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Because You Loved Me

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Never See Them Again

KISS OF THE SHE-DEVIL

M. WILLIAM PHELPS



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This book is dedicated to Kensington Publishing Corp.—and all those who have supported me throughout the years, including Michaela Hamilton, Doug Mendini, and publisher Laurie Parkin, with a special thanks to the Zacharius family and Kensington’s late founder, Walter Zacharius.

I

THE MURDER

IT WAS JUST about nine o'clock. Time for the library to close. Barbara "Barb" Butkis, a veteran librarian supervisor for fifteen years, planned on staying late. Barb needed to work on a few things related to the library's computer system. This type of work had to be done after hours. Barb had to tell Martha Gail Fulton, one of her library aides, that there was no reason for her to stick around. Martha, who went by her middle name, Gail, was always asking how she could do more. Barb explained that she and another employee could take care of the extra work. Gail's home life wasn't so stable lately anyway; in fact, it was no secret to most employees at the library that home was probably the best place for the forty-eight-year-old married mother of three grown children. Gail had recently taken her husband back after he had an extended and tumultuous affair. But that was Gail: the forgiving, devout Catholic, always willing to pardon for the sake of souls.

All the employees generally met near the staff door heading out into the parking lot at the end of their shift. Barb and another coworker, librarian Cathy Lichtman, stayed behind.

"Computer backup," Barb said to the others as they gathered, ready to leave.

It sounded boring and tedious. The only plus for Barb was that it would take maybe ten or fifteen minutes, tops.

The Orion Township Library, on Joslyn Road, was a central point in the quaint Michigan town of Lake Orion, "where living is a vacation," the town's website claims. Lake Orion is about forty-five minutes due north of the more well-known and popular home of the Tigers and Pistons, the Motor City, Detroit. By small-town standards, the landmass of Lake Orion is infinitesimal: 1.2 square miles, 440 acres of which are eaten up by water. On that cool October night, when Barbara Butkis and Gail Fulton's lives outside of books collided, there were fewer than two thousand residents registered in Lake Orion. So, without overstating it, one could say this was a town, literally, where not only did everybody know everyone else's business, but nothing much beyond bake sales, PTA meetings, and bingo games happened. Lake Orion was as charming and dainty as any fabricated plastic town in the middle of a child's train set: perfect and pleasant and quiet. Maybe even boring, too—just the way the townies liked it.

Gail's work imitated her life—she was flexible. Gail worked every Monday night (tonight) from five to nine, but she would come in on additional, alternate days and nights at different hours. Those Monday nights were Gail's, though, and had been since she'd taken the job eighteen months earlier. The job Gail did—and did it very well—was what one would have expected from a librarian's assistant. Throughout everybody's time inside libraries, patrons have all come in contact with these everyday, average women and men. They push carts of books from one aisle to the next, quietly, in solitude, depositing each into its respective, numerically placed slot. Once in a while, they will answer a patron's question. If a person loved books, this was a dream job.

Gail walked out with the others. "Good night," she said. "See you soon." In the inflection of Gail's voice, there was an unremarkable (yet unmistakable) Texas drawl. Gail and her husband and kids had been in Michigan only a few years, transplants from Corpus Christi.

Gail's maroon van was parked in the lot just out the door, about twenty-five yards straight ahead. Gail walked to her van and immediately noticed something different about it. The way it sat. She couldn't put her finger on what, exactly, but something didn't seem right.

Gail shook off what was an odd feeling before placing her pocketbook on the passenger seat and

getting in on the driver's side.

Inside, she turned the key, backed out of her parking space, and drove away.

She got about ten yards from her parking space before realizing one of the tires on her van was flat. So she turned, driving around a small island of mulch and shrubs, before pulling back into the same space she'd just left.

Then she got out and had a look.

Gail stood staring at her flat tire, then turned back toward the library. All of her coworkers, save for Barb and Cathy (still inside finishing up that computer work), were gone by now, on their way home to another peaceful night in paradise.

So Gail walked toward the employee entrance.

Not yet out of the immediate area where she had parked, Gail noticed a car, with its lights bright and shining in her face, pull up. There was a man and woman in the front seat. A second man dressed in a black leather jacket, black gloves, black ski mask, and a do-rag sat in the back.

Gail didn't like the look of this. It didn't appear that they were there to help.

The man dressed in black got out.

No one said anything.

Gail grew concerned; she kept eyeing the library's employee entrance, no doubt hoping someone would walk out.

WITH CATHY LICHTMAN'S HELP, Barbara Butkis finished the computer backup. Both women got their things together and proceeded to leave. It was October 4, 1999, at 9:10 P.M., when they walked out the door, Barbara later recalled.

Outside, it was dark and crisp. Cooler than normal temperatures had forced the brittle, colorful leaves of fall to settle like feathers on the ground. A slick sheen of drizzle moistened the pavement. All the doors to the library were locked. Nobody could walk in off the street. A person would have to know what Barb later described as a special “key code” in order to open the door.

Gail knew this code.

Barb and Cathy stood near the employee exit. Barb punched the alarm code number to set the door open. She watched Cathy walk out in front of her, and soon followed behind.

When she was outside the building, Barb made sure the exit door was secure. She pulled on the handle, hearing that click of the lock, feeling resistance.

They could go home.

“Have a good night, Cathy,” Barb said.

“You too. See you tomorrow.”

Barb and Cathy walked toward the parking lot. As Barb later explained, “We usually kind of look back and forth, because it is evening, to see if there is anything in the parking lot before we start approaching our cars. . . .”

Two women, alone in the night, were being vigilant and careful, mindful of their surroundings. That was the kind of world they lived in—even there, in what many would have deemed the safest place on earth.

After making that routine gaze into the night, looking for anything out of the ordinary, Barb peered straight ahead—and then stopped.

Something caught her eye.

It was on the ground. Maybe about fifty feet ahead.

Fabric?

It looked like a piece of clothing. However, neither Cathy nor Barb could tell what it was because, as Barb later explained, who expects to see clothing on the ground as you leave work?

Barb and Cathy walked toward the fabric.

A pile of clothes?

Strange, someone’s clothes spread out on the ground like that. Here. At night. In the parking lot of the library.

Kids? Maybe a pre-Halloween prank?

No. Couldn't be.

Barb noticed what she called “breath or steam coming from the object”—and that’s when things began to make sense.

Walking up next to the fabric, Barb and Cathy noticed something else.

“It was a person,” Barb remembered.

“Gail!” Barb yelled, recognizing her coworker lying on the tar.

Cathy was just as shocked to see Gail, barely moving, on the ground, on her back, motionless, moaning in a whisper. (“She was very still,” Barb said later. “I could not tell at that moment what had happened.”)

happened to her, if she had fainted or—I couldn't tell because she was lying on the ground.”)

Barb knelt down beside Gail. “Honey? Gail? Talk to me!”

No response.

Cathy stood beside Barb; then she, too, knelt down.

Barb grabbed Gail's wrist to check for a pulse.

“I'm going to call 911,” Cathy said, standing up, turning, and running for the library.

“Gail?” Barb said, with her fingers applied gingerly to the back side of Gail's wrist. (Later, Barb remarked: “Her eyes were just staring. . . .”)

Gail Fulton was slipping away.

Cathy had the phone in her hand; the door to the library was open. She yelled to Barb, who could not find a pulse, “Is Gail diabetic, Barb?” Obviously, Cathy was speaking to a 911 operator, who was directing her on which questions to ask.

Barb knew this was no diabetic coma or fainting spell; she could see what she thought was blood coming from the top of Gail's forehead. As Cathy continued to yell questions, Barb noticed a large pool of “liquid” surrounding the back of Gail's head, tacky to the touch, seemingly growing in size. Barb focused on it. The fluid was dark, thick, and spreading in a halo pattern around Gail's head.

Oh, my, Barb thought.

“Is she breathing?” Cathy yelled.

Barb looked. That growing pool of fluid had to be blood—lots of it, in fact, pouring out from the back of Gail's head.

“She's been hurt bad!” Barb yelled. “Someone hurt her *very* bad.”

Cathy hung up with 911 and grabbed a blanket. Barb met her at the door, took the blanket, ran back to Gail, and placed it over her body.

“Gail, honey . . . can you hear me?” Barb said as she consoled her friend, trying to keep her warm and awake.

Cathy then walked up with a towel, which she applied with firm pressure to the back of Gail's head. The tears came when Barb realized Gail had been shot in the head, maybe a few other areas of her body, too. There could be no other explanation.

Gail was still alive, though. She was breathing laboriously, and her pulse was weakening.

She had a heartbeat. She was fighting.

Sirens pierced the night as Barb and Cathy did their best to let Gail know she was not alone. They would not let her die out here by herself, in the dark, on her back, lying on the cold parking lot pavement in a pool of her own blood.

GUY HUBBLE HAD been with the Oakland County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) since 1985. *A* the call came in that a woman was hurt at the Lake Orion Public Library, road patrol officer Hubble, nearing the end to his generally carefree and quiet three-to-eleven shift, realized he was right down the street. The Township of Orion had been under Hubble's patrol. Looking at his watch—9:14 P.M. on the nose—Hubble sped toward the scene.

"I was already northbound on Joslyn Road, coming up to [West] Clarkston Road," Hubble recalled. "I was approximately a quarter mile away, maybe half, at the most."

From his scanner Hubble had gleaned basic details of what was going on: *injured party . . . medical emergency.*

The patrol officer hit his lights and siren, passing Square Lake Cemetery on the right, several residential houses on the left. Coming up to the library's driveway a few moments after receiving the call, Hubble raced into the backward J-shaped entrance toward the employee parking lot and spied "two white females . . . standing above another white female that was [lying] on the ground."

Hubble parked, flung his door open, and approached the women. Understandably so, they were upset, a bit manic, and did not know what else they could do for Gail.

"What is the nature of the situation?" Hubble asked.

"We think she's fallen," Barb said. She held a "paper cloth" to Gail's forehead. After thinking about it, Barb figured Gail had fallen and hit her head. She was confused and traumatized, not thinking clearly. She didn't want to believe her friend had been shot in the head.

Hubble walked closer. "Please remove the cloth," he said, wanting to see the extent of Gail's injuries, maybe try to discern what had happened, and if he could do anything to help.

As soon as Barb removed the cloth, it was clear to the veteran cop what happened: Gail had fallen, as the women had now suspected. "I noticed a large hole in the upper part of the forehead," Hubble explained. It was obvious that Gail had been shot.

Emergency personnel and another officer pulled up at the same time, chirping to a stop. The lights on each vehicle flashed strobes of red and blue, brightening the parking lot, making a scene out of what was, on any other night, a place of peace and quiet, where nothing much of anything happened.

"Back away, please," the officer said, approaching. "They need to administer help."

Gail was slipping; that white light approaching fast. She had been shot in the head and torso four times. She had stood, looked into the eyes of her killer, turned away instinctively, knowing, it seemed, the end was near. Anyone who knew Gail would agree that in those crucial moments after she was shot, as she fell to the ground, this pious woman, undoubtedly, began to recite the Catholic prayers she had breathlessly said thousands of times throughout her life. Gail was known to say a rosary every night; maybe tonight she was saying that same prayer as she lay dying.

Hubble noticed Gail was "moaning and moving" slightly. "I was trying to keep her from moving her neck area," he recalled, "[when] shortly after that, fire [rescue] arrived and [she] took her last breath."

As he knelt beside her, Hubble heard a *whoosh* of air from Gail's lungs, so subtle and unexpected and yet eerily normal. Then there was total quiet.

Gail had given up her fight. She was gone.

With a volunteer emergency medical technician (EMT) now helping, Hubble got to work performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). As they prepared Gail's body for CPR, undoing her

clothing, Hubble noticed “what appeared to be multiple gunshot wounds . . . above and to the left of the right breast, and one below.”

The EMT continued CPR, but Hubble felt Gail wouldn't respond. There was no bringing her back. While she had moaned previously, Hubble leaned down and asked Gail if she could relate any information about what had happened. It was then that Hubble “could hear the air leaving her lungs. It was just a—all I could hear was a ‘*hough*’, a deep *huff* type of sound as the air left.”

This was Gail's final breath.

Hubble got together with those officers who were now responding to the scene in droves. “Close down the entrance to the township [library],” he ordered, “so nobody can enter.” Hubble wanted the area cordoned off. If Gail had been shot, there must be some sort of trace evidence around, maybe even a few spent projectiles.

“Ladies, go back into the library,” Hubble told Barb and Cathy, who were wandering around in a daze, unaware—in shock, perhaps—of what had actually taken place, yet understanding that something horrible had happened right before their eyes.

More rescue personnel arrived, all of them now working on trying to revive a dead woman.

Hubble saw that Gail held a set of keys in her hand. He walked over and took them. Then he opened the passenger-side door to her vehicle and found her pocketbook, where he quickly located her identification. The bag was sitting on the passenger seat, as though she had just set it down. He took a quick look around the van and did not see anything out of place or disturbed. Then he gave a once-over to the outside of the van. Save for the flat tire, nothing seemed suspicious.

As Hubble walked the scene, surveying what he could, Barb came out and mentioned what she thought might be of some help. “Cameras,” Barb said. “We record what goes on out in the parking lot and around the building.”

“You do?” Hubble said.

“Yes,” Barb reiterated. She pointed to a camera on the building that faced the exact spot in the parking lot where Gail lay dead.

Gail Fulton's murder has been caught on tape, Hubble thought.

This murder of a local housewife and librarian would send the OCSD to call on Oak Force, a multiagency crime-fighting organization. As luck would have it, that very same week this super police force had been formed as a team of lawmen. Comprised of local Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents, members of the Michigan State Police (MSP), and OCSD—on top of police officers from the nearby towns of Pontiac, Southfield, and Troy—the agency investigated major crimes. Good thing. Because from the moment Hubble and his colleagues arrived and found Gail Fulton—a harmless librarian's assistant, whose father, Noe Garza, and uncle, Margarito Garza, were former federal judges—it was clear that she had been targeted. Gail's mother, Dora Garza, was also a well-known figure in the community and a church leader in her native home of Corpus Christi.

These could be people, law enforcement concluded, that others might hold grudges against.

PATROL OFFICER HUBBLE asked Barb where the videotapes from the night were kept.

She showed him the closet, saying, “Right in there.”

As Barb further explained, she was unaware of how the “video machines” worked. She suggested they call in the library’s maintenance man.

Not too long after, Hubble followed the guy with all the keys clipped to his belt and watched him take the videotape out of the video player. By now, Hubble had called in his sergeant, Alan Whitefield, who had arrived at the library by nine-thirty to help secure the scene and make sure a chain of custody with regard to the videotape was maintained.

Sergeant Whitefield took control of the scene, directing Hubble to give him the videotape and head back outside, where he could watch over things until the crime scene unit arrived. From there, Whitefield called in the crime lab and dispatched several additional officers to keep watch on the library and its surrounding area. There was a shooter somewhere in town, after all—likely, not too far away. It had, by Barbara’s estimation, been only twenty minutes (at most) since Gail had been shot.

Detective Chris Wundrach (pronounced Won-Drack) showed up in Whitefield’s wake—the situation extremely fluid by now—and took possession of the videotape, suggesting to Whitefield that they go into the library and have a look at it right away. It could yield an important clue to the killer’s identity, like perhaps a car license plate number.

“Right,” Whitefield said.

The tape contained a view from four different video cameras recording in one-second intervals, so as Whitefield later explained, “it was very quick.” More than a film of the events, it looked like a bundle of snapshots flipped into action. The cameras were posted over the employees’ entrance, the main entrance, toward the rear of the parking lot, and looking down at a loading dock in the back of the building. At best, the portion of the tape depicting the murder was grainy and blurry and fuzzy. As they sat and watched, a car pulled up to Gail’s van after she walked around to the passenger side; they could see the car’s headlights clearly. Then someone got out from the backseat after the car stopped. Wearing what appeared to be a white shawl, Gail came out toward the car from around the back side of her van. The man from the car (his back to the camera) approached. Without warning, there were several white blasts of light, disturbing in the context of which they now knew. Gail, who was standing in one frame, was on the ground in the next; then the man, her killer, headed back toward the waiting vehicle. It was clear from the video that there were other people in the car. The remainder of the video showed the car pulling out of the driveway and disappearing into the night. Without enhancing the video (zooming in on different sections of each frame), there was no way to make out a license plate number—if, in fact, the license plate itself wasn’t covered up with something. The only fact they could be certain of without sending the video to the lab to be enhanced was that they were dealing with three people inside a contemporary-looking vehicle that had pulled into the parking lot for one reason:

To kill Martha Gail Fulton.

While additional police arrived and the parking lot became an official crime scene, Barb decided she needed to make a call and let Gail’s husband know what was going on.

A young man answered. It was Gail’s son. “Is your father home?” Barb asked. The urgency in his

voice was aggressive and apparent.

Moments later, George Fulton said, "Hello? What is it?"

"Something happened to Gail in the parking lot," Barb said.

"I'll be right there."

Barb told one of the officers at the scene that she had called George.

"How long since the time you found Mrs. Fulton, did you call Mr. Fulton?"

"Twenty minutes," Barb said.

He wrote it down.

"Several weeks ago," Barb added, "I overheard Gail telling another employee that she was having marital problems. So I asked her later on that day if everything was okay."

"What'd she say?"

"She told me that she and her husband were going to counseling, and she thought things were going to be all right."

As Guy Hubble worked the action outside, some time had passed and a colleague notified him that George Fulton and his son had arrived.

"Do not allow them on the scene."

"What should we tell them?"

"Have them escorted to the Orion substation so we can conduct interviews."

By 9:27 P.M., the doctor on scene had pronounced Gail Fulton's death, making it official. All efforts to revive her were stopped. Someone had murdered this devout Catholic housewife and librarian. The police were already suspicious of Gail's husband. At first, from all outward appearances, George wasn't the least bit torn up over his wife's sudden death. No tears. No urgency to find the perp. Either George held his emotional cards close to the vest, or he had things to hide.

THE LIBRARY WAS not quite surrounded by woods, but there was a section of thickly settled weeds and pines. As one officer walked the perimeter of the parking lot near this area, flashlight in hand, searching for what he did not know, he “heard movement.”

The officer keyed his radio: “I need another unit . . . for search.”

Two additional officers ran up. They went into the wooded area with flashlights and looked around. It took about ten minutes, but they found nothing.

Officer Robert Timko, one of the cops conducting this search, was told to give George Fulton and his son a ride to the substation.

“I’m not going anywhere,” George said defiantly, suddenly becoming concerned, “until I find out what happened to my wife.”

Timko told George to relax. He called Sergeant Alan Whitefield over.

Whitefield was busy. He had a crime scene unfolding. There were medics and doctors and cops all over the place. Yellow crime-scene tape was going up. Passersby were beginning to gather at the entrance. Neighbors across from the library were beginning to wonder what in the world was going on.

“What’s up?” Whitefield asked Timko.

They stood out of earshot from George and his son. Timko explained the situation, noting how he believed George had been acting strange, irate and not wanting to cooperate.

Whitefield walked over and told George, “Look, your wife has been shot, and we need your complete cooperation.”

Timko showed George and Andrew Fulton to his patrol car and they left for the substation.

Officers went out and canvassed the neighborhood, both facing the library and in back of the building, through the woods. Just about every neighbor within earshot of the library reported the same thing: gunshots heard at 9:00 P.M. In this part of the country, most are accustomed to what a gun going off sounds like. There’s not too much mistaking a gunshot with a car backfiring or some other noise. People here know the sound of a gun firing because it is a place where residents hunt and fish and participate in all sorts of outdoor activities. The only difference in the five reports neighbors gave was the number of shots heard: Some said three; some said four; one said five.

Sometime after midnight, several library employees, George Fulton and his son, Andrew, along with their youngest daughter, Emily, waited at the OCS D Substation in town. Whitefield had instructed detectives from the sheriff’s department to head over to Talon Circle, George and Gail’s home, to collect evidence and see what they could figure out about the life and times of George and Gail Fulton. George had already admitted to owning several handguns, but he had said little else. He seemed a bit hostile and uncooperative, even angry—not the response cops generally get from a grieving spouse. Investigators had interviewed George briefly, but nothing of value came out of it.

“George was very unemotional,” said one investigator. “Very hard to read.”

George Fulton’s weapons would have to be confiscated and taken to the lab. Also, police wanted swabs of DNA from George, Emily, and Andrew. Gail’s maroon 1992 Plymouth Grand Voyager van was impounded and towed from the crime scene; the flat tire was removed from the vehicle and sent off to the crime lab for further processing. There was protocol to follow now: steps to take in order to find out if Gail’s murderer had left behind that one clue that could break the case open. It was like there, investigators knew, somewhere in all of the interviews going on and the evidence collected. N

killer is flawless. They all leave behind a mark or clue—no matter how trivial or, conversely, significant. An investigator knows this and follows his training and instincts; sooner or later, that one piece of evidence will emerge.

A man who left the library right about the time of Gail's murder had heard what happened and came forward to tell police this story: "I think I seen two cars, one larger, maybe a four-door. There may have been two gentlemen, one in each car; but it was unusual because [there's] always some cars there when I was leaving . . ."

Maybe this was something. Maybe not. The officer took the statement and placed it with what was a growing number of witness testimonials.

The one person, however, investigators were just sitting down with—alone and away from his father's grasp—was a boy who could tell police where George was, and what he was doing at the time of his wife's murder. Spouses are always suspects in murders of one another; but George, with his unusual behavior, inconsistent and erratic as the night progressed, was judged a bit more quickly by police. Something—maybe just a cop's instinct—told law enforcement to look closely at George.

HIS BIRTH NAME is George Andrew Fulton, but everyone in the family called him Andrew. It was near eleven o'clock on the night of his mother's murder when Andrew sat down with Detective Chris Wundrach at the Lake Orion Township Substation. According to a family member, Andrew was "a very social person . . . and caring [individual], as he will go out of his way to do nice things for the people he cares about."

Andrew and his mother were close. Her death was devastating to him.

"You're not under arrest or anything like that," Wundrach explained. Andrew was going to be turning eighteen in two months. "We're just looking for your help in our investigation."

"Okay," Andrew said.

Start with the basics: "Tell me what you did tonight."

The boy seemed nervous, which was expected. This was a tense and alarming situation. Still, as one family member recalled, Andrew "can also have a temper on him," which he acquired from his "papu" (grandfather on his mother's side). Saying Andrew and his mother were tight was a gross understatement; Andrew was not afraid to tell his mother anything.

"My dad was always very critical of [Andrew] and didn't have a kind word for him, but my mom was always very loving and understanding of whatever my brother did," Emily Fulton later observed.

"Near six o'clock," Andrew said, "me and my girlfriend, Alicia Caldwell (pseudonym), left my house to go over her house for dinner. My dad was just getting home from work as we were leaving."

Andrew spent much of the night over at Alicia's, which Wundrach would soon verify. Alicia dropped her boyfriend back off at home around eight-thirty that night. The library, Wundrach knew, was about a ten-minute ride—at most—from home.

"How did you know your dad was home, Andrew?"

"I heard him working in the basement."

"Did your father leave the house at any time that you know of?" It was not hard to tell where the line of questioning was headed.

"No," he said.

"How do you *know* that?"

"I was watching television in our den, so I would have seen him come up from the basement and leave."

There was always the possibility—and as a cop, Wundrach had to consider every potential scenario plausible—that Andrew was covering for his father, or for himself. And the way to get that out of the boy, Wundrach knew, was to dig into the day-to-day dynamics of the family.

Sins and secrets. Every family walked casually around them every day. Some emerge and cause a breakdown within the unit, while others are able to work through them.

"Tell me how your mom and dad's relationship was?" Wundrach asked.

Andrew looked down at his hands. This was not a tough question, and he was upfront: "It was stressed."

"How so?"

"My dad had an affair last year with his boss, while he was working in Florida."

This interested Wundrach, of course. Love, money, and revenge were three potential reasons behind *any* murder. More than that, why hadn't George mentioned anything about his mistress while being

interviewed at the substation earlier? Why was George holding this fact back?

“Can you tell me anything about it?” Wundrach pressed.

Andrew said the affair dated to “last December 1998,” as far as he knew. “My dad ended the affair and was going to counseling with my mom to work on their marriage.” Gail was a firm believer in the sacrament of marriage and saw it as a vocation, as she had been taught since childhood through Catholic school and church teaching. She was a devoted parish member of St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, on the north side of Lake Orion, where Barb Butkis had explained that she saw Gail at mass often. So working on the marriage, although it had suffered the hammering blow of adultery, was something Gail had been bred to do, an observer could say. There had been times—*boy, had there ever*—when Gail was ready to pack it in and head to divorce court, but she was willing to forgive George and move on, especially since he had broken it off with his mistress.

“Do you know your father’s boss’s name, Andrew?”

“Donna,” he said. “She lives in Florida.” He didn’t have a last name.

“You ever see Donna?”

“No.”

“Andrew, let me ask you, have you *ever* heard of any threats made against your mom?”

Andrew thought about this. “My mom told me once that Donna had threatened her, telling her she was going to ‘drag her out in the street and beat her.’”

That was pretty significant. There wasn’t a lot of wiggle room there to speculate what this Donna person wanted to do.

“When was that?” Wundrach asked.

“It was a few months ago that [my mom] told me. Donna came here to Michigan to see my dad.”

“Donna ever call your house?”

“Yeah, of course. My dad still works for her.”

“When was the last time she called?”

“Around nine-twenty—tonight.”

“Really. How’d you know it was her?”

“I heard my father say, ‘Bye, Donna.’”

After being asked, Andrew explained that they had two phone lines in the house: one for George’s business and another for the family, adding, “As my dad was saying, ‘Bye, Donna,’ on one line, the library people were calling on the home line to tell us something had happened.”

How ironic!

Or maybe not.

Were Donna and George discussing Gail’s murder?

“Your dad have any weapons in the house, Andrew?”

“He owns three handguns. One’s a twenty-two—and two are nine millimeters.”

“When was the last time you saw the guns?”

“My dad was cleaning all three of them, just three days ago in his bedroom.”

“Have *you* ever shot the weapons?”

“Yes . . . but when I was in fifth grade.”

“When was the last time—and we’re almost done here, okay—you shot a gun, Andrew? Do you recall?”

“A week ago. I shot my BB gun at a friend’s house.”

“Think about this, son. Is there anyone that you can think of who would want to harm your mother?”

Andrew took a breath. “No.”

IT STARTED FOR Emily Fulton earlier that morning, October 4, 1999. She called it intuition, paranormal “ability” of some sort she’d had since childhood.

“I was extremely agitated.”

Of course, she had no idea that her mother was going to be murdered, but there was something tugging at Emily—relating to her mother—all day long. She had a feeling that was nagging and pulling at her emotions.

“I had no reason to be mad at my mother,” Emily added, “but I was mad at her all day long.”

Gail was one of those mothers—wives—who had a meal on the table every night. Didn’t matter if she had to work that night or not. If Gail had a shift at the library, she’d prepare the meal and have it ready in the refrigerator.

Throughout that day Emily had a sense that she needed to go to her mother; yet she felt she wasn’t supposed to intervene in the situation in any way. Whatever was to be would be, and Emily had that strange “knowing” of having to step aside on this one and allow fate to run its course. The feeling became stronger that night—possibly, according to Emily, right around the time Gail was being slain—as Emily sat at a friend’s Pampered Chef party. Not normally someone who needs to be prodded into socializing or talking, Emily wasn’t herself. Her friend walked up and asked why she was so quiet. Emily had sat around during the party; there was something heavy weighing on her mind.

“I didn’t feel right. I had a headache. I kept getting that feeling that I needed to go see my mom and be with her, but that I *wasn’t* supposed to, at the same time.”

Emily had been to several of these sales parties—be it jewelry, food, cooking supplies, Amway or whatever. She always had made purchases, both to support her friend and to get something for her mother.

“But on that day, I knew,” Emily recalled. “I was going to buy something for my mom, but I knew I needed to wait. I wasn’t going to buy anything for her.”

Why the hesitation?

Because she felt that her mother wasn’t going to need it, she added.

“When she died, the moment she died,” Emily said, “I must have felt it.”

After the Pampered Chef party, Emily should have gone home. It was the thing to do. She’d have to get some sleep so she could get up and go to class in the morning.

“But something told me not to. I didn’t want to face what was there.”

Inside that house, Emily sensed, was bad news. She knew it. She understood that what was waiting for her might change her life in some way. She just didn’t know how.

“I was avoiding going home, at all costs.”

So Emily went over to her boyfriend’s house.

It was near eleven at night when she dredged up the nerve to drive home.

“I put it off as long as I could. Then I showed up and the police are there.”

All those feelings throughout the night—the connection with her mother, the aura of something dark that was hovering around like a ghost following her—were now in her face. She had been right after all.

“There’s been an accident,” one of the cops at the house told Emily after she walked in. It was late now, well after midnight. “Could you come down to the substation with us?”

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