

Detective Aaron Finn

Detective Finn read the autopsy report from three years ago. It was fairly complete. There could have been more information on it, but he didn't think they would have to exhume the body. The anonymous caller had told them that the killer was here in town, right now, so if they could figure it out, they could catch him today. It seemed like the caller knew who the killer was, but how could that be, unless he was the killer himself? Or herself, he guessed. It could have been a woman that pushed her down the stairs.

He looked at the suspect list that had been drafted up this morning by the Sergeant and the Captain who had worked the case previously. They had gone over everything with Finn yesterday.

"Sara Elias. Dr Simon Brantwell. Really? Noah Greysen. Jackie Keller and Ridel Wiley. Interestin'." He was reduced to talking to himself now. "Not sure why some-a these people are on this list. Others, I'm s'prised they weren't checked on three years ago, and either arrested or cleared then. Hmm." He looked at the suspect list from three years ago. Not one of these people was on that list, too.

"Well, let's get started." He decided to hit Dr Brantwell first. He'd be busy at work, but his patients would just have to wait while Finn talked to him. He could talk with Jackie Keller while he was there. Two birds, one stone. He drove over to the doctor's office, and walked in.

Sitting down in one of the chairs in the waiting room, Detective Finn watched Jackie as she went about her day, totally unaware of his presence. He watched how she worked with their patients. Was she short with them? Abrupt? Did she cut them off in impatience? Did she show compassion? Kindness? Gentleness? Did she hurry them along, or let them go at their own pace? You could learn a lot from the way people treat others.

Since he worked in civilian clothes, he was often overlooked as a member of the police department, even though he wore his badge in plain sight. He walked up to the receptionist desk, and told Jackie that he needed to see Dr. Brantwell immediately.

"You'll have to take a seat and wait, like everyone else. Do you have an appointment?" She barely looked up to acknowledge the good looking older guy in front of her. It was a busy, busy day already. She had no time for patients like this guy who expected her to move the sun and the moon for them. The guy just stood there looking at her, so she looked up again. This time she saw the badge. She was sure he hadn't had it in his hand before.

It made sense that he would unclip it from his waist, where he probably kept it, and hold it up for her to see, since she hadn't seen it the first time. She wasn't worried, yet. They often had officers come in for various reasons. Sometimes they liked to play their badge card to get better appointments for themselves or family. Usually, they needed some information on a patient, or they needed something for a case they were doing. This time was a little different. He demanded to see Dr Brantwell immediately. That was unusual, but maybe this guy just had a bad day, and when she hadn't acknowledge that he was an officer, he got a little miffed. Could be anything.

She got up, went in to exam room one, and quietly told Dr Brantwell that he was needed immediately out in the waiting room. Not a 911 situation, though. He politely finished what he was doing with the patient, and tactfully excused himself from the room, giving some intelligent doctor excuse. You know them; pretty much every doctor has had to give one at one time or another in their career.

Detective Finn watched the good doctor come out of the exam room right next to the reception desk. He and Jackie did a brief little huddle as she told him who was here to see him. He glanced over at Detective Finn, and stepped behind the reception desk. Just then the patient came out of the exam room. He nudged Dr Brantwell with his elbow in a goodhearted way, and received a long, friendly pat on the shoulder in return. It looked like Dr Brantwell was saying something to him, because the patient was standing there grinning back. Suddenly both men were bellowing a good hearty laugh, and the patient left, giving the detective a sideways glance.

Once the patient had cleared the back area, Jackie turned toward Detective Finn, who had been standing at the end of the reception counter taking it all in, every gesture, twitch and movement, mentally writing everything down on a notepad for later use.

"You can come on back now, Detective. Dr Brantwell will meet you in his office at the end of the hall."

Finn hadn't even noticed that the doctor had left the area. The patient that left had grabbed his attention for just a brief moment. Was it planned? He'd figure out if it was, and that would be a strike against Brantwell. He *a/ways* figured it out.

Detective Finn took 15 minutes to talk with Dr Brantwell. The questions he used were all the same. It just depended on how they answered if they would be receiving a return visit from him. The detective told him not to leave town until further notice. He then informed Dr Brantwell that he would need to talk with his receptionist, Jackie Keller.

"She's my nurse, actually. She just does the jobs of five people around here." He was a little nervous this time.

"My apologies. I'll need 'bout 15 minutes with your nurse, as well, Dr Brantwell. Could you please arrange for that, right now?"

Dr Brantwell smiled slightly, and stood up.

"Should I stay here? Or do you want me to meet with her in a different room?" The detective gave him the choice between taking up an exam room to meet with her, or letting him stay in the office while he went and got her.

"Oh, um, I'll go get her." He went out to the reception desk, and told Jackie that she was needed in his office to talk with Detective Finn. He told her not to leave anything out, and not to worry about discrediting anyone, that the truth was more important.

Jackie went into Dr Brantwell's office, and sat down with Detective Finn. They were together for a little longer than he expected. After 25 minutes, Jackie came back out, white faced and almost crying.

"Are you all right, Jackie?" Dr Brantwell looked angrily back at the office where the detective was just exiting. He took good care of her. He needed to be sure she was in tip top form, ready for work, but also ready for herself. If she wasn't personally okay, she could never be professionally okay. He didn't care what those motivational speakers said about leaving your work at work, and your personal life at home. It didn't work that way all the time, especially when you worked with sick people.

"I'm fine. Thank you, Dr Brantwell." She went to her desk, and got back to work. Detective Finn had just reached them. He ended up following Jackie back to her reception desk.

"Thank you, Doctor Brantwell, Nurse Jackie. Remember, don't leave town for any reason 'til you hear from me specifically."

In the car, Finn wrote down the notes he had taken mentally while in the doctor's office. He wrote every comment and every bit of body language he could remember. It was important

to watch the body language, too. That's why a detective interrogates in person, not that these were official interrogations.

Once everything was written in his little notebook, Detective Finn left, and went over to the church where Ridel Wiley should be. He wasn't there, so he went to his house.

"Ridel, I'm Detective Finn with GPD. I got me some questions for ya. Can we have a quiet place to sit and talk where we won't be disturbed?"

Ridel seemed a little concerned. He led the way into the house where Detective Finn asked him questions for about 15 minutes. When they were done, Finn thanked him for his time, and told him not to leave town until he heard from him specifically. Ridel agreed.

Once again in the car, Finn wrote down everything he could remember. He was especially curious about the little tick that started the second he had mentioned what he wanted to talk about. Finn was shocked that Ridel, the victim's husband, wasn't a suspect the first time around. How could Bryson and Gerber *not* have read him?

Next, Detective Finn went over to the Greysen house. Noah was standing on the porch looking at him, with his dog barking next to him. Detective Finn asked if he had some time to sit and talk a spell, regarding Lola Wiley.

"Of course I have time to talk with you, Detective. But, you do know that I wasn't living here at that time? Only my mother was."

"Yes, we are well aware o' that. I still wanna to talk with you. May need to call your mama, too. Would that be possible?" Detective Finn asked.

"Yes, she should be up by now. I can't promise she isn't out in the sun, though."

"No worries. We'll cross that bridge if we come to it."

Detective Finn and Noah talked on the front porch. Noah got them both water, and they talked for about 15 minutes. Afterwards, in the car, the detective wrote down his impressions, along with the facts that Noah told him.

Detective Finn didn't have a contact number for Sara Elias. He decided to go back to the station, and have Dispatch look her up for him. While he did that, he went upstairs to his desk, and reviewed his notes. Then he read all the statements—twice. He looked at the autopsy report and the case file after each statement he read, especially after Dr Brantwell's. Then he called Dispatch.