

Monday, November 14, 2005

Missing Person - Episode #4

Meeting at the Cafe

Audio Index:

Story: 1:48

Explanations: 6:04

“We have to go, Dr. Reeves!” Anne said excitedly. “That was Bill on the phone. He is at a restaurant called Cafe Pico. Sarah’s been kidnapped!”

“Kidnapped? Are you sure?” I asked, somewhat incredulously.

“I’m sure. Someone has taken Sarah,” Anne replied. “Bill said that a man is holding her, and he will kill her if we don’t give him the ransom he’s demanding.” Anne was pulling me to the door of the apartment. “Come on! Bill said he will explain at the restaurant.”

I closed the door to the apartment and followed Anne down the stairs and into my car. The weather was typical for Los Angeles: sunny, 75 degrees, with brown smog covering the city. L.A. is a city of dreams. But for some people, it’s a city of nightmares.

Anne and I drove down Robertson Avenue in my old red Mustang, going around cars as fast as we could without causing a pile-up.

“Where is this cafe again?” I asked her.

“On Robertson and Pico, next to a bookstore,” Anne answered. She was justifiably nervous. You could tell it in her eyes.

Arriving a few minutes later, we found a place to park in front of the bookstore, and walked into the Cafe. Bill was there waiting for us.

“Bill! Oh my God, Bill, what happened?” Anne hugged Bill, who looked tired and worried.

“Oh, this is a friend, Dr. Darron Reeves,” Anne said. “Dr. Reeves, this is Bill. Dr. Reeves is my professor at USC. But he is also a very good detective. When I found out that you and Sarah were missing, I went to him for help.”

“It’s good to meet you, Bill,” I said.

“Um, yeah, I’m glad to meet you, too,” Bill said.

Bill, Anne, and I sat down at a table in front of the cafe. The waitress came to take our order. I asked for a glass of iced tea. I’m a bit of a caffeine addict, truth be told.

“Bill, tell us what happened to Sarah. Is she okay?” Anne asked impatiently.

“Sarah is fine for now,” Bill said. “But for awhile, I thought both of us would be killed. Two days ago, a strange man knocked on our door at the apartment. I opened the door, and before I knew what was happening, he had a gun in my face and was shouting obscenities at me.”

“What did he look like?” I asked.

“He was tall and muscular,” said Bill, “but he wore a ski hat, so I couldn’t see his face very well. He had a mustache, I think. It all happened so fast.”

“That’s okay. Go on,” I said.

“Well, the man took Sarah and me and put us in a car. He put a small towel around our eyes, tied our legs and hands together, and then drove us to another place. We were forced out of the car and into a small, dingy room.

“We were given food twice a day. I’m not sure how many kidnappers there were holding us there. I heard several voices outside the door, maybe three or four, I’m not sure. Finally this morning, about an hour ago, I was let go, and given a message: If I wanted Sarah to be set free, I had to pay a ransom of \$500,000.”