

Novels By Russ Fine

March, 2025

Spring is almost here. Just a few more weeks of this very cold winter. I'm sure we're all looking forward to it.

I've written a lot of short stories, and ten of them were about the adventures of my character, *Frank Carver*. In the first story Frank is promoted and becomes the only detective on the Norfolk County police force. His first case is quite unusual and that story was published in last month's newsletter.

However, my favorite Frank Carver story is titled the *Time Traveler*. In that story a man walks into the police station and asks Frank to help him prevent a murder that hasn't occurred yet. I've attached that story to this newsletter. I hope you enjoy it.

I've recently combined all the Frank Carver short stories and a novella into a single hard cover edition which is available on Amazon and my signing events.

Please note that all my newsletters are available on my website.

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding my novels please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you.



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Book Signing Events

March 13 - 15

11:00 - 4:00

Kroger

**189 Brooklawn Street
Farragut, TN 37934**

March 27 - 29

11:00 - 4:00

Kroger

**5201 North Broadway
Knoxville, TN 37918**

The Time Traveler

A Frank Carver Mystery

It was early Monday morning. I was sitting at my desk, drinking a cup of coffee, and thinking that it was great that nobody had been murdered recently. The last murder in Norfolk County occurred almost a month ago. It was a domestic dispute. A woman got really pissed off at her husband for buying a new car without discussing it with her first, so she shot him. Not once, but six times. Her trial starts next week. This is my third week in a row with nothing to do.

My name is Frank Carver. I'm a lieutenant in the Norfolk County police department, and the only homicide detective. My wife, Jill, is the county medical examiner. That means we work together on all the murders or unusual deaths that occur here. Fortunately, murders and unusual deaths are not common, so I often find myself waiting for something to happen.

My phone rang. When I answered it, the desk sergeant said, "There's somebody here to see you. He wants to report a murder that hasn't happened yet."

"Is this some kind of bad joke?"

"No, he's very serious about this. Talk to him, you have nothing else to do anyway."

"You're right. I'll be there in a minute."

I hung up the phone and walked to the reception area. There was a guy standing next to the sergeant's desk. He appeared to be in his early forties. He was tall, had short black hair, and was in terrific shape. I walked up to him and said, "Good morning. I'm Lieutenant Carver. How can I help you?"

The man appeared to be very nervous. He stammered when he said, "There's going to be a murder next week, unless you can stop it. I know how silly that sounds. Believe me when I tell you I really didn't want to report this, but if there is any way to prevent the murder I have to try it."

"Okay, let's go to one of our interrogation rooms and you can tell me all about it. Follow me."

He followed me to an interrogation room. I closed the door and sat across from him. Then I said, "Tell me about the murder."

"I think I should give you some background information first. My name is Marvin Feldman. I moved here about three months ago after I accepted an offer to teach physics at the university. I bought an old house near downtown on Maple Street. I asked the previous owners to clear out the house so I would have room for my stuff. However, after I moved in I went down into the basement and found an old isolation chamber."

I thought I knew what an "isolation chamber" is, but since I wasn't sure, I asked, "What's an isolation chamber?"

"This one is a metal box about seven feet long, four feet wide, and six feet high. There is a door that extends down about three feet from the top on one of the narrow sides. The chamber is designed to be filled with two feet of salt water. There's a heater built into it to warm the water to body temperature. You enter through the door, lay down on your back, and because of the salt content you float in the water. Once inside, you're completely isolated from any outside disturbances."

"What happens when you're inside?"

"It's very relaxing. Your mind begins to wander and then you begin to dream."

"What do you dream about?"

"That's where this gets really interesting. The first few times I tried it, the dreams made no sense. I really can't remember them. Then I had a dream I couldn't forget. I suddenly found myself in a battle near Atlanta during the civil war. It was September 18, 1863. In the dream my name was Rufus Springer, I was a sergeant in the Union Army, and was leading a group of five other men near Chickamauga Creek. We were trying to prevent the Confederates from crossing Reed's Bridge. Suddenly I felt a severe pain in my chest. I looked down and discovered I'd been shot, my shirt was soaked with blood. I was unable to breathe. Then everything went black and I woke up."

"Is it unusual for you to have realistic dreams?"

"Up till that time I'd never had a dream as realistic as that one. But I knew nothing about Civil War history. Until I had that dream I had never heard of Chickamauga Creek or Reed's Bridge. I checked and discovered there was a battle at Chickamauga Creek that day and there was fighting at Reed's Bridge."

"Have you had other realistic dreams besides that one?"

“Yes, I’ve had several just as realistic. There was one I think you may find particularly interesting. Does the name Joshua Brewster mean anything to you?”

I was very surprised to hear him say that name. Just prior to his death Joshua Brewster hired an assassin to kill the people he felt were responsible for his first wife’s death. “Yes, it’s a name I am very familiar with,” I responded.

“I dreamed I was Joshua Brewster on the last day of his life. Just before I died I wrote a letter to Chief Mitchell explaining my involvement in the death of three of the five people I thought were responsible for the death of someone named Melissa. Does that sound familiar?”

“Yes, and nobody except the Chief and I were aware of that letter. Did you write anything else that night?”

“Yes, I wrote a note. I’m not sure I remember it exactly. I think it said, ‘There will be three deaths in the next thirty days. Each of the victims will be wealthy, and their deaths will occur under unusual circumstances.’ or something similar.”

“I believe that is exactly what the note said. There is no way you could have known that because the text of the note was never released to the press.”

“Additionally, that incident occurred long before I moved here.”

“Okay, so you appear to have factual dreams about the past. But apparently you also have dreams about the future. Am I correct?”

“Yes, and that’s why I’m here. First, I wanted to tell you that a few weeks ago I dreamed about the winning lottery numbers. I didn’t want to win the jackpot and have to endure the publicity, so I only bet five of the numbers. I won fifty thousand dollars.”

“That’s pretty impressive, congratulations.” I hesitated for a moment and said, “So, tell me about the murder.”

“I had this dream several times. The murder will take place a week from today. I was walking up the hill on Birch Street. Near the top of the hill, on the north side of the street, there is an old two story house with dark brown siding and a large front porch. Standing next to the front door of the house is a man wearing a black leather jacket. I’m not sure what he’s doing, but suddenly a red pickup truck appears on the street. It slows down as it approaches the house. The passenger window opens. I see an arm come out of the truck holding a large pistol. The gun fires three times and the man on the porch falls down. Then I wake up.”

“Do you know the address of the house?”

“No, but I’m sure I would recognize it. To be honest, I’ve been afraid to go to Birch Street and look for the house.”

“Would you feel more comfortable if we go to Birch Street and look for the house together?”

“Yeah, that would be better.”

“The problem is, even if we find the house, how do I stop a crime that hasn’t occurred yet? Wait here for a few minutes. I want to speak to the Chief.”

“Okay.”

I went to the Chief’s office. He didn’t look busy so I knocked lightly to get his attention. He motioned for me to come in. After I sat down he said, “What brings you to my office so early in the morning?”

I said, “A prediction of the future.” He looked perplexed. Then I told him about the conversation I had with Marvin Feldman. He listened and didn’t say anything until I finished.

Then he said, “I can see why you believe him. His story is very convincing, and I don’t see how he could benefit from lying to us. I didn’t believe in any of this psychic stuff until the Brewster case, but now I have to consider that he may be telling us the truth. See if you can find the house, and then find out who owns it. Perhaps the owner knows someone who wears a black leather jacket.”

“Okay. I should be back in a couple of hours.”

Marvin and I walked to my car. The drive to Birch Street would only take six or seven minutes. Once we started the drive, I asked him, “During your dreams, do you have control over what is happening or are you just an observer?”

“I think the question you really want to ask is, ‘Can I do anything to change the past?’ The answer is ‘no’! When I dream, I seem to share the body of whoever I dream about. I can observe their actions but I can’t influence anything they do. Sometimes I don’t even know the name of the person I’m sharing a body with. That’s the case with the dream we’re investigating now.”

“Can you control what you dream about?”

“No, I don’t think so.”

A few minutes later we were driving on Birch Street. The Birch Street hill is one of the highest spots in the county. As we approached the top of the hill, Marvin shouted, “There it is! That’s the house I dreamed about!”

I slowed down as we passed the house. It looked exactly the way Marvin described it. Marvin took a small pad of paper out of his pocket and wrote down the address. Then we headed back to the station.

As soon as I got back to my desk, I used my computer to access the County Assessor’s web site. I entered the address of the house and found out it was purchased a year earlier by Danny and Gina Thorpe. Then I checked for a criminal record for either of them and the only thing I found was a parking ticket issued shortly before they bought the house. Some additional checking revealed that Danny owned a hardware store his father had first opened forty years earlier. When his father died, he inherited the store. There was nothing in the records to indicate why either of them would be a target for murder.

I said, “The people who own the house seem to be unlikely targets for murder.”

“Okay, but perhaps the man I saw wearing the black leather jacket was a friend or relative.”

“That’s definitely a possibility. I really don’t want to tell them that police believe there is going to be a murder at their house next week.”

“Perhaps you could ask them if they know anyone who wears a black leather jacket,” Marvin suggested.

“I could do that, but they’re going to ask why I want to know, and I don’t want to answer that question. I think the best thing to do would be to watch the house on the night of the murder. Do you remember what time the murder is going to take place?”

“I think it must have been early evening. The sun had just set and the western sky was still red.”

“Okay, I’ll be there to watch the house by five o’clock. I’ll have a patrol car there too.”

“I want to be there with you,” Marvin said forcefully.

“Marvin, I’ll be on active duty. There is also some potential for danger. I can’t put you in that situation.”

“Okay, I guess I understand. But you can’t stop me from going there on my own.”

“You’re right, I can’t stop you from going there on your own. But you’re still putting yourself into a potentially dangerous situation. However, I completely understand why you want to be there.”

Marvin said, “Good, I’ll be there on Monday at five.” Then he got up and left.

As soon as Marvin was out of the office, I checked with the lottery to find out if he actually won fifty thousand dollars. I found a picture of Marvin on the lottery web site that showed him receiving an oversize check. I assumed they gave him a real check too.

I went in and talked to the Chief about my plan for Monday evening and he agreed to the surveillance. We talked for a few more minutes and then I went home to have dinner with Jill.

By the time I got home Jill was already making dinner. I walked in, kissed her, and said, “I had a very unusual experience today.”

“I thought almost all of your cases were somewhat unusual,” she said with a smile.

“Yeah, a lot of them are. But today a guy came in and told me he had a dream about a murder that will occur next week.”

“Is he mentally stable?”

“Actually, I think he is. He teaches physics at the university. He bought a house a few months ago and found an isolation chamber in the basement. When he uses it, he has vivid dreams about past and future events.”

“And you believe him?”

“He is very convincing. He told me he dreamed about the winning lottery numbers and I verified that he won fifty thousand dollars.”

“Do you think he could do that again and next time give us the winning numbers?”

“I’ll ask him the next time I see him. But he told me he has no control of his dreams.”

“That’s too bad. I can predict the future too, and I predict that in about eight months we are going to need some extra money.”

“Why would we need extra money in eight months?”

Then Jill yelled happily, “Because I’m pregnant!”

I was caught completely off guard. It took me a few seconds to respond. Then I smiled and said, “That’s wonderful news. I know you’re a doctor, but have you seen an OBGYN yet?”

“I have an appointment next week.”

“Perfect, I want to go with you.”

“I want you there too. You know I’m going to have to quit work, at least for a while. Is that going to be a problem?”

“No, I’m fairly sure we’re okay financially. I was thinking more about how dangerous my job is. With the additional responsibility of a child, I’m going to have to be more careful in the future regarding my own safety.”

“Does that mean no more last-minute trips to Iran?”

“I suppose it does. Anyway, let’s go out and celebrate while we still have the money to do that.”

“Okay, that sounds good.”

We had a very nice dinner at a local steak house. Then we went back home and spent the evening together in bed.

The next morning, I went to speak to the Chief. He was on the phone but motioned for me to come in. After he hung up he looked at me and said, “You look like the weight of the world is on your shoulders this morning. What’s wrong?”

“Actually, nothing is really wrong but I’m worried. Jill told me last night she’s pregnant.”

“That’s wonderful! What’re you worried about?”

“My job has a certain amount of danger associated with it and now I have responsibilities I didn’t have before.”

“I understand your concern, but there really isn’t much you can do to mitigate the danger in your job. Would you like me to assign somebody to work with you?”

“I’ve thought about that. I’m not sure whether that would make things better or worse. If I had an assistant, I’d worry about him too.”

“Okay, you need to get your head on straight. Come back tomorrow morning and we’ll talk about this again. Anything new on our future murder?”

“No, we’re basically all set up. I’ll be parked across the street from the house and the squad car will be parked a few hundred feet down the hill. As soon as we spot the pickup truck, the squad car will pull out and block its path.”

“If it actually comes. I must tell you that I don’t have a great deal of confidence in future predictions.”

“Normally, I would agree with you, but so far Marvin has not given me any reason to question his vision, other than the fact that it is a vision. If the truck shows up on Monday, as he predicts, will you have more confidence in his predictions?”

“I suppose so, but if we catch the guys in the truck, I want to be sure there is no connection between them and Marvin.”

“I understand. By the way, Marvin asked if he could ride with me Monday evening and I told him that would violate our rules. So now he plans to be there in his own car.”

“It’s a free country. If he wants to be there, we can’t stop him.”

“That’s exactly what I told him. I’ll think about your offer for an assistant and we can discuss it again tomorrow morning.”

When I got home that evening, Jill was already there. She kissed me and said, “We have to talk.”

“Okay, what do you want to talk about?”

“I knew there was a County Board meeting this morning, so I submitted my resignation prior to the meeting. The Board refused to accept it. They want me to take a ninety day leave of absence and then come back to work. I’m not sure what to do.”

“Do you want someone else to raise our child?”

“Just because we’ll have a nanny to watch the baby during the day doesn’t mean she will be raising our child.”

“I suppose you’re right. But I really think that decision has to be yours. On another subject, I told the Chief you were pregnant and I was concerned about the additional responsibility. He offered to hire an assistant for me. Do you think that would be a good idea?”

“Would having an assistant do anything to minimize the danger associated with your job?”

“It probably would, but then I’d worry about the safety of my assistant.”

“I think you should tell the Chief that you think having an assistant is a wonderful idea.”

“Okay, I’ll do it tomorrow morning.”

The next morning, I went to the Chief’s office first. He was reading something on his computer but he looked up, saw me, and said, “Good morning Frank, come in.”

I walked into his office, sat down, and said, “Jill thinks my having an assistant is a wonderful idea.”

“What do you think?”

“I think it’s a good idea too. I don’t think I need somebody full time, but during an investigation it would be very helpful.”

“I could assign one of the patrolman to work with you on an ‘as needed’ basis. Can you think of anyone you feel could handle the job?”

I thought about it for a few seconds and said, “Yeah, I think Mike Stevens would be good.”

“I was going to promote Mike to Sergeant at his next review anyway. I think he’ll be an excellent assistant for you. If he agrees, I’ll promote him immediately.”

“Let me know what he says. If he agrees, I’d like him with me on Monday night while we watch for a future murder.”

“I’ll talk to him today.”

I went back to my desk and discovered I had absolutely nothing to do. So, I decided to do some research on isolation chambers. I remembered seeing an old movie called *Altered States* where the main character regressed physically as a result of using an isolation chamber, but I didn’t think Marvin was regressing into some kind of ape-man. All the information I found indicated that they simply provided a great way to achieve total relaxation.

So, either Marvin’s chamber was different than the others or Marvin was different. I decided that the best way to find out was to try it myself, and if Marvin’s prediction came true, I planned on doing exactly that.

Just before noon I received a call from Mike. He thanked me for asking the Chief to make him my assistant and said he was looking forward to working with me. I spent a few minutes explaining the situation with the murder that was predicted to happen Monday evening. When I was finished, he said, “I’ve been a member of the police department for more than five years, but before you became the homicide detective, we never had these weird cases. Now we seem to have them all the time. I’m not complaining. I actually think it’s kind of exciting.”

“I understand and I must tell you that several of the cases I’ve worked on go way beyond weird. I’m glad you’re excited to be working with me. If you have the time, stop by the office later. We’ll pick up Jill and go out to dinner.”

“Okay, I’ll be there just before five.”

“Perfect, I’ll see you then.”

Jill, Mike, and I spent the evening together. Mike seemed very happy that Jill was pregnant and he promised he would make sure nothing bad happened to me. Jill thanked him.

On Monday afternoon at four o’clock Mike, the two patrolmen who would be assisting us, and I got together to discuss the plan for the evening. The plan was that Mike and I would be in my car on the south side of the street, across from the house where the shooting was supposed to occur. The patrol car would be parked about two hundred feet down the hill from the house on the north side of the street. When the red pickup was spotted, the patrol car would pull out in front of the truck and block the street. After the truck was stopped we would surround the truck and arrest the people inside. It was obvious the two patrolmen thought this was a big waste of time, and I shared some of their skepticism.

By five o’clock we were in place and waiting for the truck. A few minutes later Marvin showed up in his car and parked right behind me. The day soon transitioned into night and the street lights turned on. We had been there forty-five minutes when an old van parked just up the hill from the house we were watching. A man wearing a black leather jacket got out of the car and began walking toward the house. Mike and I were surprised because neither of us believed Marvin’s prediction would actually come true.

We watched the man walk up to the house. He stopped by the front door and reached into his pocket. At that moment we heard the screeching of tires and saw a red pickup truck moving rapidly toward the house. Mike and I got out of my car and ran toward the patrol car. The emergency lights and siren on the patrol car turned on and it pulled into the street in front of the truck. The truck driver slammed on his brakes. Then I heard three shots that sounded like they were coming from the truck. The driver managed to stop the pickup truck a few inches

from the patrol car. Mike and I had our guns out as we ran behind the truck to prevent the driver from backing up. The patrolmen got of their car with their guns drawn and ran to the passenger side of the truck.

When the two men inside the truck realized they were surrounded by four cops with guns drawn, they yelled, "Don't shoot!" The doors on the truck opened and the two guys stepped out with their hands up. The patrolman put cuffs on both men. Since the situation was under control, we ran to the house where the man in the black leather jacket had been standing on the porch. He was no longer standing. He was on the porch floor, with a bright red dot in the middle of his forehead. He was dead!

I was stunned. I turned around and saw Marvin standing on the walkway leading to the porch. He asked, "Is he okay?"

"No, he's not. He's dead. Apparently shot in the middle of his forehead."

Mike called an ambulance and I called the Chief and told him what happened. The Chief said he would dispatch a forensics team immediately and he would be there as soon as possible.

When I finished my call, I looked at Marvin and said, "This isn't the way it happened in your dream, is it?"

"No, but the outcome is the same."

"Was the guy in your dream shot in the forehead?"

"I don't know. I didn't get a good look at the body."

Mike said, "An ambulance is on the way. I checked the victim for identification. His name is Wayne Bristol and he lived on Valley View. He had business cards in his pocket that indicate he's a handyman. He also had a key to the house. Apparently, nobody is home."

"Mike, go talk to our suspects and find out why they wanted to kill Mr. Bristol."

I was examining the body and something just didn't look right. I didn't know whether Jill or Amanda was on call that night, but one of them would be here shortly. Mike opened the front door to the house and I decided to search the inside. I walked through every room and thoroughly searched the basement too. I found nothing the least bit incriminating. I walked back to the front porch and found Amanda examining the body.

She saw me, smiled, and said, "Congratulations, Jill told me this morning that she's pregnant."

"Thanks, I'm just a little worried about the additional responsibility," I responded. Then I said, "Something about our victim bothers me, but I'm not sure what it is."

"After a quick examination I can tell you he was already dead when the bullet struck him. That's why there was no bleeding at the entry wound. I would guess he died from a heart attack, but I'll know more after the autopsy."

Mike returned from his discussion with our suspects, so I asked, "Did they tell you why they wanted to kill Mr. Bristol?"

"They said their intent was to shoot up the house. Apparently, they were upset with the owner of the house over some problem at the store he owned. They said they didn't know Bristol, and had no reason to harm him."

"I want them charged with manslaughter. I believe they are still responsible for Mr. Bristol's death."

"Okay, I think I'll ride back to the station in the patrol car. I have to tell you our suspects are really scared. They thought this was going to be a harmless prank."

"Good, they should be scared. I'll call you when I'm done here."

Marvin had been standing next to me watching the events unfold. Then he said, "In my dream I saw the victim fall, but I never saw him get shot. Even though you stopped them from shooting at the house Mr. Bristol still died, so it appears there is no way to prevent the events I dream about from happening."

"You may be right, but obviously when you dream about future events, they actually occur, so if you have any dreams about future events, I still want to know about them. I would also like to experience your isolation chamber myself. Can we do that tomorrow night?"

"Sure, why don't you come over about eight o'clock? I'll turn on the heater at seven so it will be ready when you get there. By the way, I always go into the tank nude. I think wearing a bathing suit might prevent you from experiencing the full effect of the chamber."

"Okay, that's not a problem. My wife, Jill, will be with me. She's a doctor, so if I have some kind of attack, she'll be able to take care of it."

"I don't think you're going to have any kind of attack. I think the only thing you'll feel is total relaxation."

"And maybe a dream?"

“Yeah, and maybe a dream.”

Amanda stood up and said, “I’m done here. I’ll do the autopsy in the morning. I’ll call you with the results.”

“Thanks, Amanda.”

The Chief arrived a few minutes later and I briefed him on everything that happened. We talked for a while and I went home when the forensics team arrived. When I got there, Jill was waiting for me. She kissed me and asked, “Did the future murder occur?”

“Yes, it did. But I’m not sure it was murder. The victim was shot but Amanda said he died from a heart attack before he was hit by the bullet. I’m convinced that Marvin is actually able to predict the future. Tomorrow night I’m going over there to try his isolation chamber. I want you to go with me.”

“I wouldn’t miss it. Perhaps I’ll try it too.”

“Marvin said you have to go in naked. Are you sure you want to do that?”

“Yes, you know I’m not the least bit modest, so being naked isn’t a problem for me, even with Marvin there. Is it a problem for you?”

“No, I guess not.”

“Good, let’s go get some dinner. After all, I’m eating for two now.”

The next morning, I was sitting at my desk when the Chief came by. “Any new developments concerning last night’s events?” he asked.

“No, I’m waiting for the autopsy results.”

“How did Mike work out as your assistant last night?”

“He’s fine. I must tell you it makes my job a little easier.”

He smiled, nodded his head, and walked toward his office. Two hours later Jill called to confirm Amanda’s thought about Mr. Bristol’s death. She also said that the bullet never penetrated his skull. It was deformed so it must have ricocheted off of something before it hit him.

I wrote up my report and put it on the Chief’s desk. Then I went to lunch. Nothing happened in the afternoon and I spent most of it daydreaming about the night’s activities.

I got home early, so I made dinner for Jill and me. After we ate we cleaned up the kitchen and drove to Marvin’s house. He was waiting for us and opened the door before I rang the bell.

After we walked in I said, “Hi Marvin. This is my wife Jill. She’s the county medical examiner.”

Marvin and Jill shook hands and Marvin said, “It’s a pleasure to meet you Jill. I’m curious, did Mr. Bristol die before he was shot?”

“It’s nice to meet you too. I’ve never met anyone who can predict the future before, and ‘yes’ Mr. Bristol was dead before he was shot.”

“I suppose you want to get started, so please follow me.”

We followed Marvin down into his basement. It was mostly empty except in the area where the isolation chamber was located. Marvin said, “You are the first guests I’ve had in the house. I set up some chairs and a table so we would have a place to sit while you’re in the chamber.”

I asked, “How long does the experience take?”

“That’s an interesting question. While you’re in the chamber, time has no meaning. I’ve been in it for what I thought was only a few minutes and discovered that more than three hours had elapsed. On other occasions I thought I was in it for hours and I was actually in it for only about twenty minutes. I have no idea if your experiences will be the same.”

I took off my clothes and walked over to the chamber door. Marvin opened it and said, “Once you’re comfortable inside, turn off the light. The switch is on the right. When the light is off, you’ll be in total darkness. Have fun.”

I stepped inside the chamber and laid down on my back. Marvin closed the door. It was very comfortable. I turned off the light and was surrounded by total blackness. It was somewhat disconcerting at first, but then it just added to the feeling of relaxation.

I dreamed but not about past or future events. Just the normal, senseless dreams most people experience while they are sleeping. When I woke up, I turned on the light, moved over to the door, and opened it.

Marvin and Jill were sitting at the table drinking coffee. They looked at me as I climbed out of the chamber. Jill asked, “Did you dream about the winning lottery numbers?”

“No, I didn’t dream about anything I can remember at all. How long was I in there?”

Jill looked at her watch and said, “About an hour and a half. Was it relaxing?”

“Very, do you want to try it?”

“Sure, if it’s okay with Marvin?”

“I have no problem with it. Do you want me to leave?”

“No, you don’t have to leave.”

Jill threw me a towel and I dried myself off while she got undressed. She climbed into the chamber, I closed the door, and then I got dressed again. Marvin got me a cup of coffee and brought down another towel.

We talked for about an hour when Jill opened the door to the chamber. She was not smiling as she stepped out. I handed her the towel and asked, “Is something wrong?”

“Yes, something is very wrong!” she said excitedly. “I just experienced dying in a plane crash.”

“Is this something that already happened or is it a future event?” I asked.

“I think the crash occurred in 1985. I was a passenger on Japan Airlines flight 123. I remember hearing an explosion and seeing the oxygen masks drop. The really strange thing is that I could read and speak Japanese. That’s how I knew the airline and flight number. The pilot kept giving us conflicting information about what was going on, but I remember seeing the plane break apart just before I woke up.”

Jill was still shaking as a result of her experience inside the isolation chamber. She sat down on one of the chairs and said nothing for a minute or two. Then she said, “That was, by far, the most realistic dream I’ve ever experienced. As frightening as it was, I want to try it again.”

“Not tonight. I think you’ve had enough excitement for one day,” I said strongly.

“You’re right, but can we come back tomorrow and try it again?”

“Sure, I’m glad you had a similar experience. Now people will know I’m not crazy,” Marvin responded.

After Jill and I arrived home, she went to our computer and spent some time researching Japan Airlines flight 123. When she was finished, she said, “There were four survivors from the crash and I wanted to read their accounts of what happened. I was curious if their experiences matched mine, and they did. I was actually on that plane.”

“I wonder if I tried it again, would I have a similar experience? I think I’ll try it again too.”

“That’s a good idea. Have you considered what you’d do if you learned about future disasters that had national or international implications?”

“Actually, I have. But I think the visions are triggered by some personal experience, even if we’re not aware of it. If it’s true, that would be a limiting factor in the scope of the dreams. I’m curious, did you think about a plane crash recently?”

Jill was silent for a few moments. Then she smiled and said, “Yes, I was thinking about the victims of the plane crash that destroyed the restaurant here. I was working on the woman who died in the car crash that happened on the interstate a few days ago. There were some similarities between her injuries and the injuries sustained by the people in the restaurant.”

“Maybe tomorrow you should think about winning the lottery.”

“That’s a great idea! I’ll do that.”

The following morning, I was sitting at my desk when the Chief walked by. He asked how I was and I responded by telling him about the event at Marvin’s house. He listened to everything I said, nodding his head occasionally. When I finished, he said, “So it’s obvious Marvin isn’t a hoax. I still find this stuff hard to believe. Maybe the next time we’re having trouble with a murder investigation, he could help us by channeling the victim.”

“Marvin said he can’t control what he dreams about, so I don’t think that would work. I do believe the dreams are related to thoughts, but it would appear to be impossible to direct the dream in any way. After Jill dreamed about the plane crash, I asked her if she had spent any time thinking about plane crashes. She said she was thinking earlier in the day about the victims in the restaurant after the plane crash last month. She wasn’t thinking about the crash of flight 123.”

“Well, it was just a thought,” the chief said as he walked to his office.

Jill and I arrived at Marvin’s house a few minutes early. I rang the bell and Marvin open the door almost immediately. He motioned for us to come in. As soon as we were inside, he closed the door and asked, “Does the name Alicia Campbell mean anything to you?”

“No, is something going to happen to her?”

“Something already did. I was Alicia Campbell when she was murdered.”

“When did this happen?”

“I would guess at least five years ago. I’m not sure. Sometimes I know the exact date, but this time the only reference I have are the cars I saw on the street.”

“Tell me as much as you can about the incident. I’ll check it out at the office tomorrow.”

“It was fall. The leaves were all red and gold. I was walking through a park on a sidewalk that went around the perimeter of a small lake. There were ducks swimming in the lake. It was beautiful and very tranquil. There was nobody else there, or at least nobody I could see. At one point the sidewalk was separated from a busy street by some bushes. I remember looking through the bushes at the traffic on the street when somebody grabbed me from behind. Whoever it was covered my mouth so I couldn’t scream. Before I could react, I felt a needle pierce the right side of my neck. I was still conscious, I knew what was happening, but I was paralyzed. I couldn’t move or speak. The person behind pushed me through the bushes. They waited until there was a car a few feet away and then I was shoved in front of the car. I felt the impact of the car and then I woke up.”

“How did you know you were Alicia Campbell?”

“I have no idea. In the entire dream no one spoke so my name wasn’t mentioned. The only sounds I remember were the leaves blowing in the wind, the ducks, and the traffic.”

“That place sounds like Whisper Lake Park,” I said.

“You’re right,” Jill agreed. “I used to go ice skating there when I was a kid.”

“Please call me after you check this out.”

“I promise, I’ll call you in the morning.”

We went down into the basement. Marvin had set up a bottle of wine and three glasses. He started to pour some wine for us but Jill said, “None for me, thanks. I’m pregnant.”

“Congratulations, Marvin said with a smile.

We talked for a few minutes, then Jill asked, “Is the chamber ready?”

“Yeah, I never turned off the heater after I got out.”

Jill quickly removed her clothes and stepped into the chamber. I closed the door and returned to my seat. Marvin and I were both on our third glass of wine when the door to the chamber opened. I grabbed a towel and brought it over to Jill. I handed it to her. Then she said, “You asked me to think about winning the lottery today so I did. This time when I was in the chamber, I dreamed about exactly that.”

“Really?” I asked excitedly.

“Yeah, but unfortunately it was about winning the lottery two months ago.”

“Are you kidding me?”

“Yes, I’m kidding you. I didn’t have any dreams at all. It’s your turn.”

A few minutes later I stepped into the chamber, made myself comfortable, and turned off the light. I know I fell asleep, but I suddenly found myself at my tenth birthday party. I was sitting at a table, in front of me was a cake with candles on it, and I was surrounded by friends and family. When they all started singing, I woke up. It was an improvement over not having any dreams, but it was pretty lame when compared to the dreams Marvin and Jill experienced.

I stepped out of the chamber and Jill brought me a towel and asked, “Did you dream about anything exciting?”

“Yeah, I had a very realistic and thrilling dream about my tenth birthday party.”

“It was still an improvement over having no dream at all, wasn’t it?”

“I suppose so.”

After I got dressed we went upstairs and talked for a while before Jill and I went home. On the way home we talked about the evening and decided to wait three or four days before trying the isolation chamber again. However, I kept thinking about Alicia Campbell all evening. I was anxious to get to work and check out what happened to her.

I arrived at the station about an hour earlier than normal. I went to my desk and looked up Alicia Campbell. Marvin was close on his time estimate. Alicia died six years earlier on November 4th. The report said it was a “hit and run” near Whisper Lake Park. The driver was never found. The medical examiner’s report said she died as the result of trauma when she was struck by a car. Obviously, this was a complete contradiction of what Marvin said, so I had to discuss this with the Chief.

He arrived fifteen minutes later and stopped by my desk. He said, “Good morning Frank. How’s my favorite homicide detective doing this morning?”

“I’m fine. Does the name Alicia Campbell mean anything to you?”

“Yes, she was killed in a ‘hit and run’ about five or six years ago. That was a few months before I was promoted to Chief of Police. Why?”

“It wasn’t a ‘hit and run’. She was murdered.”

“What makes you say that?”

“Marvin had another dream. This time he was Alicia Campbell. She was walking through the park when somebody grabbed her and injected something into her neck. Then the person pushed her in front of an oncoming car.”

The Chief didn’t respond immediately. He was obviously thinking about something. Then he said, “Something about her death bothered me for years. She was only twenty-three, in good health, and didn’t use drugs or alcohol. The traffic on Park View Drive is constant in late afternoons and I could never figure out why she would have walked into the street in front of a car. She had to see it coming. I thought that perhaps someone was chasing her, but that was only a theory.”

“I’d like to have her body exhumed and have Jill check for a puncture mark on her neck.”

“Okay, write up the request and I’ll sign it and take it to Judge Klinger for approval.”

“I’ll bring the paperwork to you in a few minutes. I’ll also call Jill and let her know.”

“If Marvin’s dream is correct, I’m going to offer him a job.”

“I think he likes his job at the university, and I’m sure it pays better.”

“You’re probably right.”

After the Chief left I called Jill and told her about Alicia. She said that she and Amanda would check the body as soon as it arrived. Then I called Marvin. I told him what I found regarding Alicia and that we were going to exhume the body and check it for puncture marks.

It usually takes two days for a body to be exhumed, but since Alicia had no family to notify, it was done immediately. The body arrived at the morgue late that afternoon. Jill called me a few minutes after four o’clock to tell me they were starting the autopsy.

Just before five o’clock Jill called again. There was a puncture mark on Alicia’s neck where Marvin said it would be. There was no way to determine what drug was in the syringe, but there were several drugs that would have the effect Marvin described. Additionally, there was bruising on her face and upper body that would be consistent with the description of how she was held while being injected.

The Chief was still in his office so I went there and told him what Jill had found. He said, “Open a murder investigation and tell Marvin ‘thank you’ and I owe him a bottle of whatever his favorite drink is.”

“I’m going to call him now. I’m sure he’d want to know about the puncture mark in Alicia’s neck. I’ll give him your message.”

When I got to my desk, I called Marvin. After he answered I told him about the results of Jill’s examination of the body.

Then he asked, “What’s going to happen now?”

“This case has bothered the Chief since it occurred. He asked me to open a murder investigation. He told me to thank you for your help with the case and he wants to buy you a bottle of your favorite drink.”

“Tell him I appreciate the offer, but other than inexpensive wine, I really don’t drink.”

“Okay, I’ll let him know. Also, Jill and I would like to try the isolation chamber again in three or four days. Is that okay?”

“Of course, just let me know. I’m going to stay away from it for a few days too. The episode with Alicia was very disturbing, and I’d rather not have a similar experience for a while.”

“Did you give any thought to what may have triggered the dream?”

“Yes, but all I can think of is that I watched a few old murder mysteries a couple of days ago. One of them involved a woman killed by a car while walking down a dark country road.”

“I suppose that could have been the trigger. I’ll keep you informed on the investigation. Six-year-old murders are very hard to solve.”

After the conversation ended I started thinking about where to start the investigation. I read the police report again. The investigating officer was Robert Coleman. He retired shortly after the investigation and died

about two years ago. The report said there were no witnesses to the hit and run. Of course, it is possible Sergeant Coleman never really looked for any.

I read the Medical Examiner's report again too. There was no reason to suspect foul play so he never did a very thorough examination of the body.

I decided the best way to start the investigation was to look for possible witnesses. Park View Drive has professional offices on the street opposite the park. I told the dispatcher I was leaving and I drove over to the park. I walked around the lake on the path and looked for the area where the path was separated from the street by bushes. I didn't know what they looked like six years ago, but now the bushes were thin and even though it was late spring there weren't many leaves on them. As I looked through the bushes, I could see some medical offices and a few lawyer's offices.

I walked across the street and went into the first office. The receptionist looked up and said, "Good morning sir, may I help you."

I showed her my ID and asked, "Was this office here six years ago?"

"No, we've only been here for two years."

"Do you know what was here before Dr. Bates set up his office?"

"No, I've only been with Dr. Bates for about a year."

I said, "Thank you for your time," and I walked out of the office. The next office was a law firm with at least a dozen partners. I walked in and noticed immediately that the receptionist had an excellent view from her desk. I walk up to her and said, "Good morning. I'm Lieutenant Carver with the Norfolk County Police Department. Were you here six years ago?"

"Yes Lieutenant, I was here six years ago, and for eight years prior to that as well. How can I help you?"

"Do you remember a fatal traffic accident that occurred across the street about six years ago?"

"Like it was yesterday. Why?"

"Some new evidence in the case indicates that the woman that was killed in the accident was actually murdered and was pushed in front of the car. Can you tell me what you remember?"

"Sure, but I thought it was strange that nobody asked me about the accident at the time. I was expecting to be questioned by the police, but that never happened, until now."

"I agree, that is strange. In any case I'm asking now. Please continue."

"It was late in the afternoon. We had no clients in the office so I was looking out the window. Suddenly I heard a loud screeching of brakes. I looked and I saw a white Chrysler Sebring convertible with a black top hit a woman who appeared to be laying on the street. I heard a thud as the car struck the woman. The driver of the car backed up and drove around the woman and out of sight. I called the police immediately. I gave them my name and the office phone number, but nobody contacted me. When I hung up the phone, there was a man wearing a black leather jacket standing in the street directing traffic around the victim. The police and an ambulance arrived a few minutes later. I saw the police talking to the man who was directing traffic for a few minutes. Two men took a stretcher out of the ambulance and rolled it over to where the woman was laying. I saw one of the men kneel down next to the woman and check for a pulse. He shook his head, and the two men put her on the stretcher and wheeled her to the ambulance. They put her inside and drove away. A few minutes later the police left too."

"Are you certain about the make and model of the car you saw?"

"Yes, because I was driving a Sebring convertible at that time too."

"Did you get a look at the driver or any part of his license plate number?"

"No Lieutenant, I'm sorry I didn't."

"Do you remember anything about the man wearing the black leather jacket?"

"The only thing I remember about him is he was bald. But I did see him drive away. He was driving a red Ford pickup. There was some writing on the side of the truck but I don't remember what it said."

I handed her my card and said, "If you remember anything else, please call me. Thank you for your assistance."

She took the card, glanced at it, and said, "You're welcome. I'm sure the incident will be on my mind for a while now. I promise I'll call immediately if I remember anything else."

I walked out of the office and sat on a bench beside the door. I wondered if the man in the black leather jacket was Wayne Bristol. He was bald too. Of course, there are probably a lot of bald men who wear black leather jackets in the fall.

I tried all the other offices that had windows facing the street, but only one of the offices was occupied by the same tenant at the time of the murder. The receptionist had only been there for a year, but she knew who had the job previously. It was the wife of one of the law firm's partners. Her name was Jessica Preston. She gave me Jessica's phone number. I thanked her and left.

I went back to my car and called Jessica Preston. She answered almost immediately, like she was waiting for a call. She said, "Hello, this is Jessica Preston."

"Mrs. Preston, my name is Frank Carver. I'm a detective with the Norfolk County Police Department. I wanted to ask you if you remember anything about a fatal traffic accident that occurred near your office about six years ago."

"Mr. Carver, it's not often you see somebody murdered, so I'm not likely to forget! she exclaimed. "What do you want to know?"

"Why do you think it was a murder?"

"It was late and our last client of the day had just left the office. I was looking out the window admiring the pretty trees in the park. I noticed the bushes moving and I saw a woman move through the bushes towards the street. She appeared to be sick. Her movements weren't coordinated. As she approached the street, she appeared to stop. Her head was looking away from traffic. Then I noticed she was being held from behind. Someone appeared to be holding her shoulders. I saw a white and black car approaching the spot where she was standing, and she appeared to fall right in front of the car. I think whoever was holding her pushed her into the street."

"Did you see the person who pushed her at all?"

"No, the person's face was hidden by the bushes. Anyway, after the car hit the woman, it backed up and drove around her. I couldn't believe anyone would just drive away after hitting somebody. A moment later I called the police to report what I saw, but I was told the accident had already been reported and a patrol car and an ambulance were on the way. The woman I was speaking to asked me for my name and phone number, which I gave her. She said somebody would be contacting me, but after not hearing from anyone for a day, I called the police again. The person I spoke to apologized and again promised someone would call me, but that never happened."

"Do you remember anything else from that afternoon?"

"Just one thing. I was kind of surprised to see our handyman, Wayne Bristol, directing traffic around the woman."

"Are you sure it was Wayne Bristol?"

"Yes, he was in earlier that day changing out florescent bulbs in our light fixtures. He left about two hours before the incident."

"Did you notice anything about the white and black car that hit the woman?"

"It had local license plates, and I think the first digit on the plate was a seven."

"Were you ever questioned by the police about the accident?"

"No, I actually called a few times to tell them I had information, but nobody called me back."

"Mrs. Preston, you've been very helpful. Thank you for your assistance."

"I'm glad I could help. May I ask why the sudden interest in something that happened so long ago?"

"Yes, we uncovered some new evidence in the case that indicated the death of Alicia Campbell wasn't an accident."

"I knew it! As I already said, it looked to me like somebody pushed her into the street. Please let me know if there's anything more I can do to help."

"I'll do that. Thank you again."

My head felt like it was spinning. Somehow Wayne Bristol is deeply involved in this whole thing. It seemed the isolation chamber was providing us with information so we can solve Alicia Campbell's murder.

I ran checks on Wayne Bristol and Alicia Campbell. Perhaps they were connected somehow. I also had to find out why the two eyewitnesses to the incident were never interviewed by Sergeant Coleman. It was time to discuss this with the Chief.

I went to his office. When he saw me, he motioned for me to come in. I sat across from him and asked, "What do you know about Robert Coleman?"

"He and I joined the force at about the same time, but he was about ten years older than me. He was a loner. He almost never talked, except to discuss a case. His life seemed to be centered around his job. I don't

believe he was married, but I'm not sure. He never discussed his personal life with anybody. He was the lead investigator on the Alicia Campbell case. Why?"

I told him about the two eyewitnesses and that neither of them were even interviewed.

The Chief was obviously thinking about what I told him. The look on his face changed into a scowl, then he said loudly, "That asshole! I knew he was hiding something. I'll bet he's involved in this murder somehow."

"I think you're probably right. But there is more. Wayne Bristol, our dead guy from Birch Street, was seen directing traffic around Alicia Campbell's body after she was hit by the car. I don't think that's just a coincidence."

"I think we need to know more about all the people involved in this case."

"I agree. I'm currently running checks on Alicia and Wayne. Do you think I should run a check on Robert Coleman too?"

"Absolutely. Let me know what you find."

"You know I will, Sir."

The information came back on Alicia Campbell first. She had no criminal record at all, not even a parking ticket. She was adopted by Vera and John Campbell when she was two years old. There was no information about her birth parents, which is normal in adoption cases. She was an excellent student and graduated second in her high school class. John Campbell was a very successful attorney. His specialty was patent infringement cases. Apparently, Alicia's family had a lot of money because they sent her to MIT where she earned a degree in mathematics. After graduation she planned on going back to MIT to earn a degree in physics, but two months after graduation her parents were killed in an automobile accident. Less than three months later Alicia was murdered. There was one more thing in the report that was a real surprise, Alicia's last address was the house Marvin was living in.

Somehow all of these things are related. After reading the report on Alicia I decided to run a report on John Campbell. It was almost five o'clock so I went home. I wanted to discuss all the aspects of this case with Jill. I was hoping she would see something that I missed.

When I arrived, Jill was already there. I kissed her, sat next to her on the sofa, and spent ten minutes going over everything I discovered about the case today. Then she said, "There are way too many related things going on here. Were Alicia's parents murdered too? Was her father involved in something that caused the death of his entire family? Obviously, Robert Colman and Wayne Bristol are involved, but I have no idea why. Lastly, somehow, someway, the isolation chamber is providing us with clues to solve Alicia's murder."

"All good points. I believe Alicia's parents were murdered too, and it was because of something John was working on. I ran a check on him and I should have a report by tomorrow morning. I'm hoping his law firm is still in business and I can find out what he was working on. Maybe, once I know that, I'll be able to figure out how Robert and Wayne are involved. Also, I don't believe the isolation chamber is giving us clues to Alicia's murder on its own. I believe someone, or perhaps something, is controlling it."

When I arrived at my desk the next morning, I found the rest of the reports I requested. The first one I looked at was John Campbell. He had no criminal history, but there was some information regarding his law firm. He had no partners or associates. When he died, his law firm died too. I looked up the incorporation records for his law firm and there were three officers listed on the report. John was president, Vera was vice-president, and Marie Goodson was listed as treasurer. It only took a few minutes to find a current address and phone number for Marie Goodson, but it was too early to call her.

The accident that resulted in the death of Robert and Vera was unusual. They were driving on the interstate when a big truck swerved into their lane. The truck forced them off the road and into the median between the lanes. At that particular spot the median was about one hundred feet wide and thirty feet deep. The car flipped over several times before coming to rest on its roof at the bottom. Robert and Vera were pronounced dead at the scene. Since that time, a guard rail has been installed to prevent another similar accident. The truck driver claimed he fell asleep while driving. He was convicted of involuntary manslaughter and sentenced to six months in prison. The truck driver's name was Jason Graber. I ran a report on Mr. Graber too.

The next report I looked at was Wayne Bristol's. He had a substantial criminal past. He was convicted of burglary twice and served a total of five years in the state prison. He was also arrested several times for other crimes ranging from assault to drug possession, but there were no other convictions. What I found interesting was that his record was clean for the last six years. There were no arrests after Alicia's murder. Either he changed his

ways or made enough money that he didn't need to continue with his criminal enterprises any longer. I was fairly sure it was the latter.

Since I now knew Wayne was a criminal, I was curious to see if he had any history with Robert Coleman. What I found out was that Wayne had been arrested several times by Robert, but every time he was arrested by him the cases were dismissed for lack of evidence. So, it was obvious, at least to me, that somehow Robert and Wayne were involved in Alicia's murder.

It was after nine o'clock and I thought it would be okay to call Marie Goodson. After she answered I introduced myself and said, "I'm investigating the death of Alicia Campbell. We have just discovered evidence that indicates her death wasn't accidental."

She said emphatically, "Good, I always thought her death was suspicious. How can I help you?"

"I believe that she may have been killed because of something her father was involved in. Do you remember the last few cases he worked on?"

"Yes, of course. I was Mr. Campbell's secretary so I was familiar with all of his cases. The case he was working on when he died was a patent infringement case. Mr. Campbell represented Universal Electronics. They were suing Fuji Equipment Manufacturing over a new touch screen design that was going to be used by almost every electronic manufacturing company. The amount of money involved in the lawsuit was more than one hundred billion dollars."

"I've never heard of either of the companies. What happened?"

"We spent months gathering information and had more than enough evidence to prove that Fuji Equipment stole the design from Universal Electronics. After Alicia graduated from MIT she helped in the case too by providing technical expertise for her father. However, before a trial date was set, Mr. Campbell and his wife were killed. After Mr. Campbell's death Fuji Equipment contacted Universal Electronics directly and they reached some settlement. The details were never released, but now both companies are the sole suppliers of the screens that are used on almost every device that has a touch screen."

"You don't believe the Campbell's deaths was an accident, do you?"

"No, I think they were murdered. Don't you?"

"I thought that was a possibility, but now that we've had this conversation I'm sure they were murdered too."

"If I can help you in any way, please don't hesitate to call me, and if it doesn't violate any rules, please keep me informed about the case."

"Thank you, Ms. Goodson. I think I know what my next course of action will be. I'll call you in a few days."

I was sure the truck driver, Jason Graber, was the key to solving Alicia's murder. I hoped Mr. Graber still lived in Norfolk County. An hour later I had the report on him. His credit report indicated that prior to the accident that killed Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, Jason was unable to pay his bills. His car had been repossessed and his landlord served him with an eviction notice. To make matters even worse, his wife filed for a divorce.

He served five of the six months of his sentence. He got thirty days off for good behavior. After he was released from prison he got back together with his wife. They bought a modest home in a rural part of the county and paid cash for it. He also bought a new car and paid cash for that as well. Since he was released, Jason hasn't worked a single day. It would seem that Jason had been well paid for the time he spent in prison.

I got Jason's phone number from our residential database. I was about to call him, but I decided a personal visit would be better. I wanted to take Mike with me so I called him. He showed up at my desk fifteen minutes later. I wanted to fill him in on what happened, but since I had to tell the Chief too, I walked to his office with Mike. The Chief was on the phone, but when he saw us, he motioned for us to come in. Just as we sat down the Chief said, "To what do I owe the honor of this visit?"

Ten minutes later the Chief was fully informed about the case. When I was finished, he said, "That was excellent work Frank. I hope Graber will tell us who hired him."

Mike and I stood up and as we walked to the door I said, "Perhaps we'll be lucky and Graber will feel some remorse for killing Mr. and Mrs. Campbell."

The chief said, "Feel free to lean on him a little bit. I'm sure he thinks he got away with murder. I suspect he'll be more than a little unnerved by your appearance."

After Mike and I left the Chief's office I had a thought. "Mike, I want to be as prepared as possible before we visit Jason, and you need some experience anyway. Spend the next couple of hours finding out everything you can regarding his finances. According to his social security report he hasn't reported any income for almost six years. I want to know how he pays his bills, does he have a bank account, does he still own his house or is there a mortgage on it? Do you know how to do that?"

"Yes, if I have any questions, I'll ask you."

"Perfect, I'll let the Chief know we're going to delay our visit for a while."

It was three hours later when Mike walked up to my desk and handed me a report. I read it and then said with a smile, "Great job, Mike. I think this will convince him to cooperate."

I called the Chief and told him what Mike discovered and that we were leaving. When I was finished, he said, "I probably don't have to tell you this, but if he doesn't want to tell us what we need to know, threaten him."

"That was my plan. He doesn't have a home phone but I think we should get a court order to track his cell phone calls."

"That's a good idea. I'll take care of that immediately."

It took Mike and me about a half hour to get to Jason Graber's house. He answered the door a few seconds after I rang the bell. When he opened the door, I said, "Good afternoon Mr. Graber. I'm Lieutenant Carver and this is Sergeant Stevens. We are homicide detectives with the Norfolk County police department. We would like to talk to you."

He stepped aside, and with some obvious concern in his voice said, "Please come in."

Mike and I walked into the house and after he closed the door he said, "Please sit down and tell me what this is about."

I said, "Thank you."

Then Mike and I sat down. Graber was still standing when I said, "Some new evidence has come to light regarding the death of Alicia Campbell. It was originally thought to be a hit and run, but now we have proof she was murdered."

The look on his face softened. Some of his previous concern had disappeared. I intended to put it back.

Graber said, "I don't know anything about Alicia Campbell's death."

I smiled at him and said, "I know that. However, when we realized Alicia was murdered, we decided to look at the circumstances surrounding the death of her parents as well. We know you know something about that."

"I already admitted to killing them, but it wasn't murder. It was an accident. I served my time and was released about five years ago. Besides that, even if it was murder, I couldn't be tried again for it."

"I realize that, but I believe you were paid to kill Mr. and Mrs. Campbell and make their deaths look like an accident. I must say, you did a very good job. All I want you to do is tell me who paid you."

"Even if that were true, why would I tell you anything?"

"Because I'll bet you would like to stay out of jail."

Graber yelled, "You have nothing on me. I'm not telling you anything. Now get out or I'll sue you for harassment."

"We're not leaving so I suggest you sit down and listen. If we leave, I'll have someone here in a half hour with a warrant for your arrest."

It was clear that Graber was worried, but he sat down and stared at me. I said, "You haven't filed state or federal income tax forms for five years. I was curious how you were able to pay your bills without any income. Now I know how you did it."

I hesitated for a moment and looked at him. He now knew that he was facing jail time. I continued, "A month after you got out of jail you bought this house. The price for the house and all the associated closing costs was paid by a wire transfer from the Cayman National Bank. Since you were facing bankruptcy before the accident, I'm sure the IRS and the state revenue office would like to know where the money to purchase this house came from. Are you aware that even if you could prove the money was a gift, you still have to declare it as income for tax purposes?"

Jason now looked defeated but I wasn't finished yet. "I also know you pay all your bills by using your American Express card. You get cash by asking for cash back after making a purchase at various stores in the area. I wasn't the least bit surprised to discover that your credit card bill is paid every month by a wire transfer

from Cayman National Bank. It is obvious you are living off of money at the bank. Would you like to tell me where that money came from?"

"No, if I tell you, they'll kill me."

"Okay, it's your decision. However, when you are arrested for tax evasion, that becomes public knowledge. If I were them, I'd probably kill you anyway to prevent you from making a deal to stay out of prison."

Graber said nothing for about a minute. I got tired of waiting and I said, "Mike, call the station and get a warrant for Mr. Graber. When we get back, I'll call the IRS."

Graber asked, "If I tell you what you want to know, how will I know that you'll keep your end of the bargain?"

"You'll have to take my word. I promise I won't report you, but the information was not difficult to find, so somebody else may find it in the future. Ten years ago it would have taken months to find out what Mike discovered in a few hours. Isn't progress wonderful?"

"Yeah, it's terrific. Okay, I was approached by a guy named Vince Gifford. He knew about my financial problems, including some personal debts that I'm certain you aren't aware of. He said that if I killed the Campbells and made it look like an accident, he would pay me five hundred thousand dollars when the job was finished and then ten thousand dollars a month for the rest of my life. He said he would put the money in a bank in the Cayman Islands because foreign banks don't notify the IRS about any transactions so they would never know about the payment."

"Did Vince tell you who he was working for?"

"Fuji Equipment Manufacturing."

"Does he live around here?"

"I have no idea. I only met him once. We didn't discuss his personal life."

"Okay, thank you for your cooperation. Please don't try to leave the area. If you do, I promise you there will be federal and state warrants issued immediately."

"I understand and I won't run. I guess I always knew this day would come. I think about what I did every day and no amount of money is going to erase that guilt."

I gave him my card and said, "I want you to come to the station tomorrow morning. You're going to help us find Mr. Gifford."

"I'll be there at nine o'clock."

"I'll see you then."

We were finished. Mike and I left. As soon as I was in the car, I called the Chief and told him what happened. Then I asked him to find Vince Gifford.

By the time we got back to the station the Chief had already made some progress. There was a note on my desk telling me to go to his office as soon as possible. Mike and I went to his office and walked in. As soon as he saw us, he said, "There's a man named Vince Gifford who is a regional sales manager for Fuji Equipment living in Albany. He has worked for Fuji for twelve years. I suspect he's our guy. One of you has to go there and talk to him. I'll call my contact at the New York state police. I'm sure they'll help us with this. Which one of you wants to go?"

"I'll do it," Mike said.

"Good, I didn't want to tell Jill I was leaving again. Did Graber make any calls after we left?"

"No, his cell phone company said they would send me a text every time he makes a call." Then he handed Mike a card and said, "Call Becky. She'll make all the travel arrangements for you. Plan on leaving tomorrow morning."

"Yes sir."

After Mike and I left the Chief's office I told Mike to take a picture of Gifford as soon as possible, and text it to me immediately. When I returned to my desk, I called Graber and told him not to come in until I called him. Then I went home.

Jill and I spent a pleasant evening at home watching TV and talking about the case. Then Jill asked, "Do you think it was just a coincidence that Alicia and Marvin lived in the same house?"

"No, I'll have to ask Marie Goodson about that tomorrow. I wonder if it was Alicia who bought the isolation chamber. I'll ask her about that too."

"You know, if it wasn't for the isolation chamber, you would never have investigated Alicia's death."

“Yeah, I know that. I’ve been thinking about that for the last couple of days. It’s definitely a weird situation and one that, I suspect, will never be explained.”

I was thinking about the case off and on all night. I probably only slept for a few hours. I got out of bed at five o’clock and was at my desk by seven. There was nothing going on locally so I read the morning news on my computer. A few minutes after eight Mike called.

“Good morning Frank. I flew to Albany last night and met Lieutenant Barnes early this morning. We are sitting in an unmarked car across the street from Vince Gifford’s house. As soon as he comes out, I’ll take a picture of him and send it to you.”

“Perfect, I’ll head out to Graber’s house and wait for your message.”

On my way to the house I received a text message. I pulled into a parking lot to read it. The message was from Mike and there was a picture attached. I left the picture of Vince Gifford on my screen and finished the drive. I rang the bell and Graber answered the door a few seconds later. I showed him the picture on my phone and asked, “Is that Vince Gifford?”

“Yes, that’s him. What happens now?”

“He lives in Albany. He’ll be arrested there and we’ll ask for him to be brought here for trial. He could fight extradition but he’ll lose. In the meantime, the district attorney will bring charges to the grand jury and ask for an indictment. You’ll have to testify at the trial.”

“I expected that. You know I thought about this after you left yesterday and I’m glad it’s over. I know the money will stop but that’s okay. If I have to go back to work, I really don’t mind.”

“You know you’ll never be able to drive a truck again. What are you going to do?”

“It doesn’t really matter. I’m sure I’ll find something.”

“I’ll give your information to the district attorney. He’ll be contacting you shortly.”

We shook hands and I went back to my car. I called Mike immediately and told him that Graber identified Vince Gifford. Mike said they would arrest him as soon as they can get a warrant.

I went back to the station and told the Chief that Vince Gifford would be arrested shortly. He said he would set up the paperwork to extradite him and speak to the district attorney.

Then I called Marie Goodson to ask her about the house. She told me that after Alicia graduated her parents bought her that house as a graduation gift. She also told me that Alicia had the isolation chamber installed because she felt she needed something to help her relax. After her death the house was sold, as was everything else she owned. The money was given to the orphanage that raised her until she was adopted.

I thought this case was almost over, but Fuji Equipment hired a lawyer to fight extradition. I knew we would win in the end, but it would take a few months. However, I realized Graber’s life was in danger. Without his testimony, the case against Vince Gifford would fall apart.

A few days after Gifford was arrested I went to Graber’s house. When he answered the door, I said, “You and your wife have to leave here immediately. I’ve made arrangements for you to stay in a cabin located in the woods about a hundred miles from here.”

“Do you think the people from Fuji will try to kill me?”

“I’m sure of it. Your friend Vince has refused to talk and he is represented by a very expensive criminal lawyer from New York City. They’ve already filed a motion to prevent him from being extradited. Is your wife here?”

“Yes, she is.”

“Good, both of you pack as quickly as you can. I want to be out of here in a half hour. Don’t use your phone. I have a new one for you to use. Please hurry.”

I walked into the house and waited in the living room. Twenty minutes later Graber and his wife came into the living room, each of them wheeling a big suitcase. He said, “This is my wife, Diane. We’re ready.”

“It’s nice to meet you Diane. Let’s go.”

A couple of hours later we arrived at the cabin. It was in the middle of a forest, about five miles from the nearest town. It was small, only about a thousand square feet, but both Jason and Diane really seemed to like it.

After we were inside we sat down at the kitchen table. I handed Jason a cell phone and said, “This is an unregistered phone. If you need anything, call Mike or me. Our numbers have been programmed into the phone. Don’t call anybody else. The cabin has been stocked with enough food to last at least two weeks. I’ll be back in

a few days. If you feel like you have to get out of the cabin, there are hiking trails all over this area. Feel free to use them.”

“Thank you, Lieutenant. Diane and I really appreciate what you’re doing for us.”

“You’re welcome. Call me tomorrow and let me know if you need anything. I’ll bring it with me when I come back.”

“I’ll do that.”

For the next two months Mike and I made regular trips to the cabin. To help break up the monotony of living in the cabin we would take them to dinner on almost every trip. Finally, I was able to tell them that Vince Gifford would be brought into our jurisdiction in two days. The grand jury indicted him on two counts of first degree murder and three counts of conspiracy to commit murder. The trial would begin within a week.

On the day he arrived I met with him. He was cuffed to the table in the interview room. I walked in and said, “Good morning Mr. Gifford. Did you have a pleasant journey?”

His response was to call me a few names and suggest that I perform a sexual act upon myself that was physically impossible. I ignored his response and said, “You don’t have to talk to me. Feel free to be as uncooperative as possible. However, the level of your cooperation will be taken into account by both the judge and the jury. You are going to prison for a long time. The length and location of your imprisonment is dependent on your actions.”

This time he said, “Hey asshole, you probably won’t believe this, but I won’t spend a single day in prison.”

“Okay, you can believe that if you wish. However, when reality sets in, it may be too late.”

The trial lasted only four days. The second day of the trial Jason Graber testified. I think Gifford and his attorney were genuinely surprised to see Jason in the courtroom. Gifford’s lawyer tried to convince the jury that Gifford and Fuji had only limited contact with Jason and they certainly didn’t pay him to kill anybody. The jury didn’t appear to be swayed by his comments. The following day the district attorney presented evidence from the Cayman National Bank regarding the deposits into Jason’s account. Then the prosecution rested their case. If there was any doubt in any of the juror’s minds that Gifford was guilty, the evidence from the bank erased it.

The following day Gifford’s lawyer presented several witnesses that said Gifford was a great guy, a real humanitarian, and would never harm anybody. It was obvious the jury was bored and didn’t believe a word. The defense rested their case. The judge terminated the proceedings for the day and said the trial would resume at nine o’clock the following morning.

The next morning when the jury filed into the courtroom, one of the jurors stood up and asked to speak to the judge. The judge looked at the juror and asked him, “Is there a problem?”

“Yes, a man came to my house last night. He gave me five thousand dollars in cash and said there would be more if I voted ‘not guilty’. I agreed and took his money,” then he removed an envelope from his pocket and said, “I have it here.”

The judge signaled for the bailiff to take the envelope from the juror. The bailiff handed the envelope to the judge who opened it, counted the money, and put the envelope on his desk.

“I have no choice but to declare a mistrial. The jury selection will begin next Monday morning at nine o’clock. This time the jury will be sequestered. Also, it won’t be necessary for Jason Graber to testify in person. I’ll allow his testimony to be read into the record from the transcript of this trial.”

The defense attorney stood up and yelled, “I object. You don’t have the authority to limit my right to cross examination.”

“Your objection is noted and overruled. If you have a problem, feel free to appeal. Also, please be advised that I am instructing the police to investigate the attempted bribery of this juror. If that investigation finds you are implicated in it in any way, you can count on spending some substantial time in prison. Court is adjourned.”

That evening Vince Gifford asked to speak to the district attorney and me. We met him at the county jail about an hour later. When we were all seated, Gifford said, “My lawyer promised I wouldn’t be convicted. Now it looks like he is going to be in prison with me. Please believe me when I tell you I had no idea he planned to bribe a juror. Can we make a deal?”

The district attorney said, “We don’t normally do this without your attorney present. Will you sign something waving your right to have an attorney present?”

“Yes.”

Thirty seconds later the district attorney handed Gifford a form which he signed. Then he gave the form to me to sign as a witness. When the form was signed, the district attorney asked him, "What did you have in mind?"

"Drop the first-degree murder charges and I'll plead guilty to the three counts of conspiracy."

"You'll serve three consecutive ten-year terms and be eligible for parole in fifteen years. Is that acceptable?"

"Yes."

"I'll prepare the paperwork and have it ready for you to sign on Monday morning."

Then, looking at me, Gifford said, "I'm sorry I refused to cooperate with you before. Please feel free to ask me any questions you want. I'll do my best to answer them."

During the next half hour, he answered every question I asked. He told me that Sergeant Coleman was paid to kill Alicia and to make it look like an accident. He didn't know anything about Wayne Bristol, so I assumed that Colman hired Bristol for the job.

After I left the county jail I called the Chief and told him what happened. Then I called Jason and told him it was over, but I would try to get him into the Witness Protection Program.

Now almost all the loose ends were tied up. Our investigation into the attempted bribery of the juror proved that Vince Gifford's attorney was directly involved. He is now serving three years. All that remained was for us to figure out how the isolation chamber managed to give us the information we needed to look into Alicia's death, but that wasn't likely to happen.

It should also be noted that after the trial of Vince Gifford was concluded, Marvin's dreams in the isolation chamber stopped. Jill tried it a few more times too. Now it was just a great way to relax. Unfortunately, that meant Jill and I had to give up our dream of winning the lottery.