

SERIAL KILLER MYTHS

SOURCE: Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

In 1998, Congress passed the “Protection of Children from Sexual Predator Act” so the FBI could assist local law enforcement in serial killings. The Act defined the term serial killings as “a series of three or more killings...having common characteristics such as to suggest the reasonable possibility that the crimes were committed by the same actor or actors”.

In 2005, the FBI’s Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU) held a Serial Murder Symposium to better understand the issues involved in serial killings. And, over a hundred of experts were in attendance. In 2008, as a result of this symposium, the FBI published a handbook entitled *Serial Murder*, stating:

MYTH: Serial killers are all dysfunctional loners. *The majority of serial killers are not reclusive, social misfits who live alone. Many serial killers hide in plain sight within their communities. They often have families and homes, are gainfully employed, and normal members of the community.*

MYTH: Serial killers are all white males. *The racial diversification of serial killers generally mirrors that of the overall US population.*

MYTH: Serial killers are only motivated by sex. *There are many other motivations including anger, thrill, financial gain, and attention seeking.*

MYTH: All serial murderers travel and operate interstate. *Most serial killers have very defined geographic areas of operation...Very few serial murderers travel interstate to kill.*

MYTH: Serial killers cannot stop killing. *It’s been widely believed that once serial killers start killing, they cannot stop. There are, however, some serial killers who stop murdering before being caught.*

MYTH: Serial killers want to get caught. *It’s not that they want to get caught; they feel they cannot get caught.*

SERIAL KILLER FACTS

SOURCE: Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

Serial Murder is the killing of two or more victims by the same offender(s), in separate events at different times. Although previous definitions included "cooling-off" periods and a killing of three-plus, this new definition takes a wider scope and separates serial murder from mass murder.

Serial murder is a relatively rare event, estimated to comprise less than one percent (1%) of all murders committed in any given year.

There is no single identifiable cause or factor that leads to the development of a serial killer.

Serial murderers are the product of their heredity, their upbringing and the choices they make throughout development. The development of social coping mechanisms begins early in life...In some individuals the failure to develop adequate coping mechanisms results in violent behavior.

There are no specific traits or characteristics to differentiate serial killers from other violent offenders.

Serial killers are driven by their own motives or reasons.

Serial killers are not limited to any specific demographic group (i.e. sex, age, race, religion, etc.)

Many serial murderers can blend, so effortlessly, that they are often overlooked by law enforcement.

They conduct their killings within comfort zones often defined by an anchor point (e.g. place of residence).

As serial killers continue to offend without being captured, they become empowered and believe that they will never be identified. They feel they cannot get caught.

PROLOGUE.

Sunday, June 9, 2013. 11:47 pm

As his custom-made hunting knife sadistically slit her throat, with such precision that a neurosurgeon would be pleased, he took about three seconds to listen to the sound of blood gushing from the gash across her carotid artery. Then, after the last gasp of air left her lungs; he quickly reflected on the first time he took a human life.

That was exactly two weeks ago, May 26th, the Sunday during Memorial Holiday weekend. But, it seemed like yesterday. He recalled how he couldn't even kill his intended victim – the head of the county's largest congregation and his former high school classmate – Pastor Kyle Gibson. In fact, he was so petrified that he failed to kill the pastor, fled the scene and literally ran right into the arms of his unintended victim: Derek Liniarski.

The unplanned killing of Liniarski was his first kill. And, when the jagged-edged blade cut into Liniarski's torso and ripped through the ribcage; the first-time killer didn't even know he had taken a human life. Actually, unaware that his initial thrust made the kill, he nervously continued with a wicked slice across the throat. That's when – as Liniarski's intestines tumbled from his abdomen and blood squirted, like a broken faucet, from his athletically muscular neck – the neophyte killer profusely vomited.

It had all happened so fast that it seemed like a blur. But, like a foggy haze on a mid-summer morning, it quickly lifted and his merciless mind now remembered everything. He recalled:

How, when Liniarski's eyes rolled to the back of his balding head and his lifeless body collapsed to the paved driveway; an incredibly intense and indescribable power overcame him.

How, when he pulled his bloody blade from the victim's buckling body, an almost God-like feeling overwhelmed him.

How, in spite of his passionate religious beliefs, that first taste of human blood produced the confidence he needed to continue killing more.

But, that was then...and, this was now. So, as his new victim's corpse softly hit the kitchen floor; that indescribable feeling, once again, powerfully penetrated his veins. Then, a wicked smile – like that of the serpent after convincing Eve to eat the apple – broadly beamed across his elated face. He was no longer an amateur. There would be no vomit at this kill. Not now. Not here.

As the insatiable sensation from taking another human life instantaneously numbed his limbs; an immediate rush of adrenaline – that only a crack addict could appreciate – shot massive amounts of dopamine throughout his tainted brain. It was so sudden and so fast that it nearly incapacitated him. But, he was getting better now and it felt good. No, it actually felt great.

However, aware that there was one more kill to be made, his moment of extreme ecstasy was disturbingly short-lived. With his mind moving faster than Secretariat coming down the stretch, the now voracious killer had reluctantly realized that he couldn't admire his work for much longer. That other planned kill had to happen. And, it had to happen now.

So, without remorse or hesitation; like Secretariat, he swiftly moved to the upstairs master bedroom to put an end to her husband's life.

Discreetly observing the cadenced breathing of her sleeping husband, he actually thought about smashing his skull with the heavy lamp on the bedside's nightstand. But, unlike the unplanned Liniarski slaying, such an impetuous action would simply not suffice. It wouldn't work with his calculated killing scheme.

The Liniarski killing was, indeed, impulsive. Conversely, these kills were meticulously planned with exceptional malice aforethought. Hence, there was no need for such abrasive actions. These intended slayings were his premeditated masterpiece in the making and they required a certain amount of mathematical authenticity. He needed both of these stabbings to accurately accentuate the methodology to his madness. And, as with the wife, this kill also required absolute precision.

Quickly regaining his composure, he remembered the rhyme and the reason to his "artwork". Then, with an eerily creepy grin spread across his wickedly evil face, he gleefully proceeded as planned. That's when he deviously raised his six-inch blade and powerfully plunged – at the speed and grace of a cat pouncing on a wayward mouse – through the slowly beating heart of her sleeping husband.

Although he had no idea that his first victim (Liniarski) had died from his initial thrust, this kill was considerably different. His perfectly calculated stabbing was rapidly followed by an exaggerated whimpering sound – like a dog whose tail was suddenly stepped on – way deep from within the husband's throat. And, as the husband's body rose about four-to-five inches, his eyes suddenly opened and he instantly fell back to the bed.

Unlike the slice across the wife's carotid artery – where blood gushed out like a broken car's radiator hose – this kill was significantly different. With an aortic wound, the blood doesn't continuously flow. It modestly spurts through the hole.

Pulling the blade back through the perfectly made puncture, he attentively watched every push of blood exit the deep aortic wound – in the same cadence to match the rhythm of his slowly dying heart – and his warped face showed no signs of repentance or regret. In fact, his sinister smile actually exhibited a rather twisted grin of excitement. And, it took no less than two minutes for the last pump of blood to push through the puncture. That was it. The husband was dead.

He then pulled his personalized black handkerchief out and wiped the blood from the knife's tip. Now, it was time to head downstairs and complete the most critical part of his masterpiece: the frame job.

After exiting the master bedroom, he proceeded down the elegant winding stairs, followed by a left turn into the sizeable kitchen; where the wife peacefully laid in a rather large pool of crimson colored blood.

He thought about ransacking the house and lifting her nightgown to make the scene look like a burglary or a sex crime gone wrong; however, that was not a part of his premeditated masterpiece. He was only there for the kills. And, the kills not only needed to make his statement; they also needed to frame his nemesis.

Seeing the wife laying in a serene state, with a ghastly gash across her throat, he decided to pour himself a glass of bourbon and he even made a ham sandwich. Since it was nearly midnight, he needed a

drink. And, besides, he was hungry. In his psychotically broken mind, this was his way to make this house...HIS House.

So, after planting the incriminating evidence on the wife's body, he decided to pop in a DVD and catch up on his old high school classmates. And, while watching several home-made movies, he thought: *what a wonderful life Bill and Beth Peters had made for themselves.*

Since graduating from St. Clair High School in 1991, they'd become the quintessential DINKs (Double-Income-No-Kids) couple. Bill a prominent doctor and Beth a prosperous real-estate agent; they quickly moved from successful "yuppies" to a highly respected upper-middle class couple. They were cherished church members and pillars of the considerably quiet community. And, when they weren't working, they spent their free time supporting St. Luke's Pastor Kyle Gibson.

Dr. Bill being a youth minister and Beth being the choir leader, they actually seemed to be the perfect couple. However, there was much more to their superficially Christian lives. So much so that this peaceful town was either intentionally naïve or completely ignorant of how they "really lived".

With the deceased church-going couple making their way to judgment day; the heartless serial killer consumed his bourbon and assiduously watched the videos. He knew that the victims' lives were nothing but a façade and that their charade would soon be known to everyone in this vastly religious county. He thought:

I will make the people of St. Clair County know how these false-prophets truly lived their lives. How they preached the Bible, yet never practiced it. How they deceived the congregation through their do-gooder deeds; yet lived in sin.

He only wished that Beth, as she closed the refrigerator door, would have seen his face before he smoothly sliced her throat. Or, that Dr. Bill would have somehow awoken, for a split second, before the blade powerfully pierced his now lifeless heart in his meaningless body. But, he couldn't risk something going wrong.

Then again, none of this wishful thinking mattered much now. Over the next few weeks, he knew there would be more victims. And tonight, Dr. Bill and Beth Peters were just two broad strokes in the making of His "artwork". The masterpiece that would put him and St. Clair County on the national news networks.

CHAPTER 1

**Monday, June 10, 2013. 9:38 am
St. Clair, Michigan.**

“Good morning Betty! How’s it going today young lady?” Dan Rossi, St. Clair’s Chief of Police, happily asked.

“Chief, if you keep calling me young lady, I’m gonna tell your wife that you’re flirting with me. Then, I’ll report you to the Women’s Right’s Council and get me a big bonus,” Betty laughed.

Elizabeth Sollars, “Betty”, had thirty-three years in as St. Clair’s secretary for the eight-person Police Department and the two-person Mayor’s office. The 61-year old gray haired pit bull stood five-foot one, in heels, and weighed a tough 155 pounds. Betty, whose maiden name was Westrick, was from a “Founding Family” of St. Clair and the daughter of a Michigan State Supreme Court Judge. From the police to the political side of things, she pretty much ran St. Clair. In other words, Betty was first person you saw when you entered the small City Hall office and, if all went well, the last when you came out. She knew everyone and everything that went on in this simple town. Although every eight years there would be a new mayor and a new chief; Betty would remain the only constant.

“Yeah...I get it,” Chief Dan replied, “I know I married up. But, there’s no need to take legal action and deplete my budget now...is there honey?”

“See, there you go again with that ‘honey’ stuff,” she paused and made quote marks with her fingers. “Honey won’t pay the \$420 per credit hour to send my grandkids to MSU (Michigan State University) now...will it?”

“Four-twenty per hour,” the chief teased. He had two kids at MSU, but they were on scholarships. So, he only intended to get her flustered and continued, “I had no idea...”

“Chief!” Betty interrupted.

“Hold on,” he replied. “You win. I’ll talk to Mayor Mahn about that raise...I promise. Now, tell me what happened this weekend.”

“Well, we got that Wilson boy in the drunk tank again. And, there was a domestic violence issue over at the Hubert’s house...again,” she paused. “Also, something seems to be wrong over at the Peters,” she replied, with a longer pause and a concerned sigh.

“Dammit! Those two again! What is it with the warm weather? Let Wilson go and tell him I’m gonna see his Dad over at the K of C (Knights of Columbus). No Bullshit Betty. I mean it. And, I’ll go over to see Ronnie Hubert before lunch. This shit has got to STOP!”

“What about the Peters?” Betty asked.

“The Peters? Don’t they live in St. Clair Township’s Spartan Estates? And, what do you mean by ‘seems to be wrong’?” The chief mockingly made quote marks back to Betty.

“Well, we got a call that Dr. Bill didn’t show up for the ER-shift at River District Hospital this morning. And, Beth missed her nine o’clock house showing at the Waterview Condos over on North River Road.”

“Betty, I’ve told you before that I don’t care how the other St. Clair Chiefs handled their business. We don’t do St. Clair Township,” he glanced over across the desk. “That’s Sheriff Greig’s jurisdiction. And you know it!”

“How do you know something didn’t happen?” She waited, but with no reply, she continued, “Chief, you know that the Liniarski killing has us locals all worked up. We’ve never had a murder around here...and, Marine City is only a few miles away!”

Again, there was no response. Chief Dan grabbed the St. Clair County’s daily newspaper, *The Times Herald*, from the front counter and glanced at the headlines. The St. Clair Saints varsity baseball team was going to be honored for their 2011 State championship. The Marine City varsity football team was projected to go far into the State playoffs. And, the Marysville girls’ volleyball team was a front runner to win again. He thought: *with so little crime, sports teams make the front page!*

Although the chief was a big sports fan, high-school and college only, he was eager to get going on the morning crossword. As St. Clair’s Chief; that was about the only thing, in this small town, that presented a challenge.

Heading for his office, paper in hand, Betty belted out, “Not everything evil happens in Detroit!”

He turned and snapped, “Jesus Betty. I heard you already!”

“Sorry Chief. I just...”

“Listen, I know you mean well. But, what in the hell could happen to the Peters around here?” Chief Dan softly interrupted.

“I know...but, it just doesn’t seem right to me,” Betty promptly answered. She continued, “Ann Robbins, one of the ER-nurses at River District, called me first thing this morning. And, she was really concerned.”

“Wow...really concerned?” Chief Dan sarcastically replied.

“Well, I’ve heard some church chatter that things may not be what they seem...” She caught herself in mid-sentence – not wanting to get into St. Luke’s gossip – and said, “I just want you to check on the Peters. Marine City is still in a mess and we’re all so worried. Besides, it’s less than a mile from our city limits.”

Desperately wanting to get going on the crossword, he stubbornly replied, “St. Clair Township is not OUR jurisdiction.”

“Do it for me. Pleeeeease?” Betty begged.

“What do you mean by *might not seem what it’s supposed to be?*”

“Let’s just say, you’d be doing me a big favor. And, you never mind the St. Luke’s rumor-mill,” she winked at the chief.

“You, this small-town scuttlebutt...and, I don’t even see coffee or doughnuts,” he muttered under his breath, realizing that his crossword would have to wait.

Believing that the chief had already caved in, Betty replied, “I’ve got the glazed doughnuts, you like, next to the large Speedway De-Caf ‘to go’ (with a noticeable emphasis on “to go”). They’re right on your desk, Chief. And, keep the gossip stuff between you and me, *honey,*” she smirked, again making quote signs.

Like most law enforcement, Chief Dan didn't make a habit of going into other jurisdictions. Nevertheless, he knew that doing Betty a favor – given “The Gossip Queen's” connections – would be a future chip to cash-in. That's when he thought about Dr. Bill and Beth.

He remembered how Dr. Bill stitched up his daughter (Debi), from a boating accident three years ago. And, how Beth made his family feel so welcomed to the St. Clair area. So, as much as the Peters' visit would please Betty; this “unofficial call” would also put his mind at ease.

Chief Dan exited the red bricked-station house, on Carney Drive, and made a quick left on Clinton Avenue. Continuing eastbound on Clinton, the chief smiled and wondered what he would do without Betty and why he was out in this scorching summer sun. Although it had been a mild spring, St. Clair had been in the 90s all-month and there was no sign of letting up anytime soon.

He soon hit Clinton Avenue's dead-end at Riverside Drive and stopped at one of the town's two traffic lights located in front of The Voyageur Restaurant along the St. Clair River.

The half-mile wide river – serving as the border between the US and Canada – was already brisk with boaters and he thought: *seems like the boaters haven't left the water since Memorial weekend and they'll be out all summer long. And, why wouldn't they? This was St. Clair.*

St. Clair, situated about an hour's drive north of Detroit along the “Michigan Blue Water Thumb Area”, captivated Chief Dan. With its deep blue waters – split by waves from the Great Lakes freighters and boaters skimming along the crests – made St. Clair a picturesque place. While the tourists, shopping for knick-knacks in the quaint shopping mall, truly made this idyllic small town quite exceptional; it was the beautiful boardwalk – the longest fresh water boardwalk in the world – that charmed the chief. Its lengthy wooden planks were constantly filled with cheerful smiles from the most pleasant and peaceful Midwestern people in America.

In St. Clair, there was little “protecting”; but a lot of “serving”. And, he really didn't mind that one bit.

With his mind already wandering, he decided to pull into The Voyageur's massive parking lot to take in the view. He had time. In fact, since he had left the Detroit Police Department (DPD) five years ago; he had all kinds of time. Besides, it was only a short distance, along South Riverside Drive, to the Hubert's house.

The Voyageur – a local “hang-out” situated on the corner where the Pine River flows into the St. Clair River – was a perfect place to absorb the wonderful Blue Water Area's fantastic view. He was always amazed how one could see the cars in Canada traveling along their own Riverside Drive and he loved how the huge freighters made everything else look so incredibly small.

Taking a sip of his Speedway De-Caf, he thought about the last five years as St. Clair's Chief and how fortunate he was to be in this extraordinary town.

CHAPTER 2

The New Chief.

St. Clair and St. Clair Township, for over twenty decades, were modest German-Polish farming and mining communities that seemed to only have about eight surnames: Gibson, Hoffer, Liniarski, Mahn, Meyers, Peters, Sollars and Westrick. That's why many transplants nicknamed them as St. Clair's "Founding Families".

St. Clair Township's 39.6 square mile land mass was a major farming community that boarded the cities of Marysville and Marine City, while engulfing the entire 3.9 square miles of St. Clair. Its' fruitful lands grew all kinds of commercial staple crops: from wheat and corn to the various marketable vegetables. While St. Clair City's salt mines – carved out over millennia ago by the ice-age glaciers – were a major tax base and a huge employer. In fact, Cargill Salt (formerly Diamond Crystal) was the only Alberger salt (known for its low sodium and highly praised in the fast food industry) mine in America.

Hence, the land not mined; was farmed. And, outside its small manufacturing and service-based tourism; many locals worked in the salt mine or on a farm.

Most of the township's sporadically located farmhouses were far apart and comfortably setback many yards from the dirt roads. Moreover, where the township's border blended into the city; the property lines drew noticeably closer and the grazing cows substantially decreased. And, whereas the township had their spotted cows; the city had their number of plaid-panted golfers, in lime green jackets, and off-white summer dressed tourists taking in the scenery.

Most township traffic lights were flashing yellow – to provide caution for crossing cattle and pickup trucks hauling hay – and there were no more than a handful of red-yellow-green traffic lights. And, in town, with only two full-colored traffic lights (one coming into St. Clair and the other going out, depending on the direction travelled); traffic jams were non-existent.

Although The Voyageur and St. Clair Inn did exceptional summer business; busy was the St. Clair Coney Island Diner and Achatz Riverview Restaurant packed with local patrons. During the work week, most area residents would be home by five-or-six o'clock and in bed by ten-or-eleven. Even the restless residents that "cruised town", honking to friends who passed by, were generally back home by midnight.

After midnight, the township's mostly gravel-dirt roads and the city's primarily paved streets remained considerably silent. Sometimes, the only sound heard would be the wind slamming against the unlocked doors during a mid-summer storm. That's because, having been safe for decades, few households bothered to lock their doors.

There was an underlying trust between neighbors that permeated the area and kept its folk away from Detroit's concerns. Why not? Everyone knew everyone. And, that suited St. Clair's citizens, along with Chief Dan, just fine. Sure, St. Clair had some crime, yet it was rare and seldom violent.

FACT: From 2000-2008, St. Clair had three rapes, five robberies, four arsons and eighteen assaults (Source: FBI. www.city-crime.com).

Even though violent crimes were few in number and sporadic in occurrence, they were more recent. Over the past twenty-plus years the area was growing fast and, in Mayor Mahn's mind, so was the crime. That's why he ran for election as being tough on crime. So, like other cities and townships in St. Clair County; he went outside the St. Clair police hierarchy and hired Detroit's Lieutenant Dan to be its new Chief of Police.

Chief Dan "Winnie" Rossi, 52, was a former US Marine Corps Drill Sergeant and 22-year veteran Detroit cop. His stout, barrel-chested 6'1" muscular frame supported his intimidating and cleanly shaven bald head. He had huge hands, with rather large forearms – the right one tattooed with "Death Before Dishonor USMC" – and toned 16 inch biceps. If he didn't look like a Marine; he looked like a cop.

The chief didn't fully understand the small-town side of St. Clair. He was a city boy from Detroit. For him, there was only black and white. You did it or you didn't do it. You were guilty or innocent. Good guy or bad guy. What else could there be? That's how he grew up in the Italian section of Detroit (on Beaufait Street off of Mt. Elliot and Gratiot).

His Dad, a city bus driver, was the only one of four siblings born in America (the others born in Italy) and he beat "law-and-order" into the chief and his two brothers. They weren't going to grow up to become gangsters or have anything to do with the neighborhood "wise guys". He did everything to make that a certainty. Consequently, by working two side-jobs; he put all three boys through De La Salle (the City's prominent Catholic All-Boys High School). And, it worked.

After graduating, all three brothers joined the Marine Corps; after which, they had become Detroit Police Officers. They did everything from Organized Crime to Vice, Robbery, Narcotics and, of course, Homicide. Their moniker was known city-wide as the "Big Boys", which came from the Elias Brother's Big Boy restaurant chain (a local success story headquartered in Warren, Michigan).

Being the eldest, Chief Dan was also the most relentless. But, those that knew him well, called him "Winnie." His best friends (Detroit Police Officers: Mullins, Graves and The Fro) gave him the "Winnie" moniker. Rumor was, as the guys sat in the Athens Bar in Detroit's Greek Town, they started talking about Lieutenant Dan and how he was the epitome of a Marine bulldog (the USMC mascot).

"Once he bites that bone...he won't let go," Sergeant Mullins said.

"Yeah, it's like he can smell the crime scene," Detective Graves replied.

"Even though his nose has been broken countless times; he still can smell the perp," Sgt. Mullins smiled and the others respectively laughed.

"Okay. I get the 'Big Boy thing' from Elias Brothers," commented Detective Fro. "But, if he was my dog, I'd name him 'Winnie.' He doesn't quit and he wants to win no matter what. Who had the most felony arrests and who sold the most tickets for the policeman's ball...?"

Just before anyone could answer, DPD Lieutenant Dan walked into the Athens and they said in unison, "Hey Winnie...next round's on you!"

The nickname "Winnie" took and he liked it.

That was years ago. He may not have fully understood his new environment's intricacies, but he had convinced himself that he liked them.

With two teenagers and an understanding wife; he realized that the place for his family would be nowhere near the burned-down houses and crack dens that now surrounded the once beautiful blocks

of Downtown Detroit. Throughout the 1990s, “The City”, as the suburbanites called it, was in a deep decline. And, by 2008, he could no longer tell his wife that they would be safe. The City was changing, for the worse, and they had to go. It was him or his family.

So, when his brother (David), got him the inside-line on the Chief of Police for St. Clair; he took it. In 2008, with his Marine Corps military time added to his pension package; he retired as Lt. Dan of DPD and became Chief Dan of St. Clair.

Mayor Mahn made it clear to the new chief that he had one goal: to keep the growing City of St. Clair safe. In fact, during the interview process, Mayor Mahn went over the history of St. Clair. As an admirer of history, the Eastern Michigan University graduate (from its nationally recognized Education Department) and from one of St. Clair’s Founding Families; decided to educate the chief:

Dan, when the British General Patrick Sinclair established a military and trading post in 1765, the population of St. Clair and St. Clair Township was under 4,000 people. But, you probably didn’t know that our population had remained constant for over a century. From, when General Arthur St. Clair (a dear friend of George Washington and Governor of the Michigan Territory) died in 1818 and, until the census of 1880, our populace was steady. Then, for the following 100 years, it didn’t get much bigger. But now, things are changing and we’re growing too fast. We like our small town and we want to keep it that way. So...Dan; you need to help me keep this growing town...SAFE!

Chief Dan appreciated the history lesson of his new “home town”. Over the past two decades, the area had hit puberty and had grown from under 6,000 to over 12,000 residents. As the 1990’s IT boom resulted in many more professionals working from home; they departed Detroit in search of a safer and more pleasant environment to raise a family. Most of those families found St. Clair and the Blue Water Area to be that idyllic place.

CHAPTER 3

10:41 am. On the Road.

Since the Hubert's house was on the way to the Peters' residence, Chief Dan decided to go there first.

Ronnie Hubert and his wife, Jessie, lived on the poorer side of St. Clair that the locals called "shanty-town". It was across the railroad tracks, near the salt mine, and primarily consisted of house trailers and live-in RVs. Ironically; it was directly down from The Voyageur's beautiful view of the St. Clair River. And, it was only about two miles away from the exclusive St. Clair Township Spartan Estates.

Crossing the railroad tracks he yelled, "JuJu...look what I did, dammit!"

JuJu, a brown six year-old Pug, was the chief's faithful companion. As she comfortably rested on the passenger seat and licked the coffee from her flat face, he teased, "I know you hate De-Caf!" Chief Dan laughed, with the once-warm coffee now spilled over a once-white polo-shirt.

Because his two teenagers were now studying at Michigan State; he and his better-half, Delores, only had JuJu left at home. Debi and their son, Devon, picked her from a Pug Rescue in nearby Marine City. In spite of his wife's objections, the three-month old female Pug became their moving-in present to St. Clair and Chief Dan loved her from the start. It was his way to always have the kids close by and the reason she went everywhere with St. Clair's new Chief.

With her mushed mug, flat nose and huge "look-at-me-eyes"; JuJu was a spitting image of Frank, the Pug from the movie *Men-In-Black*. The funny thing was that many people around the small town believed that Chief Dan looked like Tommy Lee Jones (also from *Men-In-Black*).

He had heard the comparisons and; eventually, conceded that JuJu looked like Frank. However, he didn't see his resemblance to Tommy Lee Jones. Nevertheless, even his wife laughingly agreed. Although Tommy Lee Jones had hair, they both had that tough and rugged looking face; along with a snarl that hosted deep dark eyes and a crisp jaw. And, like the actor, the chief had a nose that looked like it had been broken more times than a promise on prom night. Everyone loved them both. And, together they were a team: Chief Dan and JuJu.

Just in front of the Hubert's, he gave his loyal Pug a piece of his half-eaten doughnut and again tried to wipe the fresh coffee stain from his shirt. Besides being in a relatively crimeless town, he loved the fact that khakis and a polo-shirt would suffice as the "uniform of the day". Most days his polo-shirt would sport the logo of the Detroit Tigers or St. Clair Saints. But today, it was a plain white polo-shirt with a new stream of the Speedway De-Caf coffee staining the front.

Exiting his unmarked 2010 Chevy Blazer SUV; he approached the Hubert's house for the third time in the last nine months. As he walked up the steps of the rotting, wooden front porch; he thought: *God, I hate domestic violence cases!*

The Chief had read the reports from the NCADV (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence) and realized it would only get worse.

FACT: “One in every four women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime” and “an estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner each year. It cost over \$5.8 billion each year of which \$4.1 billion is for direct medical and mental health services!” (Source: NCADV).

Knowing the report was accurate, he thought: *I can't believe that one-out-of-four women have been abused. It's wrong! This means that, if you're at a wedding with forty women; ten have been abused. People don't know this and it needs to stop now! I'll address it and start with Ronnie Hubert...*

“Hey Ronnie! You there?”

As Ronnie came out of the kitchen and approached the open front door, with a can of Budweiser in hand; he said, “Hey Chief. ‘Wuzzup’?”

Ronnie was a rather tall and slender thirty-something fellow, who seemed to always have a two-to-three day growth of slightly graying facial hair. And, although his 6’2” body only weighed about 165-lbs; it was obvious that forty of those pounds were safely secured in his bulging, beer-bellied gut.

The chief thought: *this guy is the typical “poster boy” of a wannabe hillbilly and wife abusing alcoholic.*

On Detroit Vice, he had seen too many of the “Ronnie’s of the World”. At noon, they would be sitting at the same bar – they had left the night before – sipping the same beer, along with a shot of whiskey. As they bitched about not working and the failures of government, they drank their unemployment checks away. It reminded him of the 1987 movie *Bar Fly*; starring one of Hollywood’s most diverse actors, Mickey Rourke.

“Jessie called us last night and...” He paused for a brief moment; before strongly belting out, “Jesus Christ Ronnie! You know why I’m here!”

“Uhhh?” replied the already drunken domestic abuser.

“Dammit man! It’s not even noon and you’re already drunk!”

“I’m not drunk! It’s only my fourth beer,” said the slurring wife-beater.

“Ronnie, I know you’re Mayor Mahn’s nephew and all that...but, I can’t let this bullshit go on. If something happens to Jessie, I’m gonna catch a lot of unnecessary shit! And, I don’t need that shit on me.”

Just then, Jessie came to the door supporting a bulging nose, along with some dried up blood on her upper lip. “I’m okay Chief, I forgot to cook Ronnie dinner last night. Anyway, I fell smack on the kitchen floor,” she softly said in a blatant attempt to convince the chief that it was her fault.

If Ronnie was a real-life “Bar Fly”, then Jessie was the typical trailer park girl who married a loser. Her thirty-something body, with the obvious baby bearing hips and breasts to match, was still in good shape.

He thought: *Jessie must have been a looker back-in-the-day. Why do the hottest high-school girls often end-up with the biggest losers? This is not a St. Clair thing...or even a small-town thing...this has been going on since Wilma married Fred Flintstone.*

“Jesus Jessie! How many times do I need to come here?”

“I know,” she replied, looking down at her unbuckled sandals. “This is the last time...I promise,” her sincerely pleading voice attempted to convince the chief not to arrest her husband. She continued, “Chief, with the stuff at the salt-mine...things just get hectic and I get panicked.”

“Listen Jessie! I know the layoffs at the salt-mines are hurting everyone. But, that’s NOT an excuse for them to abuse their wives!”

Ronnie finished gulping his beer, crushed the can and said, “Chief Dan, my little Jessie is just fine. So, why don’t you tell my uncle, you know...THE MAYOR...that I’ll be at supper after church at St. Luke’s.”

He knew that Ronnie was not the reason that Mayor Mahn had convincingly won re-election. With his “pissed-off-meter”, as high as the hot summer’s sun, he stormed down the dilapidated front porch. As the broken screen door slammed behind him; he wondered how he could put an end to domestic violence.

Mayor’s nephew or not; this had to stop. Now! He knew that, since domestic violence is one of the most chronically underreported crimes; people are unaware that their relatives were being abused. Adamant to put an end to this abuse and bring more focus to the politicians; he decided to confront the mayor and present the NCADV findings:

FACT: Nearly 7.8 million women have been raped by an intimate partner and thousands of homicides. Moreover, costs to society are well over \$3.7 billion (Source: NCADV).

Although he wanted to take immediate action; he needed to convince Jessie to press charges and to testify. But, she never did before. And, with another obviously lame excuse, she wouldn’t do so now.

Disgusted and appalled, the Chief decided to confront Mayor Mahn later. Needing to get over to the Peters’ house, Ronnie wouldn’t be arrested now. Nevertheless, this domestic violence needed to end soon!

Entering his unmarked SUV, JuJu was snoring loudly. That’s was just how he had left her when they arrived at the St. Clair Police Station (a.k.a. “the barn”) earlier that morning. Normally JuJu would jump up to meet her dad when he entered the vehicle. But, she was tired. Since they had been up since 7:00 am, she wanted the chief to know that it would soon be time to eat. That piece of a doughnut simply wouldn’t suffice. Not for this Pug. Not on this blistering hot morning.

Pretending to be asleep, the spoiled Pug cranked up the volume on her snoring. And, playing along, the chief yelled, “Hey JuJu!”

Nothing. She didn’t move an inch. In fact, she only snored louder.

“Okay girl. We got one quick stop to make. We need to make sure that the Peters are okay. Then, I promise, we’re back to the barn for food,” he explained in English, to a dog who obviously spoke Pug.

“Food?” That got a reply from JuJu. Sitting in the front passenger seat and facing the chief, she lifted her left ear and then raised both of her “look-at-me-eyes”. Now, suddenly awake, she looked up at Chief Dan and gave a nod. That was it. Food was a good thing. But, JuJu and Chief Dan didn’t know what they would encounter at the Peter’s house.

CHAPTER 4

11:36 am.

The Peters' House...

Chief Dan pulled up to the elegant 4,500 square foot, Southern-country style home in the exclusive Spartan Estates complex. With its two stories and two chimneys, this spacious “Southern Charmer” looked like it belonged in Charleston, South Carolina. But, this wasn’t the South. It was St. Clair Township and just beyond the city limits of his jurisdiction.

FACT: Although St. Clair Township was larger than New York’s Manhattan, it had no formal police department and was in the St. Clair County Sheriff’s Department (SCCSD) jurisdiction. Located twenty miles away in Port Huron, “The County Seat”, SCCSD’s jurisdiction also included twenty-two other townships and fifty-seven villages. And, with its massive 836 square miles of land to cover, along with 112 square miles of water, the SCCSD only had twenty full-time deputies.

These were facts that Chief Dan knew all too well. Moreover, Nevertheless, the chief got a kick out of everything being named “St. Clair this” and “St. Clair that”. He recalled telling one of his visiting Marine Corps buddies, Drew Michalczuk: *“Drew, get this: the St. Clair River connects to Lake St. Clair, where there’s another boating town called St. Clair Shores. Go on Wikipedia and look up St. Clair...they don’t even know why everything is named St. Clair.”*

He nailed it spot on. When they looked it up online, St. Clair was named for everything from St. Clare of Assisi, in 1679, to a 1700s French explore. Then, there was also the British General, along with a Revolutionary War hero; both named St. Clair. Moreover, Dan Brown’s *Da Vinci Code* inferred that the Sinclair (or St. Clair) family was the offspring of Jesus Christ!

The chief smiled and thought: *who in God’s name is St. Clair and; why they aren’t a Founding Family, is beyond me?*

Now approaching the dual-staired, colossal front porch – with its ornate fixtures and two mammoth double front doors – everything seemed ordinary. And, why wouldn’t it? This was even quieter than St. Clair.

The chief knocked on the front door. Nothing. No Answer. He looked around and didn’t see anything out of the ordinary. In fact, a Cadillac Escalade and a Mercedes 560SL – the “he-and-she” symbols of well-to-do DINKS – were both parked on the pavement in front of the garage. He thought: *okay...strange, but nothing to see here.*

That’s when he heard the Peters’ German Sheppard, who must have been sleeping in the dog house, feverishly began barking. And, JuJu was barking back from the SUV. The seemingly ferocious German Sheppard was literally foaming from the mouth and frantically tugging to free himself from the firmly tied dog house leash.

“What the hell!” Chief Dan yelled.

“Doctor Bill! It’s Chief Dan! You there?”

Again, there was no answer.

Suddenly, “the nothing out of the ordinary” was fast becoming “something more extraordinary”. Two cars in the drive, two dogs going nuts, two people not answering their door...something didn’t smell right. Chief Dan’s crime scene sniffing nose kicked into overdrive and his mind promptly followed: *what’s going on here? I gotta check this out. NOW!*

He circled to the back of the house and decided to peek through the big bay windows. However, draped with silk to shade the evening sun, visibility was limited. Yet, it wasn’t even noon. He thought: *it’s still morning and the sun’s glare shouldn’t be an issue...this isn’t looking good.*

Since he could barely see through the dense glass and drapes, he went up on the deck and checked the sliding glass patio doors. They were locked. But, a semi-opened blind provided partial visibility into the kitchen. As he banged and yelled for Dr. Bill and Beth; he caught a glimpse of a slender woman’s legs lying motionless on the kitchen floor and thought: *SHIT! Is that Beth? Is she dead? I knew this looked bad...but, where is Dr. Bill?*

He quickly went back to his car and grabbed the seldom-used door breacher. The chief hadn’t used a door breacher since 2004, when he and Mullins busted some drug house off of 7 Mile Road on Detroit’s Eastside. “Back in the day”, they would simply kick in the door. Then, when some rookie broke his foot and sued Detroit; door breachers became SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) and every cop had one. But, this was not Detroit and it wasn’t a drug bust!

With a body in plain sight, that could be dying or bleeding out, “exigent circumstances” now prevailed.

FACT: Exigent circumstances meant there was eminent danger at hand. It was the term that every first responder used when acting without a warrant. “If not for” the officer’s immediate action; others’ lives could have been at risk.

Jurisdiction was no longer an issue. He had to gain entry into the Peters’ house. Fast. After promptly busting through the patio doors and glass forcefully exploded everywhere; WHOOSH...that God-awful smell instantly overcame him. It didn’t matter how many times his nose had been broken; he knew that stench! It was the stale smell of death.

Since his first homicide in Detroit, he would never forget that peculiar, powerful odor that only leaves a lifeless reek at the crime scene. Every cop and every medic knows that smell. It’s an indescribable odor that you can never forget. He moved from Detroit to forget that scent and its awful memories. But now, it resurfaced, in St. Clair Township; just a few miles from his jurisdiction.

“DAMMIT!” Chief Dan yelled, swiftly moving through the dining room and into the kitchen; where he observed the body on the kitchen floor. Beth, his real estate agent and Dr. Bill’s wife, was lying in a pool of dark red blood. Her throat was slit across the carotid artery. Beth Peters was definitely dead.

Unlike TV, where the officer puts two fingers to the throat to check for a pulse, that wasn’t going to happen. Not here. There was no need to check. With the perfect gash, across her purplish neck slicing her voice-box, he knew she was dead. Besides, if the cut didn’t kill her instantly; there was enough blood covering the kitchen floor to feed Dracula for a week. Moreover, her color was gone and she looked as cold as a butchered cow hanging in a meat locker. So, like any experienced homicide detective, he determined that lividity had already set.

FACT: Lividity, a dark purplish discoloration of the body, occurs when the heart stops pumping blood through the body and the blood settles in direct response to gravity. Lividity works through the victim within 20-30 minutes after the heart stops pumping. With Beth laying face up, he could see the purple color and the downward blood flow. Although “maximum lividity” occurs within 6-12 hours, it can be altered for the first six hours. So, unlike on TV, an experienced officer does not disturb the body. Any movement can alter Time of Death (T.O.D.).

The body hadn't been moved and Beth was lying exactly where she had died. The chief knew that touching Beth was a job for the ME (Medical Examiner) and CSU (Crime Scene Unit) forensics team. But, having neither seen nor smelled a scene, like this, since he was at DPD; Chief Dan thought: *I need to find her husband? Is he dead? Is he the killer? Most homicides, like this, are by the spouse. If he's not the killer, then is the killer still here? Is there one? How many killers, could there be?*

Processing these queries faster than an Indy race car went from 0-100 mph; the chief promptly drew his weapon, a Glock 17 9mm that he named “Chesty” (after the most famous Marine of all time, Chesty Puller).

From their first day of boot camp many Marines named their weapon. Like the scene from the movie *Full Metal Jacket*, Marine recruits would hit the rack (bed) after taps, say “Goodnight Chesty” (in tribute to Chesty Puller) and recite the Marine's Rifleman's Creed:

This is my rifle. There are many like it but this one is mine. My rifle is my best friend. It is my life. I must master it as I must master my life. Without me, my rifle is useless. Without my rifle, I am useless. I must fire my rifle true. I must shoot straighter than my enemy who is trying to kill me. I must shoot him before he shoots me. My rifle is human, even as I am human, because it is my life. Thus, I will learn it as a brother... We will become part of each other. Before God I swear this creed. My rifle and I are the defenders of my country. We are the masters of our enemy. We are the saviors of my life. So be it, until victory is America's and there is no enemy, but peace!

With “Chesty the Glock” in hand, he immediately called Betty for backup. “Betty! She's dead. Beth's dead. I need back up now! Get The County Boys (SCCSD) and call Sheriff Greig...NOW!”

It wasn't a panicked stricken shout. It was more of a commanding expression...like the type of tone that a Marine Drill Sergeant used to get a positive reaction from his recruits; without installing fear.

But, that didn't work for Betty. In shock, she yelled out, “OH MY GOD!”

“Dammit Betty! I don't know where Dr. Bill is...I need to secure this scene. Just get back up here...NOW!”

“Okay Chief,” Betty regained her composure.

The chief knew that Beth must have been killed several hours earlier. But, that didn't mean that Dr. Bill couldn't still be alive and bleeding out. Or, that Dr. Bill could be in imminent danger. There simply was no way for him to discern, for certain, the situation at hand. However, he knew that it would take a good five-to-ten minutes for backup to arrive. And, even longer for the SCCSD to respond.

Although pleased The County Boys would be coming soon, he was confident that they had never been on an active homicide scene with possible “perps” on the premises. And, unlike Detroit, the FBI's crime statistics supported his claim.

FACT: In 1990, the last time Detroit had over one million residents, the city recorded 579 homicides and another 615 in 1991. Over the next decade, homicides had substantially declined (3,678 recorded murders from 2000-2010); however, so did the population. In fact, in 2012, Detroit had shrunk from 1.5 million people in 1980 to just 701,000 and; subsequently, only recorded 386 homicides. On the contrary, since 2000; St. Clair County, with its 160,000-plus residents, only recorded fourteen homicides. And, Port Huron only had four homicides from 2000-2008 (Source: FBI. Crime-city.com)

None of this mattered to him now. Facts and figures were simply irrelevant. There was a corpse on the kitchen floor and possibly another on the premises. He had to act. FAST! Chief Dan knew what had to be done and he knew how to do it.

From his days in Detroit Narcotics drug raids and from teaching Close Quarters Combat (CQC) at USMC Camp Lejeune; he also knew time was of the essence. However, the Peters' house was huge. And, being alone, presented a big problem. He knew that the Peters had no kids, but he had never been to their home. He had no reason to visit the Peters. Beth, who planned the Rossi's house-warming party, would come to their house (before and after they moved to St. Clair).

The only thing going for the chief was that he had been to a few homes in the exclusive Spartan Estates. Hence, he knew that these mansions had no basements. They were built on the open flood plains, along the Pine River, and each home rested upon a thick concrete foundation to support their elevated first floor.

It took all of about two minutes for Chief Dan to completely clear the entire first floor's handful of oversized rooms. Bill and Beth each had their own large home-offices, equipped with the best technology that money could buy. There was also an enormous gaming room – furnished with slots machines, a pool table and two 10-person poker tables – adjacent to the gigantic party-room fully equipped with a wet-bar, a karaoke machine and a stage with a comfortable dance floor.

He promptly proceeded through the foyer and up the winding staircase. As he reached the top of the stairs – holding “Chesty the Glock” in a safety-off and pointed in a low-ready firing position – he quickly looked left and then right. Approaching the first room on the left, he thought: *these must be the bedrooms. If the husband, or the perp, was still on the premises; it would be here. I can't stop now. I need to clear these rooms.*

He went through the door and found an empty bedroom. It was obviously for guests and nobody was in sight.

“Dr. Bill! Are you Okay?”

He checked underneath the bed and cleared the closet. With no answer, he quickly cleared the room and quietly closed the door behind him as he suddenly flashed back to his Marine Corps CQC teaching days:

After clearing the room and exiting, always secure it by closing the door behind you, especially if you're on your own! Nobody has your six (six o'clock, your back) and you're never 100% certain it's clear. With the door closed, you can hear it open. If you don't, you're a dead Marine.

Continuing to identify himself and asking for Dr. Bill, he proceeded to the opposite-side bedroom. After swiftly clearing the room, he felt a presence in the hallway. It was that “sixth sense” feeling that couldn’t be taught. You either had it or you didn’t. He again quickly flashed to back:

I need you to know that the sixth sense is an innate ability; you’re born with it or you’re not. And, hopefully, you won’t have to find out the hard way. If you have it; you could be teaching this class...someday. If you don’t; you’ll be going home in a coffin, wrapped in our flag, Marine.

His weapon drawn in the Weaver Stance, he took a deep breath and decided to wait two, maybe three, seconds. He preferred the Weaver Stance versus the Isosceles Stance (where the arms formed a triangle). The former provided more speed, stability and accuracy; while the latter was more for the beginners to help them focus under stress. Chief Dan knew how to focus under stress and he would instill into his younger officers: *That’s how TV and movies embellished things!*

Nothing. No noise. No foot-steps. No smell.

Then suddenly, just as he exited the opposite bedroom, the family cat jumped out. Startled, the chief nearly shot the small feline. He noticed the slowly dripping blood from its neck and saw a path of crimson-colored paw prints leading straight to the room at the end of the huge hallway.

He thought: *that must be the master bedroom. If Dr. Bill’s alive; he’s the killer. Dead; we got us a double homicide.*

He wanted to hit the master bedroom right away, but he needed to clear the two preceding rooms first. The one on the right was a walk-in closet and filled with towels and toiletries fit for a king. The other room, on the left, was a full-sized guest bathroom. Both were secured in seconds.

Now, it was show time. He had to clear the master bedroom; just where the cat presumably exited. With the upstairs rooms secured and doors safely closed to protect “his six”; Chief Dan silently approached the master bedroom door. Drawing nearer, he noticed that the door was cracked open about four-to-five inches. He thought: *that’s how the cat got out.*

He didn’t know if the killer was inside. And, if so, where the killer could be? Was he behind the cracked open door; waiting to ambush him? Was he behind a dresser; waiting to shoot? He knew Beth was stabbed, but the killer could also have a gun. The killer could’ve simply stabbed Beth so Dr. Bill wouldn’t hear. Nevertheless, he had to enter the master bedroom and there were three things that the chief knew for certain:

One: he didn’t have backup,

Two: he had to make his move and

Three: he wanted to come home alive...preferably in one piece and hopefully uninjured.

However, the slightly cracked open door presented more problems than it did opportunities. If there was a perp inside; not only could the killer see him, but there was no element of surprise upon entering. Through a closed door, you can quickly kick it in. And, if the perp is behind it, he’s knocked off guard. Then again, if he’s behind the dresser; you’re dead. Or, if you attempt to slowly open it; you could be shot right through the door.

Being “on-the-job” (a term used by fellow police officers amongst themselves), this scenario was one of many they faced on a daily basis. Roughly eight months ago he had educated his St. Clair Police volunteers and part-timers about these types of situations.

He told them about Detroit Officer Williams, who tried to slowly open the door, but was hit with automatic gun fire. And, there was Officer Forsyth. He quickly went through the door, standing tall, and was hit with a crowbar across his face. He lost an eye and never made it back “on-the-job”. Then, there was Officer Kendrick. He went low and got shot in the face. Dead. There was no back “on-the-job” for him and his four young children had to grow up without their father.

Now confronted with the same situation, the memory of that training session flashed across his mind and he thought about his words that day:

God willing, when you gotta go through a door; you better have Him – that would be GOD – on your side. There’s a 50-50 chance, a flip of the coin, you guessed right. One dies, the other lives. It’s that simple.

Although he had entered many closed and semi-opened doors; he knew that his math reference couldn’t be taught. There was no manual. No text-book answer. You had to feel the situation and make your move.

Without backup and the door slightly ajar, Chief Dan, back against the wall – presenting the most minimal target possible – powerfully pushed it open and rapidly entered the room. It was like a hockey player on a break-away solo shot on goal; while briskly observing his opening to score. But, this was real life! And a score would mean a kill. It was him or the killer. Whoever had the clear shot...would win.

Nothing. Nobody. No Shots. Nothing. Only that damn awful smell!

Dr. Bill was lying in bed with a gaping wound from this chest. He had cleared the closets and the master bathroom before moving over to Dr. Bill. Blood spatter was minimal. Just one deep thrust straight into his heart. Just with Beth, his body was cold and purple. There were no defensive wounds and no signs of sexual abuse. This wasn’t a sexual deviant or a sadist. It was a killer on a mission.

He wanted one thing and one thing only: for Dr. Bill and Beth to die in the cleanest and quickest manner possible. And, he did just that. The simple “do me a favor stop” was now two dead bodies and no killer in sight. The chief hadn’t seen a murder scene like this since DPD and he was certain that St. Clair County had never seen anything like this. Hearing the sirens, he knew backup was on the way.

PART II

STANLEY JACKSON

CHAPTER 5

Friday, May 24, 2013.

TWO WEEKS EARLIER: Memorial Holiday Weekend

On that muggy May morning before the Memorial Holiday Weekend, millionaire geek Stanley Jackson was, once again, visiting one of his many ADVICON computer stores located throughout Michigan. As it gave him a more “hands-on feeling”, Stanley often frequented his stores. But, any actual analysis (from a properly educated professional psychiatrist) would conclude that it was more like: *I have the power and control kind of feeling*. In other words, the money was inconsequential.

Although ADVICON’s headquarters was based sixty-miles away in Ann Arbor – home of his alma mater, the University of Michigan (U of M) – he often visited the St. Clair County stores. And, it was all for a good reason. Following his divorce in 2008, he had moved back to the area to be near his constantly ill and bedridden mother. He thought: *I live in St. Clair Township and it is better my staff sees me actively working...even on weekends*.

Today, he was in Marine City – another rather charming and picturesque small town – situated adjacent to St. Clair and along the St. Clair River. In spite of the holiday weekend, ADVICON staff would be working and the Marine City store would be no exception.

That’s when a nice looking family, with three PCs for fixing, entered. Standing at the front counter and reviewing the in-store sales, Stanley heard the bell ring. He looked up and saw a strikingly handsome man; albeit, a bit short and thin, enter his store. And, flanking his sides, were two beautiful blond-haired and blue-eyed teenage twins.

“Excuse me. Are you the technician?” the man asked

Jason, the in-store “techie”, came out and greeted them, “Nope, that would be me. He’s the big boss on an observation visit. Can I help you?”

Upon immediately recognizing Pastor Kyle from St. Luke; the techie said, “Pastor Kyle. How are you? What brings you here today?”

From one of the German-Polish Founding Families of St. Clair County, the pastor was a striking figure. He wasn’t tall and strong; like his forefathers, who had farmed the lands and owned the salt mines. At 160-lbs and just 5’8” tall, Pastor Kyle’s diminutive stature – with small hands and nicely manicured fingernails – was offset by the subtle arrogance and striking demeanor of a successful man.

Although it was clearly obvious that he came from inherited wealth (old money), the only thing he had physically inherited from his hard working large-figured ancestors was the blond hair and blue eyes. In other words, where his forefathers pushed a plow; Pastor Kyle pushed people and prospered from their deeply devoted religious beliefs. The pastor was a driver of people; not of cattle or cows. He mined money; not salt.

Stanley nearly stopped dead in his tracks and then moved back to the opposite corner of the store, near the parts area. He looked over at the pastor and thought: *Kyle Gibson from my St. Clair Class of*

'91...is this really him? The worst bully of the bunch, who became a Pastor? I haven't seen him since August 2001, our ten year reunion, and he still doesn't even recognize me. But, why would he?

Over his four years at U of M, the brilliant mathematician had sprouted from 5'4" to just shy of six feet tall. Even though he would often visit his mom, he never mingled with his former classmates. That's why nobody recognized him at their ten-year reunion and why Pastor Kyle didn't recognize him now. And, the last he had heard about Kyle Gibson was that he had graduated from some Christian college in Grand Rapids, became a Pastor and married Candy Westrick (the girl Stanley had an enormous crush on since Freshman Year).

"I'm sorry, but I can't recall your name?"

"Jason. I'm Jason. Me and Timmy, he's another techie in St. Clair, go to your services on Wednesday and Sunday," the tech excitedly answered. "Your services really rock, sir! They get us all going."

"That's great Jason. I'm really glad to hear that," the pastor replied, with a self-satisfying grin.

"Tell me what you have and I'm sure I can fix it, Pastor!"

As Stanley was standing in the corner and inventorying the parts, he was astutely observing and attentively listening to their interaction. On top of being a Mensa, with an IQ of 163, Stanley had an eidetic memory.

NOTE: Like a photographic memory, where a person recalls visual information; an eidetic memory is where the person recalls the visual along with other senses (i.e. sound, taste, touch and smell). It was "a gift and a curse" as the TV character *Monk* would say. Or, as his kids would say, "Dad, you're just like, Dr. Reed from *Criminal Minds*, who remembers everything!"

"Thanks Jason," Pastor Kyle smiled. "Can you have a quick look at these three PCs? The kid's laptops are getting all kinds of pop-ups and my personal desktop won't even boot up."

Jason booted up the twins laptops and immediately knew the problem. "Jesus Christ! Oops...sorry about that," the techie said. "It looks like your kids got a virus." Then, after opening the pastor's DELL Inspiron's case, he said, "I'm not sure, but it looks like this one could be a bad hard drive."

"Really? This is my personal PC. It's only a few years old and has all of my records, sermons and parishioner info," he paused. "It's rather private."

"Well sir, I've seen new hard drives go bad within a year." Jason explained, "Pastor, these foreign-made components don't have the same durability. It doesn't matter if it says Dell, HP or whatever on the outside...they all use overseas parts."

"I get it. Overseas parts are why I've been talking to overseas techies..."

Jason interrupted, "Pastor, that's why you're here now. At ADVICON, you get local service, local support and local people!"

"Will all my pictures, favorites and emails be gone?"

"That's called your data and I'm not sure. My manager is on an off-site business call," he paused. "But, the big boss is here now...let me ask him."

Before he could ask Stanley Jackson, the pastor interrupted, "I don't care about the costs! That's MY LIFE on that PC. Please help me out!"

Only a few short minutes had passed, but for Stanley it seemed like several long months. As he stood in the corner, alertly listening, he remembered the pastor and the horrific things that happened at St. Clair High. He thought:

Kyle Gibson is here and pleading for my help. In fact, he is calling me "sir." This is surreal, for sure. Of course he could pay anything! He was THE Kyle Gibson! From Prom Court, to Class President and football player; Kyle came from one of the Founding-Families. He always had it all. Money? No problem. Looks? He had them. Just look at those proto-typical "Barbie-girl" daughters flanking him.

Without my help, he would have never passed math class. While I tutored them; they tortured me! For those four horrible years at St. Clair High, I would tell them that "it's the frickin' Fibonacci sequence...from the most respected mathematician known to man...you mathematical morons! "1-2-3-5-8-13-21... Just add the two preceding numbers together to get the following number."

That didn't matter to Kyle and his bunch of bullying buddies. I was the nerd and they made every single day a living hell. From the swirly – where my head was being flushed in the toilet – to the constant berating during Gym Class...I was bullied. Kyle Gibson, now Pastor Kyle, was the devil-in-disguise. And, his cohorts were his "apostles of evil".

Then, Stanley became even more infuriated as he remembered that Kyle had married Candy Westrick, the most beautiful girl at St. Clair High! In Stanley's mind she was the most precious thing on the face of this earth. For four years, he took every class just to be in the same room with her. His terrible daydream was suddenly interrupted.

"Mr. Jackson, this is Pastor Kyle and it looks like his PC has a bad hard drive. Can we use the data recovery program you developed?" Jason asked.

With a bit of perspiration sparkling on his forehead – as of if he had just awoken from an awful nightmare – he cleared his thoughts, softly moved from the back corner and asked, "Pastor Kyle is it?"

"Yes sir! That's MY LIFE on that DELL desktop..." He paused for a brief moment, thinking that he recognized the ADVICON Big Boss. He quickly brushed it off and said, "I don't have anything backed up."

"Well Pastor, I've recently developed a data recovery program. But, it's only in beta stage right now."

"I just need that data. The cost is not my concern."

"Okay, let me see what I can do."

Then, one of those weird and awkward moments passed between them before Pastor Kyle broke the silence and said, "I'll be home most of the Memorial Weekend. Just call me when you get it done."

"Okay. But, it may take a little longer than that," Stanley replied, as the pastor filled out the work order.

"That's fine. But, sooner would be better. And, if you can't reach me at home, then try my cell phone," the pastor answered, writing down the number 1.810-555.1260 on the ADVICON work order.

"No guarantees."

"Don't need any. If the Lord lets it be...so shall it. God bless you!"

With no clue that he had just conversed with his former St. Clair High School classmate, he exited the Marine City ADVICON store. His blond-haired and blue-eyed teenage twins ("The Barbie Girls", as Stanley now called them) followed.

Stanley was shocked and deeply troubled to remember those terrible and torturous years. But, the pastor could have cared less how Stanley was hauntingly affected by those memories. In Pastor Kyle's mind, that was high school stuff that happened over twenty years ago. It was kid's stuff.

However, for the ADVICON big boss, it wasn't that simple. He wanted the pastor to pay. Actually, he wanted him – along with his bullying football buddies from the other Founding Families – to feel his pain.

Although it had only been four years of horrific bullying; it was the twenty-plus years of reflection that haunted him. And, if it weren't for his deeply rooted faith; Stanley wouldn't have been able to curb his internal desire to seek revenge.

Consequently, for all these years, Stanley had never said a word and never did anything.

