfortunately for him it didn't work out like he planned."

A nurse came to the door. "Excuse me," she said. "There's a call for Mr. Lincoln at the nurse's station."

Walt got up and followed her to the phone. It was Norah's husband Joe.

"You just got a call from a girl who says she's Laura Sturbridge's roommate. I think she said her name was Kelly, she gave me a number and asked that you call her right away."

The call to Kelly was equally brief.

"Mr. Lincoln. Terry's truck. The one I was telling you about? It's right outside our building. I was going out to get some dinner and I spotted it. I could see him sitting in it. Do you think he is stalking Laura?"

"Lock your door and stay calm. I'm on my way over."

* * *

Walt pulled into the parking lot of the little shopping center across the street from Laura and Kelly's apartment building. In the rearview mirror he could see the black pickup. It was still light enough that he couldn't just walk over to the truck without being seen and he was trying to decide what to do when a group of students came out of the pizza house and waited at the roadside for a couple of cars to pass. Walt hopped from the car and nonchalantly became part of the crossing party.

Once across the road he made straight for the truck. Coming around the back of the truck, he pulled his gun from its holster and drew a bead on the driver's door. As he came up on the door it became evident that his theory about LaRosa's part in the murder had a couple holes in it. As did Terry LaRosa. He put his gun away.

The driver's window was open. Blood spread from what appeared to be two bullet wounds to the chest. Could Laura have done this in self-defense? But these shots had come from close range outside the car. Someone standing almost exactly where he stood. If his belief in Laura's innocence was correct, that would not fit in with her acting in self-defense. She would have been in the car and gotten his gun somehow. That he could believe. She would not have stood outside the window and coldly shot him.

Walt noticed some blood spots on LaRosa's jeans. Their shape didn't make any sense until he realized that they were letters, apparently written by LaRosa using his own blood. The first letters were pretty clearly "SG," the second set was more sketchy but looked like "RIC."

It was time to call the police in on this one. Walt went up to the apartment entrance and rang for Kelly.

"This is Walt Lincoln. Can I come up? I need to call the police. LaRosa has been murdered."

* * *

"Was it really only 24 hours ago that I met you?" asked Brainard shaking his head. "You found the Anderson's bodies, met with almost every interested party, got yourself shot at, and then discover the body of a boy you suspected of being involved in the case. Not to mention a strange parking lot fight that was brought to my attention. Would you care to fill me in on that little detail."

The evening sky was starting to darken as they stood outside the apartment watching as the crime scene investigators carried out their grim job.

"That's a rather involved story, but it was a key to my theory that LaRosa was our number one suspect. It seems he had found out a clever hiding place on the Anderson property and after their disappearance tried to use that place as a storage facility for

some beer. It made me wonder if he didn't know about their deaths or worse was their murderer. Anyway, I caught two of his buddies trying to pick up the beer. They were the ones who gave me his name, but one of them obviously held a grudge for me catching them and telling them they were trespassing and had to leave."

"And this girl, Laura Sturbridge? How does she fit into your theory?"

"Remember when I talked to you earlier, I told you about the girl who wanted to talk to me? I didn't know her name at that time, but I called the school and made some inquiries. I also found out she was LaRosa's ex-girlfriend. The thing that has made me so concerned is that she hasn't been seen since I talked to her." Walt explained. "Further; when the school called her to give her my phone number a man answered, but she only has female roommates."

"So now we are down to a couple letters written on the dead man's pants."

"My guess is that LaRosa saw his killer and tried to leave us a message. He wouldn't have had much time; he probably died fairly quickly. My guess is they are either someone's initials or else I got the letters wrong and it was a message he never completed. Something like, 'Go right.' Which makes no sense."

"Sleeping Giant, Ranger Information Center?" a voice from behind Walt asked.

The two detectives turned around to see who had asked the question. Cathy Landers flashed a smile at them.

"You do get around Ms. Landers." Walt quipped. "And is there really such a place as the Ranger Information Center?"

"Well no. Not as such. But there is an information center and you can't ask a dying man to be absolutely reasonable in his choice of words."

"That's a good point. I was trying to make it work with the two people I'd met today whose names began with 'S.' There was a guy named Steve who gave me Terry LaRosa's name, but I think his last name was Toversahl, it began with a T anyway. The other was Sarah. She worked in the math department, but I never heard her last name. Maybe if I called..." Walt's voice trailed off.

"Called who?" Brainard prompted. "The math department? At this time of the night?"

"No, No. But I think I have the owner of the initials 'RIC,'" Walt turned to the reporter. "The life of a 20 year old girl is at stake here, Ms. Landers. You have to promise to be careful what you let get on the air right now. The killer's sense of being unknown may be all that is keeping her alive. That is, if she is alive."

"My lips are sealed," she said drawing her fingers across her mouth.

"In the math department, the man who took over for Anderson is a guy named Riccio. Okay, I'm going out on a limb here, but if my daughters bright idea that this was a crime of passion, who says Riccio can't be a jealous colleague?"

"So if we take your theory to be true, LaRosa's message translated to 'Sleeping Giant, Riccio.' But what does that really mean?" asked Brainard. "Sleeping Giant slayings were committed by Riccio; Sleeping Giant is where Riccio is headed?"

"Certainly the first seems the most plausible." Walt answered. "But I wish the message was closer to the second. I really want to find this guy before anything more happens."

"I think you said something earlier that could help." Landers interjected. "He still thinks he is unknown. He is probably at his own home watching the news. I can call in a story that will keep him convinced that you are on the wrong trail and hopefully keep him glued to his set long enough for you to nail him."

"A story that the police are mounting an all out manhunt for Walt Lincoln after a brawl in the student parking lot, followed by the brutal death of a Quinnipiac student."

"Well, I could say you were a person of interest and keep my conscience clear," Brainard said. "How the media interprets that is their business."

"Yum!" the reporter's eyes lit up. "This is going to be a juicy story."

* * *

Walt left in a hurry, so that his co-conspirators could set their trap. He stopped at the Anderson house and pulled out the phonebook. There were actually several Riccio's in the area, but only one Frank Riccio and it gave an address on Whalley Avenue in New Haven. It was listed as apartment number two.

It took him 15 minutes to find Whalley Avenue and another 10 minutes to find the apartment building. This was not a west coast city with its organized grid, this was an organic east coast city where the roads wound around earlier obstructions; such as buildings, hills or town greens. The building looked more like a three-story house rather than an apartment building. A large front porch spanned the house and Walt could see three mailboxes by the front door.

"I guess that makes apartment two, the second floor." Walt thought as he parked the Workman's Jeep across the street from the building. "I can't exactly just go up and knock; he's bound to be pretty jittery if my theory is correct."

Walt walked down the block and into a small parking lot behind a different apartment house. From there he could see the backside of Riccio's apartment. He slid into the shadow of an old elm tree and watched patiently. The third floor was dark, but the other two floors had several windows that were lit. The corner room on the second floor appeared to be the kitchen; he could see the top of the refrigerator and a bright neon light on the ceiling. One of the windows was open, with a small screen in it.

After a few minutes a man walked up to the window. Tall, dark hair and that indefinable Dean Martin look: It was definitely Riccio. By his actions, he appeared to be washing something. His head kept turning and looking to his right. Was he watching the TV or possibly keeping his eye on Laura Sturbridge?

Walt studied the back of the building for a few more minutes, fixing the position of windows, a downspout, a small roof over the backdoor and some wiring. If he was going to make a quick entrance, he was going to have to rely on instinctive moves.

Walt's plan was simple: he would set off the car alarm on the Workman's jeep. That should draw Riccio to the front window. Meanwhile he would be over the fence, into the backyard and up the wall to Riccio's apartment.

The alarm system on the Jeep Cherokee allowed the driver to press a button on their key chain and activate the alarm. Walt crouched at the side of the house and pressed the button. The shrill, ascending whine of the car alarm filled the neighborhood. Like a panther he was over the fence. Walt counted out 25 seconds, enough for most people to have had just about enough of the obnoxious noise. They would be starting for their windows about now. The pathway from garbage can, to window ledge, to the doorway roof and onto the second floor window ledge took only a few seconds to complete.

On the other side of the window was a sink and countertop. Walt could see the TV screen in the front room and the leg of a woman; the rest of her hidden by the chair she sat in. But where was Riccio? Had the fool gone out to see whose car alarm was blaring? Then he realized that there were two windows in the room and the other probably had the better view.

It was time to put his theory to the test. He tugged at the window but it wouldn't open any further. He pulled at the screen and it came loose. He turned it sideways and wedged it into the opening to keep the window from closing. Then taking a deep breath he crouched down and swung himself into the apartment. He slid right over the sink and landed on the kitchen floor. The landing would have been perfect if he hadn't knocked a glass off the counter.

Walt pulled his gun and jumped to the doorway separating the two rooms. He took in the scene in a heartbeat: Laura, sitting tied up in the chair, looked up at him; a gag

around her mouth and tears streaming down her cheeks; Riccio was yanking at his coat which was draped across a chair. No doubt his gun was in the pocket.

"Put that down and get your hands in the air!" Walt commanded.

Riccio swung the coat towards Walt. He couldn't let the girl get hit by a panicked gunman. It was hardly a thought. Walt shot and hit Riccio in the right shoulder. He sensed Laura jump at the report of his gun. The concussion caused Riccio to spin the coat-shrouded gun away from both him and Laura. Riccio sunk to his knees holding a right arm that didn't seem to want to move on its own.

"On the floor and face down," Walt ordered, his gun still trained on the wounded man.

"But my arm! I'm bleeding!" Riccio complained, but he did as he was told.

Walt pulled the coat away from Riccio and carefully checked the pocket. Sure enough, he had been going for a .22 caliber pistol. He made a bundle of the jacket and gun and set them on the TV top then turned his attention to Laura. He untied her hands and feet and pulled the gag free from her mouth.

"I can use this as a tourniquet on our buddy over here." Walt said helping her to her feet. "Are you going to be okay?"

She nodded her head.

"Good. It will all be over soon. Can you call the police? Ask to be connected with Detective Ray Brainard."

Ironically at that moment Cathy Landers face appeared on the television, intoning the news story, "As we reported only minutes ago, the police are calling Walt Lincoln a person of interest in the brutal death of a Quinnipiac student. Stay tuned to TV7 for the latest developments."

Laura paused with the telephone half way to her ears and looked over at Walt.

"When I first heard that newscast, my heart sunk. I thought this guy had committed the perfect crime."

"When there's time, I can fill you in on how we found you," Walt said soothingly. "But just remember; you can't believe everything you hear on TV."

* * *

For her help in capturing the murderer, Walt agreed to give Cathy Landers an exclusive interview and fill her in on the details he'd learned from talking with Laura

Sturbridge. The reporter and her cameraman arrived at the Benjamin Henry homestead at 8 o'clock the next morning and they sat at the old oak dining table in front of the large fireplace, drinking coffee and conducting the interview. The kids stood on the stairway watching and listening intently.

"One thing our listeners are going to be fascinated to hear is how did you solve this case so quickly?"

"For that I really have to thank my kids. Jay convinced us to go to the Park. Peter found the tracks that led us to the two victims and Joanie gave me the idea of a 'crime of passion,' to put it in her words. It gave me a different angle to follow from the one that the police were currently following."

The cameraman turned the camera on the kids and they all beamed with pride.

"A crime of passion! Tell us more about that."

"Well there was a young woman student involved, I think everyone will understand if we keep her name out of this. But it goes something like this: An old boy friend saw the girl with Professor Anderson off campus. The girl denies there was anything improper about the meeting, but let's just say that the location made it very easy for someone to believe the opposite was true."

"Was that the dusty old tunnel you were telling me about?"

"Yes. So the ex-boyfriend went to the professor and confronted him, accused him of conduct unbecoming of a teacher. He also talked to the girl as well. We're pretty sure that Professor Riccio overheard one of these exchanges. Riccio is a bachelor and he had made some overtures toward the girl earlier in the year, Mostly flirty kinds of things, but he'd also invited her to dinner, which she had refused. We think that seeing a married man succeeding where he had failed and then further to have him adamantly deny it, must have triggered a jealous streak that lead to him killing the Andersons."

"I take it Professor Riccio hasn't actually confessed to the crime or explained what happened from his point of view."

"No. We can only surmise what went on at the Andersons, the day he shot them and hid their bodies in the State Park."

"Your wife was also shot. What prompted that?"

"Like we were saying earlier, the police were following a trail that involved the school wanting to buy up this house and land. Riccio wasn't even on their radar. I went to see Anderson's office and to get a sense for what kind of a guy he was. I asked Riccio the one question he was totally unprepared for: did Anderson have a girlfriend? I think he

freaked out and tried to kill me before I could propose that to anyone else. He even told me I was barking up the wrong tree. He really didn't want people taking that idea seriously."

"And the ex-boyfriend, a student named LaRosa, he was shot and killed last night. You believe he was killed by Riccio as well?"

"We can be pretty much certain of that. The girl was there when LaRosa got shot. My theory is that LaRosa had been keeping an eye on the Anderson house, hoping to catch the professor and the girl. I think he may have seen Riccio kill the couple. After Riccio had shot at my wife and I, LaRosa may have guessed at what was happening and went to find the girl to warn her about Riccio, but Riccio got to her first. The exact logistics are hazy, but you get the picture. LaRosa arrives as Riccio and the girl are leaving her apartment. Riccio walks calmly over to the car and shoots the boy."

"And that leads us to one of the more ghoulish aspects. The dead man left a vital clue. Isn't that right?" asked the reporter.

"That's right. Using his own blood he left initials of his murderer. Funny thing though; if a fellow student had been there we could have cracked his message a lot faster."

"Why is that?"

"As you know, the boy died after writing 'RIC.' which we eventually deciphered to be Riccio. But the first two initials he had written were 'SG.' We guessed that they stood for 'Sleeping Giant.' But we weren't sure what he meant by it. It seemed unrelated. The girl told me last night that Riccio, who is a tall man with the sleepy, bedroom eyes of Dean Martin is known to all his students as..."

"No way..."

"I'm afraid so," laughed Walt. "The Sleeping Giant."

The End

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