

The Cabinetmaker

Alan Jones



First sampler edition
Copyright © 2013 Alan Jones

Alan Jones has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be identified as the author of this work. All rights reserved, except you may for non-commercial purposes download, read, make verbatim copies and distribute this first sampler edition only.

This book is a work of fiction and, except in the case of historical fact, any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

The Cabinetmaker
By Alan Jones

For Mary

CONTENTS

PROLOGUE

CHAPTER 1 CRIME

CHAPTER 2 FRANCIS

CHAPTER 3 SARAH

CHAPTER 4 ARRESTS

A dictionary of the Glasgow slang words included in the book, with audio, is available at www.thecabinetmaker.info

PROLOGUE

[Sunday April 29th 2008]

I stood in the warm April sunshine watching the flames curl and twist, destroying most of what remained of Francis Hare's life.

Thirty years after the death of his son, Patrick, I spent the whole day in the yard behind the workshop loading up the wood-burner with all the papers, photographs and newspaper clippings that Francis had collected since Patrick's murder.

As I loaded it up, I glanced at the odd item but I only kept one; the front page from the *Sunday Mail* of 30th April 1978. The headline read:

GIFTED GLASGOW STUDENT MURDERED BY GANG OF THUGS

I read the story again slowly, even though, like most of the stuff I was burning, I knew its contents only too well:

Student, Patrick Hare, 20, was beaten to death in an apparently unprovoked attack close to Byres Road in Glasgow's west end. The attack occurred between 11 o'clock and midnight on Saturday, and police are appealing for anyone who was in the area at the time to come forward.....

I laid it aside and got on with the task in hand. It all barely fitted in the furnace, but I managed, and I doused it with diesel to make sure that the fire took hold. By the time the sun was going down, all that was left was a thick layer of ash settled half way up the glass door of the cooling stove. I had kept it all, even after I retired, having been a detective in Glasgow for over twenty five years. I wrestled with thoughts of telling someone about the events of the last thirty years. But in the end I couldn't bring myself to tell a soul, not even Andy.

Until now.

CHAPTER 1 CRIME

[Sunday April 30th 1978 4pm]

I took to Francis Hare from the first time I met him. He had a dignity and inner strength about him, and despite the circumstances of our first meeting, there was a warmth that showed through at unexpected moments, when you got to know him.

We met in Partick police station, not long after his only son had been brutally beaten and left bleeding to death in the street. I came into the investigation on its second day, having just been transferred from uniform for my probationary period of six months in CID. At first, as the most junior member of the team, and “brand new, out of the box” as Gallagher liked to say, I was expected to watch and learn, and do menial tasks for ninety-five percent of the day.

That day, as was usual in the office, there was a buzz of conversation, the odd laugh, a bit of banter between two of the shift’s comedians, and Detective Inspector Gallagher trying to make himself heard above the clamour.

I probably noticed Francis first, which gave me a chance to watch him as he stood in the corridor with a WPC, waiting to meet with Gallagher. He was a tall, angular man with dark, slightly receding hair. I would have guessed mid-forties. His ‘old-fashioned’ look reminded me somewhat of a black and white photograph of my grandfather at a similar age.

Everyone in the room gradually noticed Francis standing outside, but it must have taken a couple of minutes for the room to quieten, until the two comedians were the only ones who hadn't seen him. Unfortunately, they were verbally abusing each other about their respective old firm teams, who had both won the day before. To avoid further embarrassment, DI Gallagher made a beeline out the door towards Francis, took him by the arm, and led him into the room, coughing loudly.

“Scuse me guys, let's have your ‘tention. For anyone here who hasnae met him, this is Francis Hare, Patrick’s father.” He turned to Francis.

“I'm sorry Francis, I've got a meeting with Chief Inspector Donaldson in two minutes, so I'll leave you with Dave, who'll fill you in on how the investigation is proceeding.” He looked around.

“Dave, come over here a mo’, and tell Francis what progress we’ve been making.” He turned to me. “McDaid, offer Francis something to drink, instead of standing there like a spare prick.”

Francis looked around the room, and for a moment caught my eye.

Gallagher turned away, saying “Must go, Francis, I'll give you a bell tomorrow to keep you in the picture.”

Francis didn't glance round as Gallagher left the room.

“Cup of tea?” I offered Francis nervously, as he still hadn’t uttered a word.

“Aye, that'll do, lad.” he answered, “and who might you be?”

“John McDaid,” I said, shaking his hand. “I've just started my training in CID. I was transferred over from uniform yesterday and they put me in here to help out with the paperwork. I'll get your tea, if you want to talk to Dave.”

When I came back, Dave was giving Francis the latest stuff we had.

“We're close to getting them; we have four or five witnesses who saw a group of youths running down Byres Road about ten minutes before your son was found. One of them had blood on his t-shirt and trousers, according to the best of our wits,...” he turned and picked up a folder, “...a university lab technician on his way home from a late night film at the GFT. He assumed that they had been fighting, and only contacted us today after seeing today's *Sunday Mail*. We've had some good info from a few local pubs about this crowd, one or two names being bandied about and some excellent descriptions. We're hoping for a result by the end of the week. I'll remind the DI to phone, like he promised, if there's any progress.” He turned to me as I returned with the teas. “After he's finished his tea, show Francis down to his car.”

I must have looked taken aback; I was surprised that Dave had been so dismissive. To be fair, Francis never said a word; he just took the tea from me and proceeded to walk out the door, into the corridor. I followed him, spilling some tea on my shoes as I banged through the door.

“Listen, sorry about that, I think everyone is under a bit of pressure,” I spluttered. I made some lame excuses about how busy the investigation was, but Francis' attention seemed to be wandering, as if he had something more important think about.

“Listen, John,” he said suddenly, “you get back in there and I'll find my own way out. You might miss something.”

“Nah, it's OK, I'll see you out, it's nearly five o'clock and my shift's just finishing; I'm heading anyway.”

We walked along the corridor towards the stairs, and I asked him where he was parked.

“Round in the station car park.” he answered, and I showed him the quick way down and through the back entrance.

I felt a deep sadness surrounding him as I watched him slowly walk away towards his car, then I headed for the train to Duke Street, and a night out with some of my mates that had been arranged the previous week.

~~0~~

The following morning I awoke, if that is the best term for what seemed at the time to be part of an on-going horrible dream. Clothes still on, a mouth that tasted like shite and a basin overflowing with last night's regurgitated kebab. Despite the use of a pen to clear the blocked sink, a double dose of Aspirin, a pint of Irn-Bru and a long shower, the little workmen inside my head were still pounding away at the back of my eyes with pneumatic drills when I entered the CID general office. The saving grace was that everyone else seemed to be in a similar condition.

“You lot out on the batter last night?” I asked no one in particular.

Danny Simpson lifted his head from between his hands, elbows still on the table - “We all ended up at the Balmoral - they had a stripper on last night, bit of a dog but...” he looked round, leaned over and whispered in my ear “...Peter Dalry shagged her in the toilet after the show.”

“Piss off,” I said, “not Peter. He's not that long married again.”

“Naw, Gen, straight up - we bloody saw him taking her into the cubicle, and if he wasn't in baw deep, they both deserved a fucking BAFTA, wi the

sounds that were coming out. Anyhow, seems she lost her panties and Tommo saw her on the way out and he said the stuff was runnin' down her leg."

I grimaced. "I didn't need to know that, but thanks for sharing it with me anyway."

I began to feel a bit guilty, not only about the state I was in, but also about the whole squad. I had an awful feeling that if Francis Hare walked in now, he would be absolutely disgusted with us. I knew that DI Gallagher was of the 'work hard, play harder' school, and most shifts would end with a few pints at the Crammond, or the sharing of a bottle of whisky. If you didn't take a regular part in these sessions, you could be made to feel pretty much an outsider. I considered myself a drinker, but I could see I was in exalted company with this lot, who could drink for Scotland.

Shortly after, we were all at our desks, when Gallagher sauntered in.

"Cup of tea, John," he shouted over, "and see if you can rustle up a couple of Paracetamol." He looked around the room and asked about Peter, Chris and Dave.

As I wandered over to the put the kettle on, I heard him say something about "dirty bastard." followed by a laugh. I returned with his tea, and he was still laughing with Danny and Andy. "What's happening this morning", I asked.

"Hold on, give us all a chance to waken up. Anyhow, we'll give the other piss artists ten minutes to show up."

"Only place Peter'll be showing up today is at the clinic," quipped Danny.

There was more laughter, which I joined in with, only feeling a little uneasy at the thought of Peter's discomfort, which could prove to be more

than just physical: his new wife was a feisty girl of Scouser extraction, quite capable of making him suffer for his lapse.

By ten-thirty, there were still only the eight of us. It was such a contrast to yesterday, my first day, which had been pandemonium. Everything was new to me, and chaotic. I'd wondered if I had done the right thing by joining CID, and I hoped I would be able to adapt to the pace at which everything seemed to be happening.

Then, there had been plain-clothes officers everywhere you looked, and everyone was busy doing something. There was a large whiteboard at the front of the room, with a blank flipchart next to it. Gallagher was giving out instructions from the centre of the room.

“Right, I want a photo for each of the names we've got, and two or three of the other scum that we know they hang around with - I want a short bio for each of them, and any other relevant info you can get me - most of it is already in the room - there's a Xerox at the side, so get moving. Here's the list.”

He had handed the list to Danny, and I looked over his shoulder as he read it, while Gallagher left the room, presumably heading back to his own office.

Kevin (Nolman) Nolan

Lee (Scouly) Scoular

Derek (Spaz) Davidson

Malcolm (Malky) McGovern

James Sornie

Stewart (Pinky) McNiven

John (Whitey) White

Billy Green

“Kevin, they call him Nolman, short for ‘Nolan_Man’, is the leader of this gang of bampots. Thin, ugly fucker, bad breath.” Danny grinned, then went on. “They've all got previous, Nolan and John White have done time, young offenders mainly. Most of the stuff they've done is petty - vandalism, breach, shoplifting, but White got the jail for bottling some paki's heid after he had been caught stealing the charity box outside the poor cunt's shop.”

“It's a big step from that to kicking some poor bastard to death, though,” I said. “Were they all involved, d'you think?”

“There's various reports of the gang, all at different times and places; sometimes there were five or six of them, at one point there could have been all eight, but we think the six on the left of that paper were all definitely present when Patrick was killed, but the other two were more than likely present.”

He went on to show me the photos, and give brief descriptions of each.

“Nolan, I've told you about. Scoular, a bit less ugly, short hair and his ears stick out. They're both about five feet ten. Spaz Davidson's slightly smaller, dark hair, and his eyes look as if they are too close together. Inbreeding we think; his Ma's his sister.”

I laughed. “What about the rest?”

“Aye, they're all inbred too.” He smiled. “Pinky McNiven is a short wee fucker, round head, small piggy eyes, hair cropped into the wood. Billy Green is small as well, probably about five seven. He's got a scar on his

forehead from a knife fight. James Sornie, they call him 'Pervo', looks like one. David Johnstone, probably the least hard out of them all, gets the piss ripped a lot. Ginger heid. That leaves John White and Malky McGovern. White's just a thug, but Malky's a slimy bastard, you've got to watch him. Better looking than the rest. Always has a decent looking bird. Mind you, they're jakey birds, so that's not saying much."

I had looked at the photos, thinking that they all looked like evil bastards. That had been my first day. Naively, I had thought that every day would be the same, but here we were a day later, seemingly in the doldrums, doing nothing constructive.

By lunchtime it was obvious that we were going to be a depleted unit, and in fact by now two of them had phoned in 'sick.' Gallagher suggested a pub lunch, but in the end we made do with a few sandwiches ordered in from 'The Crusty Loaf' across the street.

~~0~~

"Right", Gallagher said through a mouthful of chicken mayo as we gathered in the incident room, finishing our lunch, "I'd meant to send eight teams out to do some preliminary interviews on as many of this crowd as we could, but due to staff illness..." he paused, allowing time for dutiful laughs all round, and continued. "We'll have to tackle them in four pairs. John, you come with me, Andy and Danny can go together, Pete and Dave, Joe and Chris, you pair up today. Make sure we get together between times to pool our information."

He had a list of eight names from the previous day's briefing, and he handed them out, keeping three for us to do, for some reason. He threw me the keys and we set off for Clydebank, where all the 'turns' were to take place. The place had suffered massive unemployment over the years as a result of the closures of the shipyards and the Singer Factory. It was nearly 2.30 by now, and our first call was in a block of flats in Glazer Street.

"It would be the fucking top floor," he wheezed, as we climbed the stairs. Gallagher wasn't the fittest, and the stairs were bloody steep. As flats go, these weren't too bad, very little graffiti on the walls, even a few window boxes on the outside, and plant tubs outside the doors on the landings. There was a mixture of small and large flats, and the top flats were of the double storey type. It was in one of these that our first suspect allegedly lived. We knocked on the inner door of the small porch leading off the landing, which was essentially a long balcony running the entire length of the building.

The woman who answered the door was obviously not the boy's mother, I thought to myself, but I was wrong. She didn't look to be over thirty, and ok, despite being dressed a little, well, skanky, to be honest, she rather suited it. This one was definitely a goer, and as I glanced at DS Gallagher, I could see he was thinking along similar lines.

"Aw right, hen, I'm Detective Inspector Gallagher, and this is Detective Constable John McDaid. Is Kevin home, em, Mrs Nolan - it is Mrs Nolan, isn't it?"

As soon as she opened her mouth, I instantly had her shifted from a 'Yes' to a 'No chance'. She had one of those voices that would have killed the hardest boner.

“Yes, I am. I suppose you’re gonnae say that you thought I was his fucking sister. Anyway, what’s the wee bastard done now?”

I could see that, like me, Gallagher couldn’t equate the shrill jarring voice with the good-looking woman standing in front of us, but he kept his composure and replied, “Just routine enquiries, Mrs Nolan. Can we have a chat with Kevin?”

“He’s no in, so you cannae, but I’ll tell him you were sniffin’ around.” She closed the door partially, with just her head out. “You might get him down at the puggys, this time of day.” She turned to close the door, but Gallagher put his hand on it to hold it open.

“Have you any idea where he was on the evening of April 29th. That was last Saturday?”

“Fuck, I can’t remember where they all are every day of the week; I’ve got three sons and they’re all out most of the time anyway, Christ knows where.”

“He’s not frightened of talking to us, is he, Mrs Nolan?”

“The only thing thon cunt is frightened frae is dentists, don’t flatter yersels.”

She closed the door even further. “Now I’ve got to get on, I’ve work to go to, if you don’t bloody mind”

Gallagher, however, had his sizable foot against the door, stopping it from shutting. “Now look here, you little tart, I don’t give a shit if you’ve to get to work, I’m sure your punters will wait,” he sneered.

I don’t think he expected her to react so quickly. I was amazed that she managed to slap him so cleanly round the partly opened door, and without him trying to fend off the blow. I was still stunned by this when he reached

through the gap between the door and the wall to try and grab her arm. At this point, she managed to push the door sufficiently hard to dislodge his foot, and she would have got it fully closed if Gallagher's arm wasn't still through the gap.

With a bellow, he pushed viciously on the door, throwing her back against the wall.

“You little cunt, I'm going to have you for that, you've broken my fucking arm.” By this time he had her by the hair, and she was trying to bite and scratch him, but he just kept repeatedly banging her off the wall. I finally woke up to what was happening and tried to put myself between them.

“Inspector,” I said, “we're in the fucking house, let's go”. He seemed to snap out of it then, and although she managed a swipe at him as he let her go, he moved backwards towards the door.

As I ushered him out, I happened to glance up the stairs. One of the doors was slightly ajar, and I could have sworn that I saw someone peering over the banister and down the stairs. He was only there for a few seconds, then the door closed gently, as if he'd seen me. I knew at once it was Kevin Nolan, but we'd already done enough damage, so I didn't even mention it to Gallagher. As we returned to our car, our footsteps echoing in the concrete stairwell, he seemed to have brushed the incident aside.

I waited for him to say something about what had just happened, but he just turned to me, grinning, and said, “What did you think of that - what a fucking whine of a voice, and on a bloody fit bird, too?” I was still feeling shocked at the way things had developed, but I kept my thoughts to myself.

I had anticipated an afternoon of knocking on doors and searching snooker halls and amusement arcades, so I was surprised when we drew up at the Stone Lion, one of those 'drinker's pubs', where nothing gets in the way of a good pint.

Gallagher ordered a pint of heavy and a whisky chaser. "Yerself?" I ordered a pint of lager shandy, much to his amusement. "You'll have tae let your hair down a bit if you're goin' tae fit in with us - all work and no play makes you a right dull bastard." I kind of stuttered a reply about having a hangover, but I could see he wasn't convinced.

"Where do we take it from here" I asked, curious to know if he had some sort of strategy.

"We were all supposed to meet up here, but there's no sign of the others- we'll give them half an hour, then we'll take a look at a couple of the other cunts' hooses before we head back, and tomorrow we'll get warrants to get them all in. Let them stew for a day first; we know the bastards are guilty, it's just gettin' one or two of them to make a slip."

"Won't the extra time let them dump any evidence and get their stories straight?"

"Listen, these guys are as thick as shite, they'll make so many mistakes when we get them in, we'll have them shafted by five tomorrow. Have another pint." he lifted our glasses, and placed them on the bar. "Same again, Jim, then we'll be off."

"I'm OK, honest, I'd rather just have one when I'm driving."

"Fuck off, d'ye want me to drink on my own? I'll drive the fuckin' car."

I left it at that, but I could see he wasn't impressed. I could just imagine the conversation later, "Fucking new boy isnae up to much - bit of a mummy's boy, wouldnae even take a pint wi' me."

Gallagher changed tack, trying to needle me. "So whit the fuck makes you think you can be a detective?"

I half muttered "I just fancied it. I'd watched a couple of CID guys on a case and, after speaking to them, thought I'd apply for the training."

"Mmm. You just fancied it." he said, aping my slightly nervous manner.

"Don't you think it will take a bit more than that?"

I said nothing. He continued. "There's too many o' you clever young fuckers comin' in to CID, not realising what it's aw about. I bet you've got a college-fucking-degree and no common-fucking-sense."

"As a matter of fact, I don't. I've got five 'O' grades; I left school when I was sixteen. Can't vouch for the common sense, right enough."

"Ay, well, you know what I mean," he said, slightly mollified. "How long were you in Uniform?"

"I started when I was twenty. About five years. Before that I was an apprentice at Yarrow's, but most of us were going to be laid off before we finished, and I decided to jump ship, so to speak, and join the police."

"So, aw right, yer thick like the rest o' us, but we'll see if ye can hack it at the sharp end."

We went on to our next port of call, one of the older terraced houses up the back towards the old Singer factory. It was obvious when we arrived at the house that they'd been forewarned, which made it even more likely it had been Kevin Nolan that I'd seen. The thug that answered the door was

probably the father, but I had a feeling we were only seeing an older version of the son, Lee Scoular.

“Yeh?” he grunted

“Mr. Scoular?”

“So?”

“We'd like to talk to Lee, if that's possible,” Gallagher replied, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

“Well, it's no fuckin' possible, cos he's no in, so piss off back to where you came from.”

“Do you know when he'll be back?”

“Not while you're here anyway, so gie's peace and fuck off.”

Gallagher turned to me. “Nice to see where the boy got his intelligence from anyway.”

He turned back to the door, “Tell him we want to talk to him, he'll know why.”

With that we turned and started down the steps onto the cracked rubbish lined path. It wasn't until I was almost at the gate that I realised that Gallagher had turned back and leapt up the steps again. He said a few quiet words to Lee's old man, there was a small scuffle and Gallagher was coming back down the path, grinning and making tossing-off gestures to me, directed, I hoped, to the now closed doorway.

I didn't even ask what had gone on, and Gallagher was disinclined to let me in on the joke. On the way back, I asked him about our other call.

“I thought we had to go and see John White as well?”

Gallagher laughed. “The wee cunts all knew to get out of the way. Nothin' to be gained from chappin' his gran's door. We'll keep that one for later.”

“I'm surprised you'd take an old woman's health into consideration in a case like this.”

He nearly choked laughing at that. “Mags Smith is no frail old lady, she's a hard cunt o' a woman, who'd run riot over you, new boy.” I thought he was going to lose control of the car; he was nearly doubled over the wheel.

“Aye, big Mags is quite a girl.”

“How do you know her?” I asked, and I couldn't keep a small grin from my face.

“Oi, you little bastard,” Gallagher swore, “I wouldn't touch her with a fucking bargepole, if that's the way your foul little brain works,” but I could see he was pleased that I could join in the piss-taking. “No, she's got all sorts of previous convictions, anything from hooring to serious assault, she's done a wee bit of time here and there. She's one of these fat hard cunts that keeps the whole scheme terrified, and the rest of the family arenae much better - there's always one of her sons inside for one thing or another, and her granweans are just going to be the same.”

I asked him how we'd got all the names, and he said that as soon as they'd talked to the wits and some of the landlords in Partick, they knew right away which crew the bastards belonged to. “It's just a matter of getting one of them to shop on his pals, although we'll probably end up getting some forensics too, but there's enough witnesses to get them anyway.”

He continued, more to fill me in on the case than anything,, “From what we can gather, Patrick was out with his girlfriend and a friend at a party, which they'd just left, when they were verbally abused by a gang of about seven or eight youths. They hurried round to her flat in Frankland Street. Patrick stayed for a while, but then left to go home. As he walked back

down to Byres road, he must have been jumped by these lads. Maybe they didn't like the fact that he had a nice looking girlfriend, or perhaps they just didn't like students in general, but ten minutes or so later he was beaten and left unconscious in her doorway, dying as it turned out. A man out walking his dog found him, thought he was just drunk until he noticed the blood trickling off the step. They tried to resuscitate him at the Western, but they failed. We don't think there was much time between him being attacked and his death. The post mortem showed severe head injuries consistent with his head being jumped on, but here were also five broken ribs, a punctured lung, ruptured spleen, a broken left arm and extensive bruising. Cause of death was a massive sub-dural haematoma.”

“Could these guys have any previous with Patrick? Maybe he'd had a run in with them before.”

“I suppose it might be worthwhile checking out, but I think it's bloody unlikely. Those cunts wouldn't go intae places students would use.”

“Couldn't we check that out with some of Patrick's student friends and see what they say.”

“That's not bad thinking, son,” he added, “nice to see you've got a brain,” as we turned into the station car park.

The others hadn't had great deal of joy either.

“Fuckers should have probably been all picked up today,” muttered Andy, not loud enough that Gallagher would hear, but I did, and I gave him a nod of agreement. Nice to know that someone else thought things were a bit sloppy.

Gallagher had a word with all the DCs, then he and Danny went to organise search warrants for the next day, while Andy and I wrote up the

day's Actions, as our submitted notes were called; I wondered if he had to leave out as much as I did.

Andy turned to me. "Gallagher wasn't impressed with you."

"Why, did he say something to you?" I asked, anxiously.

"Don't worry, it's not a bad thing. He just said you were a bit of a pussy, but a thick cunt like the rest of us."

"I refused a drink when I was driving. He took the pet at that. Then he accused me of being too fucking clever." Andy could see that I was more than a bit angry.

He laughed. "I heard that you told him you worked in the shipyards. I bet that shut him up."

It was my turn to smile. "Aye, he didn't say too much after that."

"As I said, don't you worry about him. Anyway, I think you're a bit brighter than you let on, from what I've seen."

"I don't know about that. My mum was always convinced that I would do well at school but, to be honest, I just got bored and dicked around a lot with my mates until I suddenly realised that I'd left school without much to show for it. Also, I was brought up in Shettleston, and if you did well at school, you usually ended up getting a bit of a pasting most times.

Anyway, I was lucky my old man got me a job at Yarrows. Funny thing is, I finished top of my course when I joined the police and was first again in the CID module I just finished. It was just a bit more interesting so it was easy to get stuck in."

Andy nodded his head. "I was a bit the same. I didn't really grow up until I was in my twenties. All I was interested in at school was girls and bevvy. I had to go back to college even to get 'O' grades."

I was surprised. We talked a bit more while we were working and discovered we both liked reading and were fans of science documentaries on TV, something that neither of us would particularly want Gallagher and his cronies to know.

We were just finishing off when the phone rang. Andy answered it. It turned out to be Francis, looking for an update. Andy, who was obviously trying to get away sharp, was pulling faces at me, which I read as “Be a mate, take this for me, will you”. I walked over to the nearest phone, pressed the line button and motioned him to get the fuck off home. Andy quickly spoke to Francis, saying that the Inspector was out, but that I had all the news to hand, and that DI Gallagher would speak to him later.

“Francis”, I said, “nice to speak to you again.” I cringed at my choice of words, but Francis didn’t seem to notice.

“How's progress?” he asked bluntly.

“Well,” I kind of hesitated, “we tried to interview a couple of the suspects today, without much success, but we got quite a bit of background info from their families,” I added lamely.

Francis must have known I was struggling, but he didn't push it. He surprised me, however, by asking that I come round and meet him at his shop for a chat. Normally, in an investigation like this, we didn't get too close to the deceased’s relatives, partly because we couldn't always be sure that they weren't involved in the crime, but in this instance we were one hundred percent sure that Francis wasn't.

“Ok, I said, I'll be around in 20 minutes, where exactly are you?”

“Just along from Jordanhill station, near the lights, you'll see the sign outside.” With that he hung up.

CHAPTER 2 FRANCIS

I picked my kit bag out of my locker in the corridor, and got a lift from one of the ‘woodies’ or uniforms, as they were more correctly known. My car was still at home - I hadn’t risked driving that morning after a night on the batter.

Francis’ shop was in a substantial red sandstone building, with an old fashioned half glass door and one large window elegantly displaying a couple of smaller pieces of furniture. The doors, and all the wood surrounding the window, were painted a dark green, and there was a small sign above the door indicating that this was the business premises of ‘P. Hare & Son, Cabinetmakers and Finishers.’ Connected to the shop was a stone arch, incorporating two large wooden gates, also painted green, with a small door inset into the left hand gate. Carved on the stone above the arch was the year it was built, over a century ago, and I wondered if it had been built by Francis’ family.

As the shop door was locked, I tried this small gate, and found it to be open. I stepped into an enclosed yard, large enough to comfortably hold an ‘M’ registration Jaguar, a large green van, and another couple of vehicles behind it. The yard was surrounded on two sides by what I took to be the house. There was a narrow gap between the part of the house facing me and the other side of the yard, which was lined by a large wooden workshop and a low woodshed, extending from the back of the workshop.

I shouted a “Hello”, and was relieved when Francis poked his head out of the workroom door.

“In here,” he said, motioning me over.

“I don't think I've ever been in a joiner's workshop before.” I looked around at the neatly laid out benches and machines, racks of tools and stacked wood extending almost to the roof in places.

“Don't confuse this with a joiner's workshop,” he smiled. “Most cabinetmakers would be offended by that.”

“Sorry,” I said, “I didn't know there was a difference.” I noticed a wooden staircase going up to a kind of balcony, with what looked like a tree house at one end of it.

He saw me looking. “That's my office.” He started up the stairs. “Come on, we can chat in there.”

I climbed up the stairs, intoxicated by the unfamiliar smell of sawdust, oil, glue and varnish. As I entered the poorly lit office, he nodded for me to sit down on one of the two old carvers, both a bit worse for wear but well suited to the rest of the room. Tea boxes with rolled up plans cluttered up the back of the room, but a wide shelf ran along one side, and it was on this that Francis was fiddling with a coffee maker.

“I asked you here for a reason.”

He paused.

“Now, you know and I know that this investigation is being run by a bunch of useless morons,” He glanced at me, and continued, “no, don't deny it”, as I tried to interrupt. “My son has been killed, and as far as I can see, those investigating his murder are in danger of screwing the whole thing up.”

“Listen Francis”, I managed to butt in, “I don't know where you got that idea from, but I'm sure this will be done in the right way eventually.” Even to myself, it sounded trite, and I could see Francis shaking his head and sighing.

“Look, son, I'd expect you to show a bit of loyalty, but you try and tell me that as a complete newcomer to that place, you are not disturbed by anything you've seen or heard?”

My face must have turned a shade of red, but I tried to bluster. “I can't comment about the investigation to the public, Francis - I know it's your son, and you have a right to know what's going on, but you've got to go through the right channels.”

He looked at me rather strangely, with his head slightly to one side and a quizzical look on his face. “I don't think I got you wrong – I'm usually a good judge of character, and I had you down as someone with a bit of integrity. All I'm looking for is for someone to keep me informed of developments, and to enable me to have some input into this investigation. I can't afford to rely on "official channels" or being shut out.”

I had a cold feeling in my lower abdomen - I knew what he was suggesting was wrong, but.... the only reason I was still even considering his request was that, even though neither of us had any experience of a murder inquiry, he had come to the same conclusion I had.

“I'll need to think about it,” I said, but a big part of me was saying to myself, “Get out of here, walk away from this.”

“Think of it this way, John,” Francis said. “In some countries, the police assign somebody to be close to the deceased's family as a sort of family liaison officer - think of yourself like that. Anyway, take your time, and be

assured that anything you say will stay between us, I can promise you that. If you feel uncomfortable with it, I can ask the inspector if he can assign someone to keep me in touch. I could probably suggest you in a roundabout way.”

Despite hardly knowing Francis, I believed him. But it didn't make it any easier. In hindsight I can honestly say that I never regretted agreeing to help, but I can also say that the decision gave me more than a few sleepless nights.

I thought about it for a while, but he seemed quite relaxed about that, as if he knew that I would come through for him. After going downstairs to the workshop and wandering round for a few minutes, I retraced my steps back up to the office and told Francis that I would help, but only where I felt that it did not leave me with a moral or ethical problem. These words had sounded laudable during my three month CID training, but now they just sounded crass and pompous.

I felt more relaxed after I had made the decision to help, and we passed half an hour or so talking about what we knew of the case so far, and what way it was likely to go.

Finally, I said “By tomorrow night, we should know a lot more. There’s talk of us making some arrests in the morning.”

Francis merely raised an eyebrow, then frowned.

“I’m hoping they’ve got some strong evidence to back that up.”

I shrugged, not knowing quite what to say.

As we walked through the workshop, I looked around with interest, never having seen anything like it. There was almost a religious feel to the place.

Wooden handled tools hung in racks between the large cast machinery. Everything looked so old and solid, and in its place.

“My grandfather started this workshop, you know.”

“It must give you a great feeling to keep it going after all these years.” I looked around. “Has it changed much?”

“Well, my father put in most of the machinery, but the rip saw was my grandfather's, and most of the benches are his originals. I've replaced a few machines and added a couple. Virtually all of the hand tools and clamps are either my grandfather's or my father's, although I've managed to pick up a fair few second hand tools as all the old craftsmen retired.”

He dragged an old wooden toolbox from under the bench, placed it on top and opened the lid.

“This was my father's first toolbox - he made it as an apprentice when he first left school. Look at the way everything fits in little trays or drawers and niches in the lid.”

I looked closely at the box - the corners were beautifully dovetailed, and tools fitted everywhere inside it, like a three dimensional Jigsaw puzzle. I closed the lid, and noticed that, inlaid into the top, in a darker wood, was the inscription 'M. Hare ~ 28th January 1922'. It was then that I realized that the 'son' in the title was not Francis, but his father. Suddenly, it crossed my mind that Francis was the last of them. Even if his son had survived, he probably wouldn't have followed in Francis' footsteps, with him having chosen to go to university.

“Was Patrick never interested in any of this?” I asked.

“No, he always hated the workshop. I suppose it was my fault really - I expected him to be like myself. I used to spend hours in here watching my

father, doing little chores for him from an early age, but Patrick was bored to tears with anything to do with wood, or making things.”

As a way of changing the subject, I asked Francis what he was working on at the moment. Despite his obviously melancholic mood, he became almost animated by his standards, and he took me through to what he called his clean room, where he told me the ‘finishing’ took place. In the centre of the room stood the most beautiful piece of furniture I have ever seen. I can honestly say that in some respects that moment changed my life - it was the start of a lifelong love of traditional workmanship and materials, and a lifestyle more reminiscent of my grandfather’s time than my own.

Francis’ piece of furniture was a solid oak bookcase, with latticed glass doors and drawers and cupboards underneath. The finish on the wood was incredible - the flecked black grain stood out from the rich golden brown surface, and the finish had an astonishing depth to it. Everything seemed to be in perfect proportion; in fact, it almost seemed a shame to spoil it by ever putting any books in it. I opened one of the doors. It felt, at the same time, heavy and light, as if the solidity of the materials was balanced by the precision of the construction. The door clicked closed again with a sound so soft that I had to open and close it once more, just to hear it. Even the back of the bookcase was finished immaculately, all the wood planed and varnished to the same high standard as the rest of it. There was a small metal plaque screwed to the frame. Stamped onto it was the following inscription.

P. Hare & Son, Glasgow.

FH 1978

Francis gently smiled as he saw the effect his work was having on me.

“Open a drawer” he told me, watching as I did so, my jaw almost dropping with the smoothness with which it slid open. It reminded me of the time my dad took me, as a small awestruck boy, to the motor show at the Kelvin Hall, and we got to sit in a Bentley; the soft click the doors made when they were closed, and the way the ashtray popped up slowly when you pressed its lid screamed money and quality, but also demanded an admiration for the unseen craftsmen who had achieved it.

“That is stunning, Francis, I can't believe that you made this.”

“People have different reactions when they first see furniture of this quality. I pride myself that my work is as good as any being made in the country today.” He said this without any conceit, just an honest belief that he was as good as the best in his trade.

He continued, “Some people are amazed by the technical quality of the construction, others see it adding to the beauty of their home, but there are some who have an almost spiritual reaction to it, as if they see the humanity, the blood sweat and tears, the emotion that goes into something like this. They realise that what they see in front of them is the end result of generations of craftsmen who have honed their craft to reach as near to perfection as is possible.” He let that hang in the air for a little while, then turned to me and said, “What did you feel when you first saw it?”

I hesitated for a few seconds. “I can't easily put it into words, but I'll never think of wood in the same way again.” I felt stupid, and not a little embarrassed.

He looked thoughtful as he replied. “To me, it's not dissimilar to the effect a great piece of art or music has on you, but it's more subtle and personal. “

He took me back through and showed me the parts he had already made for the second bookcase the customer had ordered as a matched pair. It became obvious why the finished bookcase looked so good - All of the joints precisely fitted and many of them were of the ‘hidden’ variety.

Years later, when I started to dabble with a little cabinetry of my own, I tried to make similar hidden mitred dovetails for a small cabinet that I wished to give to my sister as a wedding present. It took weeks to cut the joints, and in the end, it required the judicious use of strong gap-filling glue and some hastily-cut matching wooden wedges to get the joints to look acceptable from the outside. (I lined the inside with cherry, which hid the internal cock-ups.) For years after, I recognised my limitations and stuck to biscuit joints, mortice and tenons, or standard dovetails.

He started to fiddle with the carcass, and I'm sure he very quickly forgot that I was there. I watched him work, as he planed an edge, and even my untrained eye could see that the plane was an extension of his arm, the shavings coming from its mouth so thin as to be almost translucent. I could have watched him for hours, but a shout from the yard interrupted my reverie, and Francis asked me if I wanted a lift anywhere.

I was a bit surprised. “Don't suppose you could drop me up at Anniesland Cross; I'm playing football up there this afternoon.”

“No bother, it's not that far away.”

He locked up the workshop, spoke briefly to someone in the house, and led me over to the car. “Here we are.” he said.

“Fuck, it's the Antique Road Show,” I thought to myself, as I surveyed an old Morris Traveller in a corner of the yard. This one was immaculate; the curved wooden struts and the gleaming bodywork panels glinting in the sun. Sitting in the soft, cracked leather of the strangely upright seats, Francis explained that he'd restored the car after inheriting it from an old guy down the street whom he used to help out a bit from time to time.

After we had passed through Anniesland Cross, and stopped at the sports ground, I crossed around in front of the car to head for the changing rooms. He wound down his window, stuck his head out and motioned me over.

“Who's playing?” he asked.

I told him that we were taking on a bunch of academic dick-heads in a match that had been arranged by some 'fast-track-ex-university-prick' from Pitt Street who had organised his old 'Uni' team to play against our largely successful, but now mostly ageing 'B' Division team. “Some of us have gone to seed a bit, but there's enough of us still playing regular football to hopefully give them a humping”.

“Mind if I watch a while” he said, as he got out of the car.

Although I was a wee bit self-conscious, I nodded. “Yup, but you may regret it. It won't be pretty,” and he followed me in as far as the changing rooms, which were, to be honest, more reminiscent of a rugby or cricket club than the usual parks we normally played at. The boys were fairly upbeat about the game, until Brian Fleming mentioned that our opposition was virtually the same University team that had reached the second round of the Scottish Cup and had given some third division professional side,

Montrose or Brechin he thought, a real bloody fright before going out to a dodgy penalty in the replay.

A voice from the shite-house shouted. “Aw fuck, we've been set up by that fanny, Johnston: this is his revenge for all the shite he's had from us since the stupid cunt arrived,” That was Stu Mack, one of the Pitt Street wide boys who was probably responsible for most of the proverbial shit that seemed fall on the heads of all the accelerated-promotion officers, who just happened to be heading up the ranks a little bit quicker than the rest of us plodders.

We trudged (not a good sign) out on to the park, which was at the far corner of the playing fields. Needless to say, the ‘rigger’ pitches were clustered around the clubhouse, which had a kind of balcony where non-participating students could stand with their jolly pints and cheer on their varsity fucking fellows. Having said that, once we got to it, the pitch itself was bloody fantastic, best I've ever played on: big (almost the same size as Hampden, I've been told); flat (unlike some of the hillsides we've visited) and green, so fucking green all over, even in the bloody goalmouths. I lay down on my back in the centre circle.

“This is more comfy than my bed,” I said to Tommo, who was reverentially rubbing the grass, muttering that it was a bit too much to expect us to play on a decent pitch.

“Aw shut up, would you rather play on red blaze” I asked him, referring to the ex-power-station ash & cinder parks that could shred skin from your legs faster than a cheese grater.

“As a matter of fact, I fucking well would. At least it would even it up a bit if we were playing at the Red Road pitches.”

As I warmed up, I was surprised to see the ref walk over to the corner of the park and speak to Francis, who had been watching us go through the motions of jogging and stretching and eyeing up the opposition's warm-up drill (They were like some demented wasp army, swarming about with these horrible multi-coloured horizontal stripes that you normally see on rugby's fanny boys). Francis and the ref talked for what seemed to be an age, then he handed Francis a flag to run the line, the other one going to some bespectacled student in a bloody duffel coat.

I would like to say that we played them off the park; I would even like to say that it was a fairly even game and we just lost it at the last gasp. What I can say is that we were red rotten. Not all of us. Some, including myself, if it doesn't sound too arrogant, really played our guts out and in short spells actually played some nice football. But for most of the game it was backs to the wall, and to coin a phrase, they looked like scoring every time they came up the park. To be fair, we had several large slices of luck, and it is perhaps a reflection on how well our goalie played that we were only two down at half time.

If the first half had been one sided, the second half was, for the most part, even worse. The game was played almost exclusively in our half, as our goalkeeper's weakest point was his kicking. It was a good job that we'd changed round at half time, otherwise one half of the pitch would have been mud, the other half wouldn't have looked out of place on a golf course, except for the muddy path that their goalkeeper had trodden back and forth across his six yard box in boredom, like some demented polar bear.

Despite their dominance and bombardment of our goal, the gods of football shone on us for a while, even to the extent of providing us with a breakaway goal, set up by a lovely long pass from deep inside our own half, which Stu Mack had threaded through their defence. They probably had gone to sleep waiting for some action - a couple of them even seemed to have joined their midfield's siege on our goal. Anyway, Tommo uncharacteristically latched on to this pinpoint pass, ran twenty yards to the bye line and stroked a vicious curving cross straight on to the frantically flying head of yours truly, and from there it looped into the top left corner of the net. At this point, our heads could have lifted, and we could have perhaps scrambled an undeserved draw. What actually happened was that even the fairly fit players among us ran out of steam all around the same point, thus joining the six or seven fat bastards who had been completely cunted since half time. I reckon the ref played only forty minutes in the second half. After the score reached 5-1, and five of our team looked like serious candidates for the Western Infirmary's cardiac resuscitation suite, the ref put us out of our misery by blowing the final whistle a full five minutes early. Johnston, at that moment, actually lost all the superiority that he had gained in winning the game, by trying to argue with the ref that full time was at least eight minutes off, taking into consideration the time that the game had stopped to allow Colin 'Donkey' Harvey to vomit in three different places along the touchline.

We trooped off miserably to the changing rooms (big hot communal bath and showers – fucking amazing), and as I shook the ref's hand in the corridor, he asked me if I'd known Francis long. When I replied that I'd known him only for a short while, he looked at me strangely and said

“You must be honoured then, Francis doesn't usually go out of his way for anybody.”

Feeling slightly uncomfortable with this, I asked him how he knew Francis. “I've been refereeing for twenty-four years, and Francis Hare is one of the best amateur footballers I've had the privilege to referee.”

“Don't you mean used to be?” I asked, laughing.

“No, he still plays amateur football, and after seeing your performance, none of you could hold a candle to him, even at his age. I'll tell you, he could have outlasted ALL the players on the pitch today. He probably could have gone professional, but I suppose he thought he would get caught out for speed at that level. He did play Junior football for a quite a few years.”

I thanked him for the game and the information, and we both went to get changed. We all met in the bar after the game, and I waved Francis in.

Although quiet, he seemed very much at ease, talking quietly with a few of the opposition, whom he obviously knew. I caught up with him as he stood at the bar on his own, nursing an orange juice.

“You never told me you played.” I said, sounding slightly miffed as I said it.

“You never asked.”

I had to grin at that; I deserved it, really.

“Who are you playing for at the moment?” he asked me.

“Oh, just a Sunday league mob, and sometimes with the Division team”.

“Why?” I added.

He didn't reply, but I was getting almost used to the sudden gaps in the conversation that were his trademark. We sat sipping our drinks, and just

as it was beginning to get a bit awkward, Francis stood up, put on his coat and wished me all the best, and that he'd see me again sometime.

CHAPTER 3 SARAH

[Tuesday 2nd May, AM]

I had a note on my desk when I came in the next morning. I made my way to the DI's office as requested, knocked on the half-open door, and took the vacant seat in front of Gallagher's desk.

“I want you to do some more background on the kid,” he said, “seeing as you came up with the bright idea of looking at his haunts and habits. Start at his house, look at his stuff, and see if you get anything on where he hangs out. Just fucking remember to phone the parents first to warn them you're coming.”

“Ok sir, but aren't we detaining the suspects today?”

“Yeh, but I've got enough guys for that. We've got an extra eight DC's and a whole pile of Uniforms, and you're the one with the least experience, so see what you can dredge up. Talk to his pals and his girlfriend, and see if you can speak to some of the other students in his year. Don't complain. A lot of new cunts wouldn't even get out of the office for the first month!”

In fact, I thought this sounded like a good idea, but I was a bit disappointed to miss out on the arrests. At the back of my mind, I wondered if I was being deliberately left out of it. Had Gallagher sensed my disapproval?

“Very good, sir. Do I go on my own?”

“If you're frightened, take a WPC in case it all gets a bit too hairy for you.”
he laughed, obviously delighted with his ready wit.

“No sir, I think I'll manage,” I retorted, shrugging acceptance that the joke was on me.

“Don't be fucking slow, you daft fuckwit. You can go with Joe; he's got a doctor's appointment later, so I don't want him sloping off halfway through something more important.”

“Right, sir, I'll hook up with Joe and get moving.”

“Off you go then.” He pointed to the door, and just as I was going out, he asked me if I knew where the house was.

“Aye, sir, Mr. Hare gave me a lift to my football game the other day, and he stopped off to get something at his shop first - my game was just up the road from his house.” These fucking small lies have a habit of catching up with me, but it was all that I could think of at the time. “I'll get the rest of the addresses from the incident room. Am I OK to visit the university to try and see his classmates?”

“Yes, but don't make a spectacle of yourself. Be a bit fucking subtle.”

I made myself scarce, finding a spare phone and speaking, as it turned out, to Mrs Hare.

I told her what I'd been asked to do, and explained that it could help in finding Patrick's killers. She said that Francis would be away all day, but that I was free to come over anytime, as she would not be leaving the house. I wrote all the other relevant details from the central file into my notebook, and found Joe, who told me he'd meet me downstairs in ten minutes.

I waited in the car, and Joe eventually stuck his head in the passenger door. “Hey, John, I’m really sorry to do this to you, but any chance you could cover for me?”

I liked Joe, but I wasn’t sure what he wanted from me. “Go on, what’s up?”

“I kind of lied to Gallagher about the doctor thing, gave him the impression I had something wrong with me. Well, I am going to see a doc, but not for my health. The wife and I, we’ve been trying to have kids for a few years now, and it’s not happening for us, she’s getting a bit antsy about it. Anyway, we’ve got an appointment at the fertility clinic today. If we don’t take this one, it’ll be months before we can get another date.”

He looked so miserable, I felt sorry for the poor bastard, having to tell a near stranger he was having trouble getting his missus bairn’d.

“Listen Joe, you’re all right with me, I’ll not say a word.”

“Thanks, my car’s parked up at the University so no cunt would see me leave. Drop me off at it, would you?”

“Nae probs, consider it done. Will I just go ahead on my own, or would I be better waiting for you to come back?”, I asked him.

“No, just carry on, I’ll catch up with you later and we can go over anything you get. Meet me at the Koh-i-noor about lunchtime. If I’ve got time we’ll have a curry. Hey, that’s my car there, pull over.”

I pulled into let him out, and watched in my rear view mirror as he got into the car and headed for his spunk test, or whatever it was they were going to do to him.

I set off for Jordanhill. It only took a few minutes, as traffic was fairly light after the rush hour. I let myself into the yard and knocked on the front door of the house.

Mrs. Hare was one of those women you would call handsome - tall, perhaps severe looking and, to my mind, a little bit 'superior'. You could see that she would have been attractive as a young woman, but daunting at the same time. When she answered the door, she had obviously been cooking, as she had an apron on, and the smell of home baking pervaded the hallway. She motioned me in with a nod of her head, and I followed her up the passage, closing the door behind me. She showed me into a large bedroom at the rear of the house, saying, "I'll be downstairs if you need me. Please don't make a mess, and please ask if you wish to take anything away."

I stood and looked round the room. It was tidy as far as students' rooms go, and I wondered if she'd tidied the room after his death. I placed my notebook on the desk in the corner, and started to look around.

A guitar sat on a stand by the head of the bed, but I couldn't see any music lying about - probably a 'dabbler', I thought.

The room was a peculiar mixture of solid old and tacky new. - The bed was a beautiful old wooden three quarter size bed with inlaid headboard and footboard. With the matching wardrobe and tall chest, it would not have looked out of place in Francis' showroom, but in front of the old wooden fireplace, sitting like a fat filthy squatter at a royal garden party, was a cheap chipboard and laminate monstrosity in 'light pine effect', long and low with smoked glass doors with shelves holding records and books.

But, on top of it, there was some rather expensive hi-fi kit rather than the ubiquitous cheap 'music centre'.

Although most of his record collection was housed in this unit, there were also a couple of burgundy PVC LP cases, each holding about forty or fifty records, and more than a few singles cases of the same design, but in black. Blaming thoroughness, I took a good look through his records. I liked what I saw; our record collections were kind of similar. Most of the 'biggies' were there, especially in the singles department, but there were enough differences for me to think to myself that this lot would fill a few gaps in my album list. There were some nice 12" EPs, and a few early picture disks.

Pistols, Ramones, Skids, The Clash; they were all there, but he had a wider taste than I had expected; some older stuff including the Kinks, The Stones, Beatles, early Bowie, a bit of Dylan and The Who. Most of the modern stuff was punk & new wave, but he had a bit of reggae and more than a few 'modern folk' albums.

I checked the desk out next. It was largely unexciting, apart from an economy pack of condoms (I made a note to ask the girlfriend about birth control). I had assumed that his relationship with her had been a longstanding one, and that she would have been on the pill.

The other items in the desk apart from the usual stationery were mostly university related objects, from notebooks filled with a neat but light hand, to textbooks and printed lecture notes in loose-leaf ring binders.

There were a few bank statements - he had an overdraft, not massive, but big enough to make it likely that he took part in student lifestyle to the full.

I crossed to a built in cupboard to the left of the fire, and opened the door to reveal a fairly deep and well-filled glory hole, the obvious deposit for anything not needed for everyday use. Ski boots, boxes of books, an old skateboard, and a box labelled 'Natural History' vied for space with various assorted jackets, scarves and hats. There was also a stack of *New Musical Express* papers: he hadn't kept every one, but had certainly held on to the most interesting issues. It was like a musical history of the mid 70's.

At the back of the cupboard I found a box containing an interesting collection of items. Hidden beneath a pile of ten or twelve records, which included Gordon Lightfoot, ELP, Genesis, Mike Oldfield and Supertramp albums, there was a small but well-thumbed collection of porn, mostly your mainstream stuff, but also a couple of slightly more hard-core mags of Dutch origin. Obviously the porn was only slightly more embarrassing to him than the dodgy vinyl. I myself had furtively dumped my early record collection, when I was trying to become 'cool' at seventeen. As for my porn, well I got rid of that when I moved in with my girlfriend, stuck between the rock (my mum finding it if I stashed it at home) and the hard place (Moirra finding it at the flat). I deposited it in a skip outside my dad's nosy neighbour's house - you know the type of prick who used to chase us as kids when we played football in the street, and complained to everyone's parents about each and every sub-criminal act that was perpetrated in the area. I tipped off the local gang of fourteen-year-olds that old Pettigrew was dumping his porn collection in the skip, and for the next twenty-four hours, they were like wasps round a picnic - wee boys in and out the skip, pages of choice porn fluttering about the street and into

Pettigrew's front garden, the old bastard running about with plastic bags trying to gather it all up to burn in his little garden brazier.

More interestingly, below the porn mags, I found a tobacco tin, containing a partly used half ounce of Golden Virginia, some Rizlas and a small block of cannabis wrapped in some thick Clingfilm. I looked round to see if his mother was lurking, picked it up with a t-shirt from one of the drawers, and stashed the tin under a loose floorboard at the back of the cupboard. However long it had been there, I didn't know, but this was purely for personal use, and I sure as fuck wasn't going to be the one that would provide any crumbs of comfort for the defence to use. If it ever turned up, I could just say I missed it during my search of the room.

I felt that I had seen everything I needed to, so I went downstairs and shouted through the back to Mrs Hare. On the way out, I told her that Patrick and I had had similar tastes, and that he had quite an interesting record collection.

“Oh, I don't like all the stuff he likes, but I suppose our parents said the same about our music tastes when we were young.”

I noticed her avoidance of the past tense, but I didn't comment. She gave me the names of a couple of his university friends when I asked, then I shook her hand and left to make my way across to the home of the other female in Patrick's life, his girlfriend Sarah. I found the close where she lived, and started climbing up the polished stone stairs, admiring the wrought iron and polished wood banisters, the half - tiled walls, the well-kept painted doors and the potted plants on each landing, the sign of a slightly superior Glasgow tenement building.

I eventually found myself on the top floor, and as I knocked on the door of the left hand flat, the door of the flat opposite opened behind me a crack and I could feel someone looking at my back but, by the time I had turned round, the door had closed - some nosy bastard neighbour, or perhaps some friend just keeping an eye open for her? Eventually, the door was answered by a scarecrow of a girl, who assured me that although she wasn't Sarah, if I came in and had a seat, Sarah would be through shortly. Sarah Anstruther was more or less what I'd expected. Really good looking, but dressed down for two reasons that I worked out later, apart from the obvious one of avoiding being constantly leered at by members of the male sex, myself included. Firstly, and this was confirmed swiftly during our chat; she seemed to want to be taken seriously in some intellectual context, and if looking drop dead gorgeous was going to get in the way, she was more than happy to tone it down. Secondly, I think she saw herself as a left wing moderate-radical, and dull drone was the order of the day among that section of the university intelligentsia.

As far as I was concerned, she didn't succeed in being asexual, but it certainly helped to let me have something approaching a normal conversation with her, without my tongue hanging out, or my eyes darting too often to her more interesting physical attributes.

Surprisingly, and perhaps because of this, her most noticeable feature was her hair - brown, but in certain lights it could have been almost red, and short in style. She had quite a pretty face, no makeup or jewellery, and she wore jeans and a baggy jumper, which was meant to hide, but gloriously hinted at a beautiful proportioned figure below it.

I installed my so-sorry-about-your-bereavement face, and indicated that I was sorry for her loss, that I was a detective on the investigation, and could I ask a few questions. She asked me for I.D, which surprised me, as very few people do. After looking at my warrant card, the issue date screaming 'rookie' carefully hidden by my thumb, she motioned for me to take a seat in the kitchen-cum-dining-cum-living area of the flat. Her pal, the stick insect, made it clear that she was not going to leave the room, and I assured her that I was fine with that, although I could have done without the hostile glare that she was giving me.

Anyhow, I kicked off with "When did you last see Patrick?"

For a moment, she couldn't really say anything, and when the words did come out, they were sort of half muffled with a sob. "He left here about 11 o'clock on Saturday night, he just left and I never saw him after that." A few tears were running down her cheeks, but she seemed to ignore them.

"I told the other policeman about this the night it happened", she added.

"I know," I said softly, handing her a fresh tissue from the box sitting on the table. "I saw in the notes that you'd made a brief statement. This interview is to expand on that, and maybe give us some background on Patrick, what he liked, what he did with himself, etcetera, etcetera. If it's any consolation, it will help us a hell of a lot if you can give us as much detail about him as you can."

She gave a barely perceptible nod, and I waited for her to go on. "He thought it was safe to go back to his flat. He could have stayed the bloody night, and it would never have happened."

"You said in your statement that you had been hassled by a crowd of youths earlier. Was that why you were worried about it being safe?"

“We were on our way back from a party in a flat just off Dumbarton Road.” She turned to her friend. “What was the name of that street?”

“Gardener Street” was the sullen reply from the twiglet.

“That’s it,” she said, turning back to me. “We'd left early because Paddy was working in the morning. I suppose he wanted to go home so that he would get a good sleep, but he always walked me home first.”

She blushed as she realised what she'd said. “Not that he wouldn't have slept here, but we would have stayed up later.”

She looked at her friend, who gave her a little smile of encouragement.

“Shit, I'm digging myself in deeper here.” She was beginning to get angry with herself now, but I put my arm out and touched the back of her hand.

“Hey, It's OK, take your time, this isn't easy for you.”

The stick insect glared at me as if I had applied electrodes to her friend's nipples and gradually turned up the power. I gave her what I thought was a dismissive glance, and concentrated on the next few questions.

“What actually happened on the way back from the party?” I asked.

She kind of gathered herself together. “We were just walking along, talking as usual, and we were just about to turn into Byres Road when six or seven youths, who had been standing in a pub doorway, moved over to us. Patrick gripped my arm and tried to cross over the road, but two of them moved in front of us.”

I nodded, taking brief notes as I went along, and let her continue.

“Patrick asked them if there was a problem, and said that he didn't want any trouble, but the smaller of the two said something about not liking him or his type, and that did he...” She paused, biting her bottom lip and

shuddered a bit, "...he said something really nasty that I really don't want to repeat."

I told her that it was important for us to know everything, and that she shouldn't feel bad about repeating what had been said.

"Well, I can't remember the exact words, but it was to do with Patrick having sex with me."

At this point the stick insect butted in.

"The wee bastard's exact words were to ask if he was going to give her a proper shagging, from behind. Sarah, you may as well tell him what these thugs were really like."

I was astonished at the sudden change of heart by Twiggy, until I realised that she probably hated all men, but at the current moment, I was lower down the hate score than the ones that had killed Patrick.

"I'd rather Sarah answered the questions", I said to her, then I turned to Sarah.

"Sarah, is that what he said?"

"Yes, and even when we got past them and seemed to be getting away, they were still running after us, shouting. "I can't give you all of it exactly, but it was horrible."

I suggested that she could write down what she could remember, and that I would then read it out and she could confirm that it was correct. I didn't want to tell her that she would probably have to get up on the witness stand and tell a packed court all of this, but I decided we could cross that bridge when we came to it.

I asked the friend for a piece of paper, and slid it across the thick varnished surface of the cheap pine table, and sat quietly watching her as she started

to fill the page with neat girly handwriting. Later, as I read it back, I could see that parts of it were shaky, and there were quite a few smudged words where she'd wiped a tear off the page, leaving a bubble of crinkly paper with a washed out letter or two. She had paused at some words as if writing them gave them too much substance. I copied it all into my notebook, as any statement taken had to be written down in my handwriting. As she listened to me reading it out, the twiglet sat beside her and put a hand on her shoulder, and it suddenly struck me that Sarah was more than a flatmate to this girl, but it was probably one-way traffic. I finished reading her words back to her, and to be honest, most of it was the usual stuff you would hear on the streets of any housing scheme, especially at closing time.

She looked pretty numb as I finished and confirmed that, as far as she could remember, that was a fairly accurate record of what had been said. I asked her for descriptions but I wasn't expecting too much as most of the schemies looked, spoke and dressed the same anyway. However, she surprised me with a couple of details which I hadn't heard before, including Billy Green's scar and Nolman's bad teeth.

I asked her if she had ever seen any of them before that day and, although she briefly hesitated, she was almost certain that she hadn't. When I asked her if she would be willing to identify the suspects for us, her face paled and she looked away but she agreed to give it a try.

"What sort of mood was Patrick in when he left?" I asked, trying to deflect her from the prospect of an identity parade.

"He was OK - more tired than anything else, but he was really just his usual self"

The twig interrupted indignantly. "He asked you if you would be ok on your own, like as if I wasn't in the flat."

"He didn't mean it like that, he was just thinking that I might have wanted him to stay because I was upset. I wish now I'd made him stay." She started sobbing again, and her flatmate didn't waste the opportunity to console her again, by putting her arm around her shoulder.

"Have you not upset her enough already", she spat at me.

I stared her out, directing another question to the quietly sobbing girl.

"How long had you and Patrick been together?" I asked quietly.

"About a year and a half", she said. This seemed to steady her up, and I asked her some bland questions about where they'd met, and what they liked doing etc. She yapped away about how they just liked each other's company and that there wasn't anything particular, but "Oh, we did both like long walks and we both feel strongly about the environment." We all noticed her use of the present tense, and this led to her face crumpling into tears again.

"And did you always get on really well - you hadn't fallen out over anything, had an argument?"

I thought her pal was going to burst an aneurysm - the eyes blazed anger but she just managed to keep her mouth shut. Sarah looked slightly guarded, as if she'd relaxed too much and suddenly realised that I wasn't as friendly as I seemed.

I went on. "I'm sorry, but I've got to ask these questions. We need to understand Patrick's state of mind when he left." I made a point of scribbling a few extra notes in my book to give her a bit of time.

Eventually she replied that they had had the odd disagreement but that, in general, they really got on as well as two people could. She added, "I loved him, you know, and I'm not embarrassed to say it, even to you," meaning, of course that this cynical bastard probably wasn't capable of understanding the concept, far less being able to have feelings for another human being. I didn't seem to be making a very good impression, but I suppose that's part of the job; you really need to have a bit of a shell.

That was me about done. I couldn't think of any more questions to ask her but as soon as I'd left the flat, I remembered that I'd meant to ask her if she knew if Patrick was a heavy drinker or if he was into drugs, I made a note to call back at some point and see her, but thought perhaps that a phone call might do it. Shit, I'd also forgotten to ask about the birth control method they used. I smiled to myself at the thought of the reaction of her feminist friend if I'd asked Sarah if she was on the pill!

While I was in the area, I thought I'd call and see a couple of his friends, but neither of them were in their flats. There was a note on the door of one that said 'BB'. It didn't take a detective to guess that it referred to the 'Beer Bar', at the student's union. Although never a student, I'd been in the union a few times, trying to pull the nicely uninhibited female undergraduates at the disco in the extension.

Leaving the car parked, I walked briskly up over the hill to the union, in Gibson Street. I entered the old building, took the stairs down and turned left into the Beer Bar. Sartorial drinking it is not. Laminated tables and hideous vinyl cushioned booths, coupled with a floor that almost always seemed to be swimming in beer made it suitable for only one purpose - getting students absolutely pished. To be fair, it was cheap, and you

certainly got a quality pint. Not only that, but women of any description were completely banned from the whole union, except for the previously mentioned disco. This made the place a haven for the more politically incorrect male student; they even had a soft porn show every Thursday lunchtime called 'the Freds'.

Anyhow, when I walked in, the bar was almost empty, apart from a group of four students sitting in the corner. After collecting a pint at the bar, I moved over towards them.

"Is one of you guys Mike Davies?"

They looked at me, sort of surprised - I suppose I didn't look like a student, but I didn't look much like a rozzar either. The one with the cropped hair pointed to one of his mates, the tallest of the four and said, "He is."

"Thanks a fucking lot," said the newly identified Mike. "Why are you looking for me anyway, and who the fuck are you?" he said, turning to me. I flipped my warrant card across the table. They looked a little less cocky after that, but Mr. Hairless was the first to speak. "This about Paddy, then?"

"Yes," I answered, "this is about Patrick - did he get called Paddy normally?"

"His mother goes scripto if she hears him called Paddy or Pat, but we generally call him one or the other."

"Listen, if you want to have this discussion elsewhere, I'm happy to oblige." I had thought that somewhere more private would be better but when they replied that "here will do" I realised that I would probably get more out of them in these surroundings.

I got a bit of background on their friendship with Patrick which, to be honest, wasn't much help beyond confirming what I knew already - that he was one of the lads, nice girlfriend (“very nice girlfriend”), got on well with his parents, but rebelled a little in token ways, such as having the odd spliff, not going home some nights (but he usually phoned), arguing politics and values with his dad.

They got up to the usual student things, pretty harmless fun, but it seemed a fucking waste of the taxpayers’ money if you're working class and helping to pay for it. To be fair, this crowd seemed to have come from similar backgrounds to myself.

As I said, the chat really wasn't doing much for me, but when one of the four, I think it was the one called Alex or Alec, said “He did like to feel he could go anywhere and still be one of the crowd”, I felt a little tingle of interest.

“What d'you mean by that?” I asked, probably a bit sharply, because he gave me a funny look and hesitated before answering.

“Well, we all know where we can go and where it's, how can I put it, not advisable to go.”

“What, like areas in Glasgow, or pubs and stuff?”

“Anything really - he would drag one of us down to some new pub he'd found, and we would stand and have a pint, me shitting myself, and him talking to some old bloke about welding or dog racing. He sometimes even took Sarah with him.”

“You're joking.” I said.

“Nope, I think she might have got a buzz out of him being able to mix with the ‘common man’, because she never complained about it.”

At this point, Mike butted in “I don't think he did it to show off or anything. I'm sure he really believed that people should be able to mix with any social class or group, no matter who they were. The silly bastard even went to the odd Rangers pub, and him called Patrick.”

“Did he ever get into any trouble when he went native?” I asked.

They all shook their heads and Alec, or whatever he was called, said “No, the funny thing was he always got on really well with them all. Even in diehard Hun pubs, I've seen him getting pissed quite happily with a crowd of loyal bluenoses.”

“Surely they didn't know his name?” I asked, agreeing that Patrick wasn't the best name to have in a place like that. I had another thought “Was he a football fan?”

“He was a Celtic fan, but he never went to a game as far as I know. He was one of those guys who was equally at home at a rugby international - anyway, I think the fact that his old man was so keen on football was a bit of a turn off for Pat. He liked to make it obvious that he was not a chip off the old block.”

“Listen, back to Patrick's love for a bit of rough, did that ever go further? What about rough tarts? Did he ever go to any of the schemes or anything stupid like that?”

“No, not as far as we know.” one of them replied.

Another thought crossed my mind, and after I'd asked the question, I thought “What a silly bastard,” because when I asked them where Patrick got his stash, it was like a shutter coming down.

“Listen, Man,” Mike said, “we all have a little smoke now and again, but there's no heavy stuff and it's all small amounts - Pat was the same, so

where he got it is his business. He didn't supply anyone with anything, if that's what you're asking.”

“No, No, nothing like that,” I quickly retreated, saying “I just wondered if Patrick got his stuff on his ‘travels’.”

“Look, you're the police, so we're not going to say anything that will cause the guys problems here – surely all you need to know is that that side of it had nothing to do with anything.”

“Ok, subject dropped.” I said, but I thought it would be worth following up with his girlfriend at a later date.

I bought us all a pint each, and chatted for a while about life in general, trying to be vague when they asked when the funeral would be, and I left, heading down to Gibson street for a businessman's lunch at the Koh-i-noor - £1.50, three courses, and one of the best curries in Glasgow.

I sat at the table eating my bhuna, and reviewed my afternoon's notes - you had to do that as soon as possible, while it was still fresh. I left most of the cannabis references out, referring only to “the odd spliff”. I was just finishing up when Joe came in.

“How did it go?” we both asked simultaneously, and then burst out laughing. “You first,” I said.

“Oh, you don't want to know. Good thing is, my side seems to be OK, although officially I've got to wait a bit while they do some more tests.

The doc also seems to think that the wife's ok as well. He says that barring any other results, chances are that if we stop worrying about it, it'll happen sooner or later.”

“That's brilliant, but I can't call you Jaffa now.” I grinned.

“Jaffa?”

“You know, seedless”. I laughed, and to be fair, he did too.

“How did things go with you?”

“Very good,” I replied, “here...” I handed him my notes, which he read and nodded from time to time.

“I’ll make a few notes, and that’s us done for the day. Can’t say thanks enough, man.”

I phoned Francis, to update him on progress. After I’d finished, he said that there was something else he wanted to speak to me about and I cringed inwardly, wondering what he was going to ask.

“I’ve had a word with Mike, and he’d like to take a look at you, if you can come to our next training session.”

“And Mike being...” I interjected, rather stupidly.

“Mike Moffat, manager of Glenhill, the team I play for - we’re always looking out for younger players, if they’re willing to learn, and I told him I thought you were worth a look.”

“Yeh, well, ok,” I stammered, slightly stunned, as I had always considered myself to be just a Sunday league player, and Glenhill were one of the old established amateur sides in the Glasgow area, maybe slightly fading from their post war ‘Glory Years’, but still in the amateur elite.

“Thursday night, then, I’ll pick you up if you like, from the station.”

“No, I’ll meet you at the house,” I answered, not quite knowing why I said that, but at the back of my mind I did not want the boys to know I was on first name terms with Francis.

CHAPTER 4 ARRESTS

When we got back to the office, around four-ish, there was no one in the Incident Room, so I asked the duty officer where everyone was.

“Most of them are along at the interview rooms,” I was told. I returned to a spare desk, and wrote up the actions for my interviews, and then headed along to the other end of the corridor, meeting Danny on the way.

“What’s going on?” I asked him

“We've got them in, about an hour ago it was, and we’re nearly finished with the first sessions.” he replied as he disappeared into the bog. I followed him in, suddenly realising that I needed a piss.

“How’s it going?” I asked.

He grunted non-committedly, and checked his hair in the mirror above the sink.

I asked him again if there was any progress, but he mumbled something about it being early days yet, and left the toilet. I got the impression that things weren't going that well and that I wasn't the most popular member of the squad. I made my way along to the interview rooms and, as I turned the corner, I could see Danny standing talking to Tommy Thompson and Pete Jones, ‘the two fat sergeants’. I went to walk past them but Tommy, or "Tommo" as he was known, stopped me, saying that no one was allowed to disturb the interviews.

I stood with them for a while, but no one was saying very much. Tommy offered a fag to Danny and Pete. Just as he was about to put the pack back in his pocket, he glanced at the other two and offered one to me.

“Thanks, but I don't smoke”.

“You must be the only one in here that doesn't”

I told him that smoking would fuck up my football, but I could see that they weren't impressed.

“The boss says you don't drink either,” he sneered.

“No, that's not true, I just don't drink if I'm going to be driving, or if I've a game the next day.”

“Oh, I thought you might be ‘God Squad’ or something. You know, a fucking Quaker.”

“Or even worse, a Tim”, Pete interjected, enjoying the smirks of the other two.

I kept a smile on my face.

“I was brought up a Tim, but I haven't been to mass in years, except for our Stevie's wedding.” I wondered why I'd said that - I'm not usually defensive about being a Catholic. All I needed was two more answers like that and I'd feel like Peter the fucking Apostle.

“At least you're not on your own - there's another fenian in the building. Joe'll be pleased that he's got someone to talk to 'bout their altar boy experiences.”

I forced a laugh. It becomes second nature over the years to deal with bigots this way. Laugh with them and drop them in the shite somewhere along the line without them knowing who it was, or why. I wondered if Gallagher had told them that he'd teamed me up with Joe today.

“Maybe Joe and I can start up a wee Celtic supporters club in the station - we could even use the same room that they use for the station lodge meetings.”

An angry look passed across Pete’s face, but he joined in when he saw the other two laughing, and he slapped me on the back, turning to Tommy.

“Cheeky cunt, isn’t he?”

I knew the bastard didn't like me, but I wasn't going to let him see that I was rattled. I also knew that if I stood up to ignorant twats like him, I would survive my first spell of CID. There would also be chances to move on to a better section if I kept my head down and got on with the job as best as I could.

Danny turned to me, still grinning “How did you get on with the girlfriend, then?”

“I got on fine with her until we got engaged, but it's been downhill all the way since then.”

“No, you stupid arsehole, not your girlfriend...” He realised at that point I was winding him up. “Ok smart arse, you know fine well what I meant.”

“Sorry Danny,” I said, laughing. “She's a looker alright. The guy had good taste. We got a bit of background stuff and some details on the timeline and some more info on the possible suspects from her. I've put it all in the incident room.”

“Worth a ride, then?” What a surprise, a sensitive question from Pete the caveman.

“Out of your class, mate,” I replied, “Out of your class.”

“You little cunt, you think you're so fucking clever.” With that he stormed off up the corridor in the direction of the bogs.

I turned to the two others, who were obviously taking great pleasure in seeing Pete getting riled, and said “and probably mine for that matter.” After a short while, Gallagher came out of room one. “Give me a fucking break,” he complained. “That wee bastard is being a right stubborn little cunt.” He looked at me. “Where's Pete, I want him to do a spell in there. Where the fuck is he?”

“Away for a slash, sir.” Danny informed him.

“Well, go and fucking tell him to get his arse in here pronto.” He was looking at me as he said this, so I made myself scarce in the direction of the toilets. On entering, I couldn't see anyone, but one of the cubicles was closed, so I shouted “Are you in there, Peter?”

“Christ, can a man no have a crap in peace around here - fuck off and leave me alone.”

I walked back and told the Gallagher that Peter would be busy for the foreseeable future and that, judging by the smell, he was processing the curry that he'd had last night. Gallagher wasn't exactly impressed, but he turned to Tommy Thompson.

“Go and put a bit of pressure on the scummy little ned, we've only got six hours with them.”

I stood about waiting in the corridor, the walls grubby, and the roof yellow with smoke, waiting for Gallagher to explain what was going on, but he launched into a story about playing two brothers off against each other, eventually getting them to compete in giving details about a gruesome double murder from the late sixties.

I felt pretty marginal: I'd half anticipated that anyway, being new to the job, but I hadn't expected to have the feeling that I was being deliberately

excluded from parts of the case. I tried talking to Gallagher, reporting on the interviews of that afternoon. He asked me to clarify a few things, and then told me to make sure it was all documented. I said that I wanted to go back and have another chat with Sarah, and Gallagher and Danny gave each other knowing looks.

“Taken a shine to her, have we?” Gallagher asked.

I denied it, but I could see that they were going to have their bit of fun no matter what I said, so I just looked slightly sheepish as I leaned against the wall and waited for something to happen. I yawned, trying to stay awake in the cloying smoky atmosphere. As a result of being half asleep, I nearly shit myself when all of a sudden, there were loud bangs and a clatter from the room that Tommy Thompson had gone in to. I made to open the door, but Gallagher put himself in between the door and me, opening it a crack to see what was going on inside. He closed it again, and turned to us, grinning. “Just young Malky trying it on with the lads.” He opened the door and glanced in again. “I think he's just regretting it now.”

“Wouldn't it be an idea for us to get in there and help them?” I asked, naively.

“Nah, they're managing just fine on their own,” he smiled. “Leave them to it. We'll go and get a cuppa.”

With that he started walking back up the corridor to the incident room. As he passed the toilet, he pushed the door halfway open and shouted “C'mon you smelly bastard, we've got work to do. Can't have you sitting about getting your piles aired.” He turned back to us, and headed off to the incident room. “Come on and give us a hand, you lazy twats. Let's get this place in order, before the statements start coming through.”

Danny and I looked at each other, and followed him into the now deserted room.

“How many have we got in custody?” I asked.

“Just the six - we're going to leave the other two to stew a bit yet, now that they know their friends have been lifted. We'll get them in later.”

“Do we have much forensics, yet?”

“We searched their hooses earlier, but we got hee-haw.”

“No wonder - they'll have got rid of anything that we could have used long ago. They had plenty of time.”

“They're too fucking stupid for that. They were just lucky.” He started pulling out papers and files.

“Right you two, get this lot copied and filed, pronto.”

Boring as it was, it needed done, so we just got on with it. Danny pissed off back to the interview rooms after a while, leaving me on my own.

Every so often, one of the others would come in briefly and, despite their general lack of enthusiasm for giving me information, I gleaned enough to get the feeling that they were really getting somewhere with the interviews. The only bit of excitement came when I heard a commotion in the corridor. By the time I had reached the door, Pete and Tommy had already passed. Pete seemed to be holding a wedge of toilet paper to his face, and there were a couple of drops of blood splattered here and there in the corridor. Later, someone told me that Pete had ‘walked into a door’ on his way out of the interview room. I briefly saw a couple of the suspects on their way to the cells, and they looked as if they'd been roughed up a bit; nothing broken, you understand, but the bruising and cuts would be later explained away as resisting arrest. Into the bargain, one of them later

would be additionally charged with assaulting a police officer, hence the disappearance of DC Jones in the direction of the Gartnavel Casualty Department.

I had wondered why there was a distinct absence of legal representation until quite late on in the day, but I had been informed that the little bastards had been so cocky, they'd thought that it was unnecessary until things started to go pear-shaped. Then there was a scramble for lawyers such as hadn't been seen since the Tolpuddle martyrs decided to say, "screw you" to the establishment. By early evening, the place was crawling with defence lawyers. I know someone has to do it, to protect punters against the likes of Gallagher and his cronies, but how the fuck these guys go home at night to their wives and kids after protecting the scum they have as clients, I don't know. Christ, some of them even admit that they often know that their clients are as guilty as fuck, so how the hell can they stand up in court and terrorise some poor bastard witness who's already probably shiting himself because the accused's family or pals are already threatening him with physical violence.

Anyway, these lawyers were all milling about, as Gallagher refused to allow them access to their clients. This he was allowed to do on the grounds that there were still two arrests to be made. Obviously, once they were charged, the suspects would be entitled to talk to their briefs before the remand hearing.

When Danny came back, we worked away, selecting key pages from the copied files, sticking them on the board with pins. Andy came in, and muttered something about "that arsehole Gallagher." I glanced around to check that Gallagher wasn't around.

“Watch yourself Andy,” whispered Danny loudly. “If he hears you talking like that, you'll get clobbered.”

“You just look after yourself, Danny boy, and I'll look after Andy. I'm thinking of asking for a transfer anyway. If I can't get another CID unit, I'll go back on bloody traffic.”

“You can't be serious.” I asked him, shocked.

“No, you're probably right, but there's times I feel like it.” He looked at Danny and me. “And don't you two go bleating to Gallagher about it, OK?”

“Don't be daft,” I said, “I'll not say anything.”

“Me neither.” said Danny. I vowed to have a pint with Andy sometime, just to have a bit of a natter, but I didn't say anything in front of Danny, who, despite his assurances, could well go back and report our conversation to the rest of the squad.

We chatted for a while, mostly about the names on the board - it was useful to me, as these guys knew the area and the people, and for once seemed willing to get me up to speed on the whole culture of the place. As usual, as I knew from the areas I'd worked in uniform, it was only a small number of evil bastards that made the place smell of decay and violence - ninety five percent of the folk were decent, but they often lived in fear or intimidation of those few fuck-heads.

About an hour passed, and the boys began to filter into the room. There wasn't much chat, to be honest the atmosphere was subdued, but with an underlying tension. One of the guys said that the police surgeon was in seeing Malky, but he would more than likely live. There were a few nervous laughs at that.

Gallagher eventually came in, and apart from Pete Jones and Dave Woodman, the whole lot of us were there, mostly sitting about in small groups, quietly talking. Cups of tea had been handed round and the air quality was not being helped by the inevitable series of fags that were being lit up by most of the squad.

“Right, let’s get down to business.” He pointed to the whiteboard. “I see that Danny and McDaid have got the incident board up to date - over the next 24 hours, I want a summary of everything new we get on there, and Joe, I mean a fucking summary.” There were one or two laughs at that and, when I turned to Danny, he whispered that Joe was famous for his lengthy reports about everything. Gallagher continued. “Malky has given us quite a bit of stuff. Mind you, we've given him quite a bit as well.” This time there were more laughs, but I could see that one or two of the lads weren't entirely comfortable with it - Andy for one.

“The other wide-o’s think they're being clever, but they've been making one or two mistakes - seems that two of them were shagging the same bird in different pub toilets at the same time - she must be a right slag to let that happen.” This time the laughter was more relaxed, and Gallagher waited until it had died down before continuing. “We're going to put a bit more pressure on Malky, and I think David Johnstone will be our next best bet. He seems to harbour a bit of resentment against John White. Let's try and use that.”

“For all of you doing interviews, keep at them, and keep talking to each other. I keep telling you to communicate - these bastards hate to see notes coming into the room ‘cause they don't like it if they think we know something. Later on, change them round; let them see Malky’s face in

passing, but no talking - only take one back to the cells at a time. Wind the bastards up, talk about their women, especially their schemie boiler girlfriends and their poxy slag mothers.”

He looked round us all, making sure we were all hanging on his every word.

“Now, those of you that aren't doing interviews, make yourselves busy. Get as much stuff up on the board as you can, get some phone calls made - there's a list of outstanding calls as long as my dick, and before any smart arse comes back at me on that, it's a fucking long list.”

Again, the laughter was a bit louder and more relaxed.

At that moment, Pete Jones walked in, and Gallagher turned to him. “Nice of you to join us, you fat prick”, but they were both smiling as he said it.

“Sorry Mike, Spot of diarrhoea.”

“Well, it's better than Gonorrhoea I suppose.” Gallagher looked at Peter Dalry as he said this, and the place erupted, Peter spread his hands wide and put on a sheepish look, and the laughter continued for another thirty seconds.

Gallagher tapped on the desk for order. “After we've finished the interviews, I want everyone back here to find out what we've got from the house searches. You all know what we're looking for, so get your actions all done & dusted. Again, those of you not assigned to this, there's plenty to do otherwise. I'll put a list up of who's doing what. That's all for the moment.”

He turned to me. “John, I want a word with you before you fuck off anywhere.”

Some of the others were already making their way out of the door, when Gallagher seemed to suddenly remember something that he'd meant to say. "Hold it a mo, boys, I forgot to say that Chief Inspector Donaldson will be down first thing to give us all a pep talk." The emphasis on the rank, and the sarcastic manner in which he gave this information made me think that he didn't have a great deal of time for Jim Donaldson. I'd only met the inspector once, when I started at CID, and he seemed a decent sort of Gaffer, although he looked the slightly nervous, reserved type. He finished "I'm sure it's something we'll all look forward to at the start of a long day." With that he waved us towards the door. "Well, on your bikes then." He turned to me after everyone had noisily left the room. "Listen John, I'm not putting you on any of the interviews - It's not fair to drop you into these situations too early. I've also got a couple of things I want you to help Andy Craig with tomorrow, I'll get him to fill you in on that." With that he walked out, leaving me slightly annoyed, but not particularly surprised.

Andy came up behind me. "Listen pal, you're better off out of it, if you want the honest truth. Just do your job and get out when you can."

"Is the whole of CID like this?" I asked, "Because if it is, I can do without it."

"It's not all like this but, believe it or not, I've seen worse." He looked a bit like I felt.

"What have we got, anyway?"

"Shite, kid, but some cunts's got to do it. Gallagher wants us to finish off the house to house at the scene - they got some done the other day but we've to do the rest"

“Oh,” I said, disappointed but in a way relieved to be doing something at all. “Hey, can we call in with Sarah Anstruther. There are a couple of things I need to get back to her for.”

He looked at me slightly strangely. “Go on...”

I felt a bit stupid, but I told him a couple of ideas I'd had: “Well, Patrick definitely had the odd the odd reefer, so I just wondered if she knew where he got it, whether that had anything to do with his death.”

“Not bad thinking, mate, but you're on the wrong track - these bastards that we've got just now - they did it, we know they did it, and they know that we know, but we need to know the details to make sure they don't walk. Gallagher wants to do it the easy way because basically he's a lazy fucker. What we need to do is find some stuff to back up the confessions that he's going to rely on. So keep thinking, ask the questions, but at the end of the day the poor bugger got snuffed for being in the wrong bloody street at the wrong time of night.”

“Does that mean that we shouldn't bother looking elsewhere?”

“No, you aren't listening – we'll look everywhere we have to, just don't get your hopes up that it will make any difference.”

~~~0~~~

When I arrived at work the next morning, I could feel that something significant had happened - There was a buzz around the station, starting at the front desk where the duty officer was talking to two journalists from the *Daily Record*. Although he was telling them that there was no further progress, I could see that his body language was getting the journos

interested. The last thing I heard as I went up the stairs was him telling them that they'd be better to hang around as things could change at any time.

Only Danny was in the squad room when I got there, and he was just leaving.

“What's happening, Danny?”

“Six of them have been charged, and the other two are getting picked up today. We got a couple of them talking last night, and Sarah and her pal identified three of the suspects as the ones who'd hassled them on the way home that night. The boss managed to get some stuff out of David Johnstone, and when they confronted Malky with it, he initially tried to get himself off the hook by saying he was there, but he hadn't taken part in the assault. He said that he didn't want to shop his mates but he ‘wasnae gettin the jail for thae cunts’, but when we told him that his story didnae tie in with rest of them, he admitted that he was involved with some of the violence.”

“Did we get any forensics yesterday?” I asked, despite knowing the answer already.

“I haven't heard yet if we've got much, not that it matters if they are all squealing. Quite a few of the statements stated that Billy Green was more involved than we thought, so he's being pulled in now, along with John White.”

“Did Gallagher say anything about what Andy and I were supposed to be doing today?”

He looked anxious to leave but, before he did, he told me that he hadn't seen Gallagher since about 7.30.

“How early was everybody in?” I asked.

“Some of them only went home for a wee while last night. Interviewing has been going pretty late. Most of us were in about seven.”

“No one told me it would be an early start,” I complained.

“Oh, I think the boss would be thinking you weren't needed until later. I wouldn't worry about it.”

After the morning pep talk from Donaldson, the DCI, which was received with barely concealed disdain by most of the squad, Andy grabbed me, and we walked out to his car. As we got in, he asked if there was anything else I needed to ask Patrick's girlfriend, as we would be in that area.

As I answered, I thought that he was one of these quiet people who actually knows when someone else has something to say, and would listen when they did. I took the opportunity to update him. “There are a couple of other things I'd like to ask her. His friends said that he liked to go native, drink in pubs at the rougher edge and stuff - he liked to think he was a friend of the working classes. Also, I wondered how he got on with his father. I've got slightly different slants on that from different people already.”

“Hey, whoa, Trigger, you're going off at a tangent now. The old man's not involved. Firstly, he's stone clad somewhere else at the time of the murder, and secondly...well there isn't a secondly, but he just didn't...”

I butted in. “I know that, it was more for background, to try and see how he fitted together. I mean, maybe he felt he had to prove something, and doing that put him in risky situations.”

“Doesn't matter what motivated him, It's what motivated his killers that's the important bit.”

He suddenly seemed to remember something. “Aw fuck, talking about Patrick's old man, there was a phone call for you earlier, to contact him when you could manage, something about football.” He looked a bit embarrassed. “Sorry, I should have told you earlier. Look, there's a phone box over there, give him a call.”

I nipped out from the car and phoned Francis. He wasn't in, but his wife said that he had left a message about remembering training tomorrow night at seven, and that I should meet at the house after work.

When I got back to the car, Andy gave me a look.

“I've started training with the same team as Francis.” I tried to sound as matter of fact as possible. “He saw me play the other day, and put in a word for me with his manager, so he's going to give me a go.”

“Just watch Gallagher doesn't find out - He might use that to get at you or Francis.” He still looked thoughtful. “How did he get to be watching you silly bastards trying to play football anyway?”

“He gave me a lift the other day, as the ground where we were playing was just up from where he lives, and he stayed to watch a bit of the match. He knew the Ref, and a few of the opposition players, as well.”

“Yeh, you lot got stuffed, didn't you, by Johnston and his posh brigade. He was slagging you lot off all over the division.”

“Aye, it wasn't pretty, but a few of us actually played all right. Francis asked me after if I'd be interested in trying out for Glenhill.”

He whistled, impressed at that, and said, “That's a not bad outfit, from what I hear.”

“Do you play then?” I turned and asked him.

“Naw, at least not since I was a kid, but I hear the boys talking, you know. Anyway, enough of that; just watch yourself and don't tell any of the lads any more than you have to.”

For him, that seemed to be the end of the conversation and, besides, we had reached Byres Road.

I can't say the next few hours were the most exciting I'd spent in the job, but there was a quiet satisfaction to be gained from doing the donkey work that filled in some of the gaps in the case. I can't say we learned much new, but we made sure there that no-one had seen or heard anything that would conflict with what we already did know.

Just as we were knocking on the last door of the morning, Andy turned to me and said, “Do you still want to see the deceased's bird?”

“Is it not getting on a bit?” I replied, thinking of my stomach

“Don't worry, we can grab a bite later.”

We proceeded up to Sarah's flat, and this time the flatmate looked more like an emaciated Rottweiler when she saw who was at the door.

“Can't you people just leave her alone - she's having a really rough time of it at the moment. That parade thing last night really freaked her out.”

Andy put his hand up to cut off anything I was going to say and, instead, in a voice designed to charm the fiercest of harpies, told her that we were very sorry to do this to her friend, but that we needed a couple of pieces of information that might help us to nail the suspects who had been charged late last night.

She obviously was impressed with that, because she grudgingly let us in and we were ushered into the now familiar room. Sarah was again sitting down at the table, and Andy asked the flatmate to get a cup of tea for her.

He added that a cup of tea for all of us would help, and I was pleasantly surprised, and not a little impressed, when she disappeared into the kitchen to comply with Andy's request.

I looked at him admiringly, but he had a bigger agenda. In the absence of Sarah's minder, he asked if it was OK to ask another couple of questions. When she nodded weakly, he explained that a few of Patrick's friends had been interviewed, and that a couple of things had come up from those conversations. He then gave me the nod to carry on.

“Sarah, before I ask you anything, can we just tell you that six of them have been charged, and two others have been detained today. We know it was very difficult for you to identify the suspects, but it was so critical in this case, so really well done. Now, are you OK for a few more questions?”

“Yes, carry on,” she said, making an effort to give me a hint of a smile, but the identity parade was still obviously worrying her, because she continued, “but I could only say for sure with three of them, the others I couldn't be definite about. Lesley identified the same ones I did, we think.”

“Don't worry, Sarah,” Andy chipped in, “some of the other witness identified them as well.” He turned to me. “John...”

I took a deep breath. “Did Patrick ever take you to any pubs or places that you thought were a bit rough or you felt uncomfortable?”

She looked a bit taken aback at this, but obviously caught on that I already knew about it, and answered in a way that I thought must be pretty close to the truth. “Pat did go to some pretty rough pubs and clubs, and he would

occasionally take me, but we never saw any trouble, and the majority of the people were really friendly to us.”

“Did you ever see any of the guys who were abusive to you on the night of Patrick's death at any of these places?”

She started to bluster that she'd already told me that she didn't recognise any of the men, but she sounded less convincing with that answer than the previous one.

I pressed on, despite noticing that she was beginning to look a little agitated.

“Are you absolutely sure that you hadn't seen any of them before - think really hard before you answer.”

She started to sob a little, and Andy handed her a paper hankie, which he conjured from his jacket pocket.

“I wasn't really sure, to be honest, but I may have seen a couple of them before - I just don't know for certain.” She seemed to pull herself together a little. “I didn't want to say in case it wasn't, and it would look as if I was making it up.”

I softened a little. “Look, we just need all the help we can get to get these bastards, pardon my French, so if you just let us decide what is important and what isn't, we'll get on a lot better.” I looked at my notebook, more to create a pause than anything else.

“Where did Patrick get his dope from?” I asked, expecting another tearful reaction.

Surprisingly, she answered very matter-of-factly. “I know he had a place down in Dumbarton Road he used to go to, but he only ever had enough

for him and me, and we often shared with both my friends and his - we all had access to it, really, but no-one in our lot really goes over the score.” I told her that I wasn't interested in what they smoked or when, but I just needed to know where his source was.

Andy interrupted. “Were him and his friends big drinkers, then?”

Again she replied calmly. “They drank too much probably, but no more than the rest of the students around here. Sometimes we'd go weeks without a drink, or for that matter, a smoke. The only thing I can say to help you about where he got our grass is that it is up the stairs from an off-licence, I heard him mention that once.”

She was trying to help, but that only narrowed it down to half the buildings in Dumbarton Road.

Andy asked her one last question, just as the tea arrived. “How did Patrick and his parents get on?”

“He got on well with his mum, although I don't think she approved of me over much, but him and his dad had a funny sort of relationship.”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“Well, on the surface they seemed a bit distant with each other, and they had quite a few arguments about politics and the environment and stuff like that, but I still think that beneath it all, they loved each other.”

“What made you think that?” Andy asked.

“Well, you know when you know someone really well, you often get a feeling about what they're thinking. I just know, that's all, that Pat loved his dad. Anyway, when I first saw Pat's dad after he was killed, I don't think I've ever seen someone so hurt - he didn't really show it much, but I saw it in his eyes. He likes to be the strong man and carry on as normal,

and perhaps that is his way of coping, but he is as sore inside as Pat's mum and I are.”

“Have you had much contact with them since Patrick's death?” I asked on the spur of the moment.

“Francis has been to see me every day, but I haven't seen his mum. I think she blames me in some way for letting Pat leave that night.” She gave a small choked laugh. “It's ironic - She used to give Pat a hard time for staying over, and now she's angry because he didn't stay that night.”

“Sarah, I’m sorry we had to drag you through more of this, but it will help us, rest assured about that. Now, you look after yourself, OK.”

She sniffed. “OK, thanks, I know you have your jobs to do.”

We could both see that she really had had enough, so we gave our thanks and left. At the doorway, Andy thanked the flatmate for her patience with us, for the great support she was giving her friend, and for the tea, and asked her to contact us if there was anything they needed.

“You smooth bastard!” I said to Andy as we walked down the stairs.

“Sssshh” he whispered, putting his finger to his lips.

Once we were outside, he turned to me and said “Sometimes you have to kiss a little ass to make things happen. Anyway, you were pretty touchy-feely with Sarah, so don’t start about me.”

I grinned as we walked back to the car, thinking that I could learn quite a bit from Andy, and contrasted his style with that of Gallagher and some of the other bully-boys in Partick CID.

As we got back into the car, I suddenly remembered what I'd forgotten to ask. “Fuck it, I meant to ask her if she was on the pill.” I explained about the box of condoms I'd found in Patrick's room.

“Chances are they could have been there a while. She’s probably on the pill if they've been together for a more than a few weeks.”

I looked through my notebook. “Eighteen months or so, they've been going out.”

“Maybe his parents made sure he had a supply - you know, didn't want an unwanted kid to fuck up their son's education.”

I didn't think so. “Mum's a bit prim and proper, and I couldn't see Francis discussing Patrick's sex life with him. Perhaps he was Jack the lad before Sarah.”

“Or maybe he shags about behind her back and wants to avoid giving her a dose.”

I was strangely surprised, I'd not even thought of that. “If she was my bird, I don't think I would be playing away from home.”

“Ah, but no matter how gorgeous she is, and I'll admit she's all that, some women just don't provide everything a bloke wants, so don't rule it out completely.”

I grinned “Ok, the old blow job complaint. But, being honest, from what I've heard of these two, it seems as if they were completely into each other.”

“You can ask her if we interview her again, that will make you popular with the angry lesbian.”

“Yeah, she does seem a bit protective - fancies herself as the bull dyke in that relationship.”

We got back to the station, and Andy was called away to the interview rooms by Tommo, one of the two sergeants, leaving me to get back to the drudge of sorting and sifting through pages of notes and collating the

information into some semblance of order. I didn't see him until much later, when he poked his head round the door and asked if I'd eaten.

We nicked over to Doloni's for a pie supper each, and sat on a bench in the small park down from the station eating them. In between blowing on chips to cool them down, Andy told me about one of this afternoon's interviews. "I was in on Billy Green's. Now, he's just like the rest of the little bastards. He's an evil little cunt but I still didn't like what they did to him today."

"Whad hppnd?" I asked, sucking air in through my mouth to try and avoid scalding my tongue on the piece of steak pie that I'd rather rashly placed in my mouth before checking how piping hot the fucking thing was. I spat the offending item on to the grass, took a quick slug of Irn-Bru to cool my mouth down and repeated my question.

"What happened?"

Andy laughed. "Serves you right, you could see that was roasting hot." He answered my question. "Well, the wee cunt was just stringing us along, and Gallagher came in with this inhaler in his hand, you know, for asthma. Anyway, he says to Billy, 'Lost something, Billy?' waving it from side to side. So, Billy, who had been cool as fuck up to that point, suddenly felt in his pocket, and realised that Gallagher had pulled a fast one on him. To be fair, the little fuck shrugged and tried to look like he didn't give a toss. We just watched him for a while, and you could see that it was getting to him, he just started breathing a bit faster, then the little bastard started sweating, you could see the drops forming on his forehead. I thought I could hear a kind of whistling sound every time he breathed in."

“I asked Gallagher to give him a puff to calm him down a bit. Gallagher just smiled, and said, ‘No fucking chance, not unless he gives us a bit of information about his poxy mates, then I might think of giving it back to him.’ I could have punched the sick bastard; he was as bad as they were. I realised that Gallagher had put me in there for a reason - it made him look like a right hard bastard if someone else tried to stop him and he just laughed in their face. It wouldn't have been so bad if he'd told me, or maybe it would have, but anyway, I was fucking annoyed. I stayed anyway, and by the time they gave him his inhaler, the poor cunt hardly had the breath left to use it - it took him about ten minutes for his breath to stop rasping.”

I listened, wondering why Andy was even telling me all this, but I suppose he had to get it off his chest to someone, and he seemed to trust me. He carried on with the story.

“After he'd settled down, they took the inhaler away again. He asked to see a doctor, but Gallagher dismissed that request as well. Well, that went on for a while, and at one point I thought we were all going to be up on a murder charge. I actually asked permission to terminate the fucking interview. In the end I think wee Billy was more scared of breathing his last than of his so-called-mates because he started to talk. They're still working on him.”

“Fuck me gently”, I said, “They're a bunch of nutters,” shaking my head as I did so. “Does Donaldson never do anything about it?” I added, thinking that surely someone could keep Gallagher and his team under control. He laughed at that, looking at me as if I was stupid. “Donaldson couldn't see shite at the end of his nose. Anyhow, he's scared shitless of Gallagher

and a few of the others. As long as Gallagher gets results, which to be fair, he does, Donaldson'll just let him run his own show. He makes the odd appearance, to make it look as if he's in charge, but everyone just laughs at him behind his back."

He continued, bitterly. "You want to know about Gallagher and his mates? Just ask around. When Gallagher started with plain clothes, in the late sixties, he was a member of this task force that was set up to try and rid the streets of knife gangs that were rife at the time. Laugh if you want, but they called themselves the 'untouchables', and they consisted of a core of hard-as-fuck cops who would patrol in the well-known unmarked 'Black Maria' vans, going right into the gangs' strongholds, bursting out the back doors of the vans and rounding up as many of the knife thugs as possible. Sometimes you could see the vans swaying from side to side as the thugs were ferried back to the local station, justice being meted out to the occupants en-route with fists, boots and truncheons. Once there, they were then charged with breaches of the peace, resisting arrest, possession of offensive weapons and the like, basically jailed for fuck-all half of the time, but it did clean up the streets, right enough."

"Anyway, as usual, there were always individuals who pushed the boundaries far and above what was generally accepted as 'within reason'. Gallagher was one of those...it was well known that when he picked up a ned who was in possession of a razor or knife, he would slash him across the face with his own blade, permanently scarring the individual for life, and to ensure the poor cunt really got the message, he would then deposit him deep into a rival gangs' heartland, to make his own way back to safety with half his face off."

“How did they get away with it? Did no one say anything?”

“Eventually, it was disbanded, but by that time it had done its job anyway.”

“Were the other two in it as well?”

“Tommo and Pete Jones? No, but they weren't much better. I heard a story about them when they were younger, working uniform over Baillieston way. They tanned a door in this pub, I can't remember its name, but then helped themselves to a couple of crates of spirits, planked it somewhere, then called in a suspected break-in to control. The key-holder was contacted, and turned up at the pub, which Tommo and Pete were 'minding' to make sure nothing else would be stolen. The key-holder, who was one of the barmaids, was grateful to the two nice officers for checking the property and noticing the break in, and for keeping an eye on the place, so they would get a lock-in with unlimited booze and no doubt one of them would have given the barmaid a ride into the bargain, while they waited for a joiner to turn up and make the place secure!”

I couldn't believe that that sort of thing had gone on, and although he said that it wasn't the same now, he assured me that it had been like that back in the sixties and early seventies.

When we got back to the station, everyone else had disappeared. Some were in doing interviews, and I supposed that the rest of them were still doing the last of the house searches. I talked to the duty officer, but he didn't know much about anything. Andy told me to bugger off, and that he might do the same, seeing as we didn't seem to be part of the team anyway. I could see that he was totally pissed off, and was about to

suggest a quick pint, when I saw that there was a message pinned to the notice board for me.

“I've to give Francis a phone. Probably something to do with the football. I'll see you in the morning Andy.”

Andy gave a wave as he went out, and I dialled Francis' number.

This time he was in. I told him that I'd got his message about the training, and that I would meet him at his house the following night at half six.

“You do that,” he replied. He paused, and added “but that wasn't what I was phoning about, John.”

Immediately, I looked around to see if anyone was watching or listening. I must have looked as guilty as fuck.

“Listen Francis, I can't say much here. Can I meet you somewhere?”

He hesitated for a few seconds. “Do you know the Clan Head?”

I knew where it was, and had been in it once or twice. I told Francis that I could be there in ten.

When I arrived, he had just ordered a pint for himself, and one for me. He didn't say much until we had sat down and had a few satisfying gulps of our drinks. I noticed that he was a ‘heavy’ man, but he'd bought me a lager.

I looked at him sort of expectantly, but he just took another long swallow of his beer. I just didn't have the patience to wait him out. “Well...?”

“They got nothing on the house searches.”

I nearly choked on a mouthful of Tennent's.

“Jesus, Francis, what are you trying to do to me?\_Where did you get that from?” I blurted out, looking round to see if anyone else in the dimly lit pub was looking at us

“Let's just say that I've no reason to doubt its trustworthiness, and there's no secret about where it came from. I phoned Gallagher not long ago, and he told me that, although he'd got no forensics to speak of, he was very confident with the suspect confessions and the witnesses.”

I gathered my thoughts together before speaking.

“Francis, that seems to be the way he works - if it's any consolation, he seems to have a fairly good success rate.”

“But you have misgivings about it?”

I fidgeted a bit as I answered - I didn't feel comfortable with this at all, but deep down I felt that Francis had a right to know what the score was.

“As far as I can tell, Donaldson, the DCI, more or less gives Gallagher a free hand to run the investigations. The two DS's are cronies of Gallagher's, and are happy with anything he says or does. The result is that Gallagher runs the show. From what I hear, some of the other sections are the same, but Gallagher's seems to be worst. He gets away with it because he has a good conviction rate, and Donaldson can just gloss over the detail.”

“And you don't think that's a good thing, I take it?”

“Probably not. He seems to take too many short cuts. As far as I can see, the whole squad is sloppy, and there's other things going on as well.”

Francis gave me that knowing look again. “Something you don't want to talk to me about? Don't worry, I can read between the lines. Don't say anything that you don't feel comfortable with.”

“It's just that....” I finished lamely. Francis reached over and put his hand on my shoulder.

“Listen, I'm not stupid, I can see that the whole thing is run by some second rate bully. To be honest, you and I both know that these guys they've got are the right ones. I don't mind if Gallagher uses methods to get them which we might be squeamish about,” he said, glancing at me as he did, noting my slightly surprised look with a sardonic smile, “but I am really concerned that they are going to make an arse of this and let the little bastards get away with it.”

I must've had a sick look on my face, because Francis just inclined his head towards me and finished “You too, obviously?”

“Look, I think there is a danger that something like that could happen, and I can't say too much about how the interviews were conducted, but I hope to fuck that the result will go the right way. Apart from anything else, there are a couple of DCs on the case who are trying to do all the other stuff that should be getting done while Gallagher and his cronies get on with their bit.”

I hesitated slightly, and then plunged on.

“There are a few things which could come out that you won't particularly like...” I tailed off, waiting to see what his reaction was going to be, but he didn't flinch, so I carried on.

“Well, Patrick smoked cannabis from time to time, and it's nearly bound to come out at the trial.”

“I had an idea that he did, and although I can't say I approved, I never broached the subject with him. Of course his mum never knew, and she might get upset if it comes out.”

I told him then that it might be an idea to tell her before it came out in public. “The defence are going to bring up anything which might make Patrick look less than perfect, so be prepared for some crap in that department.”

“Anything else?”

“Well, how can I put this, Patrick was a bit guilty of putting himself in situations which were a bit risky at best, dangerous at worst; mostly places that weren't what you'd call suitable for a student from a middle class background. Did he ever tell you anything about the pubs he went to?”

“Not really, we sometimes would have a pint or two together somewhere local. I've been a few rough places after games in my time, but I've never had any trouble.”

“Yes, but there are pubs and there is Beirut.” I said. I named a few of the bars, and for the first time, he looked a bit surprised.

“I've heard of most of them - quite a mixture there. Some of them are just houfs in no-go areas, some are hard-core sectarian places, some I don't recognise.” I could see that he was trying to work out why Patrick would have wanted to drink in those types of places.

“That's the nice ones you've described, the rest of them are either gangland pubs or drug dens.”

I told him that we had a couple of theories - “It could be that he and Sarah got off on danger.” I was reluctant to go into details of how some couples heightened the excitement of their sexual encounters by being involved in real or perceived danger. This could mean anything from shagging in a place where they might be discovered, to fucking after a car chase, or shoplifting for the adrenalin surge rather than financial gain.

Francis shook his head, and I thought that he hadn't understood the connotations of my statement, but he dispelled that idea with his answer.

“As far as I know, they didn't need any extras in that department.”

“Yes,” I said, “I don't think I would need much encouragement if she was my girlfriend either, but...” I kind of realised what I'd said as soon as I'd said it, and my face turned an appropriate shade of red. “Oh, I didn't mean....”

Francis smiled “Don't worry, I know what you are trying to say - she is a stunning young lady. That's not why I don't think their choice of drinking den was some sort of sex game. Beauty and sexiness don't always go hand in hand, but if you had ever seen the two of them together, you would have realised that they had no need to add a bit of zest to their love life.”

Francis said this without the slightest sign of discomfort or embarrassment.

“Don't you feel a bit awkward talking about it?” I asked him.

“When Patrick was alive, I don't think we ever discussed the subject, and I now regret that it was one of the many things that we should have been able to talk about. The things we did speak about latterly usually ended up in an argument, more often than not about politics or religion.”

Glancing at him, I could see some tightening of his face as he talked. I turned away to give him a chance to gather himself together.

“Why do you think they went to these dives?” he eventually asked.

“Well, I agree with you that it probably wasn't for cheap thrills - He didn't always go with Sarah. As often as not it would be on his own or with his pals.

I think it was more a kind of liberal-leftish kind of thing - I think he

probably saw himself as a man of the people; that he could mix with any social group, that there were no barriers.”

Francis thought for a spell. “He certainly always championed the working man and the supposedly disenfranchised when we discussed politics - I thought that it was in the main a reaction to my conservative outlook, and that he needed to be different from me. The way I see it is that you don't deserve anything without hard work, and although there should be a basic protection for the poorest in our society, there are far too many wasters and scroungers about. Needless to say, Patrick thought that my politics were somewhat to the right of Genghis Khan, and he frequently told me so.”

“So Patrick was as left wing as...what, labour party, socialist worker, communist?”

He mulled that one over before he replied. “I don't think he was really as organised as that, it was just a general outlook he had, that everyone deserved a chance, or needed looking after. I don't think he joined any parties or anything, but I know for a fact that he had been on a few marches, you know, CND, Save the Whale, etcetera.”

“I'll check up on that, so that we're covered when the trial comes round. The defence will try and muddy the waters as much as possible, and the more we know the better.”

Nothing was said for a few minutes, but I can't honestly say that it was an uncomfortable silence.

Francis dragged me back to the conversation. “Sarah was probably his biggest influence in that respect - she was more ideological than Patrick was. Up until he met her, he was more of a liberal, middle of the road type of boy.”

“I can imagine that her flatmate was also an influence - have you met her?”

“You mean Lesley?”

I nodded “Uh-huh, that’ll be her, I suppose.”

“A bit of a dyke that one, I think.”

Again I nearly choked on my drink. “Christ, Francis, not the sort of thing I’d expect you to come out with.”

“I may live a quiet life, but I have seen a bit of the world, you know.”

“Right,” I said, “but getting back to Sarah, how well do you know her?”

“Oh, I know her fairly well - she always insisted on making the effort to come and see us with Patrick, and although Deborah sometimes gave her a bit of a hard time about their ‘intentions’, we used to really enjoy her visits. She would sometimes come out and sit and chat in the workroom with me, while Patrick wound his mother up in the house one way or another.”

“So you’ve seen her quite a bit since Patrick died?”

“Yes, I’ve gone to see her every day. I know she must be feeling this as much as we are - she and Patrick were very close.”

“I went back to see Sarah, today, just to clear up a few things up. She might mention it to you.”

With that, we said our farewells, and I drove home thoughtfully. I made a mental note to myself to mention to Andy if it was worth chasing up a few of those pubs to see if any of the suspects were regulars in them.

~~O~~

The next day, Thursday, the inquiry room was quiet when I got in, just before eight. Only Danny and a WPC, filling up the kettle on Gallagher’s

orders, were present. I asked Danny where everyone was, but he just shrugged and told me he didn't have a clue

“After the other two were charged, the remand hearings were organised and all the paperwork was tidied up. It was quite late last night before we finished. A few of them went for a drink, so nobody will be in too early today. Didn't you know they'd all been charged now?”

“No, I seem to be the last to hear anything in this place. Has Francis Hare been told yet?”

“Gallagher phoned him late last night. He has seemingly asked to talk to the Fiscal after Donaldson and Gallagher are finished, but I doubt he'll be given the meeting.”

I changed the subject “Where's Andy then? I've got something he was looking for.”

“Andy? I haven't seen him today - have a look on the duty roster to see if he's down for court or something.”

Danny left and I looked around the room. There was nothing on the notice board for me, so I went over to Andy's desk and had a look to see if he'd left a note of where he was. The duty roster showed that he had been in, at about seven-thirty. I strolled down the corridor towards the toilets but, as I turned the corner, I bumped into Joe Harrison coming the other way. I hadn't really seen much of Joe since I'd covered for his visit to the clinic, and he didn't seem to hang around with the rest, but Gallagher seemed to tolerate him more than Andy. I guessed that he was more inclined to keep his head down and say nothing rather than try to fight against them.

“Hey, John, how's it going?” he said.

“Fine,” I replied, “I was looking for Andy, you seen him about?”

“No, but Gallagher was looking for you, oh, here he is.” Just as he said that, Gallagher came round the corner.

“Who's looking for Andy?” he asked.

I replied that I had been looking for him, but hadn't been able to find out where he was.

Gallagher gave me a funny look, but I didn't let on that I'd noticed. “What were you wanting him for, John, because you'll not see him till this afternoon - he's doing a wee job for me with DC Woodman.”

I told him that I had something to ask Andy about yesterday's interviews, and he asked me how they'd gone.

“OK, I suppose; we didn't find anything that would lead to any other lines of inquiry. The only question would have been whether Patrick and his girlfriend had come across the gang before.”

I didn't know if he was entirely pleased with my contribution, or my interest in finding Andy. I was intrigued to find out about the job Andy and Dave were doing, but I wasn't going to say that to Gallagher.

Gallagher more or less dismissed the likelihood of prior contact between the deceased and his murderers, but said that I could pursue it with Andy later on. “I don't want you going off half cock on your own, though,.” were the words he used. That being said, I also got the impression that he would be quite happy to keep Andy and myself out of his hair until he could wrap up the investigation.

“In the meantime, get on with some filing - the pile on the desk at the front needs copied and the highlighted bits put on the board. File the rest as per usual before the pile reaches the fucking roof.”

“Ok sir,” I said, thinking that it was better to keep on his right side if I wanted to stay in CID after all this was over.

By lunchtime there was still no sign of Andy, so I nipped out for a bacon, egg and fried tattie scone roll at ‘Jimmy’s Joint’, a nutritional error if ever there was one. When I returned, I found Andy talking to Gallagher in the corridor. Although their voices were not raised, I could see by the way they were standing that there was some sort of argument taking place. I slipped into the incident room and made to continue with my filing chores. By the time Andy stormed into the room, I had almost finished the task. “Right John, let's go.” He said brusquely.

I followed him out, curious as to what had gone on between him and Gallagher, but I managed to resist the impulse to ask him, hoping instead that he'd tell me in his own time. I followed him outside and hurried to catch up with him as he made for his car. Andy, with his black leather jacket and quality sideburns, just had to drive a Capri - not just any Capri, but a GT with the black vinyl top. “Jump in” he said as he unlocked the car, got in, and reached over to unlock the passenger door. I complied as quickly as I could, and even before my door was shut, he was reversing the car out of the parking space, nearly knocking down a startled traffic warden in the process, then with a squeal of tyres, surged forward out of the car park. Despite the impressiveness of this manoeuvre, it didn't get us very far, as the traffic in Dumbarton road was nose to tail. As Andy fumed silently, and the snarl-up continued to hold us up, I decided to tackle him about his differences with Gallagher. I waited a few minutes, and then asked him what was going on.

“If you really must know, we're being fucked over by Gallagher and his cronies, and the whole investigation is based on shite. It's all very well having confessions, but you've got to back that up with good solid evidence and witness statements.”

I kept pretty quiet at this, and he continued.

“I shouldn't really be even discussing this with you, and I don't know why, but I think you're all right. The thing is, there's a fair chance that Gallagher and his mob are gonna fuck this up. As a matter of fact, they've been getting away with all this crap for years. Sooner or later, things are going to go tits-up and I've got a bad feeling that it might be on this one.”

“If they get the convictions, does it really matter in the end?”

He looked at me witheringly. “I thought you seemed to be different.” As I started to protest, he silenced me with a glare, and carried on. “Yes, they get convictions, but in the time I've been with them, I can think of two cases where I'm not sure we got the right guys. Even when I raised the possibility with Gallagher, he just laughed and told me to get tae fuck.”

“Why don't you go higher up than Gallagher, then?”

“I've already told you, Donaldson is shit-feart of Gallagher, and the bastards above him aren't going to take my word over Donaldson or Gallagher. I'm hoping for a move elsewhere in the division, but it's not easy to get out without it looking bad on your record. Anyway, I get the feeling that I'm getting on their tits now, and they may ship me out anyway.”

He paused, and obviously he felt quite bitter about the whole situation.

“What are we supposed to be doing now?” I asked.

“That's the annoying thing. We're going to follow up some of the stuff that you've been doing, you know, about Patrick's liking for the rougher side of Glasgow. It's fucking diabolical that someone like you, no offence, but you're just new on the job, is doing the proper investigative work that should have been done by these other lazy cunts.”

He smiled after he had said that, as he could see that I was pleased at this backhanded compliment.

“The other reason Gallagher wants us to do this, is that if we can show that the deceased was known to the suspects previous to that night, it makes it easier to show a degree of premeditation. So, we're out of his hair and we might turn up something of use to him.”

I nodded in agreement, and asked where we were going to start.

“Close to home. We start down at Clydebank, and then work our way back to here.”

As we drove along Dumbarton road, up to Anniesland Cross and down towards Clydebank, I was amazed as usual at the juxtaposition of ‘well-to-do’ areas with the less affluent ones. You could see passing through Jordanhill that the large sandstone houses and wide tree-lined streets were the homes of your professionals, businessmen and the odd senior teacher. In contrast, sometimes within a few hundred yards, the houses became smaller, closer together and the only stone involved in their construction was in the crumbling roughcast of the gable end. As we got into the estate further, the roughcast gave way to the monotonous grey of the numerous monolithic flats that surrounded the dirty concrete shopping centre, half of the shops’ metal roller shutters closed for security even when the shops were open. There always seemed to be a cold wind blowing through the

urine stained passageways under the flats which gave access to the shopping centre's square; a solitary tree with a partly burnt trunk raised its near-lifeless branches to the sky in some attempt to grasp on to life. The boarded up windows on the lower flats made the whole structure look more like a medieval fortress constructed from graffiti covered reinforced concrete than a place where families could live and shop.

On one corner of the square, next to the Asian mini-market that boasted that it opened 'eight-till-late', sat the public house optimistically named the Blue Lagoon, colloquially known as the Bar-L: some comedian had named it before the bright new dawn that was the modern high rise housing estate had foundered on concrete, antisocial families, a lack of community and sheer poverty. The sad fact was that many of the clientele had probably sampled the accommodation of the other 'Bar-L', as the infamous Barlinnie prison was known in Glasgow.

As we entered the bar, the few regulars that were present, nursing their half and half's, stared at us as we showed our ID to the barman. Despite showing photos of Patrick and Sarah, the barman couldn't recall anyone remotely resembling them ever being in the bar. He did, however, easily identify our suspects from the pictures we showed him, but informed us that they hadn't been in for over a year, after having been barred for a string of violent incidents. It had culminated in the near rape of an older divorced woman who had made the mistake of assuming that the young man that had been chatting her up and buying her drinks was not the evil bastard that he later proved to be, when he followed her to the toilet and attempted to gang rape her with the help of his friends. Only the intervention of the suspicious barmaid had prevented the obvious outcome.

“The thing is”, said the barman, “Sadie, the barmaid who interrupted them, said that the most horrifying thing about the whole incident was the way they had just laughed at her as she threatened to call the police, knowing that the woman wouldn't even report the assault through a combination of shame and fear.”

He asked what had they been up to now, and Andy told him that it was a murder investigation.

“Right, I saw that in the papers - some young student was done in, wasn't he,” he said.

“Aye,” replied Andy, “but we think we've got them; we just need to tie up a few loose ends.”

“I'm not surprised, they were a bunch of bad wee bastards, ask anyone in here.”

I thought that the rest of the inhabitants were less than happy with the idea of talking to the rozzers, but showed the pictures around anyway. They reluctantly answered questions confirming the barman's story that they hadn't been in for a year, and that somebody would have recognised Patrick and Sarah if they had been in, “especially the girl,” a few of the blokes had said.

We checked all the dives in Clydebank, and up around Anniesland, and came up with nothing that added to our knowledge of the gang or their victim, but we struck luckier in Dumbarton road, where in three of the pubs, Patrick and his girlfriend had been noticed, and in one of them, 'Strachan's Bar,' the gang had also been seen. Neither the landlord or his barmaid could say if there had been an occasion when both were in together, but then told us to contact a bloke called Dougie Jamieson, who

worked in the bar most evenings. We decided to come back at five when he started his shift, so we checked out the remainder of the pubs in the area in the meantime. Despite coming up with only another couple of vague possible ID's on both Patrick and the gang, we both felt that we had covered the lead sufficiently, with only the guy Dougie to speak to. We returned to 'Strachans' at about four-thirty, and both of us had a lukewarm pie that had probably been cooked three days ago, but kept warm since then in the heated glass food display on the top of the bar. We washed it down with a pint as we waited.

Dougie arrived sharp at five, and the landlord stayed on for a while to allow us a bit of time with him without interruption. Although he seemed reluctant to commit himself at first, Andy's deft manipulation of the situation soon yielded results. Yes, on a couple of occasions they had all been in at the same time. On the first occasion, Patrick had been alone, talking to some of the regulars when the gang came in. They had had a few pints, and after verbally abusing a few of the older soaks, had been asked to move on to avoid any trouble. On the second occasion, which as far as Dougie could recollect, was no more than a couple of months ago, the gang had already been in for a couple of hours, getting to the loud-drunk stage when Patrick had walked in with Sarah. Apart from a few catcalls and whistles at first, there seemed to be no problem but, as the gang left about an hour later, something appeared to have been said to Patrick as they passed on their way out. A couple of the larger locals had stepped into prevent any aggro, and the gang had left, shouting abuse at Patrick, Sarah, the locals and the staff.

As we returned to the station, I asked Andy if this would be as useful as I thought it would be, and he more or less confirmed what I thought myself, namely that it might help Gallagher build a case of pre-planned murder. Andy told me as we got back to the station that he would handle Gallagher, but that I should write up everything that we had done that afternoon. “Don't you want to check it all over together before going to Gallagher?” I asked him.

“No, I'll just give Gallagher a brief verbal, and we can cross check the actions in the morning. You can bugger off now if you want.”

“Hey, thanks man, I was hoping to get away sharp to get to football training.”

“You'll see Francis at this training of yours?”

“Aye, he'll be there, I hope - he's the only bugger in the team that I know.”

“You can tell him what we've found out today, I'll square that with Gallagher.”

I wondered if he knew that I talked to Francis, and I had a few uncomfortable moments thinking that I'd been caught doing something I shouldn't, but then it suddenly gelled with me - Andy was Francis' other source of information.

**End of Chapter 4**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Big Greig for being the first person to read the book, for reading it so quickly, for being so enthusiastic about it, and for checking that all the CID stuff held together. Many thanks also to Tel (The White Rhino) for checking it out from the legal angle and to Jim C. for correcting my grammar and punctuation, and for helping me tidy up the book's final structure.

The comments and support that I got from my other proof readers was very much appreciated. They were Cat, Michael, Karen, Gordon and Franko (by proxy).

I wouldn't have persevered without the positive feedback that I got from Zander, Claire, and Jon, professionals in the publishing trade. While they didn't take the book on, their comments and suggestions gave me the confidence that I had a book worth publishing.

Thanks to Cat for the cover; all that education finally paid off! Also thanks to Harvey for the tools we used on the cover.

Last of all, thanks to my wife, children and all my extended family and friends for putting up with me for all those years.

If you enjoyed this sample, and wish to purchase the complete book, you can buy it in the Amazon Kindle Store.

[http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Cabinetmaker-ebook/dp/B00F0WWVYQ/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=digital-text&ie=UTF8&qid=1378534384&sr=1-1&keywords=The+cabinetmaker](http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Cabinetmaker-ebook/dp/B00F0WWVYQ/ref=sr_1_1?s=digital-text&ie=UTF8&qid=1378534384&sr=1-1&keywords=The+cabinetmaker)

If you wish to recommend The Cabinetmaker to a friend, you can send them this sample, or they can download it free of charge at [www.thecabinetmaker.info](http://www.thecabinetmaker.info),

The website also contains additional material connected with the book, including a map of locations from the book, a dictionary of some of the slang and a glossary of cabinetry terms.

