

THE HOROSCOPE WRITER

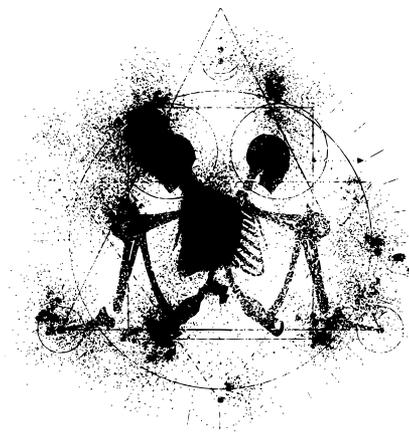
MURDER IS IN RETROGRADE



A S H B I S H O P

**THE
HOROSCOPE
WRITER**

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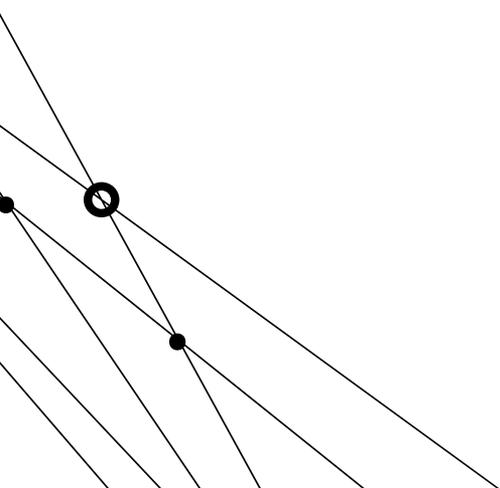
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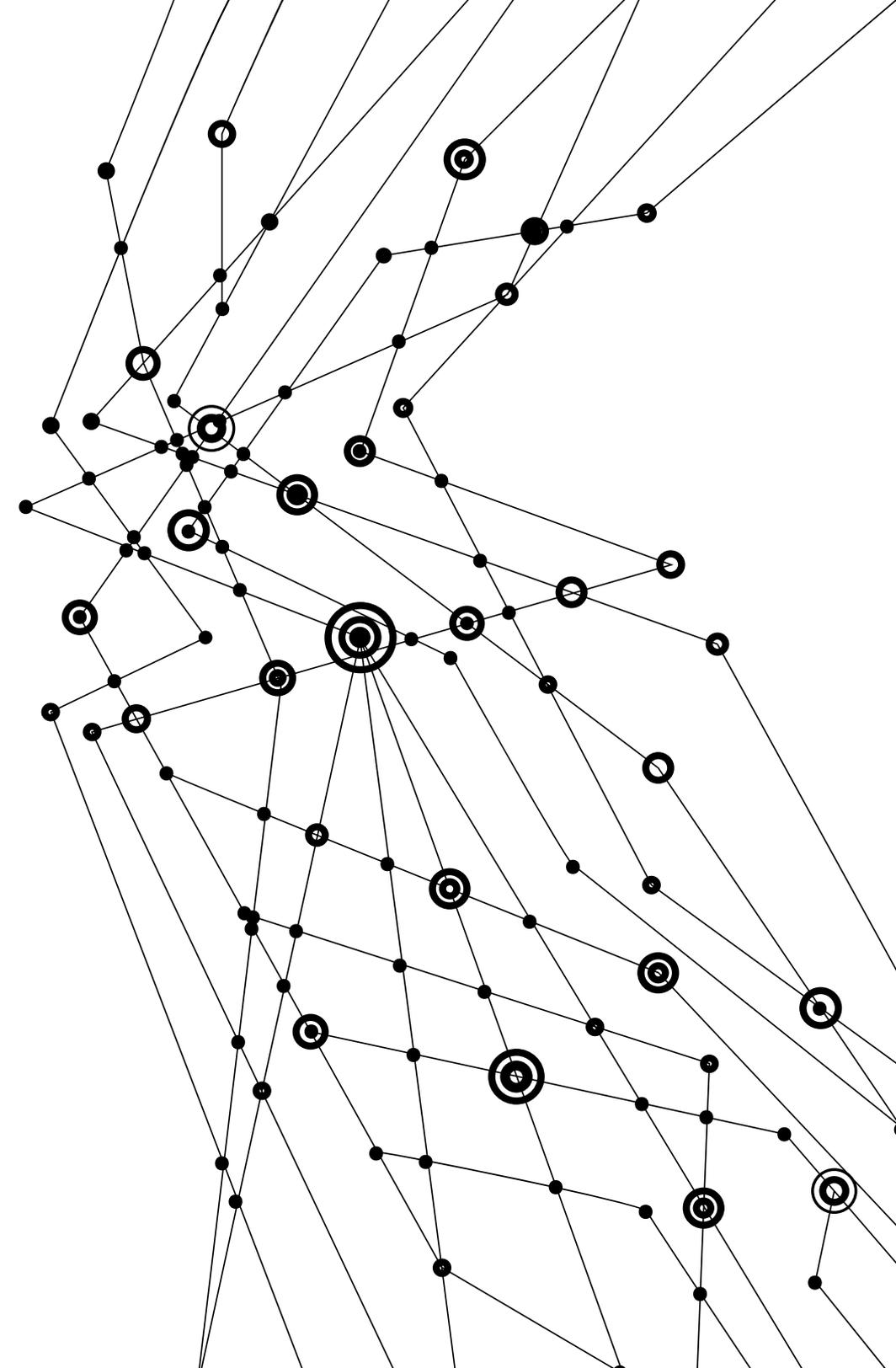
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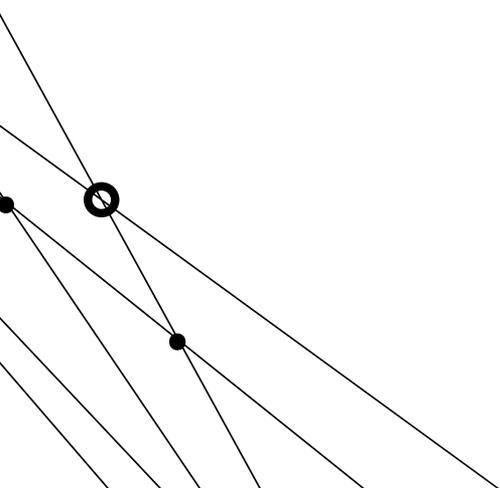
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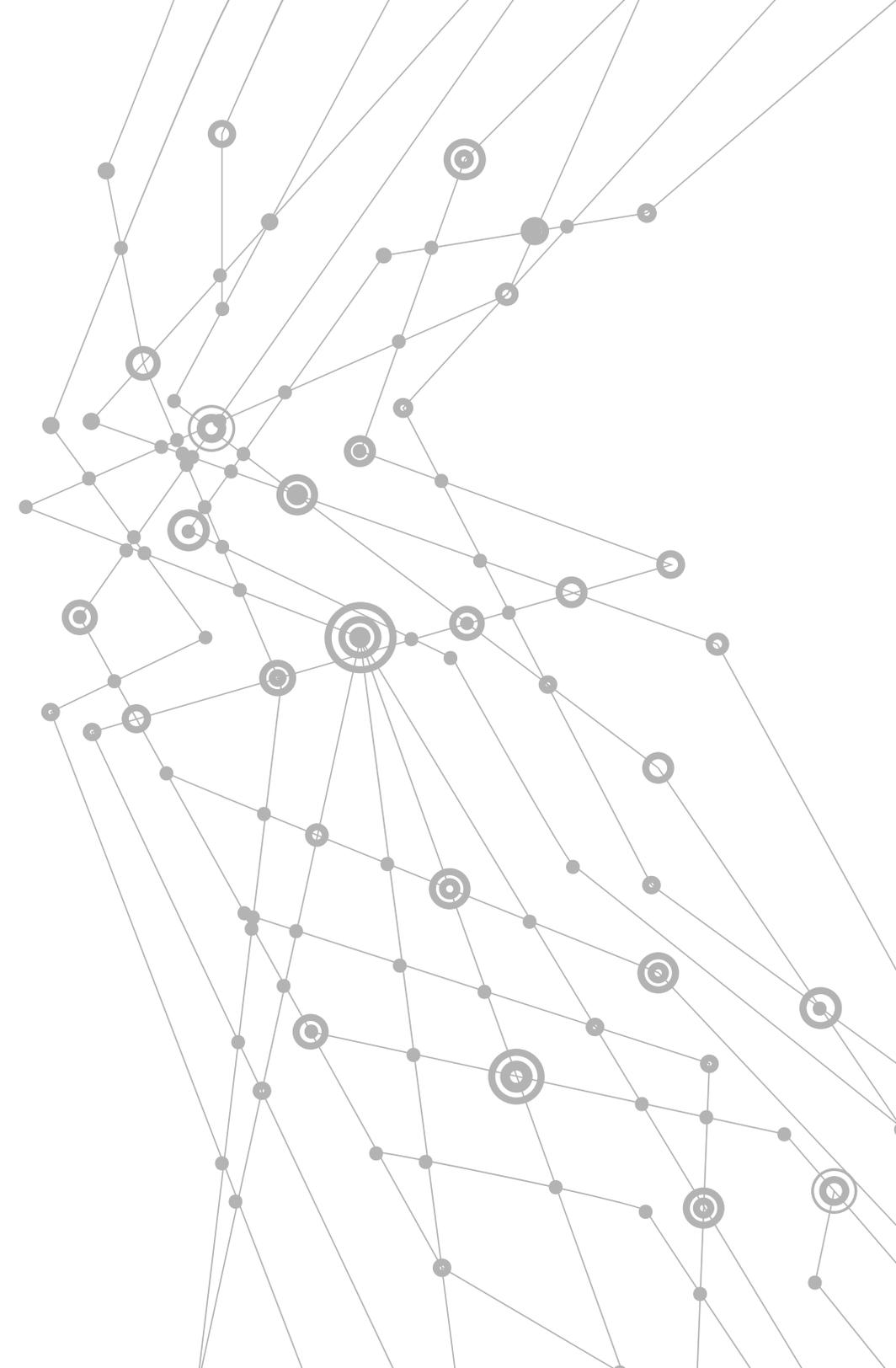




*... and there is a Catskill eagle in some souls
That can alike dive down into the blackest gorges
And soar out of them again ...*

—Herman Melville, Moby-Dick







1

DETEKTIVE LESLIE CONSORTE didn't like being woken up in the middle of the night. In fact, he didn't like it enough to have turned off his cell phone and taken his home phone off the hook. The desk sergeant, a busybody named Roman Stevenson, had felt the situation warranted sending a unit by his house to pound on his door until he had dragged himself out from under warm sheets, grumbling, groaning, and belching out every cussword in the English language, and a few based loosely on Latin roots: *crapepsia*, *shitalgia*, *cockpluribus*.

Stevenson hadn't been wrong. Leaning on his car door and surveying the damage, Leslie dreamed of the stacks of paperwork headed his way. A fifth-year cop named Lapeyre, dressed in uniformed blues, approached, picking through the crime scene, not so much to preserve evidence as to preserve her clothes. Lapeyre was a handsome young woman, close-cropped hair of tight black curls, dark skin, driven, focused, taller than Leslie by at least a couple inches.

"It goes on for another three miles."

"This is a grisly thing here."

Leslie squinted his eyes, staring down the dilapidated Clairemont street. Clairemont was a rotten little housing project of about fourteen hundred units with dirt lawns, peeling paint, unwashed cars, rusted motor homes, and non-working boats. Most of the inhabitants had moved in decades ago when home prices were still reasonable. Now they clung desperately to their thin slice of the American Dream as their property taxes ticked higher and higher and their roads remained unrepaired.

This street was in particularly bad shape because it was smeared with blood, muscle, and bone. Someone had been dragged behind the bumper of a GMC truck. For about a mile.

“What are we looking at?” Leslie asked.

“Dispatch got a call at 12:03. A neighbor reported hearing screaming, squealing tires, and then a grinding sound. Desk jockey logged it as a domestic dispute, though I think that’s a bit of an underclassification.”

“That’s funny, Lapeyre. Any chance we can identify the victim?”

“It’s unlikely. There’s only about a third of the body left. It shook loose from the car down by the mesa.”

Leslie crouched in the street, running his hand over the drying blood.

“Radley found fragments of a jawbone on the next block over. We might be able to get a dental match. I also managed to extricate a patch of hair from the fender of the murder car. I’ve bagged it for a DNA analysis. A SID team is prepping the car for impound over on Derrick Drive. What do you want to do about this?”

“Let’s knock on a door or two,” Leslie suggested.

Leslie and Lapeyre walked up the nearest driveway. Leslie’s suit looked like he carried it to work in a plastic bag. The top button was loose on the shirt, his tie hung low, the edges of the cuffs were frayed, and the collar was badly wrinkled. Leslie believed it was possible to machine wash and dry his dress shirts.

The collar, it seemed to him, was the only part that didn't turn out so great.

Before they reached the door, Leslie pulled Lapeyre to a stop.

"I forgot something," he said. He dug around in his pocket, finally drawing out a shiny, metallic object roughly the size of a billfold. He handed it to Lapeyre.

Lapeyre fumbled with it, trying to get it open with shaky hands. "Is this what I think it is?" she said.

"Congratulations, Detective. The captain passed word down to me as I was leaving work. I was going to tell you tomorrow, but I guess this is tomorrow."

Lapeyre didn't say anything else, but her eyes never left the badge. It reminded Leslie of his ex-wife's expression when he'd first popped open the engagement ring box. "It's a good moment, Lapeyre. You only make detective once, if you're lucky. Enjoy it." Leslie waited a moment while Lapeyre polished the badge on the front of her shirt. "Let's solve this case, huh? After you, Inspector."

"Are you going to show me how to grill a witness?"

"I will show you the ways of the master."

The nearest house was a tiny three-bedroom, one bathroom with a rotting fence and a weed-strewn yard. Leslie knocked on the door. They waited a few minutes. Lapeyre pulled out her badge to look at it again, and Leslie told her to put it away. He knocked again, louder this time. No one answered. They moved to the next house, walking directly across the lawn. It was a small structure, probably close to seven hundred square feet. The roof was dilapidated. A Trump 2024 flag waved above the faded painting of a bald eagle, its wings stretching wide across the garage.

They knocked and waited. None one answered.

On the third house, a blonde woman in her fifties came to the door. She wore pajamas covered by a tattered robe. Her unwashed hair had a frizzy-fried texture Leslie always associated with the very

poor and the chemically addicted. She smelled of recently smoked cigarettes.

“Yes?” the woman said. She was rubbing her eyes and blinking at them.

Leslie knew Lapeyre was waiting for him to speak but he didn't. After an awkward silence, Lapeyre finally said, “Sorry we woke you.”

“What do you need?” the woman asked; her voice held a slight edge.

“We were hoping you saw something tonight. There's been a crime. Outside your home, all up and down the street.”

“That's terrible. I'm sorry I can't help you.”

Leslie was irritated by her curt response, but he tried to remain professional. He leaned in and sniffed her. She smelled like very strong alcohol. Maybe 100 proof.

“What the hell are you doing?” she said.

“There was a brutal murder fifteen feet from your house,” he said.

“I didn't see anything. I was sleeping.”

“The murderer dragged his victim through the street. He tore the victim's body to pieces. His flesh is part of your asphalt now. It's part of your street.”

“I don't know anything,” the woman said. Her shoulders shook in a quick jagged motion, but she got them under control again immediately.

“You watched it from the window.”

“No.”

“I don't know how much you saw, but it was enough to send you back to the kitchen. A decent person calls the police. Lets us get here in time to help, maybe. But you poured yourself a shot.” Leslie sniffed again. “Several shots.”

“Get out of my house!” the woman barked. “I'll call the cops.”

Leslie idly waved his badge. “We're not in your house.”

“I'll call my brother then. He'll kick your ass right out of here.”

“Go ahead and call him. We’ll wait,” Leslie told her.

The poor, rugged blonde took a step back and pulled her phone from her pajama pocket. Then she lurched forward and struck Leslie with her phone-clinched fist. Lapeyre moved to interfere, but Leslie called her off with a curt head shake. With her other hand the woman clawed at him for a moment, like a sick bird, then she fell to her knees, crying.

“We need to know everything you can remember. The coloring, height, and weight of the victim. The same for the killer.” His voice softened. “If you tell us everything you saw, it will help you forget. I promise.”

The woman remained on the floor. Leslie pulled Lapeyre aside. “Get a statement,” he said. “Be as gentle as possible.”

“Yeah, right. Thanks,” Lapeyre said.

“I’m going to go check out the murder car. Join me when you can.” Leslie moved back out of the house without looking at the crumpled form of the woman on the floor, still sobbing. He walked slowly up the street to Derrick Drive.

He had been suffering from acute lower back pain for the last thirteen years. The cause had never been completely diagnosed, but Leslie figured it to be a combination of too many nights chasing lowlifes down alleyways, too many hours behind desks perched on cheap chairs, his tendency to buy his furniture and mattresses at thrift stores, and all the collective stresses of trying to keep a city safe from itself. The mileage of life. The pinching pain caused him to shuffle his feet when he walked, and he always appeared to be leaning slightly forward.

When he reached Derrick Drive, he followed the portable lights, flares, and flashbulbs to the murder car—which was, in fact, a murder truck. He pulled on a pair of rubber gloves and pointed his belt light at the truck’s bumper. A SIDs guy, short for Scientific Investigation Division, was already swabbing at it with a Q-tip. Leslie

didn't recognize him, but then as all the other departments felt the pinch of deep budget cuts, the SIDs were growing like weeds.

Leslie ran his light along the left side of the truck. He noted deep, jagged scratch marks in the faux chrome of the bumper, on the right fender, and just above the tailpipe. The SID was working over his shoulder on the taillight. Leslie told him, "It looks like the victim tried to keep up with the car long as he could. He must have been affixed to the bumper by something other than his arms. Make sure you run tests for trace elements of rope, tape, whatever the hell kind of epoxy could stick a person to a vehicle long enough to grind their bones to dust."

"Of course."

Leslie looked again at the long, snaking red swath as it disappeared down the street and around the corner. "No motive. Few witnesses. Not much left of the body. This must have made a hell of a racket, though. Make a visual record of the entire trail. Then call HAZMAT for cleanup. I don't want people waking up to find this on their street."

"You want to destroy the evidence?"

"No. Gather the evidence but do it quickly so HAZMAT can get this massacre cleaned up."

"Are you sure, sir? Whitmire's going to be pissed if we compromise—"

"You SIDs guys are supposed to facilitate our investigation, not run it. Guy gets butchered in the street, it's still a case for the homicide detective, right?"

"Yeah."

Leslie slid his hands into a rubber glove and gingerly felt around the back of the bumper. Something sticky transferred from the bumper to his index finger. He held it up to the light. It looked like candy from a toy store vending machine. He lifted it up for the pale man with the camera and the plastic baggies to see.

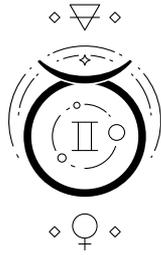
“Got an idea of what this is?” Leslie asked him. It wasn’t quite the right texture to be brain or flesh.

The SID’s man shone a light on it, moving his face just inches from its quivering surface. Leslie turned his wrist to give him a better look, and it split, letting an inky mess free to run down onto his knuckles.

“Looks like sclera,” the man said, taking it from Leslie gingerly and dropping it into one of his bags.

“I made detective because of my tenacity, not my brains.”

“I’m pretty sure you found an eyeball, sir.”



2

Eighteen Hours Earlier

THE NEWSPAPER WAS lying open on Sarah's kitchen table. It was the first thing Bobby saw after he jimmied her window, stepped a sandaled foot onto the tile of her countertop, and legged over the sink to the floor. He slid the window closed with his palm and circled around to look. The local paper, the *San Diego Register*, had been trying to stave off extinction by delivering a free copy every Sunday. Most people just carried it right to the recycler. Sarah's was open to the same small blurb he'd noted on his copy: "Interns wanted! Apply in person or online."

Just as he had when Bobby first saw it on his porch, he became lost in the possibility. While he thought about the internship, he flipped idly to the horoscope section. He read his sign: "Libra—Your specialty is to take care of others. You always do it at your own expense, and sometime soon you're going to need to give yourself a break. A big event will change the course of your summer. Be ready for it. Your communication skills attract an admirer today. Use them to get a head start in the workplace. Those same skills will help love blossom with a Sagittarius or Capricorn."

Bobby folded the paper closed. "Sarah?" he called.

Getting no response, he opened the refrigerator and pulled out mayonnaise and butter. In her crisper he found cheddar cheese, black forest ham, and pickles. The bread was on top of the microwave. He made a sandwich.

Bobby walked over to the computer desk and pushed Sarah's laptop to life. It slowly cranked through its start-up process. Maybe he was old-fashioned, but Bobby couldn't write anything important on his phone. He hated trying to nudge at the small letters with his large fingers.

While he waited for the laptop, he took a few bites of the sandwich and looked around Sarah's apartment. It was tidy, comfortable, littered with mostly new furniture. His eyes fell on the pictures on her desk. One was of Sarah's wedding—she was kissing a bull of a man at a simple, inexpensive ceremony on the beach. His eyes moved to the second picture, her husband in full military regalia. Bobby could see that he was handsome, thick-necked, hair cut short, with just a hint of early baldness beneath the edges of his beret. He wasn't smiling, just glaring back at Bobby for sitting in his wife's office chair.

Bobby took a bite of the sandwich, licked a dab of mayonnaise from his cheek, and booted up a word processing program. He began to pick at the keyboard.

Bobby Morgan Frindley.

Age 26.

BA. Journalism. University of Southern California.

GPA: 3.72 (estimated).

Professional Experience:

The cursor blinked back at Bobby. Professional experience.

Bobby combed through his brain, reaching for any single moment when anyone had paid him money to do anything. He pictured

his father slapping two dollars into his open palm for wrestling the old electric lawnmower across the family yard. Bobby leaned back in the chair, exhaling, his fingers clutched behind his head. He had done a few television interviews last August for local affiliates, just after the Olympics. Pro bono. He listed them anyway. Local 8, CBS. Fox Sports West.

A key cleaved into the front door lock. Bobby pushed Print then leaped to his feet. His sandwich landed on the bare toes of his left foot. He took two steps toward the kitchen and heard Sarah call his name. “Bobby?”

The question was slightly slurred. It was without malice. Bobby turned to see Sarah walk gingerly into her own apartment, a half smile on her pretty face, her eyes glazed. “Hey, Sarah,” Bobby said.

“Hey, Bobby. Did I walk into the wrong apartment?” Her eyes roamed the room for clarification, registering her own couch, her own throw rug. “What are you doing in here? Did I call you?” Sarah said. She shoved the door closed and sat heavily in a bean bag. She was wearing a sundress and tennis shoes. Car keys dangled from her hand, and Bobby took them, gingerly.

“I wanted to borrow your laptop. I hope you don’t mind.”

Sarah looked straight into Bobby’s eyes, flashing a bright, sloppy smile. Bobby could smell alcohol on her breath and her clothes.

“Why are you dressed like that? So fancy.” She paused to tug on the lapel of his jacket.

Bobby was wearing khaki Dockers, a white dress shirt, his only suit jacket, and a pair of Rainbow flip-flops. He would put on the patent-leather shoes as late as he possibly could.

“I’m not usually drunk this early. Bad form, Bobby. I apologize. It’s bad form.”

“Don’t be sorry.” Bobby looked at the digital clock on Sarah’s countertop. It was 11:13 a.m. “I was trying to write my résumé for this news media internship—”

“The *San Diego Register*? There’s one on the table,” Sarah said, gesturing drunkenly to her kitchen. “I saw the internship and kept it . . . to show you. Help me get to the bed. Take me to my room, my Bobby.”

Bobby stood up and lifted Sarah in his arms. “My Bobby, huh?” he grunted. He carried her into her cramped bedroom and propped her in a sitting position on the edge of the bed. Her comforter was a yellow and green flower pattern. It matched the lemony blinds that hung around the only window.

Bobby pulled them shut, darkening the room. Sarah lolled around on the bed.

“It was slosh ball. Slosh ball did this. Kate Sessions Park. I’m going to take my dress off. Could you help me get in the bed and pull the sheets up to my chin?”

Bobby turned in a half circle, positioning his back to Sarah. Slosh ball. Modified self-pitch softball with a keg of cheap beer on first and third base. You have to chug a red Solo cup’s worth before you can advance. A dangerous game, even for seasoned drinkers.

Sarah made small sounds of struggle as she worked the dress up her body. “Help, Bobby, help.”

“What’s wrong?”

“It’s stuck in my bracelets.”

Sarah was half lying on the bed, her hair and one arm pinned above her head by a reckless attempt to remove the dress. She kicked her legs in scissor motions and tugged fruitlessly to the left and right. Bobby pushed the dress off her wrists, her elbow, extracted both ears, and lifted the collar over her nose. When the material brushed past her eyes, they fluttered and stared up at Bobby.

“How did you get in my apartment?” she said.

“Don’t worry about that,” Bobby told her.

“Maybe . . . maybe you should kiss me,” she slurred.

“Definitely not,” Bobby said.

“Kiss me. Right now.”

“I will,” Bobby promised. “But I want you to close your eyes and count to ten.” Bobby held Sarah’s elbows tightly against the comforter. She was trying to raise herself up, her lips questing for his mouth. “One. Close your eyes. Two. Head on the pillow. I’ll kiss you at ten, I promise. One. Two. Three.” Bobby paused at three. He tried not to look down at her lacy white bra or her lovely legs. Sarah’s eyes fluttered open again. “Four. Five. Six. Seven. Seven. Seven. Eight. Nine.” Bobby waited a few more moments. Sarah made a soft mewling sound. She rolled onto her side. “Sarah? Can you hear me?”

She didn’t answer.

“I would love to be your Bobby,” he said. Then he lowered the comforter, slid her to the middle of the bed, and pulled the blanket up to her chin. “Also, I’m borrowing your car.”

Bobby retrieved his sandwich from the kitchen floor and wolfed it down in two bites. He checked the window to be sure it was bolted tight and then used Sarah’s keys to lock her front door.

Bobby crossed the street and let himself into his own apartment. He found his patent-leather shoes by the front door and kicked off his flip-flops. When he went back outside, he saw that Sarah’s car was parked in the loosest sense of the word. She’d driven into the curb, threading the needle between two parallel-parked cars, leaving the tail end of her Camry sticking out into the street. Bobby slid the car seat back almost a foot and climbed in. The radio light blinked 11:45. He headed in the direction of the San Diego Register.



3

BOBBY PILOTED SARAH'S car out of the sleepy beach town of Crown Point, down Ingraham Street, and onto the 8 Freeway. His long frame barely fit into the early 2010s Toyota, and he found himself rolling down the window to make space. The wind whipped through the opening, sending his shaggy brown-blond hair dancing in every direction. As he drove, the grubby beach communities of San Diego gave way to the more polished homogeneity of Mission Valley, which gave way to the ever-expanding bloat of San Diego University, squat-ting high on the hill above the freeway. Three miles farther on and he exited into a medium commercial district. He passed San Diego Unified's bus storage, a Family Fun Center miniature golf course, a tow yard, a seedy-looking sex shop, and finally turned left into the parking lot of San Diego's last surviving regional newspaper. Bobby climbed from the car, his nearly blank résumé clutched carefully between his thumb and forefinger.

The desk receptionist, a petite, ponytailed brunette, looked at him quizzically when he told her he was there for the internship. She checked his name in her appointment book and didn't find anything.

“The ad said apply in person or online.”

“I think we have a lot of applications for that one,” she said. “But no one has come in to apply in person.”

“Kind of makes you think I might be the best person for the job, doesn’t it?”

“It makes you old-fashioned,” the girl said, giggling. “And a little old for an internship. I don’t have any applications. If you go to the waiting room, I’ll print you out a copy. Unless you just want to fill it out on your phone?”

“I’ll wait,” Bobby told her.

“Second door on the left. There’s a bathroom to the right if you want to fix your hair. And your tie.”

Bobby walked down the hall. A tall man in a brown suit with an eye patch came out of the elevator. Bobby said hi, but the man just grunted in response. Bobby passed a mirror. He ran his fingers through his hair and pulled at the wrinkles in his suit jacket.

The waiting room was stacked with rows of metal chairs, like the DMV. The art, faded in smudged plastic frames, was also DMV-esque. Bobby noted a Monet. A Dali. A Chagall. A few more he didn’t recognize, all cracked and dull from sunlight squirming in through old single-pane windows. He was the only one there. It felt ominously empty.

He wandered over to the water cooler and poured himself a cup of water. In a voice just above a whisper, he said, “God? I know I haven’t prayed since July. I know I don’t really deserve a favor, per se. But, uh, please help me get the job here? Amen.”

A thin man entered the room and filled up his own paper cup full of water. The man was bald except for a few hairs above his ears, rallying there before final surrender. He could not have weighed more than one hundred and ten pounds on a six-foot frame, and most of his weight seemed to be carried in the huge bags under his eyes. Standing across the room from him, dwarfing him in height,

structure, and general health, Bobby felt like a different species. The man offered Bobby a quick nod.

“You look familiar, son. Do I know you?” the man asked.

“I don’t think so,” Bobby told him.

The man offered his hand. “Milo Maslow, Sports, Calendar, and Metro, too, lately. Hey, that’s a nice handshake you’ve got there.” His speech was clipped, inflection almost an afterthought.

“Bobby Frindley.”

Milo searched his pockets until he found a pack of cigarettes and, when he found them, his face briefly brightened. A subtle shift overcame Milo. He made eye contact. His shoulders straightened slightly. “That name is familiar.”

“Well, I guess if you covered local spor—”

“Hot damn, you’re Bobby Frindley. The Olympic athlete. We did two separate profiles on you.”

It hit Bobby just as suddenly. Milo Maslow. It was on the byline of the news articles hanging on his bedroom wall in his parents’ house. His mom had printed out the articles and taped them there; it didn’t seem like she’d ever take them down. The *Register* had made him out to be a local hero, posting his scoring achievements for every water polo game he’d played, starting when he was first promoted to hole set his freshman year in high school. They’d nominated him as athlete of the week six times his junior and senior year. After college, when he made the Olympic squad, they’d featured him with online splash pages twice. He’d interviewed with a woman named Michelle something, but it had been Milo Maslow whose name had eventually appeared on the byline.

Milo practically jumped in place. He shook Bobby’s hand again.

“That’s great you’ve heard of me.”

“Heard of you? I cheered for you! That stuff against Croatia? It was outstanding. I meet a lot of professional athletes, don’t get me wrong, but it’s not often you meet an Olympian. A gold medalist, right?”

“Practically.”

“What the hell are you doing here?”

“I’m interested in the internship.”

Milo walked over to one of the empty chairs and sat down. Bobby’s words mollified him. “You shouldn’t be. You should be looking somewhere else. This is a dying business, son. Have you looked around? New media has been crushing us mercilessly for the last two decades. No matter what I try to do—including a heavy focus on local sports,” Milo wagged his finger in Bobby’s direction, “we just can’t catch up. You don’t want to stake your future here.”

Bobby started to say something, but Milo raised his palm and kept talking. “Do you know what we’re doing? With this ‘internship’ program? We’re replacing our admin assistants with unpaid students. We’ll save on healthcare, bonuses, salaries. But there’s no upward mobility. For anybody. There’s no way these positions lead to jobs. In fact, they’re replacing jobs. We’re basically a boutique, a vanity project for our billionaire boomer board of directors. You’d be throwing your time away working here. You’re what? Twenty-three?”

“Twenty-six.”

“When the boomers are dead, the papers are dead. Don’t hitch your wagon with us. Try and get in the bottom floor at Qualcomm.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, really. This paper has been around for over one hundred fifty years. There’re stories in the archives about ‘Injun’ attacks on wagon trains. It’s as old as a damned desert tortoise, but it’s dying.”

“Maybe we just need a new business model.”

Milo laughed nervously and then looked at Bobby, biting his lip; his eyes creased. “Well, spit it out.”

Bobby patted his chest. He didn’t actually have a new business model in mind. He exhaled.

Milo looked at him, eyebrows arched.

Bobby improvised.

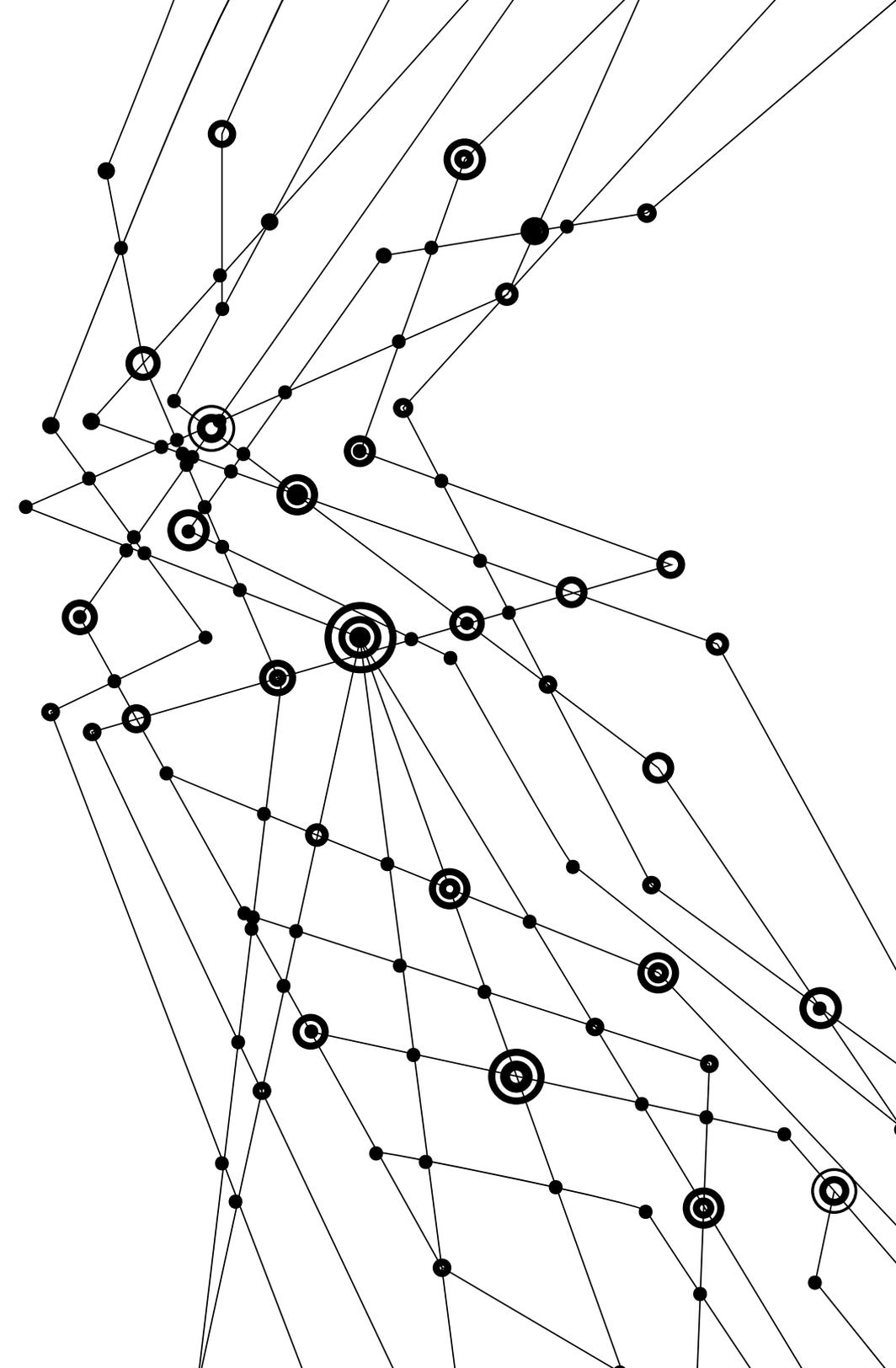
“Think about it this way. The internet didn’t just kill traditional news media. It also killed the lofty values that it was based on. These days, half-baked ‘news’ slingshots around the world before breakfast followed by ten thousand tweets and a hundred thousand reactions to those tweets twisting the unverified information into more and more ridiculous shapes. Politicians sipping on baby’s blood in pizza parlors? Or what-have-you?” Bobby held up a finger, for emphasis. “But, I think people miss having a news source that prioritizes its own integrity and holds dear to the ideals of veracity, honesty, and truth. One that won’t piss everything away in a race for more clicks or to capitulate to some pre-existing political market. What if we put investigation, authenticity, and accuracy first and foremost? As our business model we offer irrefutable, triple-sourced facts, backed by science. Without bias. We refuse to bend to the forces that have compromised the other outlets. We could build a reputation of having so much integrity that folks would know they could come to us for the real story. I’d pay money for professionally vetted information I could trust. I think a lot of people would. We stay in business and, at the same time, we sow a little faith back into the human animal.”

“We should be able to pull that off by noon tomorrow,” Milo said, half a smile creeping onto his face. “Is that all?”

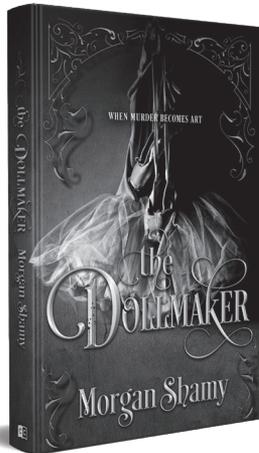
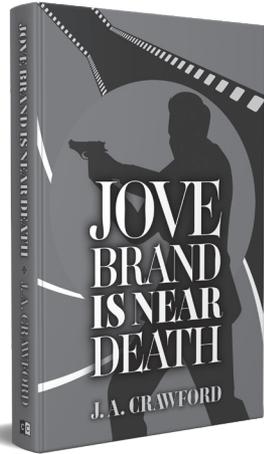
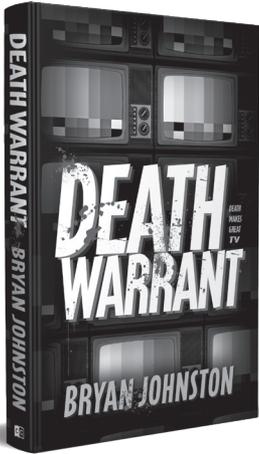
“That’s not enough?”

“Veracity, honesty, and truth.” Milo chuckled. “Big Bobby Frindley. I love your youthful idealism; I love it. Sow faith in the human animal.” Milo leaned forward in his chair. He had placed a cigarette in his mouth, but he hadn’t lit it and it hung from his lips, smelling faintly of cloves. “What you’re suggesting is totally impossible in the modern market. But I’m impressed. I am. Give me your résumé, let me take a look.”

Bobby, whipped into a fervor by his own speech, had forgotten about the mostly blank sheet of paper, still clutched in his left hand. He handed it sheepishly to Milo.

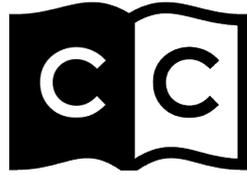


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— Leo —

You'll step out the door, prepared for a normal day.
But you'll never reach your workplace.
You will vanish, without a trace.

Who is **The Horoscope Writer**? It's not Bobby Frindley. He's an ex-Olympic athlete who has fast-talked his way into an entry-level position at a dying newspaper. He's supposed to be writing horoscopes, but someone has been doing his job for him . . .

On his first night on the job, Bobby receives an email with twelve gruesome, highly-detailed horoscopes, along with a chilling ultimatum: print them and one will come true, or ignore them and all of them will.

Working with a skeptical co-worker, Bobby investigates the horoscope writer's true identity, but the closer he gets to the truth, the more the predictions begin to be about him. Has he attracted the attention of a cruel puppeteer? Or is it possible that, like any good horoscope, it's all in his head?


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