

## Chapter 22.

"Whaddya think?" Police Detective Smith cast an eye at his partner slouched at the opposite desk. "About this Theo Breuer?" He studied his notes. He made squiggly underlines and jotted in the margin.

"I don't know," Ramsey said honestly to his partner. "Motive, opportunity, maybe even character, it's all there. We can pick him up, but I don't think it would go to an indictment. Trail seems too cold; no real connection."

"Personally, I agree, but, you know, he had this game going. There was a bunch of money there, at least a lot of dough for a solo operator, and he couldn't tolerate dead-beats. Remember what the daughter told us about the IOU and the bounced check," Smith sighed. "Just when I thought we could just forget about this case and move on. There's always some new angle, isn't there. You know, this case sucks. Everyone's a weirdo – even the straights, even the two kids. I don't quite see what they are up to."

"I'm with you," Ramsey agreed with a laugh. "I followed the kid. After he met the girl, he hasn't been hard to find. What have we got to go on? A bloody cocktail napkin with the limerick, and I don't mean the British 'bloody'. Still, I sent it to the lab. They cut out the blood stains and on the rest they found buccal cells, so it was probably from someone who used the napkin to wipe his mouth – DNA was different from the victim and different from the kid."

"That's a piece of shit evidence, Gordy. Even if we had actually found it where the kid said, it doesn't relate to the moment of crime."

"Maybe it does. Remember what you said about where the perp was sitting. He was eating a snack with the victim, he wiped his mouth, they argued, the perp lost his temper

and stabbed him. Makes sense to me. Chain of evidence is fucked, but it could give us a name to follow up.”

“So don’t you like this Theo guy? Waitress said he was there that night, but he was gone when we showed up. Motive’s starting to get thick.” Detective Smith turned to his computer and brought up the notes from the night of the murder. Theo Breuer had no alibi for where he was at the time of the crime. Plus, there was a motive, the unpaid gambling debt. Even better, Smith had discovered Theo’s math club role; he had the right background to write an esoteric limerick like the one found on the victim. “We could ask for his DNA.”

“I wonder if there’s a history between them,” Detective Ramsey pondered. “Why he’d be more angry than usual. Did you think the girl would know?”

“She might.”

“Let’s call her.”

When they reached Melissa at home she researched Rodger’s IOU list and found a whole bunch of prior debts to Theo, and three not marked as paid off. They, in turn, requested her to turn in the entire IOU list as part of the evidence in the case.

“Probable cause?” Ramsey asked. Smith shrugged affirmatively. “Well, then, pull a warrant. Let’s go pay a call on Rodger’s math buddy.”

