

Monday, January 16, 2006

Missing Person - Episode #12

Episode 12: Kathy to the Rescue

Without thinking another second, I kicked Bill in his right knee. He screamed in pain and fell backwards on his back. The gun fell to the ground. I picked it up and pointed it at Bill.

“The game is over, Bill.” I said, moving the gun closer to his face. “I know that you killed John Costello, too. Was he your partner in kidnapping Sarah?”

“Costello was an idiot. He was supposed to kill Anne and then keep quiet. But he told me he wanted more money or he would tell the police everything he knew. So I had to kill him so he wouldn’t blab to the cops.”

“And you came to Costello’s apartment tonight to get rid of any evidence that connected you to him?” I asked.

“Costello had my name written down on a sheet of paper I gave him. I had to find the paper and get rid of it.” Just then I heard a knock on the door, and someone came in. It was Kathy Chang.

“Kathy! Right on time!” I said. “Did you call the police?”

“Yes, they are on their way here right now. I have a camera person from the television station outside. We’re ready to report the story.”

The police arrived a few minutes later, and arrested Bill Salas for the murder of his wife and John Costello. Anne would be devastated, of course, but at least now she would know the truth.

Now it was really over, and the murderer had been found. A week later, I met Kathy at her apartment for our usual dinner. Of course she wanted to know all about the case of Sarah Salas’ kidnapping. We talked over a wonderful meal of baked chicken.

“I understand that Bill killed his wife, Sarah, for her money,” Kathy said, “but how much money was he going to get?”

“Bill had a two-million-dollar life insurance policy on Sarah,” I responded. “Bill would get two million plus half of the money from Pardo Computers.”

“And how was John Costello involved in this whole thing?”

“John Costello lived in the same apartment building as Bill and Sarah,” I said. “He moved-in a few months ago, and became friends with Bill. But John liked to go to Las Vegas and gamble. He also liked to smoke and drink. So he needed money--lots of money.”

“And Bill gave him a chance to make a lot of money by helping him kidnap Sarah,” Kathy said.

“Exactly. Bill told John he would give him \$500,000 if he helped him kidnap Sarah.”

“But how did they take Sarah? Where did they keep her?”

“Bill had planned everything out very carefully,” I explained. “He told John Costello to call Sarah on the phone to ask her for some help with his computer. When she got there, John tied her up and kept her in his room. Bill left Los Angeles for two days in a rented car, so people would think both he and Sarah had disappeared. And it worked: Anne called the police, because she thought that both Bill and Sarah were in trouble. That’s when Anne asked me for help.”

“What went wrong with Bill’s perfect plan, then?”

“The problem was that John Costello wasn’t a very good helper,” I said. “He was supposed to kill Anne on the freeway, but he didn’t. Then he told Bill that if Bill didn’t give him more money, he would tell the police about the kidnapping.”

“That’s when Bill decided to kill Costello, to make sure Costello didn’t tell the police?”

“Exactly. He went to the bar where Costello worked and killed him,” I said. “Then he went back to Costello’s apartment to kill his wife. He cut her throat and put her body in the street. But when I discovered that John Costello lived in the same apartment building, I knew it was no coincidence, and that’s how I figured it out.”

I took a drink of the wine and looked at Kathy. She really was a very beautiful woman.

“Well, let’s not think about Anne or Bill or John Costello,” Kathy said. She smiled and raised her glass of wine. Perhaps I’ve been working too hard on this case. I’ve forgotten the simple pleasures of life. It was time to spend some more time on the good things in life, like a good glass of wine, a good meal, and Kathy’s wonderful smile.