

**Murder, Revenge and the Occult in 1890's St. Louis**

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# *A Season of Revenge*

**The Mound City Serial Murder File**

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## About the Author

Growing up in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and especially in Kings Mountain, enhanced an interest in the American Revolution that was birthed at an early age with a visit to the Kings Mountain National Military Park. Yearly family reunions at nearby Lake Crawford, in the South Carolina portion of the park, gave easy access to visits to the National Park Museum, walks along the trails, and never missing a close up view of the gravesite of Major Patrick Ferguson and an opportunity to throw another rock onto the rock pile signifying the grave and a climb to the top of the rock pile to declare, "I am King of this Mountain." A lifelong dream of authoring a book based on my actual ancestors, came to reality. Living near the Kings Mountain National Park and also, a short distance from the Cowpens National Park only serves to fuel my imagination, and desire to share even more stories based on the history of the United States.

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My wife Nancy, first of all. She is my main rock. Tracy Dunn-Wyatt, Stan Wyatt, Jamie and Kim Dunn, Jason and Jennifer Dunn, Jim and Joy Kimsey, Belinda Evans, Pam Champion, and Charlene Shepard. These are the remaining rocks that make up the foundation.

PJ DUNN

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## **CHAPTER 1    The Murder of Inez Baker**

Mac O'Hara and his wife, Ella, sat on the veranda of their home looking out over the mighty Mississippi River. O'Hara reminisced about the last few years. He had retired from the St. Louis Police, married his love, Ella, and they had bought their dream home. O'Hara thought about how fortunate he had been, and how he had been in the right place at the right time. He and his partners had built a club, the High Cotton Club that had become the premier attraction of the St. Louis nightlife.

“Ella, honey,” O'Hara began. “I was asked yesterday, if I would like to buy a riverboat. What do you think?”

“Mac, I think it's a wonderful idea if you want to do it.” Ella said. O'Hara was quiet for a few moments.

“I guess that's something I'll have to think about.” O'Hara replied.

There was a knock on the door, and Ella got up to answer it. When she opened the door, a surprised smile adorned her face.

“Wallace! Wallace Jarrett. Well what a pleasant surprise this is. It's so good to see you. I haven't seen you since Mac retired from the police department.”

“Yes, Ma’am, Ms. Ella. It has been a while. Is the Sarge at home?” Jarrett asked referring to O’Hara.

“Yes he is. He is out on the veranda. Come along and I’ll take you to him.” Ella said, as she took Jarrett by the arm.

Approaching the door, Ella called out to O’Hara, “Mac, look who is here.” O’Hara turned to see Jarrett come through the door.

“Wallace Butts,” O’Hara yelled and laughed heartily. Jarrett also laughed, as Ella looked puzzled.

Still laughing, O’Hara looked at Ella and began to explain the joke. When O’Hara, Jarrett, and Pitts, captured the arsonist who set fire to the High Cotton Club, killing Ollie, there was a gunfight, and Jarrett was shot through the buttocks, both cheeks. It had been a standard joke at the department since that time to refer to Wallace as ‘Butts’.

“Good to see you, Wally. Have a seat pal, if you don’t have too much trouble sitting.” They laughed heartily again. “Ella, would you get Wally something to drink? What brings you to see the old Sarge?” O’Hara asked.

“Sarge, I need some help. I need some help with a case.”

“But I’m retired now, Wally.” O’Hara injected.



“I know Sarge, but this is a real strange situation that has all of us baffled. All of us at the precinct agreed, if anybody would have an insight into this one, it would be Sergeant Mac O’Hara.”

“Okay, Wally. Let’s hear it, and don’t mind Ella, she knows all my secrets.” O’Hara leaned back.

“You remember Doc Baker don’t you? Doc’s wife Inez disappeared about a week and a half ago and we have been searching hard, wondering if she had just left home or if there was foul play. Well, we found her body yesterday. The body was wrapped in burlap, like what is used on a cotton bale, and dumped in a ditch behind the old feed mill down next to the river.” Jarrett sat on the edge of his seat, appearing very nervous and sweating profusely. O’Hara and Ella could tell whatever he was about to say really bothered him. “Sarge,” he began, but had to clear his throat.

“Sarge, it’s hard to talk about. Sarge, she had been hanged, both hands and both feet amputated. Her tongue had been cut out and Sarge, she was eviscerated. All of her internal organs were missing.” There was deadly silence.

Finally O’Hara spoke, “Wally, what kind of evidence do you have?”

Wally shook his head. "Next to nothing Sarge." O'Hara stood up, walked over to the rock wall edging the veranda, and looked out toward the river. He watched as a paddleboat appeared from the North traveling to the South. A barge was moored on the West side across the river from the cabin unloading bales of cotton.

Without turning around O'Hara spoke, "do you know where the murder took place?"

Again shaking his head, Wally replied, "no Sarge. The body was dumped at the scene where it was found. No blood trail, no footprints, no horse or wagon tracks were found. It's as if the body was dropped from mid-air into the ditch. The feed mill was searched from top to bottom and all the other abandoned buildings in the area also. Persons who live or work in the area were all interviewed, but no leads."

Ella had been very quiet while Wally described the crime. "What about occupied buildings in the area?" She asked. "Homes, barns and out buildings, were these searched?" Wally hesitated.

"Well, Wally, were they searched?" O'Hara pressed for an answer.

"Most were." Wally replied.

“Most?” O’Hara said.

“The residences on the north side of the track, well, that’s influential people, mayor, councilmen and such and the Chief said not to bother searching there.”

“Does the Chief want to solve this crime or not? We need to take a trip over to the old feed mill, Wally. Ella, come along if you like.”

“Does that mean you are going to help us, Sarge?” Wally asked.

“I guess it does.” O’Hara said.

Ella spoke up, “me too.”

It was about a twenty-minute trip over to the old mill. Two officers were guarding the scene to keep anyone from disturbing anything. O’Hara stopped and stood in the street for several minutes, looking at the old mill. It was a wooden structure in need of some paint. Most of the windows were broken and there was a hole in the roof, as well as a hole in one of the outside walls. The front had a double door entrance. One door was missing and the other hanging by one hinge. The porch, which doubled as a loading dock was about twelve feet wide and extended from one corner of

the front of the sixty-foot wide building to the other. The porch itself was in decent shape. No boards were missing or broken. O'Hara walked up on the porch, followed by Ella and Wally. The porch was quite sturdy, but the roof over the porch was drooping down on one end where it was missing a support post. O'Hara walked slowly, looking at all details.

## **CHAPTER 2 The Crawlspace and the Hobos**

Entering the front door O'Hara could see tracks in the dust on the floor, where investigators had already walked through. There were two desks to the right side of the approximately ten by fifteen room, which obviously was a former office. One of the desks was missing a leg and the other had remnants of a ladder back chair lying on the floor behind it. There was an old dolly or hand truck that was missing one wheel leaned up in the opposite corner from the desks. An old calendar was hanging on the wall behind the desks. The calendar was from the year 1881 and was turned to the month of June. The date of June 16 on the Calendar had an X drawn through it. O'Hara stopped and looked at the calendar.

“That’s strange.” O'Hara commented. “June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1881, has an X over it. Today is June 17, 1889. Wally, was Inez Baker killed a couple of days ago?”

“The Coroner said he thought so.” Wally answered. “Hmmm, strange.” O'Hara mumbled. “That X was recently drawn over the 16.”

The three continued to walk slowly through the office, and passed through a door opening into what appeared to be another office. The dust and cobwebs did not appear to have been disturbed. While Ella and Wally watched, O'Hara took a quick look around and backed out of the office. Moving to his right, another door opened into a smaller room. Papers were scattered all over the eight by ten room. Invoices, ledger pages, old calendars, payroll papers completely covered the floor, except for an area about 3 feet by 3 feet where the papers appeared to have been recently scattered. Mac used his foot to pull back the papers and exposed the wooden floor. The room was dark, so Wally stepped back into the large office and got a coal oil lamp and lit it to provide at least some visibility in the small room. O'Hara and Wally knelt in the corner, and O'Hara began to look closely at the floorboards. Grasping one board with the tips of his fingers, he pulled and it came up. He then pulled the remaining boards up. Taking the lamp, he leaned over and looked inside the floor opening. Suddenly there was movement in the opening, startling O'Hara. A large wharf rat emerged from the opening, causing Wally to jump and cringe, and

Ella to squeal with fear. The rat disappeared into the other rooms. O'Hara leaned over and again peered into the opening.

"Holy crap." O'Hara exclaimed. Wally and Ella leaned over also where they could see in the opening. There they saw a human skull, some bones and clothing. The skeleton was small, like a child, and the clothing appeared to be that of a young girl's dress.

O'Hara placed the boards back over the opening and he, Wallace and Ella moved out of the room, closing the door to keep it secure.

O'Hara addressed Wally, "go back to the station, get whatever equipment you think we may need and bring some help. We'll investigate this floor compartment better. Ella and I are just going to snoop around and see what else we might find. Also, send one of the officers in here to guard this room."

O'Hara's mind was racing. Could these remains be associated with the murder of Inez Baker? They still hadn't found the murder scene, an important part of Inez Baker's murder investigation.

O'Hara and Ella looked at each other without speaking. They slowly walked toward a door that led out into the production area of

the old mill. Most of the production machinery was still in the building, as if someone had just turned it off and walked away. The equipment was powered by water flow from the river being diverted into a channel, called a 'race', short for raceway. The diverted water turned a large water wheel, which in turn provided power to operate the milling machinery through a series of belts, pulleys and gears. It was not a very complicated arrangement. O'Hara and Ella looked at each piece of machinery for anything unusual or out of place. As they neared the rear door, Ella stopped. "Look at this Mac" she said. She was looking at a pedal powered grinding wheel. There were footprints in the dust from the grinding wheel leading back over about six feet to the tracks left by the previous investigators.

"Those could be footprints from someone checking out the grinder." O'Hara said.

Ella spoke as looked at the grinder, "the dust has been disturbed and there are fresh metal filings on the grinder and on the floor."

"Hmmm," Mac looked closely. "It looks like someone has been grinding something."



“Like maybe sharpening a knife?” Ella said.

“Yeah, like someone sharpening a knife.” O’Hara said then pulled his notepad from his pocket and scribbled a note.

The two then walked out on to the rear dock. There was lots of trash and old boards on the dock. There were several old half-empty bags of grain stacked against the wall. The grain left in the bags had soured, fermented, and then rotted producing a very pungent odor. Ella covered her mouth and nose with a handkerchief, but it really didn’t help. O’Hara laughed and poked fun at her. As they passed the rotted bags of grain, O’Hara saw an old portable scale, used to weigh the sacks of grain. Ella squealed as another wharf rat ran across the dock. O’Hara stood there on the dock looking out toward the back lot and the ditch where Inez’s body was found.

The lot was leveled out for about fifty feet from the dock, and then dropped off sharply into a ditch that was about eighteen to twenty feet deep. The other side of the ditch also rose sharply up about twelve feet to the beginnings of a railroad bed and then rose another eight feet. The railroad tracks were old and used very little.

The decline into the ditch was over grown with brush, briars and trees on both sides.

Ella stayed on the dock as O'Hara made his way over to the edge of the ditch. The yard was strewn with trash, old machinery parts, and heavily covered with weeds. O'Hara could see where the body was found and had been removed by the other officers. He could also see where the officers had cut and attempted to clear enough of a path on the far side of the ditch to reach the rail bed.

O'Hara made his way down the hill. He looked around where the body had been lying, and saw nothing unusual.

The body had been located slightly up the far side of the bottom of the ditch, indicating to O'Hara that the body had come from the top of the ditch on the far side, possibly the railroad track.

He decided to follow the same path the previous investigators had cut out to get up to the rail bed. The hill was very steep and difficult to climb.

O'Hara finally reached the rail bed, and leaned against a small sapling to catch his breath and rest for a moment. He saw very little disturbed, except maybe where the others had walked. The rock on the rail bed did not seem to be disturbed at all. He

climbed the rock forming the rail bed to the top and stood on the rail timbers, looking back down where he had just climbed up. It was obvious where he had come up.

He stood for a moment, and looked down at the tracks. The rails were mostly rusted.

Then O'Hara saw something that caught his attention. A rock, but not just a rock. A rock that has been crushed between the rail and something that had passed on the rail. The rock, however, was not completely crushed. Whatever ran over the rock or stepped on the rock was not heavy enough to crush it completely. To O'Hara, that ruled out a locomotive or railroad car.

He stood, looking first up the track to the North, then turned and looked down the track. Thinking to himself, boy, this is tough on an old man, but he knew he had to walk the track for a distance. But, which direction was the question. A couple of hundred yards to the north, the track curved back toward the river, and O'Hara knew it wasn't far the river bridge.

He decided to go south first. If he did not see anything, he would re-trace and then go north. It was early afternoon, and

though it was springtime, walking the railroad tracks in the sun was hot.

After walking down the track about a hundred yards, O'Hara had seen nothing. A short distance down the track, he saw a spur track branch off to the West. Now, the decision was to follow the spur or stay on the mainline. He approached the spur and suddenly saw the corner of a building come into view. He wondered what that building was, and he began to think of businesses, abandoned and active in that area. The slaughterhouse was in that area. Could that be the abbatoir?

He decided to walk the spur track for a ways, and look for anything out of the ordinary. In the trees ahead on the right O'Hara something blue in color. As he got closer, he realized it was cloth stretched between a couple of trees. He left the tracks and saw a small board tacked to a tree with the shape of a "U" drawn on it. O'Hara knew the "U" was a hobo signal for 'camp' or 'sleep here'. He slowly walked toward the hobo camp. As he got near, he could hear voices. O'Hara stealthily approached the camp. He saw two men sitting on stumps and one woman, stirring a fire and adding wood to the fire. O'Hara stepped quickly from the cover of the

brush and trees into the open area of the campsite. The two men jumped, as if to run, but O'Hara was right on them, handgun drawn. Both stopped and raised their hands. The woman stood and remained still.

After checking all three for weapons, or 'shaking them down' as a hobo would say, finding out who they were, O'Hara had the three to sit down on the stumps at the campsite and began questioning them.

From the questions and answers, he learned they were all hobos, traveling north for the summer because it would get too hot in the South. The older of the hobos went by the name of Luthie. He was tall and unkempt, with a rather long beard. Luthie was an 'axle swinger' or preferred to ride the rail cars in the underneath framing. He was from the coastal area of Alabama, and referred to himself as a swamp rat.

Ragman was a smaller framed, slender man. His clothing matched his name. Ragman sported long hair tied back in a ponytail, scruffy looking beard and an odor that kept the other hobos at a distance. Ragman's home was in Virginia.

The female was named Myrtle Morris, and was known by the hobos as Myrt. Myrt was only in her early 30's. Although her hair was not well groomed and she was in need of a bath, Myrt had a look about her, that someone could not help but think how she would be a pretty lady under different circumstances. A first impression of Myrt was that she was an intelligent woman with a very affable personality, which is why Mac questioned her being in this situation. She really didn't fit the profile of a hobo.

Mac learned that Myrt had been on her own since she was fourteen years old. She had been used and abused by so many people she could not even begin to count. At fourteen she was forced by a man in Memphis to prostitute where he promoted her as a twelve year old virgin and charged a hefty price to desiring perverted old men to have sex with a child. For fifteen years that was her life until one day she decided to simply leave Memphis and became a hobo. She was well treated by the hobos and never molested by any of the men.

They had been at this camp for four days and were planning to leave in a couple of days.

O'Hara wasn't suspecting that the hobos had anything to do with the murder, but when asked if they had seen or heard anything strange, Myrt spoke up. She had heard a noise the night before, out on the tracks. She said it sounded like a 'jigger'. O'Hara knew that was hobo slang for a handcar. Myrt said it came from down the spur then went North on the Main.

A good while later, maybe two hours, the jigger came back down the track, but stayed on the main, not coming down the spur.

O'Hara thought to himself, something not heavy enough to totally crush the rock on the track...Hmmm, could have been the handcar.

O'Hara left the hobo camp and started back down the spur track, when he heard some yelling his name. It was Wally, and Bobby Pitt, O'Hara's old partner. They caught up with O'Hara and he began to fill them in on what he had learned.

"A hand car!" Wally declared. "Well that would explain why there were no footprints, no disturbed rock in the rail bed. You are on to something there Sarge."

Pitt spoke up, "Sarge, the Chief wants you back at the mill to investigate the body in the compartment in the floor."

O'Hara told Wally and Pitt to go down the spur toward the slaughterhouse to look for any clues. He turned to go and stopped, "I think the murder took place at or near the slaughter house. What better place to dispose of body parts and raise no suspicion at all than an abattoir, but why carry the body back up to the ditch at the old mill? There has to be some significance to that location.

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### **CHAPTER 3 The Crimescene**

O'Hara arrived back at the old mill. Four officers were in the larger office waiting for him to return. The police chief, county sheriff and mayor were there also.

The mayor was a nervous wreck and Ella was trying to describe what was found in the small room under the floorboards. Two of the local news reporters were there trying to listen to everything said.

Chief Atkins saw O'Hara as he came in and rushed over to him.

"Mac, what do we need to do first?" he said.

"Get all these people out of here." Mac barked loudly.

All conversation stopped and the room became quiet. "Just get everybody out of here and let me do my job."

"But it ain't your job anymore Mac." Mayor Ball retorted.

Mac looked at the chief, his face beginning to turn red. Chief Atkins quickly began to herd the mayor and the reporters toward the front door.

“Come along gentlemen, we will clear out so O’Hara can do his job.” Glancing back at O’Hara as he pushed the three out the door, Atkins said, “if you have questions fellows, I am sure Sergeant O’Hara will give you answers and keep you up on what’s going on. Come along, now. Let’s just go on outside.”

O’Hara managed a slight grin, as the mayor and reporters were ushered out.

O’Hara greeted the four officers there to help him, and looked toward the door to the small room. “Let’s do it“, Mac said.

Three lanterns were lit, two of them placed in the small room, the other hung just outside the door. A canvas tarp was laid out in the floor of the office, near the door, and a second smaller tarp placed on the floor in the small room.

Officer Adam Owens entered the room with O’Hara, and Officer Pete Green took a position in the doorway.

Ella was just outside the room with a pen and note pad, and a handful of evidence tags to catalog the items removed from the room. The other officers would help Ella with keeping the evidence organized.

Inside the small room, O'Hara knelt in the corner and began to remove the boards he had placed back over the opening.

Officer Owens would hand the items to Officer Green. Green would call out to Ella, "floor board #1, from right rear corner. Floor board #2 right rear corner." and so forth as the items were removed.

Once the floorboards had been removed to make an opening big enough for one of the investigators to enter under the floor, O'Hara took one of the lanterns and held it close to the opening.

"Oh my God." Owens said. "She's just a baby." O'Hara took a deep breath, "looks like maybe five or six years old."

"My God. What kind of monster would put a baby in a place like this? I have a six year old daughter. Why would someone do that?" Owens mumbled his voice cracking.

"Adam, if you don't want to be in here..."

"No, no, Sarge. I'll be okay. It's just..."

Mac put his hand on Adam's shoulder. "I'll crawl down in there." Mac said, as he moved toward the open hole in the floor.

Jarrett and Pitt walked on down the spur track toward the slaughterhouse, looking for anything unusual or out of place.

“Wally, do you think the death of the child at the old mill is related to the murder of Ms. Baker?”

“I don’t know Bobby. We haven’t had any missing children reported in the last few years. I figure that kid has been there a year and a half, maybe two, so where would she have come from and how did she get there?”

Both Wally and Bobby seemed to be in deep thought and didn’t speak for a while.

Then Bobby spoke up, “what is that, Wally?” He motioned toward a large oak tree about ten yards to the left of the track.

Wally looked toward the tree and saw a board tacked on this tree also. The symbol drawn on this board gave Wally a cold chill. The symbol was a rectangle, with a darkened dot in the center. One of the first symbols learned by a young ‘yap’, or rookie hobo. “DANGER” Stay away.

The limbs of the tree were hanging over an old wooden cattle pen. The pen obviously had not been used in years.

“Look at the post under the tree limb.” Bobby said as they moved toward the big tree. There was a narrow path leading down to the large oak tree. The area around the tree was somewhat cleared.

There was another hobo symbol drawn here, and yellow fabric was draped over the post. The symbol was 3 parallel vertical lines, with 2 parallel horizontal lines drawn through them, indicating ‘a crime was committed here.’

Wally leaned over to look at it a little closer. “Bobby, it’s a dress, and the front is covered with blood.”

Bobby looked back toward the tree and his eyes moved upward. “Wally, there’s a rope tied around that limb. I believe we found our murder scene.”

“I don’t know, Bobby. There’s no blood on the ground.” Wally observed.

“No blood, but look at this.” Bobby replied.

Bobby and Wally knelt next to a boulder next to the big oak. A tombstone, covered with leaves and vines was barely visible, but what caught Bobby’s eye was a brooch on a gold chain draped across the top of the tombstone.

The broach had some unusual designs around the edge and in the center was a yellow stone.

Wally tried to pull back some of the vines and the brush to be able maybe to read the inscription, but the grave marker was old and the carved lettering was barely discernable.

They left the broach where it was for the time being and looked around the area closely.

After about 45 minutes of searching, Wally called out to Bobby, "got something over here."

Bobby moved quickly to where Wally was kneeling. "What is it?" Bobby queried.

"I am not real sure. It is fabric, sewn together, and its hand sewn. Tubular in shape, it is closed on one end, and stuffed with some type of fiber. Looks like it could have been an arm or leg off a baby doll." Wally described the item.

"Wally, there are some marks on the ground here, like maybe something has been moved." Bobby said. "The marks go this direction, through the high grass. Wally, I am going to follow them to see where they go."

“Okay, I will keep searching around here for now.” Wally replied.

Bobby started through the high grass, following the strange marks on the ground. He had followed the marks for about fifty yards and was now in an open meadow lined by trees on three sides. It was probably another one hundred yards across the meadow to what appeared to be a culvert or ditch.

The tracks he was following were leading straight to the culvert. He stopped just short of the culvert and could not believe his eyes.

The track he was following was the imprint of the bottom ring of a wooden barrel, as it was rolled toward the culvert. The barrel was pushed off into the culvert, spilling its contents. Blood and lots of it. Congealed like pudding, the blood was spread over about a six foot by six-foot area, and splattered on the far side of the ditch.

Bobby could see covered in the congealed blood, what seemed to be the carcass of some type of animal. It was a small animal, not nearly big enough to produce this amount of blood.

As Bobby headed back toward the big oak, he could hear Wally rattling the brush and cursing the blackberry vine and the honeysuckle vines that had him ensnared.

“Holy crap!” Wally was saying. “I swear. I will destroy every blackberry vine I see. I hate blackberries. Well, not really. I love that blackberry cobbler Grandma makes. Oooooe!”

Bobby laughed when he heard Wally and then saw him tangled in the brush.

They exchanged information, and then decided to go back to the old mill to confer with O’Hara.

“I think our hobo friends may know more about this murder than they are letting on.” Wally said.

“Yeah, I think you’re probably right,” Bobby replied. “Maybe we should stop by and talk to them just a little more.”

Walking the tracks back toward the old mill, Wally and Bobby continued to discuss the situation and the evidence they had found.

They were nearing the intersection of the spur and the main track. They left the track and walked the path to the hobo camp. No one was there. “It looks like they left in a hurry,” Bobby noted.



Wally suggested they may want to walk the mainline south a little ways, since Myrt, the woman at the hobo camp had said the jigger, or hand car had went on down the main after going north instead of traveling the spur.

Bobby agreed and they proceeded to walk the mainline south. They had not gone very far, when they saw someone walking the track toward them. At first they thought it may be one of the hobos from the camp.

As the subject approached them, Bobby recognized him to be Earl. He was an older black man who lived on Depot Street, near the track.

Wally and Bobby greeted Earl, and began to ask him how he was doing. Earl replied he was doing well, for an old man.

Wally asked Earl, "Living near the track, you didn't happen to hear a hand car go by your house on the track last night did you?"

Earl rubbed his whisker covered chin, squinted his left eye, cocked his head to the left, and said, "Naw sir. Naw, I didn't hear one go by last night last night. That old jigger usually stays on that

little side track down next to the depot. I did notice it ain't been there for a while."

Wally was getting curious now, "you wouldn't happen to have any idea who might have gotten it would you?"

"Naw sir. Naw, I wouldn't know. Would this have something to do with Ms. Baker? I done heard somebody done kilt her."

"We just ask questions, Earl." Bobby replied. "Thanks, Earl. We appreciate your help."

Bobby and Wally shook his hand. As they began to walk away, Earl called out loudly, "hope you fellers find out who kilt Ms. Baker. She was a good lady, and if you'uns wants to see that jigger, it's off in the woods there just before Mumford Street."

Wally and Bobby stopped, Bobby grinned at Wally. "Earl, why didn't you say that before?" Wally asked.

"You didn't ask me where it was, you just wanted to know if I heard it or knew who got it." Earl pointed out.

Bobby laughed and Wally shook his head. "Yeah, I guess we didn't ask him did we?" Wally said.

"What do you mean we?" Bobby asked.

The two investigators walked on down the track and just as Earl said, there just before Mumford Street off to the left side of the track, was the jigger. It was lying on its side.

Wally and Bobby looked at hand car and saw blood smears on the bed of the car.

“It looks like the car jumped the track, turned over and landed here in the brush.” Wally said.

“The brush over here is pushed down, some broken limbs here also. I believe someone was thrown from the hand car.” Bobby added.

“Bobby, look at this. There’s blood on these branches. Do you think maybe there were two persons on the hand car?” Wally questioned.

“There’s a blood trail leading back toward the track.” Bobby pointed out. They followed the blood trail south to Mumford Street, before it disappeared.

Bobby continued, “That’s a significant injury to bleed like that. We will need to check all the hospitals.”

After investigating the handcar for a while more, Wally and Bobby headed back to the old mill.



## **CHAPTER 4 The Crawlspace Contents**

There was about a four foot drop to the ground in the crawlspace. Adam and Officer Green held O'Hara by the arms to lower him into the crawlspace.

Green backed out of the way and Adam handed a lamp to Mac. He shined the lamp toward the small skeleton lying in the dirt in the crawlspace.

He looked closely, making note of details, and speaking his observations so Ella could record what he said.

O'Hara tried to maneuver himself around to get a little more comfortable. He moved the lantern to the left rear of his body, twisting and turning to try to sit on the ground next to the skeleton.

"Oh no, holy crap." O'Hara exclaimed. "Adam, there are more bodies under here."

There was a collective gasp from the other officers and Ella.

"Oh my gosh, Mac, how many," Ella asked.

"I can't tell but I see at least two more." O'Hara said slowly and emphatically.

After a few moments to regain his composure, O'Hara was ready to begin the arduous task of removing the victims, being careful to look for anything that could be evidence.

He began with the body of the small girl. Piece by piece, bone by bone, he removed the body. He slowed to carefully look at each bone as he removed it.

When he handed it out, Adam again examined each bone, and then Ella would catalog each piece and carefully place the bones together.

Looking closely at the skull of the small child and then at the neck, Mac spoke to Ella. "Log down, her neck is broken." He picked up the skull to remove it from the crawlspace, and as he did he saw a piece of the skull was missing, indicating she had probably been struck with a blunt object.

The bones of the forearms, both right and left were also broken, as if she was defending herself.

Once the entire skeleton was removed, and before beginning to examine the additional bodies, O'Hara was handed a small scoop, a bucket, and a sieve.

He would then scrape up the soil strain it through the sieve and look for small pieces of evidence.

O'Hara was in the process of sifting the soil when Wally and Bobby returned.

Wally entered the room where Mac was working and knelt down on the floor to describe to him what they had found. He also told O'Hara about the hobos.

One officer was sent back out to the scene to assure no one entered the area. Two others went along to try to locate the hobos.

O'Hara was nearing completion of the painstaking process of sifting the soil. Bobby Pitt volunteered to enter the crawlspace to give Mac a break.

They now had four bodies, three found in the crawlspace and one in the ditch behind the old feed mill. The investigators were finding small pieces of evidence and had identified three crime scenes, but they still did not know if the crimes were all related.

O'Hara stepped out of the small room. "I've got to have some air. Have we got water too?" O'Hara asked.

"Yeah, and we have some sandwiches over here, Sarge." Wally responded.

While O'Hara was getting water, Bobby had lowered himself into the crawlspace. Taking a look around he could see where O'Hara had marked the location of the child, and looking back over his left shoulder, he could see the other bodies.

Now the arduous task of removing the bodies, examining each body piece, each piece of evidence, and cataloging each and every one began.

O'Hara stood in the larger room viewing the evidence already recovered, when a small yellow dress drew his attention. He picked it up and looked at it carefully.

"That's strange, Sarge." Wally said.

"What's that?" O'Hara mumbled as he laid the dress down and lit the cigar he had hanging from his mouth.

"No one has missed this child. And the others in the crawlspace, I guess no one missed them either."

"Oh, they were missed." O'Hara said. "We just have to find out who missed them. We do that, and we'll be on our way to finding out who put them in the crawlspace."



“Oh Sarge, one other thing. The dress we found at the other scene, it was yellow too. And the broach, it had a yellow stone in it.

O’Hara stepped back in the small room. “Bobby.” O’Hara called.

“Yeah Sarge.” Bobby called back.

“Bobby, can you tell if the bodies are male or female? And can you tell anything about the clothing they are wearing?” O’Hara questioned.

A few moments later Bobby called out, “Appears to be two females, Sarge. No clothing, yeah, wait. It looks like two dresses over to the side of the bodies.”

O’Hara took a deep breath, “What color, Bobby?” “It’s hard to tell under here, but I would say both are yellow.” Bobby said. “And Sarge, the hands and feet are missing from both bodies, and it appears they were also eviscerated.”

O’Hara shook his head, saying to himself, “so, the murders are related.”

The tarp holding the evidence and the remains of the child were moved to the other side of the room and were being packaged to take to the police lab to be examined further.

Pitt was handing parts of the next victim out to Adam. The second body removed, pit began to scratch through the sandy soil, uncovering something, he seemed to recognize.

“Wally, Wally,” He called. “look at this.”

Wally leaned over the opening as Pitt handed something out to him. It was a small handmade doll, missing one arm. Wally reached into his pocket and pulled out the missing arm.

The tedious work continued for the next five hours. It was 3 am. The patrol officers were relieved about midnight, but O’Hara, Jarrett, Pitt, and Ella had been there all day.

Leaving the officers to guard the now four scenes, the investigators left to get some rest, agreeing to return by 10am.

The investigators arrived back at the old mill crime scene around 10 am, as they had planned, and as soon as they arrived, O’Hara sent Officer Green to Dr. Baker’s residence.

Speaking to Green, O'Hara said, "I want to know what color of dress Inez was wearing the last time she was seen, and I want to know ASAP."

"You got it Sarge." Green replied, as he hurriedly left.

"The rest of you, same as yesterday, but we'll be checking the scene where the body was found to start." O'Hara instructed.

There was no real physical evidence at the scene, but the investigators concentrated on how the body got there. All agreed that O'Hara was right suspecting the body was thrown from the rail bed and probably from the handcar.

One question arose. Inez weighed about 145 pounds and it would be almost impossible for one person to throw the body far enough for it to land near the bottom of the ditch. The consensus of all was more than one person was involved.

The investigators now moved down to the hobo camp. O'Hara kept thinking that his first impression of the hobos was wrong. But that remained to be seen.

The hobo camp seemed to have been there for quite some time. There were several campfire spots. The investigators began to look around, and O'Hara began to stir the ashes in the

campfire spot they were using the day before when he was at the camp.

O'Hara was thinking as he raked through the ashes. Myrt had remained near the fire the whole time he was there. Was that coincidence or was she trying to cover something. At the time it didn't seem to be strange.

He stirred through the ashes until he was nearing the bottom of the pile and there he saw something. It was the remains of an old pair of glasses. O'Hara put them aside and continued to look through the ashes.

He found an earring. He found the other earring. "Wonder who this jewelry and glasses might have belonged to?" O'Hara said out loud.

"Got something Sarge?" Bobby asked.

"Couple of earrings and an old pair of glasses," he replied. "They could have belonged to anybody though."

Bobby was scratching through the trash pile that looked to be the freshest.

About that time Officer Green returned, going straight to O'Hara. "Mac, the Doc said as far as he could remember, she was

wearing a purple flowered dress with a white collar and white lapels down the front.”

“What!?” Mac said.

Green started to repeat himself, but O’Hara stopped him.

“That sounds like the dress Myrt was wearing.” O’Hara was ready to kick himself.

“Sarge, look over here.” Adam called. About head high in a tree was a large hunting knife, with the tip plunged through the bark.

“Holy crap,” Mac exclaimed. “I guess I’m just getting too old. I had the suspect’s right here, and let them slip away.”

“This knife has been recently sharpened,” Adam said. “The bigger portion of the blade still appears rusty, but the edge is real shiny. I don’t see any blood on it, Sarge.”

The investigators had scoured and searched and searched and scoured the hobo camp, until they were all satisfied all evidence was collected. Then they moved on down the spur track to the big oak tree next to the holding pen.

The Officer guarding the site was sitting, leaned against a tree. “Jeez, I didn’t think you guys were ever going to get here.” He said.

O'Hara and the other investigators stopped at the path that led down to the big oak. This crime scene was much larger than the others, so O'Hara split the investigators into teams of two.

Pitt went with O'Hara to the big oak and he showed O'Hara what they had found initially. The rope still hanging across the limb, the yellow stone broach, the old grave marker, and the dress.

The crime scene investigation being completed, all evidence and equipment was gathered together and placed on a handcar the Sheriff had gotten from the Cotton Belt Railroad Company. Everything was taken to the Mumford Street crossing where it was loaded onto a wagon to be taken to the Police Station. There the evidence techs would begin to examine all the items.

O'Hara and Ella left to get a good meal, go home, rest and sleep. Wally, Bobby, and Adam also left and headed over to the High Cotton Club. Shortly after their arrival at the club, O'Hara and Ella arrived and were seated with them.

A few moments later, Arthur Cain, the club manager came over to the table and greeted them. He explained that it was about an hour and a half before the entertainment would start, but when

they explained their dilemma, Arthur told them they would be served as quickly as possible.

Receiving their round of drinks and placing their food order they all tried to relax a bit. Adam leaned way back in his seat and pretended to snore.

Looking toward the bar, O'Hara poked Ella and said, "Look, there's BD bussing a table. BD, BD!" O'Hara called loudly.

"Mac, he's working. He's busy." Ella chastised Mac. "Aw, it's alright, I own part of this place. BD, BD!" Mac called again.

BD finally turned and looked. "Misser Mac, Misser Mac," BD said loudly. "Miss Edda, Miss Edda." He was extremely excited. He was shaking and jumping up and down. "Me miss you, Me miss you." He said with tears in his eyes. "We miss you too, BD." Then came a round of hugs for everyone, Pitt, Jarrett, and Owens included.

O'Hara and Ella felt welcomed and comfortable to be back at the club.

BD left the table and practically ran to the back of the club. In a few minutes he returned with B-Roy and Scooter. The welcoming and greetings started all over again for BD, but it was

great to be back at the club. Everything calmed back down and the group had a good meal and left the club.



## **CHAPTER 5 The Baker Interrogation**

There were a couple of things Mac just couldn't get off his mind, so he asked Jarrett and Pitt if they would escort Miss Ella home, which they were happy to do so.

Mac shook Adam's hand, telling him he would see him the next day, but Adam said he wasn't sleepy and would Mac mind if he tagged along with him. Mac was glad to have the company, and an extra head to do some thinking would not hurt at all.

Mac and Adam walked down the street discussing the case and proposing questions.

If Myrt was wearing Inez' dress where did the yellow one come from? The doll's arm was at the murder scene, but the doll was at the scene at the old mill. Is there any significance to yellow? Yellow seemed to be a dominant color. The glasses and earrings, did they belong to Inez? If the hobos actually committed the murders, what would be their motive? Why has no one reported the victims missing?

“Adam, if we can answer these six questions our case will be solved. We have to answer them one by one.” O’Hara mused.

“Let’s take a trip over to see Doc Baker. He can probably start to clear up some of our questions.”

When they knocked on the door at Doc Baker’s house, the door was answered by the Baker’s maid, Kara. She had worked for the Baker’s for close to fifteen years.

Before asking for Doc, O’Hara asked if she would mind talking to them for a few minutes. Kara was a cajun woman, in her early 50’s who had moved to St. Louis from New Orleans. She had no family in St. Louis, so she lived in a small servant’s residence in the rear of the Baker’s residence.

O’Hara and Adam sat down with Kara in the library. Kara would hear of nothing but that she had to provide them drinks before they could begin to talk. She left to prepare drinks for Adam and O’Hara.

O’Hara leaned back in a comfortable reading chair to wait for Kara. Adam began to wander around the library, looking at the books on the shelves, the decorations, and knick-knacks Inez had collected on her travels, and she was well traveled.

Soon she returned with drinks for the gentlemen and even a 'hot totty' for herself. "Is it okay with you gentlemen, if I have a drink myself? That's not usually acceptable, but these past days have been so stressful?" Kara explained.

"By all means, Ms. Kara. I am sure this has put a terrible strain on you here at the Baker home." O'Hara answered.

Adam spoke up, "Ms. Kara, I am sure we cannot understand what you are going through, but we need to ask you a few questions. If you would answer our questions and if there is anything else you think may be important, please tell us."

"Ask what you wish and I will try to answer." Kara replied.

"Thank you." O'Hara said. "First, Ms. Kara, the last time you saw Ms. Inez, Do you remember what she was wearing?"

"Yes I do, because I had to heat the iron to press the wrinkles out of the dress for her. It was a purple flowered dress, with a white collar and white lapels on the front."

"Do you remember what time she left?"

"Yes," Kara replied. "It was around three in the afternoon. She was going to visit Dr. Durham's wife, because she has been sick lately."

Calvin, our stable man had readied the surrey for her. She left but did not return. We had searched everywhere before notifying the Sheriff.”

“Was the surrey or horse found, Ms. Kara?” Adam asked.

“Why. Yes they were. The horse was back here the next morning, still pulling the surrey. Feeding time, you know, and these animals always know when and where feeding takes place.”

Kara paused, “How could something like this happen?”

“That’s what we’re trying to find out, Ms. Kara.” O’Hara said.” Now, Ms. Kara, did Ms. Inez wear glasses?”

“Only for reading, Mr. O’Hara.”

“Did she have them with her?” O’Hara again asked.

Kara got up and walked over to a small table beside where Adam was sitting. She opened the drawer in the table, looked at O’Hara, “I guess she did, they are not here.”

O’Hara reached in his pocket and pulled out the glasses he had retrieved from the ashes of the campfire. Holding the glasses out to Kara, he asked, “Are these hers?”

“I am not sure, I mean, they are so damaged. They look like hers, but I can’t be positive.”

“Okay, Ms. Kara, the last time you saw Ms. Inez, was she wearing jewelry? You know earrings, necklace, rings and such.”

“Yes she was. She always liked to wear her jewelry.”

Again, reaching in his pocket, he produced a pair of earrings, and holding them out to Kara, he asked, “Are these hers?”

Kara looked very carefully. “May I hold one of them?” Kara asked. O’Hara handed one of the earrings to Kara. She examined it carefully in her hand and replied, “No they are not, Mr. O’Hara.”

Mac and Adam looked at each other with disbelief. “Are you sure, Ms. Kara?” Adam asked.

” Mr. Owens, Mrs. Baker was very style conscious, very color co-ordinated. She would never wear emerald earrings with a purple dress.”

Mac just shook his head, “Does she have a gold colored broach with a yellow stone of some type in the center?”

“No sir, she did not have one.”

“Ms. Kara, how can you be so sure?” O’Hara asked.

“Mrs. Baker had an allergy to gold and would develop a rash. All of her jewelry was sterling silver.”

“Thank you for answering our questions. Is there anything you feel we should know Ms. Kara?” O’Hara wanted to know.

“When she returned from that last trip to New Orleans, she did act a little strange.” Kara volunteered.

“What do you mean by strange, Ms. Kara?” Adam asked.

“She would go almost every day to the Bokor over in the Latino community and pray to the Loa.”

“Ms. Kara what is a Bokor and Loa?” Adam looked puzzled.

Kara laughed. “You don’t leave St Louis very much do you, Mr. Owens. The Loa are the gods and the Bokor is the black magic priest or priestess.”

“Black magic?” Adam repeated.

O’Hara was quiet for a moment. “Could you ask Dr. Baker if he could speak to us for a moment?”

“I surely will, Mr. O’Hara. Will you please wait here, Gentlemen?” Kara left the room.

Adam looked at Mac, “she was involved in black magic? The doll, the doll, Mac. That was a voodoo doll! And Mac, the blood, during a black magic ceremony they don’t want to spill the

blood on the ground, or the sacrifice is no good. Voodoo and black magic are opposites. The color yellow in voodoo represents success, understanding, attractiveness, but in black magic yellow represents failure, confusion and the ugliness of the world. The dresses, the doll, the broach, were all yellow and symbols of black magic.”

Kara returned telling Mac and Adam that Dr. Baker would be along momentarily.” May I get you another drink Gentlemen?”

“No. I think we are fine. Thank you Ms. Kara.” Mac replied. “We will just sit here comfortably while we wait. It has been a long day, what with removing those other bodies from the old mill.” Mac commented.

“Other bodies?” Kara’s eyes widened. “What other bodies. There was only one. I mean, Ms. Inez, was the only one murdered, wasn’t she?”

At that moment, Dr. Robert Baker entered the room and greeted O’Hara and Owens.

Kara immediately addressed Dr. Baker, “Oh my gracious, Dr. Baker, these gentlemen were just telling me that three more bodies were found in the old mill.”

Dr. Baker responded, “oh no. Were these murders related to Inez’ murder?”

O’Hara intently looked at Kara and the Doc, almost to the point of glaring at them. “We don’t know yet. We are not even sure they were murdered.”

Adam had a strange look on his face, but he knew that Mac knew what he was doing, so he remained quiet.

“Thank you Ms. Kara, you have been very helpful.” O’Hara said. “We will speak with the Doctor now, and again thank you for being so gracious.”

“Oh, yes, Mr. O’Hara. I will attend to my business now.” Kara replied and walked past the doctor, placing her hand on his shoulder, and giving him a strange look.

“Doc, thanks for talking with us, we will try not to be very long. We know this has been a stressful day for you.” Mac said.

Adam then spoke up, taking the lead in the interrogation. “Doc, were you not worried when Ms. Inez did not return before dark? And, Doc, did you have someone to go to Dr. Durham’s home to try and find her?”



“Yes, Detective, I became concerned just before dark, but I had patients waiting and Calvin was not here, so Kara asked Otis, our butler, to go to the Durham’s house. He returned about an hour later.”

“When did you notify the Sheriff?” Adam inquired.

“As soon as Otis returned, Kara sent for the Sheriff.”

“Doc, you didn’t have any suspicions or any ideas where she may have gone?” Adam questioned.

“No, I didn’t,” Doc began. “But I knew Inez well enough to know if someone needed her help, she would be there.”

“Doc were you aware that Ms. Inez had been visiting the Latino neighborhood, and in particular a Bokor there?”

“Well no, I wasn’t aware. A Bokor? What business would she have visiting a Voodoo priest?”

Adam became a little more inquisitive, “so you know what a Bokor is? But this Bokor is not a voodoo preist, he delves in Black Magic. And you had no idea what Inez was up to?”

“I have already told you, Detective; I did not know Inez was doing any such thing.” Doc was now becoming rather testy. “I think

our interview is over now, Detectives. I will have Kara show you out.”

“That’s okay, Doc. We will let ourselves out, and Doc, we’ll see you again, in a few days.” O’Hara informed Doc.

Then, he and Adam started for the door. “Oh, Doc. One more thing. What is your relationship with Kara?”

Doc hesitated. “Come along gentlemen, and I will show you the door.” Doc said with an agitated tone to his voice.

When they reached the door, O’Hara prodded Doc once more, “you didn’t answer my question, Doctor Baker.”

Doc opened the door, “That, Sir is none of your business. Good evening, gentlemen.” He closed the door.

O’Hara and Adam walked out to the street, neither speaking. Adam stopped and looked at O’Hara.

“What?” O’Hara questioned and looked at Adam. He grinned and said, “they are both lying, worse than a politician a week before Election Day. We seriously need to find those hobos.”

It was now getting late. Both headed home to get some much needed rest and get started fresh in the morning.

As Adam walked toward his home he saw the beat cop for that area on the other side of the street, shaking doors. Shaking doors was a police jargon for checking to make sure the doors were locked. Adam saw that the beat cop was a rookie named Mike Kline. Adam threw up his hand as he neared Mike. Mike recognized Adam.

“Owens, Corporal Owens.”

“Hey Mike. How are you? Third month on the beat now, huh?” Adam greeted him.

“I’m doing well. I love being a cop. By the way, Adam, Chief Atkins was looking for you and O’Hara earlier.”

“He was? What does he want, somebody to scratch his butt?” Both officers chuckled.

“Nah, he had a message for you guys. He said he had issued a wide area bolo on those three hobos, and Kansas City PD has 2 of them for you. They have Myrt and Ragman. Luthie is dead.”

“Dead?” Adam asked.

“Yeah, he got runned over by a choo-choo. Kinda ironic, huh. He was riding dangle, you know on the suspension bars under

a boxcar and they suspect he had too much alki. The locomotive was 'ballin the jack' or moving real fast, and Luthie fell asleep, the boxcar hit a bump, and Luthie crashed. Never knew what got him. The other two should be back here late tomorrow."

"Mike, you are a fine feller. I will sleep well tonight. Thanks Mike. You have a good night."

"Anytime Adam, whatever I can do for you. See you, Pal."

## **CHAPTER 6 The Bokor's Temple**

The next morning the investigators met at Floyd's Diner, a great little mom and pop diner with good coffee, breakfast and lunch. They even have homemade doughnuts, very appealing to police officers.

Mac and Ella were the first to arrive, and the others weren't far behind. A round of coffee, breakfast orders done, they were now ready to begin to compare notes and determine the day's work.

Everyone was pleased to hear that Kansas City had two of the hobos and they would be returning to St. Louis today.

Someone needed to go back to Dr. Baker's residence to talk with the stableman and the butler.

Someone else should go to the Durham residence and speak to everyone who saw or may have seen Inez Baker arrive on the night she disappeared. Mac and Adam would go to the Latino

district and try to locate the Bokor Inez had dealt with. Ella would tag along with Mac and Adam.

To speed up their work, Mac, Adam and Ella obtained a carriage from the police livery, and the others saddled horses.

Adam was the only one of the three who spoke any Spanish at all, and he could just get by. And get by they would.

They had no name to locate the Bokor, so it was very difficult. When asking if someone could help them locate a Black Magic Bokor, the people would almost run away from them.

It was pretty clear the people feared the Priest and any association or contact with the bad juju, they called it, even to the point of talking about it.

After asking and being denied and folks shunning them, a Latino man by the name of Emilio approached Mac. Speaking fairly good English, Emilio spoke to Mac, "You are policia? You look for the Bokor?"

"Yes we are trying to find him to ask him some questions. We don't wish to harm him or trouble him, just ask some questions." O'Hara explained.

“I can take you,” Emilio said, and began to lead them down the street, turned down several alleys, but not because this was the way to the Bokor, but to confuse the investigators, so they could not return to the Bokor’s temple. Emilio led them down another very narrow alley. Finally they were brought to a plain black door.

A gas lamp to the right side of the door looked like it hadn’t operated in years. The glass was broken out of the lamp also.

On a ledge above the lamp a large raven was perched, as if he was guarding the door.

As they stood before the door, the door suddenly opened. A short, slender, sickly looking older man stepped through the door. “El policia?” he asked.

“Yes, uh si. El policia. The old man stepped back inside the door motioning the investigators to follow. Emilio stepped back, not going in.

Mac, Ella, and then Adam and the door slammed. Instinctively Adam turned and tried the door...locked. Mac and Adam reached inside their jackets, placing their hand on their weapons.

They followed the old man down a dark, narrow hallway that seemed to be filled with a pungent smelling mist. The hallway opened up into a room that was very dark and had only three candles burning.

When they reached what they thought was the center of the room, the old man ordered them to stop, and remain there.

After about ten minutes the old man reappeared with two females, scantily clad and wearing masks. Each one carried a lighted lamp. The light drastically increased the visibility in the room.

Adam looked up and around, then down at the floor. “Holy Mary,” and he stopped abruptly.

Mac and Ella also looked down. They were standing in the center of a pentagram. The pentagram was elevated several feet above the floor level. The area around the raised pentagram was filled with snakes. Some of the snakes would try to climb up on the raised pentagram. Mac and Adam would kick them back into the pit.

Suddenly, Mac stopped kicking at the snakes. He stepped up to the edge of the raised pentagram, ignoring the snakes. He



stepped from the raised portion onto the floor and the reptiles disappeared.

He walked toward the old man, and Adam and Ella looked shocked to see there were no more snakes on the floor.

“What in the world?” Ella began.

Adam managed a chuckle and shook his head. “Drugged, we were drugged. In the hallway, the mist that was floating around, we were drugged.”

“Things that seem real may not be real.” Mac said. Mac walked right up to the old man and only a couple of inches from his face, looking into his eyes, and said, “Are they old man.”

A door opened to the left side of the room and a figure appeared, completely covered with a cloak and a hood over the head, obscuring the face. Mac, Adam, and Ella all turned to see the figure, as it came closer to Mac.

The figure stopped, and began to remove the hood. In the dim light, Mac began to get a look at who he thought to be the Bokor. The hood removed, they saw a quite beautiful female face. Long black hair, tan colored skin, with dark, haunting eyes and a piercing stare.

Adam was thinking how beautiful she looked. She was mesmerizing in her beauty, with a haunting mysticism, and an ominous presence in the room. The old man, and the two females, lowered their heads and avoided looking at the priestess.

The Priestess turned toward Adam and Ella, who were still standing on the pentagram. She removed the cloak, revealing a beautiful body, like an angel had just appeared.

The priestess walked to one of the young female attendants, removed her mask, and dropped it to the floor. She placed her hand on the female's chin and raised her head and placed her other hand on the female's lower back. They engaged in a passionate kiss.

The priestess then moved back toward Mac. He stood stoically as the Priestess raised her hand and stroked his face. She then leaned toward Mac apparently intending to kiss him.

Under her breath, Ella mumbled "bitch." The Priestess immediately turned toward Ella, pointed her right arm to her and said something indiscernible. Ella clutched her abdomen and fell to the floor.

Mac reached out and grabbed at the Priestess, but she turned quickly, waving her arm at Mac. He also fell to the floor.

She then turned her attention to Adam, who stood very still, with his hand on his weapon under his coat. The old man and two females had fallen to their knees and again lowered their heads to avoid seeing what was happening.

Adam remained standing where he was, and intently stared at the Priestess, as she stared back at him. Suddenly the Priestess spoke to Adam. "What is it you wish to ask me?" Adam was quiet. Again she spoke, "What do you wish to ask, you may ask anything you wish?"

Adam looked directly into her eyes. Ella and Mac were stirring around, trying to stand.

"I am aware you have a weapon, Mr. Owens. I will not hurt your friends." The Priestess told him. He was surprised she knew his name.

"Do you know Inez Baker?" Adam questioned.

The Priestess walked to Adam, reached out and took his hand. She led him to the door where she had entered and Adam

went reluctantly. Once they passed through the door, it closed with a boom.

The old man and the two women went to Mac and Ella and assisted them to their feet. Though still dizzy, Mac went to the door, but it was locked.

“Where did she take Adam?” Mac demanded. No one spoke. Again Mac demanded to know where she had taken Adam, but no one spoke.

“Mac, he will be okay.” Ella said, though she wasn’t sure.

Holding Adam’s hand, the Priestess led him through several rooms and hallways. They entered a well lit room, containing two chairs, a small table, a canopy type bed, a vanity and an armoire.

In the well-lighted room, Adam could see that the Priestess was more beautiful than he thought.

“Please sit, Mr. Owens.” The Priestess directed, waving her hand toward one of the chairs. “You asked if I knew Inez Baker. Yes, Mr. Owens. I know a woman who said her name was Inez Baker. Why do you ask?”

Adam was starting to relax slightly, and he leaned back in the chair. “Mrs. Baker has been murdered.” Adam replied.

“Oh, how terrible. You are trying to find the murderer?” the Priestess asked.

“Yes,” Adam said, “I understand she came to visit you on occasion. Is that correct?”

“Yes, occasionally. She was here about two weeks ago.” Adam reacted to her comment, “two weeks ago?”

“Yes, it has been about two weeks.

She came to purchase some religious items.”

“Religious items? What were these items?” Adam asked. “As for items, all she desired were four black candles. She said she had the remaining items needed. She also purchased the incantation chant for the spell.”

“What was this spell she wished to cast?” Adam inquired. “It was a spell to break up a marriage.” The Priestess said.

“Do you mean to get out of a marriage, to break up with her husband?”

“Oh no, Mr. Owens. The spell is to break up someone else marriage.”

Adam looked puzzled. “Not her own marriage, but someone else. Hmmm.”

“Could I get a copy of the Incantation chant? I will gladly pay you for it.”

“No need to pay, Mr. Owens. I will help you.” The Priestess replied.

“Thank you, Ma’am. What is your name, what should I call you?” Adam asked.

“I am Madame Desiree, Adam.” the Priestess answered. Madame Desiree left the room, but returned a few moments later and handed a paper to Adam. Almost at the same moment, the old man appeared. “You will be led out now.” The Priestess said.

Adam followed the old man as they wound around through the building, room after room and hallway after hallway.

“Where are Mac and Ella?” Adam asked the old man, but he did not reply. The old man opened a door to bright sunlight. Adam stepped through the door and it immediately closed.

“Adam!” He heard his name called. He looked around as well as he could in the bright sunlight.

“Mac, Ella.” he called.

“Adam, are you okay? We were ready to get backup and come find you.” Mac said.

“Yeah, I’m okay. This case just keeps getting stranger and stranger. Let’s go somewhere, get some coffee, and I’ll fill you in.” Adam said seemingly out of breath.

Emilio showed up and they made their way back to their carriage and headed back to the Police Station.

They traveled along River Road to Depot Street to May’s Coffee Shop, just a short distance from the old mill. May’s once was a booming little restaurant until the slaughterhouse and feed mill closed. Now it’s just relegated to being a small coffee shop, frequented by homeless people and police officers.

The owner of the shop, Mavis Bell, would not charge officers for coffee, so some of the officers placed a bucket on the counter, and all the officers would drop money in as they could. Mavis or May, as he was known, would take the money, buy supplies and prepare meals for the homeless people.

The three investigators compared what they had learned and discussed what happened at the Bokor temple.

“Mac, where did the snakes come from? Why were we so frightened?” Ella wanted to know.

“It was the mist, the smell in the hallway; it was a drug of some type to cause hallucinations. Great way to gain control over someone. Fear is a great persuader.” Mac explained.

“It worked really well, huh?” Ella lamented.

“Mac, I am really leaning toward Kara and Doc Baker as having something to do with the murder.” Adam said.

“You’re a little slow young man. One comment last night at Doc Baker’s house that Kara made really started me thinking. Adam, did you mention that we found three bodies at the mill?” Adam shook his head, no. “Well, neither did I, but Kara told the Doc were found three bodies. How did she know we found three?”

“Another thing, Mac,” Adam began, “Madame Desiree,”

“Whoa,” Mac interrupted. “now we’re getting personal.”

“Aw Mac, that’s her name. That’s what she said to call her. Anyway, did you notice that she knew a woman who said her name was Inez Baker? And, then the spell. The spell is to destroy someone’s marriage, not end your own.”

As Mac, Ella and Adam sat in the coffee shop, Bobby Pitt burst through the door. He stopped, looking around, until he saw Mac and the others. He had seen the carriage outside.



He rushed over to them. “Mac! Adam! Come on, we gotta go, hurry.”

“Whoa, slow down, Bobby. What’s wrong?” Mac asked.”

“Somebody just tried to kill the hobos.” Bobby managed to get out. “Come on and I’ll give you the details on the way.”

The three got up from their seats. Mac went by the bucket on the counter dropping money inside. Adam did the same. Bobby nervously dug in his pocket pulled out some change and dropped it in the bucket.

Ella took the horse, and would catch up with the others later.

The three officers loaded in the carriage and hurriedly started toward Hill Street, and the train depot, where the crime reportedly occurred.

Attention turned away from Doc Baker and Kara, at least for the moment.

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## **CHAPTER 7    Cleaning Up Loose Ends**

The three investigators arrived at the train depot about twenty minutes later. Officer Pete Green was already at the scene. He met the others as they were exiting the carriage.

“It’s a mess, Sarge. Here’s what we have so far. About an hour ago, the train arrived at the station, and the Kansas City officer exited the train with Myrt and Ragman, and they walked out the front door to the street here. Witnesses say two masked men came around that corner, and began firing at them. All three were hit. The KC Officer is dead as well as Ragman. Myrt has been taken over to the hospital, and I don’t know how bad she is.”

“Any idea who the perpetrators might be?” O’Hara inquired.

Pete shook his head. “No, Sarge. We’re not even getting good descriptions of them.”

“The bodies over there? Mac asked.

”Yeah, Sarge. Each one shot three to four times.” Pete answered.

“Kansas City been notified?” Mac continued.

Again Pete replied, "Yeah, we sent a telegraph. The Chief and a couple representatives will be here as soon as they can. KC mayor is coming also."

"Okay, Pete. Take some officers and cordon off the entire block, rail station and all. I want a list of names of everybody within that block. I don't care who they are, write their names on my list, and where they were when this happened." O'Hara ordered.

"That's a tall order, Sarge, but we'll make it happen." Pete responded.

"And Pete, anybody gives you any trouble, lock them up."

"Yes sir, Sarge. Yes sir." Pete smiled as he replied.

"Pete, one more thing." "Yeah, Sarge?" "I want a passenger list for the last train to arrive, and the last train to leave."

"You got it, Sarge." Pete said.

"Bobby, you and Adam check out the bodies and perform a good search of the area. I am going to the hospital to check on Myrt." Mac directed.

"Yes, sir." Bobby replied. Mac left and the other investigators started working.

Mac arrived at the hospital a short time later and approached the reception desk. “The hobo lady, Myrt, where is she?” Mac inquired of the receptionist.

“I am sorry, sir, but I cannot give out that information. The receptionist said.

Mac looked at the woman, “I am Detective Sergeant Mac O’Hara, with the St. Louis Police.” Mac shot back at the woman.

“Do you have any ID, sir?” She asked.

O’Hara could feel his face turning red, but before he could say anything, he heard, “Mac.” He turned to look. It was Chief Atkins. “It’s okay, ma’am. He’s with me,” the Chief told the lady.

“Thanks Chief. How is Myrt doing? Where is she?” O’Hara wanted to know.

“She is in surgery now, Mac. Doesn’t look too good. It’s just a wait and see now. Listen, Officer Lee and Officer Sparrow are in the waiting room. Let’s you and I go find a coffee shop. They can let us know when she is out of surgery. I want to know what you know.”

“Sounds good Chief.” O’Hara said.

It had been about two and a half hours since O'Hara had arrived at the hospital. Officer Lee came into the coffee shop. "Chief, Myrt is in a room now and she's starting to come around a little. I just thought you guys might want to come on over so when she's awake enough, you can question her."

"Thanks Toney," the Chief replied. "You ready, Mac?"

"Yeah," Mac replied. "Oh, Toney, can you get someone to go to the train station and tell Ella to come on over to the hospital."

"Sure, Mac. I'll go myself." Officer Lee said.

"Gee thanks Toney. I'll owe you one." Mac said. "No problem, Sarge, whatever you need."

Lee turned to go and Mac slapped him on the shoulder, looked at the Chief and said, "He's looking for your job one of these days."

It took just a few minutes to get back to the hospital where Myrt was being cared for by two nurses. The Chief and O'Hara walked up to the door of the room. One of the Nurses walked over to them. "How's she doing?" Mac asked.

The nurse hesitated and pushed them out the door. "She won't make it through the night, we're just trying to ease her pain and keep her comfortable."

“Oh jeez,” Mac said as he shook his head. “Do you think she could talk to us or answer a couple of questions?” Mac asked the nurse.

“Maybe. She can’t talk, but she might be able to indicate ‘yes or no’ to some questions. You can give it a try.” the nurse answered.

Mac approached the bed, reached out and took Myrt’s hand. Her eyes opened and she looked at him. “Remember me, Myrt?” O’Hara said. She squeezed his hand, shaking her head yes, and trying to say ‘copper’, but no words came out. “Did you recognize who did this to you?” Myrt shook her head no. “Myrt, I need to know where you got that purple flowered dress. Now just shake your head for me. Okay?” Myrt shook her head yes. “Did you buy it?” She replied ‘no.’ “Did you find it somewhere?” ‘No’ “Did you steal it?” She squinted her eyes and emphatically shook her head ‘No’. O’Hara stood there for a moment.

The nurse spoke up, “Ms. Myrt, did somebody give you that dress?” Myrt shook her head ‘yes.’ “See Sergeant. You have to think like a woman.” and she smiled at the Sarge. Myrt looked at him, and shook her head again, ‘yes’.

“Who could have given it to her?” Mac wondered. “Myrt, Did MS Baker give it to you?” She answered ‘No.’ O’Hara asked her, “Myrt, was it someone at the Baker Residence. She answered, ‘yes.’ “Was it Kara, the maid?” Mac questioned. She answered, ‘no.’ “Myrt, was it Calvin, the stableman?” Myrt didn’t answer. “Myrt, was it Calvin?” Tears came in her eyes as she shook her head, ‘yes.’

“Myrt, Calvin is not in any trouble.” Mac told her. She tried to smile and say something but there were no words coming out. “What is she trying to say?” Mac asked.

The nurse leaned over close to her. The nurse straightened up, looked at Mac. “Pretty, she is saying pretty. Myrt shook her head, ‘yes.’ Calvin thought you were pretty in that dress, didn’t he?” Tears now ran down her face, and this time she smiled as she looked at Mac.

“Myrt, you were pretty, very pretty in that dress.” Mac said. As her eyes closed, Mac said, “You were very pretty in that dress.”

Mac turned and walked out of the room, and the Chief followed. They stopped in the hallway for a moment. Mac looked



back into the room, pulled a handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped the tears from his eyes.

Mac and the Chief were walking through the lobby of the hospital when Officer Lee came through the front door.

Seeing Mac he went over to him, "Where is Ella, Toney?"

"Mac, we don't know.

"What?" Mac said loudly.

"She never made it to the crime scene at the train station. She didn't show up at the livery with the horse either."

Mac headed for the door, almost in a run. Toney was keeping up with Mac telling him all he knew. "Mac, we found the horse, wandering down near the third street pier, but no signs of Ella."

Mac was experiencing fear, anger, anxiety, all at the same time as he now began to run toward the third street pier. It had been almost six hours. Where was his Ella?

Ella couldn't see anything. She knew she was in the back of a wagon, gagged, and blindfolded. Two men sat at the front of the wagon. She could hear them giving commands to the horses. They had threatened her if they heard a sound or if she tried to move, she would regret it. They had been traveling down street after

street for about 45 minutes she would guess. She did not know for sure where she was, but she had heard a blast from the horn of a steamboat, and it seemed reasonably loud, leading her to believe she was near the river. A few minutes earlier, she thought she smelled peanuts roasting and popcorn popping possibly indicating she was near Sportsman's Park, the home park of the St. Louis Browns baseball team. From her observations she thought she was somewhere near the river in south St. Louis.

The wagon finally stopped. The only noise she could hear was the chugging of a steamboat and the two men talking. She was taken out of the back of the wagon, left blindfolded and gagged, and led to a door. Entering the door she was turned to the right and immediately, led down some steps. There were greater than forty steps down, and Ella realized she was far underground. When finally at the bottom she heard the noise of a match striking against something hard and smelled the sulfur odor from the match. She heard one of the men raise the globe of a lantern, and then close it. The other pulled the gag from her mouth. She felt a relief and took several deep breaths. It was so good to be able to breathe freely again, though the smell in the room where they were, was quite

musty and seemed damp. It was very cool. The blindfold was removed from her eyes. It took a moment for her eyes to focus and become accustomed to what little light that was there.

She tried to see the two men, but both had their backs to her. She looked around in the dim light. She could see gears, shafts, belts, and could hear water flowing. She had never been in one before, but from what she could see and hearing descriptions from some of the factory workers, she suspected she was in a wheel pit. The wheel pit was the underground portion of a water power system driven by a waterwheel. The waterwheel was either directly in the flow of a river or stream, or powered by water diverted through a raceway, more often referred to as a 'race'.

Ella looked around more and saw the steps they had used to come down in the wheel pit. One of the men came toward her. He was very tall and had a Cajun accent. Very rough looking. She also saw the large knife he had on his side. He had put it to her throat when she was assaulted, and kidnapped. The second man, named Jacque, had a very discernable French accent. He wasn't as tall or heavy as the other man. Jacque seemed to display a little sophistication and intelligence. The other man, whose name she

had now determined was Andre, appeared to be the 'muscle' of the two.

Ella's hands were still tied behind her back. She leaned back against the banister railing, as she looked for a place to sit. Spiders and other insects abounded in the wheel pit, making the selection of a sitting place a little difficult. Andre moved toward Ella, and came so close she could smell the musty body odor and the odor of tobacco. He reached out his hand and stroked her hair. Ella squealed and squirmed trying to get away from him, but he had her pinned with his body against the banister. Ella kicked, catching Andre's shin, and then scraped her shoe down his shinbone, removing some of the tender flesh. Andre grasped her dress at the neck and pulled her away from the banister. He balled his fist, cocked his arm all the way back and landed a big punch to the right side of her face. Still holding her by the neck of her dress, he readied another punch, "Andre, no." Jacque called out. "No, not now. There will be plenty of time later to 'play.' Tie her to the large wheel there, and be sure to tie her tightly." Andre did as he was told.

Ella was tied with her arms stretched out to the side and slightly over her head. Her legs were also splayed and tied to each side. Before tying her, Andre had ripped her dress, leaving her wearing only her undergarments. The pain of her face, the blood trickling down her cheek, the bruising and humiliation overcame her and she cried. She cried for Mac to help her.

After a while, Ella was suffering terribly from the position in which she was tied, but her terror and suffering was only beginning. She looked toward the wall to the left. Jacque had gone back up the stairs, and returned after a few minutes with a box. He opened the box and began to remove items from it. Ella could not see well enough to tell what items he took out of the box. But she saw very well when he pulled a yellow dress from the box, and hung it on the wall.

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## **CHAPTER 8 Kidnapped**

It didn't take long for Mac, Toney, and the Chief to get to the Third Street Pier. The area was saturated with police officers. Some were walking together in a line, arms interlocked, scouring the ground for anything. Anything that might be a clue as to what happened to Ella. Toney joined in with the other officers as they performed an all-out search for any evidence.

Mac and the Chief were directed by another officer to Captain Shelby. Chief Atkins greeted the Captain, "Hello Seth. Have you got anything yet?" He asked. "A little bit, Chief." the Captain replied. Mac reacted when he heard Shelby. "What, what have you got, Seth? Where's my Ella? Where is she Seth?" O'Hara screamed. All of the officers searching the grounds stopped for a moment. One of the Officers yelled out, "We gonna find her Sarge."

The volume of his voice dropped slightly, "By God, we gonna find her, and when we do...." Mac looked at Captain Shelby.

“Mac we have an old homeless man, and I want you to hear his story.” Shelby told him.

“Where is he?” Mac demanded.

“He’s over there with Pitt.” Shelby said, but before he could say anything else, Mac was gone. Pitt was standing next to the entrance to the pier, and the old man was sitting on a pylon protruding about three feet out of the ground.

Mac ran up to the old man reaching and grabbing him by his shirt and standing him up. “Where’s my Ella?” Mac again screamed. The frightened old man cowered back, thinking Mac was going to hit him.

“Easy Mac, easy now. He did not hurt Ella.” Bobby said, as he tried to pull Mac away. Mac released his grip on the old man.

“Tell Mac what you saw, Ricky.” Bobby directed the man.

“Yeah, okay, feller. I didn’t hurt that woman.” Ricky said nervously, still cowering back away from Mac.

“We know, Ricky.” Bobby assured him. “It’s okay. Go ahead, Ricky, and tell the Sarge what you saw.” “Awright,” Ricky said tentatively. “ I been stayin’ under the pier over there,” pointing toward the corner of the pier as he talked, “ and I heard a wagon



come up over there next to the old warehouse, and they was in a big hurry. The big guy, he jumped off the wagon, before the other feller could even get it stopped. He took a big ol' knife off his side and hid there at the corner of the building. The other feller got off the wagon too, but I didn't see no knife on him. About that time, a woman came around the corner on a horse, and the big feller waited till she just past him and he jumped out and scared her and the horse. Well, the horse, he reared up and the woman was thrown off."

"Was she hurt, Ricky?" Mac asked.

"I don't think so." Ricky continued. "The big guy, he ran over to her and put that big ol' knife right under her chin on her throat. The woman quit wiggling, and she asked him not to hurt her. The other feller said if she just did what they said they wouldn't hurt her. Then they got her up off the ground, and they tied her hands behind her back, they blindfolded her and put a gag in her mouth. The littler feller said for her to be still and not make no noise or they would kill her. They put her on the back of the wagon and pulled a tarp up over her."

"Did they leave then?" Mac wanted to know.

“Yeah, they did. Well, after they picked up that box they knocked off the back of the wagon.”

“A box?” Bobby asked. “What kind of box, Ricky?”

“Well, it was just an old box. It had a lantern in it, but they broke the glass in it. And you know it looked like a new lantern. There was some candles in there too, and a hank of rope. It was kinda funny. I believe one of them fellers might be a little strange, like them guys in them shows. You know them burlesque shows.”

“Why would you think that, Ricky?” “Well there was a dress in that box, and the little feller just went to fussing and ran over there and picked it up and brushed the dirt off of it. Then he folded it up and put it back in the box.” “What did the dress look like?” Mac questioned. “It was a pretty dress, all fancy and frilly and it was yellow.”

Mac took a deep breath and let out a big sigh. Bobby called out, “Oh, hell no.” And the Chief, feeling weak, grabbed the handrail on the pier to steady himself. “We have to find her, and in a hurry.” Chief Atkins said.

Ricky pointed out the direction they left in the wagon. Mac and Bobby immediately looked to follow the wagon tracks. There

wasn't a lot of travel in that area, so following the tracks was not too difficult, to begin with. After about a block and a half, it became much harder to discern the tracks of that particular wagon.

Frustration began to set in. The St. Louis Browns were playing a game this afternoon and streets that normally had very little traffic, were today very crowded.

Mac figured, as with the other murders, the suspects would stay in the industrialized areas, but between the Ballpark and the river were several hundred factories, abandoned buildings and warehouses. Mac and Bobby started to try to eliminate some of the buildings. There were just a few patches of wooded area. The Chief sent officers to each of these areas to eliminate them from the potential sites where Ella may have been taken.

Adam and Toney had helped at the pier in the search for evidence. These two teamed up.

"I have a couple of ideas," Adam said. They walked back to the pier to the Chief, and Adam and Toney asked if they could check out a hunch they had.

"A hunch is about all we've got right now," the Chief said, "but keep us informed what's going on." Adam and Toney agreed

and took off down the street. “We need to talk to Calvin, Doc Baker’s stableman.” Adam thought out loud.

“Yeah, Adam, and I was thinking, Ricky said the yellow dress was all frilly and fancy. We need to know where that dress came from, and who bought it.” Toney added.

“Okay,” Adam agreed. “Let’s go pay Calvin a visit first.”

At Doc Baker’s residence, they were very careful to not be seen as they made their way down to the stables. Calvin was in the main barn cleaning one of the stalls. Adam and Toney walked into the barn and to the stall where Calvin was working. “Hello Calvin,” Adam said. Calvin was startled, dropping his rake he was working with.

“Who are you guys? What do you want?” Calvin asked nervously.

“We are police officers, and we need to speak with you, Calvin.” Toney informed him.

“But I ain’t done anything. I, I, just work here and I ain’t done nothing.” Calvin whined.

“We just need to ask you some questions,” Toney said looking straight at Calvin for his reaction.

Toney began, "Calvin, do you know Myrtle Sandford?"

"No. No I don't." Calvin responded.

"Are you sure, Calvin? She went by the name Myrt. You sure you don't know her?" Toney inquired.

"Myrt? Well, yeah, I know Myrt". Calvin looked puzzled.

What's going on with Myrt? He wanted to know.

"Calvin, I hate to tell you this, but Myrt has been killed." Adam could see the horror in Calvin's eyes.

Holding back tears, Calvin asked, "when? How? Why?" Adam reached out and took Calvin by the arm.

"Come over here, Calvin, sit down, and I'll answer your questions and you answer mine. We'll help each other. Okay?" Adam sat down with Calvin and explained to him of the events of the day, and how this somehow was tied to the murder of Inez Baker and now the kidnapping of Ella O'Hara.

"Calvin, the purple flowered dress you gave to Myrt, where did you get it?"

"Why, Ms. Inez gave it to me. I prepared her a carriage one day, and she was wearing that dress. I told her how pretty it was and she said she didn't like it. Oh, it was beautiful, but that it just

didn't fit right. She said she was going to give it the mission downtown, and maybe someone would like to have it. I told her, I knew someone who would love to have it, and she would look pretty in it too."

Calvin had to stop at this point. After a couple of minutes, he resumed talking. "Ms. Inez said she would give it to me for my friend. Then she began to tease me about having a girlfriend. She said she wasn't even going to ask who she was; she would just look for the pretty Lady in the purple flowered dress. A couple of days later, she brought it to me, and I took it to Myrt at the hobo camp. She gave me some earrings and a pair of reading glasses to give her too. She said she had gotten new glasses."

Adam and Toney took all of this information in, and Toney asked, "Calvin, when did Ms. Inez give you the dress?"

Calvin looked at the ground, and then raised his head. "It was about a week before she disappeared."

Adam and Toney knew it was time for the loaded question, and they hoped they got the answer they were looking for. Adam shuffled his feet, rubbed his hand through his hair, cracked his

knuckles, and said, “Calvin do you know of anyone who might want to kill Ms. Inez?”

Calvin once again looked at the ground and grew very quiet. “Doc and Ms. Kara would loved to have gotten rid of Ms. Inez, but if they had anything to do with the murder, I wouldn’t know. I do know that on her last trip to New Orleans, she finally discovered just who Kara was.”

“Wait a minute Calvin. You are saying that the trips that Ms. Inez made to New Orleans were not to participate in voodoo or black magic religious ceremonies.” Adam said excitedly.

“Oh no.” Calvin replied. “The trips she made to New Orleans were ‘fact finding’ missions. When she would return from a trip, she would confide in me and tell me what she discovered.”

“When she returned from the last trip, had she learned anything new or revealing?” Adam inquired.

“Yes, yes there was. She told me she had learned Kara’s real name, who she was, and she would now destroy her.”

“What do you think she meant by that? Did she tell you Kara’s real name?” Adam awaited the answer.

“Kara wanted to destroy Ms. Inez marriage. She wanted Doc Baker and all his money. Kara’s real name is Marianna Gomez. She is from Haiti. She is better known as Priestess Marianna.” Calvin stated.

“But just what did Inez find out about Kara that would make Kara want her dead?” Adam wondered aloud.

Ella had now been tied to the large gear in the wheel pit for over six hours. The cramps racked her limbs and the pain was excruciating. There was very little light in the wheel pit now that Jacque and Andre had left and extinguished the lamps, but still light enough for Ella to see the yellow dress hanging on the wall. She couldn’t stop looking at it.

She heard a noise at the top of the stairs, and saw the faint glow of a lantern. She listened to the footsteps and watched as the glow of the lantern grew brighter as the person or persons came down the stairs. She prayed that it was Mac or some of the officers coming down the stairs and not Jacque or Andre. Her heart sank when she saw Jacque followed by Andre.

“Untie her.” Jacque ordered Andre. Andre went to Ella and began to untie the ropes holding her to the large gear. First her



legs, then her arms and hands were freed. Ella barely moved her legs, and pains shot throughout her lower body. She had been in that stretched position for over six hours. It was the same with her arms. She was finally able to move when Andre grabbed her arms, pulling them behind her and tying her hands together once again.

Jacque then ordered Andre to bring her to a table that was next to the wall where the yellow dress was hanging on the wall. “Strip her, and put the yellow dress on her.” Jacque told Andre. Andre smiled, and was excited about the task he was to perform. He placed her on the table and began to slowly loosen the cords fastening her undergarments. Ella screamed loudly, but no one could hear her.

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## **CHAPTER 9 The Search**

Mac, Bobby, and Chief Atkins had assembled all the officers that they could in the area of the Third Street Pier. They paired the officers, and began a search of each building from Third Street down to River Road and across Mulberry Avenue to the river. Eight teams of two officers each, prepared to search about one hundred buildings. They began the search which would take quite a while.

Adam and Toney returned to the Third street Pier and related what they had learned from Calvin. Armed with the new information, and things starting to point more toward Doc Baker and Kara, Chief Atkins spoke up. "Wait, wait, guys. Listen up. Who owns the old mill property? And who owns the old abbatoir?" No one spoke up. "Bobby, take a couple of guys with you, go to the city hall. I don't care what you have to do, but you get in that City Clerk's office, to the property records. I want to know who owns those two buildings, and I want to know if Doc Baker owns any of these buildings in the search area. You got that, Pitt.?"

“Yes, sir Chief.” Bobby replied. Bobby looked at Pete Green, “Come on Pete, and bring the ‘Bird’ with you, referring to officer Sparrow by his nickname. Captain Shelby, can you send someone to rouse up the city clerk from his home, and have him meet us at his office, asap. Tell him if he is not there in twenty minutes, we’re gonna kick the door down.”

“You betcha, Pitt.” the Captain replied. The three officers left for City Hall.

No one noticed when the old homeless man, Ricky, walked away from the pier area. As soon as he was out of sight of the officers at the pier, he began to run toward Mumford Street and the leather tanning factory, located at Mumford St and the river. It was just around the corner from the High Cotton Club, and the opposite direction of the search.

Ella was lying on the table, wearing the yellow dress. Andre stood there staring at Ella. He was startled when the door upstairs opened. Jacque ran over to the stairs trying to see who had entered the leather tanning factory. Andre took his knife out of its protective sheath and hid in the darkness next to the stairs. They saw a flicker of light as a match was struck and a lantern was

lighted. The sound of footsteps on the stairs caused a fear to manifest in the wheel pit. Ella tried to turn to look. The light got closer, and then a short slender older man appeared at the foot of the stairs. "For the love of Pete, Ricardo, you scared the crap out of us." Jacque said as he let go of a deep breath.

Ella listened to the men as they talked about Doc Baker and Kara. But who was Ricardo, Ella wondered? She didn't understand all of what was taking place but she was beginning to put together some of the facts. Ricardo Gomez was the third man. He was a Haitian emigrant and lived in New Orleans. Jacque and Andre were also from New Orleans.

"We have a change of plans," Ricardo started out. "We have to take 'her' elsewhere." He said referring to Ella. Jacque looked sternly at Ricardo, "Why do that?" he said angrily. In a loud voice Ricardo chastised Jacque. "You don't question me! Do you understand? You simply do as you are told, is that clear, Monsieur le Faun?" Jacque did not respond to him, but went about what he was doing previously. Andre laughed. Jacque finally turned back to Ricardo, "just where will we be taking her?"

“That will be determined by the Priestess.” Ricardo answered.

The Priestess? Ella thought of the Priestess they had dealt with in the Latin area of East St. Louis. “Be ready by sundown,” Ricardo said. “I’ll find out the plan and let you know.”

After Adam and Toney had reported to Chief Atkins and Mac, they left to visit dress shops. Their objective was to find out where the yellow dress had come from, if it was purchased in St. Louis. It was about three in the afternoon, and most of the shops would close around six. A few of the shops were storefront with apartments on the second floor. They would wait on these until the others had closed. According to the St. Louis police and fire listings there were forty-one shops that were specifically dress shops and quite a few more general store and emporium style shops. They had to check them all. They started at the intersection of Mumford Street and Depot Street, planning to go down Depot Street and make a big circle checking all the shops that were off on side streets. They had checked about a dozen shops, when they went into Becky’s Emporium on Elm Street. The owner of the shop, Becky Barnes was not there, but her daughter Diane was glad to try and help them. “We are trying to find a shop that sold a yellow

Victorian style dress recently.” Adam began to say. Diane spoke up, “oh yes. We had one that stayed in the display window for quite a long time. You know with the new styles coming in we don’t sell a lot of those dresses now. Why this one had been here so long, I didn’t think we would ever sell it. Do you know this customer didn’t even try to get it discounted, just pulled out the money and paid for it? That dress was eight dollars. Why I would have discounted that dress down to about three dollars, but the guy didn’t even ask.”

“Yes, ma’am, Ms. Diane. I understand what you’re saying, but we are more interested in the buyer.” Adam managed to say.

Diane started back up. “Well he was a middle aged man, and his hairline was receding a little. I think that makes a man kinda sexy, don’t you? Why, your hairline is starting to recede a little bit too. Ooo, I like that.”

“Yes, Ma’am, okay. Well I don’t know. Yes Ma’am.” Adam managed to once again slip in another comment.

Off she went again. “Well this feller, he was dressed real nice, and really seemed like a nice feller. He said he was getting it for his daughter, for a special ceremony. Why he didn’t even ask

what size it was. Yeah, Becky took it out of the window and put it in a box for him. He paid for it and left.”

When she stopped to breathe, Adam jumped in. “so he paid for the dress, left and you haven’t seen him since?”

Once again, Diane got started up, “Oh no, he came by about three days ago, asking for another dress in that style and I told him, we sure did. He looked at it and said no, it had to be yellow. I told him to check down the street with Annie Porter, that she might have one.”

Adam raised his hand to slow her a little, spoke to Toney, “You get a good description from her, and I will go down the street to Porter’s General Store and talk to Annie.”

Toney gave Adam one of those disgusted looks, knowing he wanted to get away from Diane as soon as possible. Diane was still talking to Adam as he rushed out the door, but she immediately turned her attention to Toney. “Are all the fellers down there at that police station as cute as you two?” Toney sighed when she accented the ‘po’ in police, thinking how country-like she spoke.

Adam hurried down to Porter’s to catch Annie before she went home. Annie and Adam were schoolmates and had always



been good friends. Adam entered the general store and spotted Annie. She was talking to Rufus Jenkins, one of the local farmers. "Excuse me Mr. Jenkins," Adam injected into their conversation.

"Well, Hello Adam, How are you?" Mr. Jenkins said.

"I am good, sir. How are you? Annie, I have an emergency and I need you." Adam said.

"You go right ahead Ms. Annie. I hope everything is ok, Adam." Mr. Jenkins replied.

Adam took Annie by the arm and began to pull her to the side. "Adam, what is wrong. Is everything okay?" Annie nervously asked.

"Annie," Adam began, "Mac O'Hara's wife, Ella, has been kidnapped. We are trying to find her before..." and he stopped right there.

"Oh Adam, no. how can I help." Annie was very upset. She knew Ella well. She was a very good customer. "What can I do?" Annie cried.

"A few days ago, Diane, at Becky's emporium, sent a fellow here. He was looking for a yellow, Victorian style dress. Do you remember him?" Adam inquired.

“Why, yes.” Annie replied. “I had one yellow one. It was in a larger size, but he didn’t even ask the size, just paid for it and left.”

“Annie, tell me everything you remember about him.” Adam said.

Annie began, “I am five feet, six inches and he was my height, maybe slightly taller. He was very slender, maybe about one-hundred fifty pounds, he had dark hair, slightly receding hair line.”

“Kind of like mine?” Adam injected.

”Yes, like yours.” Annie said.

“Kind of sexy,” Adam said disgustedly.

“What Adam?”

“Oh never mind.” Adam said. “Go ahead Annie” “He had a thin moustache, and an accent, I think it was French. And Adam, he wasn’t alone. There was another man with him. He waited with the wagon. He was a much bigger fellow, and had the appearance of possibly being Cajun.”

“Thanks Annie, thanks.” Adam squeezed her hand. “That’s a big help.” He turned to leave, and Annie stopped him.

“Adam, one more thing.”

“Yes, Annie. What is it?”

“You know I am a horse lady, one of the two horses pulling the wagon, had a completely white face, and one blue eye.”



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## **CHAPTER 10 Ella's Escape**

Adam and Toney met back up outside Porter's General Store and after comparing notes they had a pretty good description of at least one of the suspects.

They made their way down to the Third Street Pier and again reported what they had discovered to the Chief and Mac.

"Things are starting to come together a little better now," Chief Atkins commented.

Mac agreed, " We've got to find her Will."

"Don't worry Mac, we'll find her." Chief Atkins thought in his mind, 'I just hope before it's too late.'

Captain Shelby walked up to Chief Atkins, a scruffy looking man following him. "Chief, you need to hear what this guy has to say." Chief Atkins looked at the obviously homeless man, " What's your name, old man?" The old man sniffed and wiped his nose on his ragged shirt sleeve. "Name's Roger. Roger Dodger, that's what they call me. But Roger will be okay."

"Alright, Roger. What have you got to say?"

“I jes wants to know if I can go over there to my home?”

“And where is your home?” The Chief asked.

“Over there, under that corner of the pier.” the old man replied. No one spoke. Mac, the Captain, and the Chief, just looked at each other. Then Mac yelled, “where is Ricky? Where is that old man that was here? The old homeless man?”

“He left a couple of hours ago, Sarge.” one of the officers said. Mac was holding a coffee cup, and he threw it across the lot.

“He was here. That S.O.B. was here. He lied to us. Will, he was here, making fools out of all of us.” Mac yelled.

Bobby Pitt arrived back at the Third Street Pier. When he walked up Chief Atkins immediately asked, “Bobby, what did you find out, does Doc own any of the buildings?” “Yeah, we are in luck Chief.” Bobby reported. “He owns six different buildings in this area.” “Have you got a list?”, the Chief asked. “Yeah,” Bobby answered and handed the list to the Chief. Chief Atkins turned to Adam, “Make a copy of this list, get what help you need, and go to these building. Search from bottom to top, every nook and cranny.” Adam went about getting together enough personnel to search the six buildings.

“Chief, another thing, there is one building that is showing the owner to be Marianna Gomez, Kara, and another showing the owner to be Ricardo Gomez.”

“Ricardo Gomez? Ricky? Oh, Jeez, the guy could be her husband or something. We have got to search those buildings right away, Chief.” Mac implored.

“Looks like you and I and Captain Shelby are the only ones available.” Chief Atkins pointed out. “Seth, ... Captain Shelby ... the Chief called out. “You take care of everything here. Mac and I are going to check out these two properties owned by the Gomezs.” The Chief instructed.

“Where is the first one, Chief?” Mac asked.

“The sugar processing factory, is the first on the list. It’s still operating, and then there’s the tannery, which really works seasonally. It’s closed right now. The sugar factory is the closest, let’s hit it first.” Chief Atkins said. The sun was beginning to set, as Chief Atkins and Mac approached the sugar factory. It was a fairly large six story building, with four smaller outer buildings. They began their search in one of the smaller out buildings.

The wheel pit at the tannery had been quiet for the last hour. Ricardo had left a couple of hours ago, then Jacque, and Andre about an hour later. Ella was tied to the large wheel, but unlike before, Jacque tied her in a much more comfortable position. However, they had removed the yellow dress, leaving her very scantily clothed, and the temperature was dropping rapidly. A short while later, Ella heard the door at the top of the stairs open and close and saw the glow from a lantern. She listened as the footsteps came down the stairs. Andre, it was Andre, and he was alone. Ella became very fearful of being alone with Andre in the wheel pit.

At first Andre almost ignored the fact that Ella was there. Other than checking to make sure the knots on her restraints were still tight, he simply went about collecting the tools, materials, and the dress, putting everything into a box. When he finished the task he was doing, he brought a lantern over to the large wheel where Ella was tied. Placing the lantern on a small table next to the wheel, he stood, staring at Ella and her scantily clad body. Andre didn't speak. He moved next to her and leaned down. His large hand grasped the front of the thin shirt covering her breasts, and ripped it



from her shoulders. He stepped back and adjusted the lantern for the light to shine more directly on Ella. Ella cringed, lowered her head, but there was no way to cover herself with her arms tied the way they were. Andre now began to talk to her, telling her how beautiful she was and how he wished she would be interested in him. He said he didn't want to kill her, but Ricardo and Jacque would make him do it.

Though Ella was extremely tired and scared, a little wheel in her head began to spin. "Andre, you are a very attractive and desirable man. There are many women who would like to have you as their man, including me." Ella said in her most seductive voice she could manage at the time. Andre's eyes opened wide as he stared at Ella again.

"NO, you lie to me." Andre said angrily.

"No, Andre, no, no. you must not think that. You are big and strong. Why, you can have whatever you want, do whatever you want, and no one can stop you." Ella was telling him.

"But Jacque and Ricardo, they don't let me do what I want."

Andre lowered his head as he spoke.

“Andre, how can they stop you? They are not as big as you. They are not as strong as you. They can’t stop you.” Ella continued to try to convince him.

“You say that, do you really think that?” Andre asked.

“I don’t just think that, I know it, Andre.” Ella was trying hard to be convincing. “Andre, if you will just untie me, you can have what you want. No one can stop you.”

“But Jacque, Ricardo, they won’t let me.” Andre sounded disappointed.

“They can’t stop you, Andre. You can have what you want.”

“I know what I want and nobody can stop me.” Andre said loudly. He moved toward Ella, her heart felt like it was beating out of her chest, fearing what he would do. He reached out his hand, rubbed his fingers through her hair, and then quickly leaned over and began to loosen her restraints. Once she was loose, Andre backed up, and she stood before him. He stepped forward, taking her breasts in his hands. Ella reacted quickly, reaching up taking his face in both hands, then running her fingers down his cheeks. She looked down to his right side where his large knife rested in its’ sheath. “Oh. Andre.” Ella whispered in his ear. “Oh Andre. Take

that blanket folded in the corner and spread it over the table.”

That did it. Andre was like putty in her hands. He reached for the blanket, unfolded it and began to spread it over the table. He straightened the blanket rubbing out all the wrinkles, so it would be perfect for Ella. He leaned over to reach the far left corner of the table. When he did, Ella leaned over his back. He could feel her breasts pressing into his back.

At first he started to move, but when she began to kiss his neck, he relaxed on the table. Hoping against the odds, Ella began to reach down Andre’s right side. In a swift move she grasped the handle of the knife and pulled it from its’ sheath. Before Andre realized what was happening, Ella, raised the knife, placing the blade under his chin and with one swift slash, it was all over. Andre could not scream. All he could do was look at Ella, eyes wide as his life poured from the slice in his neck. Ella watched as Andre slowly fell to the floor. A deep breath, his eyelids fluttered slightly and it was over. Ella stood there for a moment, then said out loud, “you didn’t get what you wanted this time either, did you? By the way, Andre, I did want to kill you.”

Ella, took a couple of deep breaths, but she knew she had to get out of the wheel pit. She looked quickly and found her clothes in the corner at the stairs. She had not turned loose of the knife since she took it from Andre's side. The only way she could see to get out was up the stairs. She started up the stairs slowly at first, then almost in a run. As she reached the top of the stairs she heard the door rattle as if someone was coming in. She stepped back several steps, and around a corner into the darkness. She tightened her grip on the knife. The door opened, allowing some light into the entrance. The light was very dim and enough for Ella to obscure her presence. One person came through the door. Ella's eyes, being accustomed to the darkness, allowed her to see clearly that one person was Jacque. Ella remained hidden as Jacque picked up a lantern from the floor and lit it. Then he closed the door and turned to the stairs. As he started to take his first step, Ella lunged from the darkness, shoving Jacque as hard as she could. Jacque began to tumble down the long stair way, dropping the lantern, which spilled its' fuel. The glass globe broke allowing the flame to reach the spilled fuel and ignite it.

Ella watched as the fire quickly spread through the dried wooden structure. Jacque was lying about two-thirds of the way down the staircase. He began to move slightly, and screamed loudly as the flame began to reach him. Ella watched for a moment, then once again spoke out loud, “hot damn,” she said as she began giggling loudly.

Still maintaining a firm grip on the knife, she ran out the door and across the street before falling in the grass. She laughed as she saw smoke coming from the open door and she could see the glow of the flame inside. She thought to herself, ‘why am I laughing so hard? I just killed two people?’ After laughing some more and rolling in the grass for a few minutes, suddenly Ella stopped and sat straight up. And once again she spoke out loud, “Oh, well.”

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## **CHAPTER 11    May's Coffee Shop**

Mac and Chief Atkins were carefully searching at the sugar factory, on the third floor. Chief Atkins eased around a corner, and standing by a window, cleared the aisle between the wall and machinery. He started to turn, when Mac heard him say, "What the... Mac, Mac, get over here and hurry. There's a fire." Mac ran to the window where Chief Atkins was standing. "Holy Crap." Mac said. "Chief, that's at the tannery. They ran down the stairs and into the street and started toward the tannery. Chief Atkins stopped at the corner at a call box and pulled the alarm to dispatch fire department. Mac ran on ahead the two blocks to the tannery. He ran toward the open door, but was driven back by the intensity of the smoke and flames. He walked backward, into the street, watching the fire consume the building. Mac turned, and saw a shadow under the trees, sitting in the grass. Chief Atkins came running up to the group of trees. He stopped suddenly, when he also saw the figure in the shadows. Mac began to cautiously move toward the shadow. The shadowy figure, hearing a noise, turned

and looked toward the Chief. Chief Atkins yelled loudly, “Ella! Mac, it’s Ella.” Mac’s heart began to race as he ran toward Ella. She quickly stood up and looked to the Chief, then looking behind her, saw Mac rushing to her. Before she could react, Mac reached out, grabbing her tightly, and crying, “Ella! Oh Ella, are you okay? Are you alright Baby?” Ella was sobbing and crying but managed to say she was okay. Mac pushed her back to arm’s length, looking at her and again asked, “are you sure you are okay?” Ella again replied, “Yes Mac, I am alright.”

Mac saw the large bruise to the left side of her face where Andre had hit her. Mac looked down at her arms and hands and saw them covered with blood. Ella realized Mac was looking at her bloody arms. Before he could speak, Ella began, “Mac, I killed him. I killed Andre and I killed Jacque too. I killed them both. I had to kill them to escape.”

Chief Atkins looked down at the ground at the large knife. He looked back at Ella. “I had to,” she again said.

Without speaking, Mac and Chief Atkins both put their arms around her and embraced her.



The fire department arrived and began to attend to their duties. Chief Atkins approached the fire chief and informed him, he would find two bodies in the fire. Looking at the Chief, the fire chief replied, “maybe, maybe not. Might just be a pile of ashes.”

Mac, Ella and Chief Atkins left the tannery fire scene and started back toward the Third Street Pier. Ella was telling Mac and the Chief about her kidnapping and what had taken place.

The Chief realized how tired Ella was and spoke up. “Mac. We are near May’s Coffee Shop. Why don’t you take Ella to the coffee shop, and let her rest. I will go on to the pier to have Captain Shelby start to shut down all the operations there and bring him up to date. We have a wagon on scene there, and I will have a couple of officers bring the wagon and take Ella home. They need to stay with her also.”

Mac turned to Ella, grasping her hand and said, “good idea, Chief.”

“And Mac, I will be back as soon as I can. I am going to bring Adam, Bobby, and Toney with me. We can then compare notes and develop our plans to go after Doc Baker and Kara.”

Mac was shaking his head. “Okay Chief. We will see you there in a while.”

Chief Atkins left headed for the Third Street Pier. Mac and Ella continued to the coffee shop. Mac knew Ella was exhausted from what she had been through.

Mac and Ella arrived at the coffee shop. Mac reached to open the door and stopped suddenly. So suddenly, that Ella walked right into his back.

Taking a step back, Ella asked, “ what’s wrong Mac? What is it?” Mac didn’t reply.

He took Ella by the arm and quickly led her around the corner of the building. “Stay here and don’t move.” Mac ordered.

“Mac, what is wrong?” Ella again asked. Mac reached under his jacket, and removed his revolver.

“MAC!” Ella was almost in a panic.

Mac looked around the corner, then turned to face Ella. Mac began to explain. “That wagon; That wagon being pulled by two horses. One of the horses has a completely white face and a blue eye. The wagon driven by the man who bought the yellow dress, was being pulled by a horse with a white face and a blue eye.”

Ella gasped, “but Mac...” She was interrupted.

“You stay here. Don’t move.” Mac once again ordered. He opened the cylinder on his revolver, looked, then closed it. Gun in hand, but hidden under his jacket, he cautiously approached the door to the coffee shop. Mac opened the door and stepped in. Taking a quick look around, he walked directly to the counter.

Mavis Bell, the owner of the coffee shop was behind the counter, and his daughter, Alma was pouring coffee at the tables scattered through the store. Mavis, who had been called May since he was young, greeted Mac. “Coffee?” May said. “Yeah, give me one of those I have to eat with a spoon.” Mac replied. Both men laughed. Mac turned slightly toward the wall to his right as May placed the coffee cup in front of him. Mac moved his jacket slightly, just enough that May could see his revolver in his hand. May looked Mac in the eyes and gave him a slight wink to acknowledge he had seen the weapon. May intentionally dropped a spoon in the floor and reached down to pick it up. At the same time, he reached to the bottom shelf and removed a sawed off, double barrel shotgun, and placed it on the top shelf of the counter, but still out of view. Mac looked at May and smiled slightly.

Mac looked at all of the patrons in the coffee shop, hoping to see Ricky, Ricardo, or whatever his name was. Alma walked back behind the counter. Seeing the shotgun, and knowing Mac, she realized something was wrong.

“Alma, honey. Can you go in the back and help your momma for a bit? I’ve got this covered out here.” May Inquired.

“ Sure Daddy.” Alma replied as she wiped her hands on a towel and started toward the back.

Several customers had left the coffee shop by this time. A man and woman were seated at a small table by the window. Three men at a table down the wall about fifteen feet and four men sitting at the counter, plus Mac. A short slender man sat at the opposite end of the counter from Mac. He was well dressed and well groomed. Mac remembered that Ricky had a scruffy beard and dirty ragged clothes. Then Mac remembered one other thing about Ricky. When Mac had grabbed Ricky by the front of his shirt while at the pier, Ricky’s reaction was to reach up and grasp Mac’s hands. It was then that Mac noticed that the ring finger on Ricky’s left hand was missing the first two joints.

Mac could not see the man's left hand. After a moment, Mac stood and walked behind the counter. Picking up a coffee pot, he walked to the couple sitting at the window. "Coffee?" Mac asked.

"Yeah, you can top off both cups. Thanks pal." The man replied.

Mac walked to the three men and filled their cups also. He then moved over to the counter, to the man on the end. "Coffee buddy?" Mac asked.

The man didn't speak. But with his left hand, he pushed his coffee cup over for Mac to add coffee. Mac saw that the man was missing two joints on his ring finger of his left hand. Ricky knew Mac had looked at his hand. Ricky quickly swung himself around, removing a hand gun from his belt, under his shirt. Mac, instinctly, poured the remainder of the hot coffee into Ricky's lap, just as he fired two shots. The hot coffee and the accompanying pain, caused his shots to be errant, striking a mirror on the wall. Mac quickly reached for his weapon, and May picked up his shotgun. Ricky turned and aimed at May, when one shot rang out, striking Ricky in the center of the forehead. Mac looked at May, and May looked at Mac. Mac saw gun smoke curling upward at the pass through

window from the kitchen to the shop. Mac leaned down slightly to see through the window. There he saw Alma, holding a revolver. She leaned over, her head about halfway through the pass through window, and calmly said, “oops.”

Ella came bursting through the front door, screaming at the top of her lungs, “Mac.”

He looked at her, “I’m okay. We are all okay. Right, Alma?” Ella let out a breath, and literally fell into a chair at the table next to the window. The couple who were sitting there were now curled up in the floor.

The man looked up at Ella. “Hi, I’m Ella.” She said. Nervously the man replied, “Howdy,” as he reached out to shake her hand.

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## **CHAPTER 12 The Getaway**

Chief Atkins and the other officers arrived at the coffee shop a short time later. Learning what had taken place caused the Chief to second guess himself. “There’s no way you could have known Ricky would be here Chief.” Mac began.

“That was fate having Ricky and Alma’s lives cross like that. Just like it was fate that Andre and Jacque crossed paths with Ella and I hope these two ladies have mercy on the rest of us.” Mac concluded, bringing a laugh from all and making the Chief feel a little better.

“We have still got some business to take care of men, and we need to get busy.” Chief Atkins pointed out. “ Mac, take these guys with you and go after Doc and Kara. They are very dangerous, and they know now that we are on to them. I feel sure they will try to leave St. Louis, probably head to New Orleans. Mac, have some officers cover the train station and the river boats. We will make all officers aware that they may try to escape by wagon or on horse.”

Mac, Adam, Bobby, and Toney, all agreed and assured the Chief they would bring them to justice. Though it was late into the night, the investigators wanted to arrest Doc and Kara if at all possible. They made their way to the Baker residence.

Surrounding the house to prevent escape, Mac and Bobby entered the residence from the back, and after a complete search of the residence and grounds, there was no sign of either Doc or Kara.

It was indeed strange to the investigators, there was no sign either of the butler, Otis, or the stableman, Calvin. The interior of the house appeared as if someone had finished dinner, got up from the table and just walked away. Gas lamps were lit, and half full coffee cups were on the table in the library.

It was near midnight now. Mac secured two patrol officers to stay at the residence for the night. He also called the investigation for the night and asked the others to meet him at Floyd's Diner around 9 am.

No one slept well that night. Mac was up about 7am and by 8am he walked into Floyd's to find Adam already there. Before Mac had finished his first cup of coffee, Bobby and Toney had arrived.



With no clues at the moment where Doc and Kara were, or the whereabouts of Calvin and Otis, Mac suggested they go back to the Baker residence and process the scene very closely.

Mac and Bobby began inside the house, and Adam and Toney outside. Adam and Toney started toward the stables. As they reached the stables, Toney saw someone enter one of the stalls. Thinking the person was probably Calvin, Toney called to him. "Calvin. Calvin." But there was no answer. He ran to the stall, opened the door, and went in, but there was no one in the stall.

Toney just stared into the stall. He knew he saw someone enter, but now there was no one. "Adam, come in here. You won't believe this."

"Wow, Kara must have some pretty good ju-ju. He just disappeared." Adam said laughingly, and wondering if Toney really did see someone. He and Toney walked into the stall. Looking around they didn't see anything out of the ordinary. As Adam stepped forward he heard the squeak of the floor boards. He stopped and began to sweep back the straw that was scattered on the floor.

“Here you go Toney.” Adam said as he uncovered the trap door.

“ Well!”....Toney exclaimed. “Just like at the mill.”

Both men stepped back, and with weapons in their hand, opened the door to the crawl space. There was no movement in the crawlspace.

Adam took an oil lamp off of a hanger on the wall, lit it, and held it over the opening. He could see nothing. He lowered the lamp slightly into the crawlspace and slowly leaned down to look inside.

The crawlspace was pretty large. He didn't see anyone. He did, however, see an opening leading into another space.

Adam and Toney both entered the crawlspace. Crawling along with the lantern, they slowly approached the second opening. Adam sat the lantern in a position so the light would shine through the opening. Very cautiously, Adam peered into the space on the other side of the opening.

“Jeez, Toney. There's a huge room in here, and there looks like a tunnel out the other side. Oh, no!” Adam said.

“What is, Adam?” Toney asked. “do you see someone?”

“Well, you might say that.” Adam replied. “There is a body in here, and lots and lots of blood. I’m going inside, Toney. Watch out for me.”

“You bet, Buddy. You just be careful.” Toney advised. He stayed at the opening, gun in hand, and keeping a watchful eye on his partner.

“It’s Otis.” Adam said. “I guess he knew too much. Doc and Kara couldn’t take a chance of him spilling the beans.”

Toney entered the opening and into the large room. Both men made their way over to the tunnel. They were watching closely for any sign of someone lurking in the darkness. The tunnel was just wide enough for Toney, the bigger of the two men, to pass, but was not high enough for either to stand up without crouching slightly. They followed the tunnel for about one hundred feet to the end, and there they saw an opening to the outside. The tunnel opened into a drainage ditch that led down to the river. The men could see evidence where at times of high level in the river, the tunnel had flooded.

Adam and Toney headed up to the house to let Mac know what they had found.

“Adam, do you know what this is?” Toney asked. “This is part of the old underground railroad, for hiding and smuggling slaves during the Civil War.”

“Yeah, you’re right Toney.” Adam agreed. “ I had heard since I was a kid about St. Louis being a key part of the underground railroad. Doc had lived here since before the war, and who would have thought he was involved in hiding and smuggling slaves.”

“I’ll bet Ms. Inez was more involved than Doc was.” Toney offered. “It was always rumored that Ms. Inez’s father, David Dalton, owned a cotton plantation in South Carolina and he had freed all of his slaves a couple of years before the war, sold his plantation, and came to St. Louis. That’s when he bought the old mill.”

“Wait a minute, Toney.” Adam said. “You said Ms. Inez father owned the old mill?”

“Yeah, he owned it for quite a few years. The family sold it after he was killed.” Toney explained.

“He was killed?” Adam asked. “How was he killed?”

“The coroner ruled he drowned in the river, but no one believed that. Many people believed he was killed by his partner or some of his henchmen.” Toney continued.

“And Toney, just who was his partner?” Adam inquired. He was getting really interested now.

“His partner was Stewart Baker, Doc’s brother.”

“Toney. When did Ms. Inez’s father die? And Toney, where is Stewart Baker now?” Adam wanted to know. His curiosity was really beginning to build now.

“Ms. Inez’s father drowned in the summer of, I believe, 1881. Stewart Baker is in prison. He received a life sentence for rape and murder, in early 1882, for an incident that occurred in May of 1881. What are you getting out of this Adam?”

“A lot of good information.” Adam replied. “A whole lot of good information. Tell me, Toney. Do you happen to know any of the details about Stewart Baker’s conviction?”

“Yeah, but it’s not real pretty. He was convicted of raping and killing Charity Baker, Inez and Doc’s 12 year old daughter. He was actually sentenced to be hanged, but Doc and Inez asked the court to give him life in prison.”

“Holy crap.” Adam said. “Why does Mac not know this?”

“Well, the crime actually took place in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Stewart is in prison in Louisiana. The Baker’s, Doc’s family, and Stewart’s family were all on vacation at the time. Stewart’s family moved back to Tennessee, to his wife’s family home. Doc and Inez would not allow anyone to even mention what had happened. Very few people in St. Louis were even aware of what actually happened.” “How is it that you know so much about it Toney?” Adam inquired.

“My mom is Rebecca Turner, Stewart’s wife’s sister.

Mac was in the upstairs bedroom that was used as a guest room. Adam and Toney walked into the bedroom. “Mac, we got something for you.” Adam began. He and Toney described to Mac what they had found. Adam had Toney to relate to Mac the history of the Baker Family.

“I had always been told the girl died in an accident.” Mac said. “But I was never told what type of accident, and I never questioned it. Adam, where do you think this is taking us?”

“I don’t know for sure, Mac, but I’m hoping straight to our murderer. I am going to the station to go through some records.”

“While you’re there, can you send a message to Baton Rouge.” Mac asked. “One of us might need to make a trip to Baton Rouge to pay Mr. Stewart Baker a visit. Toney, you and I will process the murder scene out back.”





## **CHAPTER 13 The Underground Railroad**

It was several hours later when the investigators got back together at the police station. Adam was excited when he entered the office.

“Mac, a good portion of the old records were in the vault here at the PD, and they answered some of my questions. I also received a telegraph from Baton Rouge. It seems that Stewart Baker escaped from prison 18 months ago with the help of an unknown man and woman. He was found 4 months later in Shreveport, and was killed in a gunfight with authorities. The man and woman were never captured or identified, but get this; Stewart had one son and one daughter.”

“Yeah, my cousins, Colton and Denise.” Toney injected. “What have they got to do with this?”

“Do you know their whereabouts now?” Mac asked.

Toney again spoke up, “ my Mom says her sister, Nola, hasn’t seen them in about two years. My Aunt Nola told my Mom that Colton and Denise were very disturbed. They blamed Doc and Inez for their dad being in prison. They thought he was innocent,

and he may have been. A man was arrested a few months later for raping and killing a 15 year old in the same area, but he could never be tied to Charity's murder."

"What about the fact that Stewart was killed in a gunfight with police?" Mac wondered.

"That was strange too. It seems there was no weapon on Stewart when the body was recovered. It was just assumed that whoever was with him took the weapon."

The investigators went back to the Baker Home to look for a clue of some kind in the underground cellar and the tunnel. The suspect list seemed to be growing and few were being eliminated.

The cellar was dark and damp. There were quite a few footprints in the soft earth, and most either came from or led to the tunnel.

Mac and Bobby followed the drainage ditch at the end of the tunnel to the river's edge. They could see marks in the earth where it appeared a boat had been dragged up the shore. As they looked around, Bobby heard a voice.

"Mr. Policeman."

It was a familiar voice. Bobby then realized it was Earl, the older black man who lived beside the tracks near Mumford Street. Bobby and Wally had talked with him a couple of days ago.

“Hey Earl. What are you doing way down here?” Bobby asked, looking at the fishing rod he was carrying. “Jest tryin’ to get me some cats for supper. Did you Fellers find out who kilt Miz Baker? She was a nice lady.” Earl mumbled.

“No, Earl, not yet. We were checking out the old underground railroad cellar and tunnel.” Bobby replied.

“Have you’uns checked the other tunnel and cellar? Earl again mumbled.

Bobby looked at Mac, “No, Earl. We haven’t. Where does that tunnel come out?”

“Up there around the bend of the river.” Earl pointed in the direction. “I wuz down here jest the other day and ol’ Doc, he come down here too. He give me two bits and told me to go over to May’s and tell ‘em he sent me. He didn’t want me to have to scrounge around out here in the swamp trying to find some food.”

Mac and Bobby went up the riverbank and around the bend and started looking for the entrance to the tunnel, Earl had mentioned.

“It’s over here.” A voice said again.

Bobby looked back and there was Earl again, standing next to a large brush pile. He pulled the brush back slightly and Bobby could see the darkness of the entrance, behind the brush.

It was obvious where someone had been going in and out of the tunnel. Mac and Bobby followed the tunnel until it opened up into the cellar. The room was not as large as the other. Leaned up against the wall directly across from the tunnel entrance was a ladder leading up to the back of the blacksmith shop.

To the left Bobby saw a door. He and Mac drew their weapons, approached the door. Opening the door quickly, both reacted at the same time. Doc Baker, and Kara, bound and gagged, barely alive were lying on the ground.

Mac and Bobby quickly holstered their weapons, and began to untie the two. Both were dehydrated, weak and unable to even stand. Mac stayed with them while Bobby ran to get help and bring back water.

“Doc, how long have you been here?” Mac asked. “Doc. Can you talk to me Doc?” He was delirious leading Mac to suspect he had been drugged. Kara was only semi-conscious and unable to speak either.

Finally, Doc reached up and grasped Mac’s arm. He began to try to speak, but was unintelligible.

“Slow down Doc. Try to speak slowly.” Mac directed. Doc struggled but began to utter a few words.

“Kill us.” Doc strained to say. “Kill us.” He said again. “She wants kill us.”

‘She’ Mac thought. “ She who, Doc? Who is she? Who is trying to kill you?”

Doc lost consciousness at that point. Mac heard a noise coming from the tunnel. He reached for his hand gun, and quietly eased back into a dark corner. Someone emerged from the tunnel. It was Earl.

“Earl.” Mac called out, startling Earl. “What are you doing in here?”

“I jest walked in here. I was wanting to see what you was doing. I seen that there other feller run out and go back towards

the house. I jest..." Earl stopped in mid-sentence. "Oh my God, is that Doc and Ms. Kara?"

"Yeah, it is Earl. When did you say you saw Doc and he gave you money to buy supper?" Mac inquired.

"That was a couple of days ago, yeah, two days ago." Earl said. "Are they dead?" He wanted to know.

"No, Earl, just real bad shape. I think they have been drugged." Mac offered.

Earl took a flask from his back pocket, took the cap off and gulped a drink. "Want a drink, Buddy?" Earl asked Mac.

"No, thanks Earl, I don't think I need any whiskey right now."

"That ain't whiskey, it's just water. I don't drink no whiskey no more..." And while he was still talking Mac was reaching for the flask of water. He removed the cap from the flask and tossed it aside. He then poured a very small amount on Doc's lips. He began to lick his lips and in a moment opened his eyes. Mac gave him a small drink of water. Doc struggled wanting more water.

"Easy Doc, easy. We got to do it a little at a time." Mac then moved over to Kara, wetting her lips with the water. She didn't react.

Moving back over to Doc , He gave him a little bigger drink. He moved to Kara again, this time he opened her lips slightly and poured a very small amount of water , then almost like massaging her cheeks, he moved the water around in her mouth so it would be absorbed.

Doc was now getting a little more active, so Mac gave him a little larger drink. Mac heard a noise in the tunnel again, only this time he heard voices, and he recognized Bobby and Toney. They rushed to Mac, each one carrying a bucket of water and a long handled ladle. Doc was now sitting up slightly. He reached and grabbed the ladle, drinking down more water.

For the first time, Kara began to stir and opened her eyes. Her reaction and the fear in her eyes was a horrifying sight.

“It’s okay Ms. Kara. It’s Okay now.” Mac tried to assure her, then he turned his attention to Doc. “Doc, you said she tried to kill you. Who was trying to kill you?”

Kara’s fear seemed to increase when Mac asked the question.

Doc looked very nervous also, then he said, “she was, the Bokor. The priestess was trying to kill us.

“The priestess?” Mac repeated.

“Yeah, the Priestess Desiree.” Doc said.

Earl’s eyes then widened also, “ She was here. It had to be her. Covered with a cloak and a hood over her head.”

“When Earl, when was she here?” Bobby asked.

“Jest awhile ago. Jest afore I come in the tunnel.”

“ We have got to get out of here.” Mac ordered “She knows we are in here, all of us. Bobby and Mac helped Doc to his feet and started toward the tunnel. Toney helped Kara up and then put her over his shoulder. He gave Earl a push toward the tunnel and he followed, carrying Kara. As they reached the entry of the tunnel, Toney heard a noise. He saw the trap door above the ladder leading to the blacksmith shop open and something was thrown to the floor of the cavern. Toney’s heart sped up when he saw the sparks from the burning fuse on the dynamite.

“Run! “ Toney yelled. “Run. Dynamite. Run Earl.”

As he called Earl’s name, a loud explosion filled the cave, and progressed to the tunnel. It caused the cavern to begin to collapse, then the earth and rocks of the roof of the tunnel began to fall, slowly at first, then at a rapid pace. The strong concussion and



the forceful rush of air out of the tunnel opening literally picked up Toney, Kara, and Earl, throwing them out the tunnel's entrance.

A large cloud of thick, dry, dust, belched from the opening, covering everyone. Toney couldn't see, he couldn't hear, he couldn't breathe. His mind wondered if this was the way his life would end. He heard his name.

“Toney. Toney. Where are you? Are you okay?”

When Toney finally got a small breath of air he began to cough and choke. Just enough noise for Bobby to hear him, find him, and drag him to fresh air. Mac found Earl and dragged him to where Toney was lying. Doc was sitting there also. As the cloud began to clear a little, Bobby found Kara. She was not breathing. After a moment she began to cough.

Mac helped Toney down the river bank and into the water where he could wash the dust from his eyes, mouth, and nose and re-hydrate himself. The others were helped down to the river also.

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## **CHAPTER 14 Off To The Bokor's Temple**

Doc and Kara were taken to the hospital. Earl was checked by the doctor and released. The others were all too macho to be checked by the doctor.

“Pretty close call,” Mac said as he slapped Toney on the shoulder. “I want you and Bobby to go home and rest up a bit. I’ll get Wally to help me and Adam.”

“No Sarge. We are okay, really we are.” Bobby pleaded and Toney agreed with him.

“You do as you are told. Take it easy for a few days. You both heard what the doctor said about breathing in and getting all that dust in your lungs. It would be easy to develop pneumonia.” Mac would not listen to their arguments.

Doc was sitting up in the bed when Mac and Adam came in. “Doing better Doc?” Mac asked. “Yeah, a lot better and thanks Mac. I’m sorry I wasn’t real hospitable last time we talked.”

“Well Doc, I have got questions, lots of questions.” Mac stated. “You can clear up a whole lot, just be honest with us. Okay

Doc, tell us what is going on. We already know about Charity's murder and Stewart going to prison.

"I'll start back eight years ago. Stewart was found guilty, and it was pretty obvious, with the evidence pointing to him. But Denise who was 16 at the time and Colton, who was 14, did not believe their father was guilty.

Denise even stated that Inez and I would 'be sorry' for falsely accusing her father of the rape and murder, but neither Inez or myself accused Stewart. Colton was not as vocal as Denise but he went along with her.

Charity was murdered on June 16, 1881, and Stewart arrested two days later. Inez was murdered on June 16, 1889. I suspected right away that Denise and Colton had something to do with it, but whether they did it themselves or hired someone, I didn't know. Then I learned of the three men from New Orleans. I never thought of them killing the hobos, or kidnapping Ella. I thought they would come directly after me, but that wasn't the plan. Then murder of Inez was part of the plan, and setting up the connections to voodoo and black magic, that also was part of the plan.

You guys took the bait, hook, line, and sinker. But you were a little smarter than they thought, and Ella turned out to be a tough little cookie and threw a wrench in the plan.”

“So, Denise and Colton wanted to frame you for the murders and avenge Stewart’s death.” Mac asked.

“Oh Mac, Stewart is not dead. He has been living in New Orleans since his escape, and has not been in St. Louis at all. The two women and the child in the crawlspace at the old mill were Colton’s wife, his wife’s sister and the sister’s daughter. They were all three raped and killed, not by Stewart, but by Colton. Colton also killed Charity and probably more we are not aware of. He paid Jacque and Andre to kill Inez.”

“Now I understand why Inez made so many trips to New Orleans.” Mac said.

“Mac, that’s when she discovered that Calvin was actually Colton. He had been living and working here for two years and we had no idea.”

“What about Denise?” Adam wanted to know. “How is she fitting in to all of this?”

“She was part of the setup and then the cover up. I believe you have met Denise, Adam.”

Adam looked puzzled.

“She goes by the name of Desiree now.” Doc revealed.

Mac and Adam left the hospital room. Mac made arrangement to have officers posted at Doc and Kara’s rooms.

Mac wanted to arrest Denise or Desiree as she called herself now, before she could flee. If she could get away from St. Louis, she would be very hard to find. But Mac’s main concern was to capture Calvin. Not only was he involved in this conspiracy and murder, but he was a serial killer, who would kill again.

Mac took Adam and six other officers and rushed to the Bokor’s Temple in the latin community of East St. Louis, and although Emilio had attempted to confuse the officers the last time, so they could not find their way to the temple, his efforts failed. Mac and Adam knew exactly where to go. Surrounding the temple and securing all doors and escape routes, Mac and Adam entered the temple. The small hallways and rooms seemed to just wind around and around in circles. All windows and openings were covered to prevent light from entering. Mac and Adam would rip off any

window coverings as they came upon them, allowing light in. A crowd of people began to gather outside the temple, watching as the officers ripped the cover off of the windows and searched the temple for the Priestess. Desiree was not found.

Outside the temple rumors began to be spread. Some were saying the Priestess had simply escaped, other that she had made herself invisible, or that she had made herself disappear.

Mac remembered searching at Doc's stable, and the second tunnel and ladder to the blacksmith shop.

"Look for anywhere there may be a trap door and escape route." Mac ordered the officers helping with the search. A short while later, Pete Green and Mikey Sparrow, referred to as 'Bird' by the other officers were looking at the Pentagram on the raised portion of the floor. Bird kicked the side of it and realizing it was hollow grasped the edge of the top and raised it up.

"Well, looky here." Bird exclaimed. "Hey, Mac. I found your escape tunnel. It wasn't hidden very well, was it?" Bird pointed out.

Mac looked into the opening and saw a ladder.

"Guess she went out this way. Pete, you and Bird check it out. See where it leads to."

“Will do Mac. Grab a lantern Bird.” Pete said. The lantern was lit and the two officers started in.

The coverings over the windows were removed and a portion of the windows were painted black. The painted windows were broken out by the officers, providing a view into the Temple many of the locals had never seen. It also provided a view out into the street. Adam stood next to the pentagram and looked out into the crowd in the street. He looked at all the people fascinated by the scene inside the temple. Then he saw eyes staring at him over the edge of a cloak held in front of a face. He stared into those eyes, beautiful eyes. The cloak slowly moved down revealing the beautiful face, he had seen before. His eyes locked on that face. Without looking away, he yelled loudly, “Mac! She’s outside.”

Mac looked quickly, but did not see her. Adam ran toward the window, diving through the window and into the street. He quickly stood and looked to where she was standing, but she was gone. Adam ran the direction he thought she had gone.

Mac and Wally ran into the street also and pushed their way through the crowd. They made their way to the window Adam came through, but he was not there. Neither did they see the Priestess.



Pete and Bird reached the bottom of the ladder and began to follow the tunnel. They had traveled about thirty feet when they saw an old slender sickly looking man and two beautiful women, one on each side of him, kneeling on the floor. He had his backed turned to them, and as he turned around they saw the fuse burning. Mac and Wally, who were still outside heard a loud explosion. The crowd outside the temple started running in panic not knowing what had taken place.

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## **CHAPTER 15    Confronting The Priestess**

Adam had run about four blocks and had not seen Desiree. He stopped to catch his breath, and when he looked up, he saw her. She smiled at him and he watched her go down an alley. He ran to the alley and down the alley, but it came to a dead end. Adam looked around, he looked up, wondering where she may have gone. When he turned around to exit the alley she stood about six feet from him. She removed the hood, and he was once again mesmerized by her beauty. He stared into her eyes, beautiful eyes, hypnotizing eyes. Without speaking, she stepped toward him, reached under his jacket, removed his weapon and tossed it into a pile of trash. She removed his police ID and tossed it in the pile of trash also. She then took him by the hand and led him out of the alley. At that moment he was totally under her control.

Desiree led Adam to the Freeport Hotel. They walked through the lobby to the stairs and up to the fourth floor, room 402. Desiree unlocked the door. She and Adam entered and he walked over to the bed. He sat down and stared into space as if in a trance.

Mac and Wally were joined at the temple by Chief Atkins, Mayor Ball and several other St. Louis city government officials. Chief Atkins approached Mac.

“We now have nine dead citizens and attempts on several more. Mac, I don’t care what it takes, every resource, every man, bring them in Mac. I want Denise and Colton brought to justice. Find them Mac, I want them, dead or alive.

“We have an officer missing Chief. Mac said. “Adam thought he saw Desiree out in the street and he went after her. We haven’t seen or heard from him since.”

“Find him!” the Chief said authoritatively. “I am going to see the Sheriff to get additional officers.”

Mac and Wally went out into the street, not knowing where to start. Someone called out to Mac. It was Toney and Mike Kline, a rookie cop. They came up to Mac and Wally.

Wally began to speak to Toney, “You heard about the explosion? We lost two officers.” Toney was shocked. He couldn’t speak. All color faded from Mike’s face. After a few moments, Wally spoke again. “It’s up to us guys. Let’s go find them and bring them to justice.”

Wally took Mike with him, and Toney went with Mac. They began canvassing the streets searching for anyone who saw the officer or the priestess. They had searched a couple of hours when Wally and Mike approached an old woman, a street vendor, who was selling livestock, chickens, ducks, and goats. Most of the animals were used for food, but were some sold for voodoo or black magic sacrifices.

Mike, who spoke some Spanish, asked the old woman if she had seen the officer, and she hesitated answering. Then he asked about the Priestess, and she became very apprehensive, not wanting to talk to him or even look at him. A young girl, kneeled at the rear of the cages of animals spoke up. "She fears Priestess Desiree."

"She does?" Mike responded. "Do you fear the Priestess also?"

"She is evil. She is Bokor, black magic. My grandmother provides her with sacrifices. I am very afraid." The young girl spoke, keeping her head covered.

"So, you know Priestess Desiree. Have you seen her today?" Mike asked, anticipating a positive answer.

“Yes,” the young girl answered. “She passed by here awhile ago. She had a young man with her. She met another man at the corner, and they talked for a moment. He went back this direction, and Desiree went down that street with the man.”

“Thank you young lady, and thank your Grandmother also.” Mike said to them. The young girl smiled at him, but the smile disappeared. My Grandmother does not want her to know she saw you. “Come on Wally, she is saying they went down Depot Street.”

After traveling Depot Street for about six blocks they had no further information. They saw Lloyd, the night clerk at the Freeport Hotel. Mike and Wally hurriedly greeted him and asked if he had seen Adam or the Priestess. He replied that he had not. They had begun to walk away, when Lloyd called to them. “Desiree and a man rented a room at the Freeport Hotel a couple of years ago, when she first came to St. Louis and she has kept that room and used it off and on. There was some man staying in the room for the last couple of weeks, but I haven’t seen him in the last couple of days.”

Wally became excited, “What room, Lloyd? What number? Mike, I believe we may have found them.”

“Wally, I believe room 401, 402, 403.....Right along there somewhere. Corliss is on the front desk, she can tell you.”

Before he could finish speaking, Wally and Mike started running toward the Freeport, as Lloyd yelled his last few words.

They went into the lobby, stopping long enough to ask Corliss the room number and then they ran up the stairs.

Lloyd continued on down the street when he saw Mac and Toney on the other side of the street. “Mac. Mac.” Lloyd called. Mac and Toney stopped. Lloyd related to them what he had just told Wally and Mike, and they too, ran toward the Freeport.

Wally and Mike stood before the door at room 402, quietly training their weapons on the door. They did not know what was taking place inside, who if anyone was inside or whether there would be any resistance.

Hearing a noise Wally looked back to see Mac come through the door to the stairwell. Mac signaled to them to remain quiet. He whispered to them that Toney was coming up the back stairs.

“Ready?” Mac whispered. Mike and Wally nodded yes. Mike raised his right leg and with a swift forceful kick forced the door

open. Desiree was at the foot of the bed and ran toward the head. All three officers had their weapons aimed at her while scanning the room for anyone else.

Adam was lying on the bed. Mac could see he was breathing. Suddenly Desiree raised her arm and in her hand was a voodoo doll. She held it with her fingers on the back and her thumb on the chest. "STOP." Desiree exclaimed. "Stop, or I will kill him." The officers looked at each other.

Desiree began to squeeze the doll, and Adam groaned, clutching at his chest. "I will crush his heart." She threatened.

Reaching over to the dresser, she picked up a basket, dumping its' contents into the floor. She threw the basket in the direction of the officers. "Put your weapons in the basket, and step away."

The officers hesitated, and Desiree again squeezed the doll. Adam squirmed clutching his chest.

"Okay." Mac said, and he dropped his revolver in the basket. Wally and Mike did also.



“Move over next to the window.” Desiree ordered. They all complied, and she picked up the basket and started out the door. The officers stood motionless as she went out.

They heard a loud crash and ran to the door.

Toney was standing there, in the hallway, holding the basket containing the officer’s weapons. Desiree lay on the floor, a broken picture frame around her neck.

Toney looked at Mac and shook his head, “Sarge, she says she’s been framed.”

Toney began to secure his prisoner, Mac grabbed the voodoo doll, and the officers went back into the room to check on Adam.

Adam was semi-conscious. Mac removed a piece of fabric tied around the doll’s head and a pin in the neck portion of the doll. Adam began to come around and sat up on the bed. Mac told him what had taken place, and that Desiree was now in custody. Mac looked at the doll. He raised the arm of the doll and pretended to have the doll hit himself in the face. Adam’s arm raised and struck him in the face.

“Give me that thing.” Adam demanded.

“ No, I think I’ll keep this,” Mac said. “It may become very valuable.”

## **CHAPTER 16    Raised From The Dead**

Desiree was taken to the downtown Police station. She remained quiet, refusing to answer any questions. Colton now became the main object of the investigation. All officers remained on alert, but returned to regular duty, except for Mac, Wally and Adam. These three were given the task of locating Colton, where ever he may be. Chief Atkins specific instructions were 'bring him in walking or on a slab', it really didn't matter to him. After a couple days, Doc and Kara, were well enough to go back to their home. Mac stopped by to see Doc and find out if he maybe had any ideas where Colton may have gone. Doc didn't have any fresh ideas, but assured Mac if he came up with anything he would let him know. No one seemed to know much about Colton. Mac started going over the entire case and he went over it again, and again.

Mac went home for the day, and it was nearing sundown. He sat on the veranda with Ella, while Rosa, the cook was finishing up preparing dinner. Mac was having a scotch and soda, while Ella was sipping on a mint julep. Ella stood at the rock wall looking out

toward the river, and Mac walked up behind her putting an arm around her waist, resting his chin on her head. The paddlewheel boats were traversing the river, barges being pushed by tugs were navigating the center portion of the river to avoid running aground. The paddleboats had 'specs' or watches on the bow to keep an eye out for shoals and sandbars. The river was demanding their attention as the sun set on the far side. Suddenly Mac heard a train whistle. Nothing unusual, but it triggered a thought. Most of Colton's time was taken up caring for the horses and cleaning the stables at Doc's residence. He lived in a small room attached to the side of the tackhouse. He could come and go as he pleased and if he didn't want to be seen, he could use one of the tunnels to go down to the river.

One thing haunted Mac, and he had no answer. Colton knew Myrt, Luthie, and Ragman, the three hobos. Mac looked up the river to the train trestle. He saw the black smoke from the coal fired locomotive curling skyward in the dimming light of dusk. He heard the train whistle again followed by the bellow of a riverboat horn, as if they were communicating with one another.

He began to think out loud and Ella listened closely to him. What is something that the hobos and Colton had in common? He repeated the question again and shaking his head tuned back to his lounge chair. He opened up the humidor and removed a cigar. A good quality Cuban cigar Sugar had left him a couple of days ago. Ella walked by placing her hand on his shoulder and proceeded into the house and headed to the kitchen to check the status of dinner. Mac stood and lit the cigar and turned behind him to light a gas lamp on the wall. There was also a coal oil lamp on the table and he reached over to light it, but stopped and extinguished the match. “Hmmm,” he said out loud... “3 on one match? Bad luck.” He reached in his pocket and removed another match.

Mac didn't sleep well and was awake before dawn. Rosa was already awake and poured Mac a cup of coffee. Rosa offered to prepare breakfast for Mac, and he asked her to wait just a while. Adam and Wally were coming by. He asked Rosa to please send them out to the veranda when they arrived. He went out, sat in his lounge chair to watch the sunrise, just as he had watched the

sunset the night before. In his mind he kept asking, 'what did the hobos and Colton have in common?'

He watched the sunrise and the activity on the river was picking up when he heard a knock on the door. "I'll get that Rosa," Mac called. "Jeez, the sun's been up thirty minutes where have you guys been?" he said loudly, as he opened the door. But it wasn't Adam and Wally.

"Doc? Doc is everything okay?" Mac asked as he looked and saw Kara and a man he didn't know.

"Mac, I, uh, We apologize for disturbing you so early,"

Mac interrupted Doc. "It's okay Doc, you folks come on in. Uh, Ella is still sleeping and I have been waiting, well, expecting Adam and Wally, and," He stopped abruptly. Looking behind him he saw Rosa. "Oh, Rosa would you get coffee for our guests? And remember Adam and Wally will be here shortly."

"Adam and Wally are here." Adam said as they walked through the open door.

Doc spoke up, "Mac, gentlemen, I would like to introduce you to Stewart, Stewart Baker, my brother." An eerie quiet fell over

the group. All three detectives could have been knocked over with a feather.

“I don’t know what to say, except Rosa, put on a big pot of coffee and you may want to wake Ms. Ella for this.” Mac released a deep breath. “Doc, Stewart, Ms. Kara, please have a seat.”

“It is indeed a pleasure to meet you Stewart.” Mac began. I know it is difficult to discuss, but we need your help to find Colton,” Mac hesitated. “We must find him, before he kills again.”

Stewart spoke up, “I am afraid it may be too late, Mr. O’Hara.” He held out a letter. “I received this yesterday, just before I left New Orleans.”

No one spoke, as Mac reached out to take the letter.

*“My Dearest Father,*

*I hope this letter finds you well. I have been about some personal business and I am sorry I have not communicated with you, as I know you have had no knowledge of where Denise or myself have been. We embarked on a special project a while back and were , sincerely hoping to write you with good news, but alas,*

*the best laid plans of men oft go awry, and so it happened with this project. We are in the process of re-thinking and re-planning the project and have come to the conclusion that there are some obstacles that must be neutralized so the plan can come to fruition.*

*Most of these obstacles have names, that I will reveal to you here in this correspondence. I do not fear that providing these names to you will hinder their elimination. It is with regret that I must acknowledge the deaths of three of my co-workers, Ricardo, Jacque, and Andre. Their deaths will be avenged. It is with regret also that the pawns of this game, Luthie, Ragman, and Myrt, had to be eliminated to preserve the continuity of complete secrecy. Just for your information, Father, and I will include you also Mr. O'Hara, for I kne wmy Father, being an honest man would bring this letter to you, I want you to know I have solicited additional help to accomplish the task I have undertaken. As of this day, I have posted a reward of \$1000 each, for the death of the persons listed at the bottom of this letter. The rewards have been placed in the care of a confident, known only to me and those entrusted with carrying out the purge of these god forsaken souls.*



*So you see Father, and Mr. O'Hara, capturing or killing me does not forego the complete elimination of you all. And Father, I do know that you did not escape prison in Louisiana. Maybe I should refer to you by your real title, US Marshal Stewart Baker. I was aware of the plan you had to capture me. Sorry, Father...I wasn't ready to be captured.*

*Sincerely,*

*Colton Baker*

*Your son and executioner.*

"Mac, who's names are on that list?" Adam asked.

"All of us sitting here, plus Ella, Toney, and Chief Atkins, and one more" Mac responded.

"Who is the one more, Mac?" Wally inquired.

Mac took a look around, "Denise." He said.

"Do you think he can do this, Stewart? Or should I say Marshal?"

"Mac, he is dead serious. He is a serial murder, with the intelligence of a genius." Stewart said. "And you may call me

Marshal if you like. I have been a US Marshall since just after Inez' Father was killed.

Colton was right. I never spent a day in prison. We knew Colton had murdered Charity, but we had no evidence, no evidence at all. I had suspected Colton in the rape and murder of a woman in South Carolina, but there was no evidence there either. It was my idea to frame myself, but I never thought Denise would become involved with Colton. We do know now, that whatever Colton was involved in, Denise was an accomplice. She knew everything, but didn't try to stop anything."

"How do we stop him? Wally asked. "We are sitting ducks. These 'bounty hunters' know who we are, but we have no idea who they may be. Mac, this is getting kinda scary."

"It's getting very scary, Wally." Mac observed. "We have to set up a protective barrier, that's difficult to penetrate. Doc, I want you and Kara to go home. Wally and Adam, you accompany them and remain with them until I send some officers to provide security. Stewart, I would like for you to remain with me. We will take Ella with us and go to Chief Atkins to make him aware of the situation.

We also need to increase security around Denise, or Desiree, whatever you want to call her.”

“I agree, Mac.” Stewart said. “No one is to be alone, not even for a brief moment. We are dealing with a very intelligent serial killer. Our only hope is to lure him into our backyard, where he is not comfortable, and will hopefully make a mistake. When he does, we need to strike. He is my son, my flesh and blood, but do not hesitate to take him out.”

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## **CHAPTER 17 Why Did You Leave Me, Daddy**

Mac, Ella, and Stewart walked into Chief Atkins office. The Chief looked up from his desk, surprised to see Mac and Ella and a gentleman he did not know. The Chief greeted Mac and Ella and turned to shake hands with the other man.

“Chief, I would like to introduce you to Stewart Baker.” Chief Atkins eyes brightened with surprise. “Chief, this is US Marshal Stewart Baker.” Chief Atkins looked stunned and very confused. “Have a seat Chief, this is going to take some explaining.”

A short while later Wally and Adam arrived at the Chief’s office, and soon after Toney, who had been notified to report to the Chief, was escorted in by two uniformed officers.

“What’s going on?” Toney wanted to know. “Am I being arrested?”

“No,” Mac replied. “But, your life has been threatened, as well as everyone else in this room. Have a seat, Toney, and I’ll explain.”

Mac again went through the entire scenario. “We have never been confronted with an intelligent, psychopathic serial killer

before. The question gentlemen and Ella, is how do we handle this, and remain safe.”

As Mac finished his statement, Stewart spoke, “It is evident,” He began. “I have been working with this situation now for several years and it has taken this long to even get close to Colton and Denise. To have one of them in custody is indeed a major accomplishment. Our best source of information at this point is Denise and I think it is up to me to get her to talk.”

“I agree,” Chief Atkins said. “Wally, have her brought down to an interrogation room and let’s get started.”

The interrogation room was a bland room, no decoration at all. It had a wooden table and several chairs in the center of the room. There were windows high up on one wall to allow light to enter, but as far as a view outside, only the sky was visible. There were two doors on opposite sides of the room. One led out to a hallway, from which Denise is brought to the room. The other door led into an observation room. The observation room was setup with a platform built to allow observers access to several small window up next to the ceiling to view and hear what was taking place in the interrogation room. The other two walls had framing to simulate

windows which served to mask to actual observation windows.

Everyone and everything was in place and Denise was brought into the room.

She was placed in a chair facing the wall with the observation windows. The windows to the outdoors were on her right. From the observation windows, Adam looked at what he remembered as a beautiful, seductive woman, but who now appeared disheveled, unkempt, more like a scared child. She also appeared to have been crying. Denise sat at the table, wringing her hands, breathing very shallow, in anticipation of an interviewer coming through the door. Adam thought how this was much different than when he was confronted by a priestess, with a vast knowledge of the use of hypnotism and powdered forms of hallucinogenic drugs to subdue those she wished to control.

Denise waited. She looked all around. She reached her hand to the rungs near the base of the chair she was sitting in. Pulling on the rung, she felt it move slightly. A quick firm pull and she felt the rung break.

Denise's attention quickly turned when she heard the door open. A deep breath, a loud gasp, and a terrified look came over Denise as she saw her father step through the door.

Stewart walked directly to the table, his eyes fixed on Denise, as she hung her head, refusing to look at him. He moved the chair at the table as if preparing to sit down, but stood stoically beside the table, fixated on the form in front of him that he knew was once his daughter.

"Hello, Denise." Stewart said. He remained quiet, possibly expecting a response. But there was no response. Denise turned to her right in her chair, raised her head and stared through the windows at the sky above.

"Hello, Denise." Stewart once again said. Still, there was no response. "Your mother said..."

He was quickly cut off as Denise spun around in her chair, her eyes full of fire and a totally different evil look upon her countenance. "Don't you speak of my Mother!" she yelled at him. The wide eyed fiery glare slowly subsided, and she turned back to once again stare out into the blue sky.



“You are going to hear me. You are going to talk to me. You are going to help me find Colton.” Stewart yelled back at Denise.

In the observation room, Mac quickly stood, but Chief Atkins reached out taking him by the sleeve of his jacket, and lifting his hand to Mac, as a sign of ‘it’s okay.’ Mac sat back down. Adam shifted nervously in his chair.

Everything was quiet in the interrogation room. Stewart sat down in his chair. He looked at Denise, and he looked out to the blue sky. “It’s a beautiful day.” He said.

I remember days we would go down to the Mississippi and go fishing, or swimming. One day we paddled around the edge of the water in our boat in Boot’s Cove, gigging frogs. We took them home, cleaned them up, and your mom cooked the legs for our dinner. You were so proud, because you had provided dinner for the family.”

Denise didn’t answer, but just kept staring into the sky. A small bird lighted on the window sill. “See that bird, Daddy?” Denise asked.

“ Yes I do.” Stewart replied

She turned in her chair to directly face him. “That bird is free. In Louisiana, all I wanted was for my Daddy to be free. To be home with me, to go to the river, to bring dinner home, to tuck me in at night. But my Daddy had lied. He was not at home with me because he lied. All I want now is to be free.” She slowly reached down to the rung on the chair that she had broken earlier. She completed the break of the rung and stood rapidly raising the jagged sharp end of the rung into the air. She plunged the sharp end into her chest. Her eyes widened, she took a deep breath, and fell to the floor.

A stunned silence filled the room, then all rushed to Denise. She had no pulse, no breathing. Stewart fell to his knees at her side. He cradled her in his arms and cried.

The investigators gathered back in the Chief’s office. A brief discussion of tactics and the search for Colton began.

## **CHAPTER 18 Time Will Tell**

It had been five months since the last known communication of any kind from Colton Baker. There had been no additional murders or attempts on the lives of any of the investigators or others named on Colton's "hit list."

Some began to think the threats were just idle and that Colton was unable to carry out his plan. Stewart Baker continued to reiterate to the officers involved that this is just what Colton wanted. A telegraph arrived from police in Memphis, informing the investigators that a man named Colton Baker had booked passage on a riverboat to New Orleans. But Colton Baker never boarded the boat. Stewart and Mac made a trip to Memphis to check out the only semblance of a lead to surface in five months, but it was not much of a lead.

Once in Memphis, a local detective named Lucas Deering presented what information he had to them. After speaking with the riverboat booking agent, Mac and Stewart had come to the conclusion that the lead was a dead end. Mac asked the booking

agent for a passenger manifest and was given a list containing the names of the passengers for that trip. Having this list in his hand, Mac, not wishing to cause too much of a problem, asked for a passenger list for the next two excursions to New Orleans. He folded up these lists, placed them in his jacket pocket. He and Stewart thanked the agent and Detective Deering for their help and boarded their boat for their trip back to St. Louis. Mac and Stewart settled in their rooms then met in the galley for dinner.

They discussed the fact of the lead being a long shot, but it was all they had. Mac reached into his jacket pocket and retrieved the copies of the passenger list. He viewed the first seeing where the name Colton Baker, had been crossed off and noted "passage delayed."

"Look at this, Stewart. It doesn't indicate a no-show. It is noted as the subject just delayed his departure." He handed him the list.

Stewart looked at the list as Mac looked at the second list. He laid the second list on the table and began to peruse the third list. "Holy crap, Stewart. Look at this, look at this, Stewart. This has got to be him!" Mac declared. Look at this... Colton Baker; Calvin Barker;

Clarence Bradley....That's got to be him! Clarence Bradley left six days later for New Orleans.”

“Mac, we've got to get off this boat. We've got to head to New Orleans.” Stewart replied.

A riverboat trip down the Mississippi is a really relaxing trip, especially in good weather. The boat crew would devise varied modes of entertainment, which included shows and gambling, some with passenger interaction. Mac and Stewart returned to the Memphis Police Department and located Detective Deering. He was informed what they had found and suspected.

“Lucas, why were you going over passenger lists, and when you saw the name Colton Baker and why did it catch your attention?” Stewart asked.

“I was just checking for Vicksburg Police. They are working a murder case of a woman found on board a riverboat. She was killed and mutilated.” Lucas explained.

“But, what about the name, Colton Baker, why did that catch your interest?” Mac asked.

“We had received communication several months ago about Colton Baker being sought in reference to a murder in St. Louis,” Lucas said.

“You guys may be interested to know, the riverboat, the Natchez, that Clarence Bradley boarded, is moored at the dock now.

“We have got to book passage on that boat, Mac.” Stewart said.

Mac, Stewart, and Lucas wasted no time beginning to question the riverboat employees, many of whom remembered Clarence Bradley. He was a flamboyant and memorable person. Bradley was a gambler and a ladies’ man.

Mac talked with the Purser, who also remembered Bradley quite well. “He appeared to have a lot of money,” the Purser said. “He had me to handle several thousand dollars for him.”

The Purser recommended Mac talk with Virginia, one of the servers in the dining room. It seems that Bradley had taken a special interest in her.

When Mac talked with Virginia, she seemed quite apprehensive about discussing Bradley at all. She did seem to

open up more with Stewart when she discovered he was a U.S. Marshall. Virginia felt uncomfortable any time Bradley was around her. Bradley had a residence in Baton Rouge and was constantly inviting Virginia to his home, even to the point of giving her the address and a key to the house. He said the servants were always there, if he wasn't.

Virginia gave the address and the key to the investigators. The trip to Baton Rouge seemed to take forever.

Mac, Stewart, and Lucas were met by two Baton Rouge Detectives when the boat docked. Bradley's home had been under surveillance since Baton Rouge had been notified, but when the house was entered only a caretaker and his wife were present.

The caretaker told the officers that Mr. Bradley had left 3 days prior and would not return. The home was to be sold. The caretaker did not know where he may have gone. Mac and Stewart were at a dead end again.

A well dressed man walked down the gangway, stopped and removed his Panama straw hat, and looked around at the beautiful beach and the beautiful women. A man walked up to him

opened a humidor and offered him a cigar. “Ahh, a real Cuban cigar, made right here in the caribbean.”

The man spoke to him. “This way Mr. Bryan, I will show you to your bungalow.”

“Please, call me Christopher.”